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The Fosse Woman

Analysis of femininity, aesthetics, and
corporeality

Dara MILOVANOVIĆ

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Supervisors:

Dr. Simon Brown

Dr. Elena Catalano

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ABSTRACT

Fosse style and ideas regarding gender have radicalised and politicised gender in popular dance on screen. This thesis examines the construction of femininity in Fosse's dance repertory for screen through choreography, filmic techniques, and performances by female dancers. Firmly situated in dance analysis, this research relies on an interdisciplinary methodology, which includes dance studies, gender studies, feminist film theory, and post-structuralism. Using theoretical discourses on masquerade, camp sensibility, and feminist film theory the analysis examines the way that female bodies are marked as feminine with choreography and screendance techniques to construct a theatrical performance of hyper-femininity as a political strategy to questions discourses surrounding representations of women in musical films. This thesis critically evaluates the aesthetic properties of spectacle, exaggeration, and artifice in Fosse's choreography and its effect on implications of femininity. Representations of femininity are considered in light of aesthetics, specifically excess exhibited through glamour and the grotesque, as a means to comment on gender performativity.

This study concentrates on dancing performed by female dancers in Fosse's work for screen in order to highlight the construction of femininity as a factor to challenge the hetero-normative, patriarchal system, which surrounds film production and positions images of women as passive. Using post-structural theory, the analysis focuses on the creative labour and corporeal identity of female dancers to challenge Fosse as a sole author of the dances. The examination of historiography indicates that Fosse's iconographic dance style and innovation in the way that dance is filmed continues influence on popular dance choreography in the late twentieth and twenty-first century furthers the discussion on authorship and transmission of physical vocabularies through time. Looking through a feminist lens, this study seeks to examine corporeality as subjectivity in order to examine notions of agency and power of female dancers in Fosse's work by employing the idea that dance theorises femininity within the film format.

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Introduction

In 1972, American choreographer and director Bob Fosse created the first television commercial for his Broadway show *Pippin*' (Grubb 1989, p. 171). Fosse's clever marketing strategy and a shrewd business move created a seamless transition between popular dance on stage and mass media, broadcasting his directorial and choreographic style from the confines of stage setting to a vast television audience. Prior to discussion of research aims and objectives, it is important to establish Fosse's iconographic dance style for screen. The commercial presents a sixty second excerpt from the dance 'Glory', which featured actual material from the musical and encapsulates the Fosse Broadway jazz dance style. The clip showcases major characteristic of the style such as precision that dancers embody as they articulate each carefully choreographed step; minimalism exhibited in the subtle use of isolations seen in the slightly dropped head and quiet pulse of the hip; exaggerated and angular movements of juted elbows moving mechanically in sync with straight legged backwards walks; economy of movement, such as use of stillness to punctuate movement that precedes or follows the pause; high contrasts of dynamics of movement, such as luxurious circles of the pelvis and syncopated pivoting of the foot. The dance movement in the commercial is heavily stylised and polished; each body part is carefully choreographed so that the head is cocked precisely, isolations are articulated, shoulders are hunched equally on each dancer, indicating Fosse's theatricalised style of dance. The camera work is crucial in the commercial and indicative of the cinematic style and techniques that Fosse used, including quick and rhythmic cutting dictated by the music, yet defying the predictability of switching shots on the first beat of the bar of music. Fosse, in this number and many other examples, fragments the body with isolations of the hips and shoulders, as well as camera angles that partially capture the body. The lighting adds an additional effect, often further parcelling the body, to accentuate the legs of the dancers or present a silhouette. Fosse choreographs the movement of the camera into the composition of the dance, capturing the dance from various angles and offering multiple perspectives on the dancing bodies in it.

In this short clip, Fosse showcases an idiosyncratic image of femininity, which relies on a number of factors, such as hyperbolised performance of gender communicated with theatricality, spectacular

aesthetics of stylised costumes and movement, and corporeal presence displayed by the dancers that characterise the Fosse woman. The women stand out with their futuristic silver corsets and exaggerated make-up in the mixed gender trio in the excerpt from the show *Pippin* featured in the commercial, performed by Ben Vereen, Candace Brown and Pamela Sousa. Fosse uses various camera positions to create a multidimensional perspective of the dance and complicate how the bodies are seen. All three dancers subtly pulse into the hip with their legs turned in transferring their weight from one leg to another and establishing Fosse's unconventional style of sexiness, which combines sensual movements of the hips with awkwardly positioned turned in legs and feet. The director captures this shot from the front, using lighting that fully lights all three dancers. He varies this perspective, which mimics the view from the theatre audience, with diagonal shots from the back and front of the stage. The dancers perform in unison for the duration of the commercial and are, therefore, featured equally illustrating the democracy of gender that characterises Fosse's dance works. Vereen holds the central position in a black outfit, therefore, he blends in with the dark background, allowing the women to visually attract the attention. The two female dancers stand out against the male performer as lighting accentuates their bare legs and their silver costumes against Vereen's all-black outfit. The camera captures the performers from the diagonal back angle with a spotlight from above. This technique makes the female bodies stand out as the male body disappears in the darkness. Fosse complicates the choreography and the presentation of gender by fragmenting the bodies with lighting and camera angles. A shot from the back captures the lower extremities of the dancing trio lit to draw focus on the bare legs of the women. With a single spotlight, Fosse divides the screen space transforming a simple, slightly exaggerated cross over walk into a spectacle of shapes and images. The lighting and camera angles accentuate the materiality of women's bodies, as they showcase the muscular precision of executing complex movement.

Fosse's dance vocabulary, which includes a straight legged backwards walk that builds with sharp shoulder hiccups; a walk with turned in bent legs and pelvis protruding forwards whilst hips aggressively sway side to side; an exaggerated crossover ball change with the circular movement of the pelvis in the shape of the figure eight; a shifting toe-heel step of the supporting leg and hips

circling, not only creates its own dance aesthetics but aids in communicating a distinct expression of femininity, which is fabricated with the cinematic choices, such as fragmentation of the body with camera framing, alternate perspectives of female bodies, and rhythmical editing that draws focus onto the materiality of the dancing body. Fosse's use of exaggerated movement, styling, acute lighting, precise camera angles, and editing create a particular brand of sexy, yet unwieldy femininity. The women embody paradoxical attributes of sexualised femininity yet exert a grotesque presence with extreme costuming of rubber armour and caricatured make-up. The futuristic corsets turn the dancing bodies into carnival with excessive style that resists and destabilises the consumable image of femininity. The Fosse aesthetic disturbs traditional conventions of Broadway jazz dance, such as the use of hats and canes, with the carnivalesque presentation of clown-like make-up and exaggerated costumes of femininity.

This advertisement, which marries Fosse's stage and screen work, instigates questions regarding the presentation of gender, particularly femininity, and aesthetics in popular dance on screen. The short commercial communicates the Fosse aesthetic of femininity, which will be analysed throughout this thesis. The dance, and the way it is filmed, summarises characteristics of the Fosse style of performance of gender including theatricality, spectacle, excess, stylised artifice, and hyperbole. Fosse politicises gender through visual codes and the corporeal presence of dancers creating a physical language that exudes political meanings regarding femininity that will be discussed throughout this thesis. Consequently, this thesis aims to analyse images of femininity projected by women in Fosse's work as pertinent agents in the construction of womanliness as masquerade, queering of gender and masculinist dynamics of film, subjects of corporeal identity, and examples of performance of female sexuality for future interpretations in popular dance. In order to understand Fosse's impact on representations of gender, it is important to situate his work within the history of images of women in musical films, which is presented below. Following this, the introduction presents the research aims and objectives, a brief literature review, research methodology and outline.

History of female image in musicals on screen

The significance of the construction of femininity in Fosse's work stands out in the historical evolution of images of women in the musical genre on film. Fosse politicises gender with a radical shift in representations of women in popular dance on screen. In order to situate Fosse's work and presentation of femininity it is important to consider images of women dancing that preceded his work. The Golden Age of Studio produced musicals spanned from the 1930s through to the 1950s and included musicals and films with dance content choreographed by Busby Berkeley, Fred Astaire, Hermes Pan, Gene Kelly, Stanley Donen, Jack Cole, Michael Kidd, Jerome Robbins, and Gower Champion¹. A number of female dance stars rose at this time, including Ginger Rogers, Cyd Charisse, Eleanor Powell, Debbie Reynolds, and Leslie Caron. Films from the 1960s such as *West Side Story* (1961) choreographed by Jerome Robbins, *Bye Bye Birdie* (1963) choreographed by Gower Champion, and *Viva Las Vegas* (1964) choreographed by David Winters, introduced the audiences to dancers such as Ann Margret and Rita Moreno. Each choreographer's work is characterised by a specific dance style and aesthetic however each of these women (some of whom have worked with a number of these and other choreographers) maintained their specific dance style throughout their dance career.

Films by Fred Astaire and Busby Berkeley codified a highly specific image of gender through choreography as well as camera work that defined the 1930s era. In Astaire's films, which concentrated on his dancing ability, the women complimented his dancing and his elegant style. For Berkeley, women's bodies, often objectified by the choreography and camera work, served as a tool for the visual design. Berkeley's and Astaire's musicals, produced within the studio system, 'redefined the visual discourse of a filmed musical, in particular showing how numbers could be imagined and then rendered cinematically' (Cohan 2002, p. 9). With their particular style of choreography (Berkeley favouring the movement of the camera to re-envision the cinematic space and Astaire's more intimate view of choreography), they also propose specific views on gender and how femininity is constructed on screen in dance situations.

Busby Berkeley's choreographic aesthetic is characterised by extraordinary geometric formations of dancing bodies, most often female, arranged to create a visual spectacle. Rows of identically dressed women executing identical steps (used for their physical form rather than individual talent) erase the women's individuality in favour of visual spectacle in Berkeley's work, therefore 'the women, passive and objectified, function as fetishized objects, while the men take the role of the voyeur' (Robertson 2002, p. 133). This is exemplified in the film *Lullaby of Broadway* (1935) featuring a large cast of women and men tapping on a large set made of multiple levels of staircases. Berkeley skillfully emphasises cinematic technique, such as the overhead shot, rather than the performance of the dancers turning the dance and the images of women into a theatrical spectacle. According to Pamela Robertson (2002), Berkeley turns dance into an abstraction worthy of astonishment so its effect is in the primacy of aesthetic style over the narrative, the pleasure of image over reality. The kaleidoscopic overhead shots often used in Berkeley's film show abstracted images of women, while other examples include a camera travelling through a long row of women's legs standing in second position, focusing on their legs and pelvic area. In the 'Shadow Waltz' in *Gold Diggers of 1933* (1933), Berkeley captures women pretending to play violins with an overhead shot, which transforms them into an image of a blossoming flower. The women disappear in the visual spectacle and effect. In the *Footlight Parade* (1933), Berkeley amplifies the visual effect by choreographing women dancing in water. They create formations with their bodies that create kaleidoscopic effects with the overhead shot. Berkeley features the infamous shot of female legs underwater, as a single performer swims through carefully positioned legs. The 'Petting in the Park' number from *Gold Diggers of 1933* (1933) begins with a ball that rolls up to the exposed legs of a reclining woman. The shot features her legs crossed at the knee showing her soft dress strewn around her and undergarments. As it starts to rain, the women hide behind a panel to remove their clothing. Berkeley films this act of disrobing in silhouette highlighting the female form. Following Busby Berkeley's tradition of filming female bodies, Altman (1987) describes the crotch shot, a camera angle which favours the pelvis and legs, as the ultimate method to align the camera with the male gaze, a theoretical idea proposed by Laura Mulvey in 1975.

In Astaire's choreography, the woman complements him in a tap or ballroom dance routine. Ginger Rodgers stands out as Astaire's most well-known out of his numerous dancer partners in his films. Dressed elegantly, either in immaculately tailored suits or glamorous dresses, Rodgers appears to follow Astaire with her dancing and gaze. In the 1933 film *Roberta*, Astaire and Rodgers perform a duet in which she meets his athleticism despite wearing a long, glamorous dress, yet she keeps her head and gaze facing her partner or demurely towards her shoulders. Astaire visibly leads her throughout the dance. In a moment in the dance, he spins her from one side of his body to the other. She seems to lose control from his force but he then appears to save her by swiftly catching her hand and safely continuing the dance. Even when they dance out of hold, her rounded shoulders cause her posture to appear slouched compared to Astaire's firmly held upper body therefore projecting a dainty and dependant image of femininity.

The duet 'Dancing in the Dark' featuring Cyd Charisse in the film *The Band Wagon* (1953) encompasses the graceful politeness of the female promoted in Astaire's films. Dancing side-by-side, the two dancers both dressed in white costumes float across Central Park in New York City. Charisse, dressed in a long-sleeved shirt with a draped front, a shin-length pleated skirt and ballet flats embodies the image of purity, elegance, and restraint. The duet employs balletic vocabulary with classical ballroom partnering showing off Charisse's training and dance expertise. Later in the film, Charisse appears in the 'Girl Hunt Ballet' in a different interpretation of femininity, portraying a vixen in a sequined red dress and long gloves. The jazzy number employs percussive steps, isolations of shoulders, and accented hip thrusts executed from hinge positions. In this routine, Charisse is grounded, aggressive in the way she attacks movement with sharp and precise quality that sits in the centre of rhythmical punctuation. Her ability to perform diverse dance styles becomes apparent when comparing her work in Astaire's choreography and Gene Kelly's dances. Charisse is possibly best known for her dancing in the 'Dream Ballet' in *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) choreographed by Kelly. In this number she occupies two versions of femininity: the first part of the number showcases a sultry seductress who can stop Kelly with a simple lift of her foot; and in the second part, an otherworldly creature who defies gravity with lyrical movement. The first image of

femininity is sexy. Charisse wears an emerald green dress and high-heeled shoes and performs controlled shimmies and hip isolations lowering into a hinge that thrusts her pelvis forward. She maintains her refined style by gently placing her foot on the floor, sustaining the core of her upper body, and extending her limbs in lifts and attitudes. In the fantasy scene, Charisse performs lyrical movement on a vast white soundstage lit with pastel pink and purple lights. Her oversized scarf billows behind her aided by a wind machine creating a fantastical vision. Accompanied by string music, Charisse repeats *bourrées*, light fan kicks, and stretches her arms to portray graceful elegance and restraint. Dancing in flat jazz shoes, in the ‘Red Blues’ number in *Silk Stockings* (1957), Charisse displays great athleticism as she exhibits an ability to cover large spatial distance with her dancing and pleasure in performing technically and rhythmically complex dance material, which combines ballet, jazz, and modern vocabulary. In the number from 1958 film *Party Girl*, Charisse dances to a jazzy musical number and although she embodies sexy appeal and performs sexualised movements such as accented hip thrusts and hinges in a pink body suit, her technical approach to movement diminishes her association with raunchiness. Charisse’s presence indicates a break with traditions as she occupies a strong position on screen and introduces a sensuous feel to her dancing.

These examples do not provide a comprehensive overview of women dancing in musicals, however, they provide a glimpse into how images of femininity had changed from the 1930s through to the 1950s. This brief history demonstrates a shift from highly objectified images of women in Busby Berkeley’s films, to elegant and demure representation of women complimenting their male partners in Astaire’s and Kelly’s work. Influenced by what has subsequently become known as the Cult of Domesticity in the 1950s, which called for a return to conservative gender roles, the 1954 film *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* choreographed by Michael Kidd asserted heterosexuality as key element of American culture and the musical. In the well-known ‘Barn dance’, the male dancers show off their athletic prowess. The women only dance when attached to men either in closed hold position or in assisted partnering. In ‘June Bride’, the sole dance featuring only women in the film, female dancers sing and dance in their bedroom wearing their white undergarments which consist of petticoats, socks, and heavily cinched corsets. The women present a demure image of femininity, of

women fantasising about being brides. Their movements consist of ballet-based steps such as *balancés*, *attitudes*, and *développés* promoting an image of corporeality devoid of sexual agency.

Oklahoma (1955) employs the same Americana aesthetics as *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954). Choreographed by Agnes De Mille, the 'Dream Ballet' in this film features a number of dance styles that promote various gender ideals and sexual politics of 1950s America. The first section features a duet between a man and a woman in a tightly-laced dress in romantic lifts and balletic movement. The upward movement seemingly set in a large open frontier promotes the American ideas of Christianity and supported femininity. Four women enter the space in costumes and movement reminiscent of Martha Graham's 'Appalachian Spring' (1944). In both number women wear long dress with tightly fitted bodices and long sleeves, which conceal the skin of the female bodies whilst allowing each movement to register. The cinched waists describe the stereotypical female form that adheres to the conservative image of the woman. The costumes deny implications of sexiness by rejecting the seductiveness of exposed skin, therefore, women assert their presence with their dancing. The women use their torsos to show the contractions and spirals of their backs, which stem from the Graham technique and allow them to articulate emotional expression. De Mille uses Graham's feminist imagery for women adapted to the light-hearted dance genre of musicals by diluting the angst of the contracted and torque torsos with upright bodies and smiling faces. In De Mille's dance, women execute large leaps covering vast space therefore claiming their territory on screen. In the burlesque section of the number, a group of women in corseted dresses, can-can skirts and large feathers on their head, perform a tired routine of ankle and hip rolls and skirt shaking. Their detached demeanour changes as they perform large kicks and prances. Even though, the routine appears to parody burlesque performances of sexuality, the ideas of femininity projected still adhere to the conservative balletic principles of strongly controlled technical bodies.

Judy Garland's repeatedly performs stylised pedestrian movement to accompany her virtuosic singing, even in films in which she partners Gene Kelly (*For Me and My Gal* 1942) and Fred Astaire (*Easter Parade* 1948), she projects a demure image of femininity. In *Summer Stock* (1950),

she performs a number 'Get Happy' seemingly devised to project an image of sexualised femininity. She wears a white blouse, black tuxedo jacket, black hat, stockings, and high heels, performing stylised walks, various ball changes, and slight hand movements. Surrounded by hard working male dancers performing a vigorous choreographed dance, Garland stands out with her subtle approach to movement. Whilst her performance, as well as the choice of costume that exposes her legs, appears as a device to project sexiness, she maintains a conservative and cute approach to female sexuality. Audrey Hepburn's elegant physique in the 'Bohemian Dance' in *Funny Face* (1957) appears to follow dissonant aesthetics of contemporary dance with precise movements of the curved back and multi-directional extensions of the limbs rejecting a sexual approach to femininity. Hepburn's portrayal of Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady* (1964) is an example of a woman who sings but barely dances in another elegant and non-sexual example of womanhood. Julie Andrews in *Mary Poppins* (1964) and *The Sound of Music* (1965) projects a sexually restrained, laced-up femininity with her classically trained voice and minimal dancing.

The presentation of women in sexual terms occurs in many musicals and forms a staple of presentation of women in commercial dance. Ann Miller's dance 'Too Darn Hot' in *Kiss Me Kate* (1953) projects the image of femininity as sexiness. She embodies the physicality of pin up girls and burlesque performances as she performs to a room full of men in a hot pink corset with a tasselled skirt, gloves, pumps, and a large fan. Her footwork both conceals and reveals her crotch and supports the shaking of her bottom and hips. The hectic pace and upbeat feel of the dance leads to her removal of her gloves, scarf, and bracelet. The limited space she performs in causes her to perform repetitious footwork and tight movements. She addresses the camera directly playing up to the male gaze in the room and off-screen. As band members chant 'Go, Girl. Go' she speeds up the tempo and her performance of choreographed sexual facial expressions as she blinks seductively, hides behind her lace fan, and opens and closes her mouth. Her body is sexualised and available for the consumption of the male gaze.

Another example of female dancers conceived within the burlesque and chorus girl routine appears in 'Take Back Your Mink' number from *Guys and Dolls* (1955). The number begins with Vivian

Blaine as the soloist surrounded by a chorus of female performers who all wear saccharine pink gowns with mermaid tails. As they reject gifts from suitors and figuratively give back their mink shawls and hats, they also remove their dresses to reveal skimpy strapless black lace leotards. By keeping their long pink gloves and jewellery on they project a purposefully sexualised image of femininity which is further accentuated with shimmies and knee lifts, playfully causes their legs to cross the body in order to conceal and draw attention to the crotch.

Jerome Robbins's choreography in *West Side Story* (1961) underlines the political developments that progressed feminist and racial movements in film musicals. Using the influence of Latino dance and music, Robbins' choreography showcases women from the Hispanic gang as grounded, confident, and sexually playful. In 'America', female dancers penetrate the space of the male cast members with strong kicks. They advance through the space with vigour, shaking hips and with complex rhythms, occupying the screen with their sassy facial expressions. As a group, they dance side-by-side with the male dancers asserting their presence as equal and strong. In the 'Mambo' number, a racially diverse cast performs a stylised version of the said dance. Even when they perform in couples, women and men are choreographed on equal terms, using the same amount of space and time; executing the movement with equal energy, attack, and vigour. The Latino-inspired music allows Robbins and the dancers to experiment with hip movements and complex footwork that demands grounded control. Although, the movement even employs sexualised movements such as undulations of the spine and forward thrust of hips, the aesthetics of the number, including the colourful costumes, bright lighting, square use of space and camera angles, which capture the bodies and choreography fully, make these dances inoffensively sexy. Additionally, sexual content is excused with racial politics as Latino characters exhibit more charged sexuality than white dancers.

Another example of display of female sexuality is Ann Margret's dance in *Viva Las Vegas* (1964) choreographed by David Winters. Wearing an orange turtle neck, opaque black tights, and high heeled shoes, Margret does not expose her flesh but oozes sexuality through her stylised performance of social dance movements. Performing at the tip of a V formation as the only female in the ensemble, her body is in perpetual motion. She shakes her head wildly, isolates her hips, and

shimmies her upper body. She does not perform any virtuosic dance movements failing to fully stretch her arms and legs in a jump. The six men who dance behind her perform the same steps with the clarity of formally trained dancers however her raw approach to dance movement complicates the choreography with abundant movement. Her wildness resists conformity and indicates a change in the presentation of women in musicals, which reflects the changes in the attitude towards women and sexuality of the 1960s. The strength of the feminist movement, along with the Civil Rights movement, and the sexual revolution in the 1960s influenced the development of social and jazz dance and the more sexualised images of women in musicals.

Fosse's choreographic career began in films directed by Hermes Pan and Stanley Donen, therefore, adhering to the 1950s system of presenting dance in film. An overview of the history of the female image in Fosse's work for screen which ranges from 1951 through 1979 indicates that the presentation of femininity evolved throughout his career. The studios kept a generic formula for musicals, which changed with New Hollywood that saw a shift of power from studio bosses to filmmakers in the 1970s (Hillier, 1993). Due to this change, Fosse was permitted further creative freedom within the industry. Fosse's imagining of the woman changed throughout his body of work with a distinct shift as he assumed the directorial position as well as the socio-cultural influences of the 1960s and 1970s. In Fosse's early choreographic work in films, such as *Kiss me Kate* (1953) directed by George Sidney, *My Sister Eileen* (1955) and *the Pajama Game* (1957) directed by George Abbott and Stanley Donen, and *Damn Yankees* (1958) directed by Richard Quine, he follows the conventions of the musicals of the time, making charming dances that favour female-male partnering. Fosse's choreography for *My Sister Eileen* follows conventions of the Hollywood musical in terms of narrative content and partner work. However, within the confines of this polite style that is influenced by ballroom dance, Fosse manages to hint at his style with isolations and complex rhythm. The duet begins as Fosse and Janet Leigh hold hands and start with simple walks. As they dance side by side, Fosse combines the tap style of Astaire and Rogers accented with subtle isolations, finger clicks, and pauses. This dance, more so than any other in Fosse's work, can be characterized by Dyer's idea that heterosexuality is imagined as complimentary blending of

opposites which 'implies that masculinity and femininity are themselves tantalizingly incomplete opposites that can be rapturously fused in an equal, loving relationship' (Dyer 2012, p. 89-90). Although, they dance side by side and in close hold, the romanticism of the scene relies on the music rather than the playful attitude of the dance style. The dance ends with a kiss sealing the romantic feel of the dance.

His choreographic debut for film was a two minute duet for himself and Carol Haney in the film *Kiss Me Kate* (1953). Although vastly different from his previous work and the rest of the dances of the film, aesthetically it adheres to the idea of musicals as promotion of happiness. Fosse's duet follows a dance choreographed by Hermes Pan consistent with a traditional, pleasant jazz dance style of the Hollywood musical with sustained movement and ballroom based partnering. Fosse's duet stands in contrast to the preceding dance choreographed by Pan, which is set to a lyrical piece of music performed by strings to amplify the sweeping feel of the choreography. In Pan's section of the number, the men lead their female partners in stylised ballroom-inspired movement, such as turns, supported lifts, and large dips. The dancers smile widely as they execute large movements that obey the simple rhythmical structure of the music. Fosse, on the other hand, choreographs alternating dynamics and plays with isolations, rhythmic complexity, change of levels, and quality of movement presenting his already formed signature style, which he transfers from stage to screen. The partners dance as playful equals showing no indication of romantic involvement or partnering that relies on leading and following. In fact, they only touch once as Fosse pulls Haney off the floor. Even within the strict format of the 1950s musical, Fosse manages to display a vision of partnering that does not have a sole purpose to advance the romantic plot. Therefore, Fosse satisfies the conservative traditions of the musical whilst at the same time subverting them.

In dances like 'Give me a Band and My Baby' from *My Sister Eileen*, 'Steam Heat' from the *Pajama Game* (1957), and the only duet performed by Fosse and Gwen Verdon called 'Who's Got the Pain' in *Damn Yankees* (1958), Fosse choreographs gender in equal terms. 'Steam Heat' from the *Pajama Game* (1957), featuring a trio of two men and a woman in suits and bowler hats, demonstrates Fosse's command of choreographically complex rhythmical structures through

isolations, layering of movement, body sound, singing, and pauses. The look and performance style of the performers allows for a fluid reading of femininity and masculinity allowing a break from the earlier choreographies and performances of gender in musicals which enforced a clear distinction and an emphasis on heterosexual coupling. 'Who's Got the Pain' in *Damn Yankees* (1958), draws on the ideology of gender equality proposed in the number in *Kiss Me Kate* and 'Steam Heat', and illustrates the fellow partnership promoting gender equality in choreography. The number showcases the two dancers in side by side unison therefore imagining choreography of gender in similar terms. Verdon's top reveals her midriff however this is the only difference in otherwise identical costumes. Both dancers perform gestures, which are conservatively considered to feminise and sexualise the body, such as hip isolations and pelvis rotations as well as large jumps and high kicks therefore refusing an explicit choreography of gender on separate terms. In his later works, which will be analysed throughout this study, a hyper-sexual and hyper-feminine image characterises the vision of a woman in dance on film.

Dyer (2012) notes a drop in the number of couple dances in musicals since the fifties (with notable exceptions of the 1970s and 1980s films such as *Saturday Night Fever* (1977) and *Dirty Dancing* (1987)), which is evidenced in Fosse's work that features more ensembles and solos by women. Dyer (2012) attributes this drop to the fact that the female stars of musicals of this time, such as Julie Andrews, Doris Day, and Barbra Streisand, were not great dancers. It is hard to ignore, however, the work of the feminist movement and sexual revolution of the 1960s which is clearly reflected in the choices to feature women as independent and sexualised subjects. A woman dancing on her own embodies a performance of gender and sexuality that veers from the tactics of arranging two bodies in space in relation to each other that reinforce the relationship of dependency (Dyer 2012). Dyer (2012) also notes that in the 1960s, a time of radical second-wave feminist movement, women would not accept the subordination required of the female dancer in the couple dances. Fosse's ascension of directorial control coincides with his attention to female-centred choreography with solos for women and all female ensemble pieces, such as Gwen Verdon's solo 'Whatever Lola Wants' in *Damn Yankees*, Shirley MacLaine's dance 'If They Could See Me Now' in *Sweet Charity*

(1969), the suite of solos in *All That Jazz* and group piece like 'Big Spender'. Dances such as 'Whatever Lola Wants' and 'Big Spender', deviate from the images of femininity presented in earlier films to feature a more assertive and exaggerated performance of femininity and sexuality.

Fosse's style, which is important in creating a particular image of femininity, became evident in his earliest works, such as the quick duet 'From This Moment On' in *Kiss Me Kate* (1953) and 'Steam Heat' in *The Pajama Game* (1957) that feature full involvement of the body and alternating dynamics and levels. Both of the dances include the characteristic Broadway jazz outgoing performance manner, the exuberant style of vaudeville, burlesque, and stage reviews, manifested through explosive use of limbs and jumps, sharp turns of the head, and isolations combined with a slinky, understated attitude. Fosse style is characterised by turned in legs and feet, raised and rounded shoulders and hyper-extended position of the neck and head. Fosse claimed in a 1975 interview for *Dance Magazine* that these were a result of his personal limitations as a dancer, such as his lack of turnout, poor posture, and a balding head (Fosse quoted in Grubb 1989, p. 25). His experience as a tap dancer caused him to treat the whole body as a rhythmical surface giving the dance movement the dynamic musical quality that defines his work (Newman 2000). Strong musical/ choreographic connection accentuated by the rhythmically determined editing characterizes his work (Milovanovic 2018b). Visual clarity of movement and architectural relationship formed by dancers' bodies and their relationship to the performing space, also defines the spatial design of Fosse's choreography. Musical and dance numbers in the films are dramatic miniatures used to create the atmosphere, express emotion and illustrate the narrative, whilst punctuating the plot.

In addition to introducing a new dance style, Fosse altered the standard filming manner for dance films proposed by Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly in the 1940s and 1950s, who filmed the whole dancing body with a long-shot in order capture the choreography. In his later works, Fosse planned camera work into the choreographic process, therefore controlling the design of the dance with the particular placing of the camera. His screendance relies on camera work as an essential element of choreography which is crucial in creating highly specific images of femininity and sexuality. This becomes evident in analysis of his work, which demonstrates that in his early dance pieces, directed

by other directors such as the duet from *Kiss Me Kate*, ‘Who’s Got the Pain’ and ‘Whatever Lola Wants’ from *Damn Yankees*, the camera does not shift often, mostly capturing the dance from the front and centre. Once Fosse gained greater control over filming and choreographic techniques he created a more complex way to film dance as specialised choreographer/director (Milovanovic 2018b). His choreography is influenced by the camera and editing techniques for dance on screen, as manifested in his dances in the films he directed such as *Sweet Charity* (1969), *Cabaret* (1972), and *All That Jazz* (1979). Fragmentation of the body that occurs via movements and steps, such as isolations, is magnified and aided by the use of the camera. This alters the way Fosse captures the dancing body on screen so that it is not only simply documenting a dance piece but rather designing choreography for the camera and screen. His treatment of choreographic material with the positioning of the camera, use of the lateral and jump-shot, editing that directly correspond to the needs of the dance and music, are some of the methods that have informed future dance on screen practices.

Fosse created a style of screendance that has since influenced the style and filming techniques used in popular dance. His choreographic and directorial influence is strongly evident in the 1980s music videos by Paula Abdul and Michael Jackson to name a few. Michael Jackson’s music video *Billie Jean* (1982) carries a striking resemblance to Fosse’s choreography and performance in the film *Little Prince* (1974). International pop star Beyoncé heavily quotes Fosse’s ‘Rich Man Frug’ in her video *Get me Bodied* (2007) and ‘Mexican Breakfast’ (featured on the Ed Sullivan show in 1969) in her video *Single Ladies* (2008). Fosse’s choreographic style has been blatantly plagiarized in TV reality show *So You Think You Can Dance* by choreographers such as Tyce Diorio (USA) and Kelly Abbey (Australia). Fosse has created a dance style and a communication tool within the popular dance idiom that continues to shape expressions of gender in commercial dance, which will be discussed in Chapter Six. Sparked by a personal interest in his work, a number of research questions occurred, such as what kind of meanings arise regarding presentation of women in Fosse’s work. Deeply troubled by the patriarchal dynamics of the film industry and the stereotypical images of women as sexual objects, I began this research in order to analyse the dynamics of femininity in Fosse’s work,

which function in complex, convoluted, and multivalent ways. As hyper-sexual women performing dances choreographed by a heterosexual man, these images prove troublesome in presenting monolithic meanings surrounding images of women in popular dance on film. This study does not aim to create a generalised understanding for trends of femininity in commercial dance but rather attempts to decode the aesthetic and physical language that Fosse's dance style conceives for the construction of femininity.

The analysis of gender in Fosse's screendance sits within the particularities of the specific genre of the American Hollywood musical of the late twentieth century. This study does not aim to situate Fosse's dances within the dance history canon however it inadvertently does that as the analysis concentrates on ideas regarding gender that shift and morph through the particular time they occur in. The choreography and the construction of femininity of Fosse's dances reflect the changing ideas regarding gender from the 1950s through to the 1980s. The American societal changing attitudes to gender and sexuality following the Feminist and Sexual Revolution of the late 1960s are reflected in a number of musicals of the 1970s and early 1980s, such as *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975), *Saturday Night Fever* (1977), *Grease* (1978), *Hair* (1979), and *Fame* (1980).

The progression of representations of gender in Fosse's work demonstrates the socio-political happenings in the US throughout his career. Fosse skilfully introduces political commentary on historical events that respond to the needs of the commercial genre and, therefore, provide entertainment whilst exerting powerful critique. This is particularly evident in his film *Cabaret* (1972), a politicised film, which presents an aggressive view on Nazi Germany, through musical and dance scenes, narrative, and film aesthetics. *Cabaret* critiques growing repressive conservative powers in America by depicting the perversions of Nazi tyranny. This film can be interpreted as a commentary on the repressive and conservative powers of the late 1960s and early 1970s in America, which included the Vietnam War, Watergate scandal, and President Nixon's authoritarian rise to power (Milovanovic 2018a).

Literature Review

Fosse created sixteen musicals during his career, spanning from 1953 to 1987, including *Pajama Game* (1955), *Damn Yankees* (1956), *Redhead* (1959) *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* (1961), *Pippin* (1972), *Chicago* (1975), and *Dancin'* (1978) and directed five feature films: *Sweet Charity* (1969), *Cabaret* (1972), *Lenny* (1974), *All That Jazz* (1979), and *Star 80* (1983). His work has been recognised by various awards, such as eight Tony awards for his work in musical theatre, an Emmy for his television accomplishments and an Academy Award for his directorial work, and he is the only artist to have the distinction of receiving this Triple Crown in one year. And yet, Fosse's work has been largely overlooked by dance scholarship. His large body of work has left a distinct stamp on the way popular dance is created and filmed, as evidenced in dance films of the late twentieth century and music videos, yet this is not reflected in academic enquiry.

A number of sources on Fosse exist in popular literature, comprising mainly biographies and instructional books. Kevin Boyd Grubb's (1989) *Razzle Dazzle: The Life and Work of Bob Fosse* and Martin Gottfried's (1998) *All His Jazz: The Life and Death of Bob Fosse* offer salacious accounts of his work in light of his turbulent life. Grubb (1989) assembles interviews with dancers, directors, composers, writers, and actors who worked with Fosse. Gottfried's detailed biography of Fosse emphasises his personal life as much as his work, therefore resulting in a sensationalist read. Gottfried (1998) concentrates on minute details of Fosse's everyday life, but does not focus on the innovation Fosse brought to jazz choreography and screendance. Joan Acocella's essay *Dancing in the Dark*, which was published in *The New Yorker* in 1988 in anticipation of the opening *Fosse: A Celebration of Song and Dance* presents a brief biographical sketch and an analysis of his psychological dichotomy that she concludes must have had an impact on his work. However Acocella's analysis of Fosse's work concentrates on what she interprets as key subjects in his work: sex, sleaze and fraudulence (Acocella 2007). Acocella does not present an in-depth inquiry into the structure of the work and style.

A number of books exist that offer descriptions of Fosse's repertory or dance style. Margery Beddow is a dancer and choreographer who has worked in a number of Fosse's shows, such as *Redhead*, *Little Me*, *Sweet Charity*, and *The Pajama Game*. Her short monograph *Bob Fosse's Broadway* (1996) is an overview of all of Fosse's Broadway shows. Debra McWater's *The Fosse Style* (2008) offers instructions on how to execute the Fosse technique, evidencing the fascination with his movement style, yet leaving out content, context, and social impact of his choreography. The Library of American Choreographers has issued a booklet written by Jenai Cutcher (2006) that is designed to introduce (presumably a dance student) to Fosse's style and technique. The booklet is an over simplistic glimpse in to Fosse's long and complex career as a dancer, choreographer, and director.

Fosse's work has been awarded scholarly attention based on his work as a director rather than choreographer in articles such as *Cloven Hooper: Choreography as Autobiography in 'All That Jazz'* by Robert E. Wood (1987) and *All That Jazz: Expression on its Own Terms* by J. P. Tellote (1983). Jerome Delameter's (1988) influential work *Dance in the Hollywood Musical*, which offers a history of major choreographers in dance films, dedicates seven pages to Fosse in his book presenting taxonomy of his movement style that is reduced down to three characteristics only: isolation, repetition, and fragmentation. Steven Belleto's 2008 article *Cabaret and Antifascist Aesthetics* discusses the political implications of the 1972 Fosse film in terms of narrative and aesthetics. Belleto concentrates on musical numbers, rather than dance in his analysis of *Cabaret*, to discuss the aesthetic ways the musical raises anti-fascist ideology. A recent publication, *Jazz Dance: A History of the Roots and Branches* (2014), edited by Lindsay Guarino and Wendy Oliver, features an essay on Bob Fosse written by Cheryl Mrozowski. Geared towards undergraduate students, the essay provides an overview of some of Fosse's work for screen and stage and a general description of his style.

Previous studies of dance in films have addressed the works of great choreographers and dancers of early film and the golden era of studio musicals, such as Busby Berkeley (Delamater 1988, Rubin 2002), Fred Astaire (Mueller 1984, Cohan 2002), and Gene Kelly (Genne 2005). None of these

authors, however, have concentrated on the socio-political implications of Fosse's repertory. A number of scholarly materials address various ideas, issues, and works in screendance however continue to omit the work of Bob Fosse. *The Hollywood Musicals Reader*, edited by Steve Cohan (2002), focuses on films made in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s described as nostalgic, conservative, and wholesome entertainment. Studio-era musicals have received ample scholarly study due to their popularity. Dodds's influential book *Dance on Screen: Genres and Media from Hollywood to Experimental Art* (2001) set a precedent for further study of popular and post-modern videodance including a methodology to analyse dance on screen. Douglas Rosenberg's *Screendance: Inscribing the Ephemeral Image* (2012) provides definitions and characteristics for analysis of screendance which have been valuable to this study. Two recent anthologies on screendance, *The Oxford Handbook of Screendance Studies* (2016), edited by Douglas Rosenberg and *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and the Popular Screen* (2014), edited by Melissa Blanco Borelli, cover a vast range of dance on screen practices, styles, choreographers, and films, however do not include a study on Fosse. This highlights the need for a critical study of Fosse's work that considers the socio-political impact of his work. Although, the research could be approached from a number of perspectives, this thesis focuses on the images and performance of femininity in his dances in cinema.

Research Aims and Objectives

Following this initial introduction, which situates Fosse's work within the history of dance in musical films, and presents the lack of scholarly attention to it, this study focuses on female dancers in Fosse's work for screen in order to highlight the construction of femininity as a factor to challenge the hetero-normative, patriarchal system, which surrounds film production and positions images of women as passive. In order to discuss the implications of performances of femininity in Fosse's work, the objectives of this research are to examine constructions of hyper-femininity building on existing theory on gender, gender in performance, spectacle, and feminist film theory as it pertains to screendance. Representations of femininity are considered in light of aesthetics, specifically excess exhibited through glamour and the grotesque, as a means to comment on gender performativity. Looking through a feminist lens, this study seeks to study corporeality as

subjectivity in order to examine notions of agency and power of female dancers in Fosse's work. The final objective is to analyse the legacy and historiography of Fosse's dance style as a language for the communication of femininity.

This study focuses specifically on Bob Fosse's work on screen. Within this context, which historically spans from 1952 to 1979, Fosse's work evolves in to a specific style of screendance that continues to inform popular dance practices in film and TV. The study concentrates on his choreographic work in cinema for practical and scholarly reasons. Practically, the availability of the material as well as the ability to re-watch the 'original' performances proves invaluable for this research, which is based in movement, choreographic and cinematic analysis. Furthermore, my interest lies in the conventions of popular dance on screen and how these affect the projections of femininity with camera work, directing, and editing processes. This study does not attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of all of Fosse's work for screen but, rather, examines specific ideas that arise regarding femininity and female sexuality. Case studies were chosen for their appropriateness in each discussion, therefore, some dances are not discussed in the thesis at all. The case studies encompass a wide historical range and include works from films not choreographed by Fosse as well as three dance films he directed: *Sweet Charity* (1969), *Cabaret* (1972), and *All That Jazz* (1979). The main case studies include 'Whatever Lola Wants', performed by Gwen Verdon in *Damn Yankees* (1959) directed by George Abbott, 'Big Spender', 'Rich Man's Frug', and 'I'm a Brass Band' from *Sweet Charity* (1969), 'Wilkommen' and 'Mein Herr' performed by Liza Minnelli from *Cabaret* (1972), and 'Take Off With Us', 'Airotica', and 'There'll be Some Changes Made' performed by Ann Reinking from *All That Jazz* (1979).

Research Procedures and Methodology

In this study I employ an interdisciplinary approach, including dance studies and analysis, film aesthetics, gender and queer theory, feminist film theory, and post-structuralism. The nature of this study requires a theoretical system, which will result from a combination of approaches that employ the idea of dance as method for social, cultural, and political expression. For the purposes of this

study, gender is understood in Butlerian terms as culturally constructed and performative in order to destabilise a rigid interpretation of femininity and allow for a feminist reading. I apply Young's suggestion that 'radical politics ... consist in troubling the gender binaries and playing with gender citation' (2005, p. 15) to analyse gendered images in Fosse's dance to discuss its subversive potential. I also employ Joan Riviere's (1929) concept of masquerade to understand construction of femininity and notions of hyper-femininity in performance as proposed by Carole-Anne Tyler (2003) and Geraldine Harris (1999). Furthermore, case studies are analysed from a queer point of view to consider their possibility to challenge preconceived ideas of gender. With particular emphasis on camp aesthetic, this research relies on analysis of excessive style, artifice, and parody to decipher the manner in which femininity and female sexuality is presented and the meanings it projects towards the viewers. Although, the idea of gender as performative construct weaves throughout the thesis, it is particularly useful in Chapters Three and Four, which discuss the choreography of femininity. A detailed presentation of theoretical frameworks regarding construction of femininity and feminist film theory is presented in Chapter Two.

At the core of the research is movement and choreographic analysis. Susan Leigh Foster's book *Reading Dancing* (1986) provides fundamental methods to explicitly interpret dance through codes and structures. Foster proposes a system for dance and choreographic analyses, as a process for 'active and interactive interpretation of dance as a system of meaning' (1986, p. xviii), which I employ in this study. André Lepecki echoes the idea that dance can provide tools for theorising other area of social performances and alludes to 'dance's capacity to create critical moves and theoretical acts through its present movement' (2012, p. 99). Jane Desmond (1998) suggests that dance can be analysed as a performance of cultural identity as it signals and enacts social constructions of race, class, gender through perpetually changing variations. Desmond proposes that the study of dance as 'bodily 'texts' furthers the understanding of 'how social identities are signalled, formed, and negotiated through bodily movement' (1998, p. 154), therefore, analysis of Fosse's choreographic work and performance provides knowledge about representations of gender and their further impact on the understanding of social dynamics surrounding dancing bodies on

film. Foster (1998b) proposes that bodily movement, including habits, gestures, and positions stems from cultural practices which construct ‘corporeal meaning,’ altered by the historical, geographic and contextual factors. Aesthetic and political values codified by the socio-cultural elements permeate the dance bodies, following Marcell Mauss’ (1973) theory of ‘technologies of the body,’ which proposes that all movement and habits of the human body are socially transmitted.

According to Mark Franko (2006), dance has been used and created in order to reflect political and cultural identities, however, it also stands as a critical theory of society. Franko (2006) acknowledges that the relationship between dance and its political implications cannot be presumed but rather is dependent on the unravelling of the complex exchanges between dance and the political by a thorough dance studies approach. Dance movement and gesture is saturated with political and historical habits and therefore a site of resistance where choreography, movement and representation are ambiguously communicated (Franko 2006). By following Franko’s and Foster’s suggestion that choreography can serve as theory, analyses of dance, including ‘body, movement, and the system of codes in which they take meaning’ (Franco and Nordera 2007, p. 7) becomes essential to the understanding of dance itself as well as the larger cultural mechanisms within which it functions. Foster argues that the physicality of the body plays a central role in ‘constructing both individual agency and sociality’ (2003, p. 395), which is an idea I employ throughout the thesis to examine the function of dance in the construction of femininity in Fosse’s work and its effect on feminist meanings projected. Foster looks at protest and analyses the body as a signifying sign in order to ‘theorise corporeal, individual, and social identity’ (2003, p. 397), which offers a methodology to analyse dances in order to gain understanding of what the bodies are doing physically and the relationships they create to their own identity, that of others, and social and historical impact of the movement.

In order to characterise the representations of femininity in Fosse’s work, I concentrate on analysis of aesthetics and focus on corporeality as a key method for female dancers to construct subjectivity. This calls for a theoretical understating of corporeality as discussed by a number of gender and feminist writers. Grosz (1994) calls for terms which re-conceive subjectivity in terms of the primacy

of corporeality in order to overcome body/mind dualism. The idea that the body is an instrument is defined in Cartesian terms, which view the body as a vessel, a machine. For political philosophers, such as Locke, the body is seen as a possession of the subject who makes decisions and choices regarding the body and its powers, such as in the labour market (Grosz 1994, p. 9). Grosz contests the idea that the material body is positioned on one side and the historical and cultural inscriptions on the other. Instead she argues that 'these representations and cultural inscriptions quite literally constitute the bodies and help to produce them as such' (Grosz 1994, p. x). Spinoza's theory posits that body and mind are two attributes that are merely different aspects of one and the same inseparable substance. Grosz explains: 'each attribute adequately expresses substance insofar as it is infinite...yet each attribute is also inadequate or incomplete insofar as it expresses substance only in one form' (1994, p. 11). According to Spinoza, the body is in a series of processes of becoming, rather than a fixed state of being therefore it is active and productive (Grosz 1994). Grosz (1994) argues that in order to understand the role of the body in the production of knowledge systems, cultural production, and socioeconomic exchange the relations between body and mind need to be re-negotiated. Grosz argues that bodies are a cultural product; 'sexually specific, necessarily interlocked with racial, cultural, and class particularities' (Grosz 1994, p. 19). The physical identities as reactive and reactionary entities are political and able to contest boundaries of control. The body, as a material and physical act, is a lived body: 'a subjective locus of worldly experience rather than an objective fact, a complex of subjectively felt sensation or embodied thoughtfulness, not *something* separable from the consciousness' (Pakes 2011, p. 41). Kinaesthetic experience of the performer and viewer highlights the subjectivity of corporeality as a 'possibility of experience rather than a physical fact' (Pakes 2011, p 42), which informs the discussion on the contribution to the choreographic process in Chapter Five and transmission of physical capital in Chapter Six. Turning attention to actions of female dancers in male choreography on screen disturbs the traditional patriarchal dominance in dance and film and provides a feminist lens to the study.

In reaction to patriarchal ideas surrounding women defined by their bodies, and more specifically their reproductive abilities, feminists tend to 'define themselves in non- or extracorporeal terms,

seeking an equality on intellectual and conceptual grounds or in terms of an abstract universalism or humanism' (Grosz 1994, p. 14). According to egalitarian feminism, proposed by early feminist scholars such as Simone de Beauvoir and Mary Wollstonecraft, a 'notion of the body as biologically determined and fundamentally alien to cultural and intellectual achievement' is maintained (Grosz 1994, p. 16) attempting to elevate the womanhood beyond the controls of the reproductive body. The members of this category of feminism believed in the idea of the body as biologically determined and divorced from cultural and intellectual achievement. The second category of feminism was defined by theorists such as Julie Mitchell, Julia Kristeva, Nancy Chodorow and Marxist feminists who retained the mind/body dualism, where the mind is perceived as a social, historical, and cultural object, while the body is naturalistic and precultural (Grosz, 1994). In order to minimize the biological difference, these theorists concentrated on gender and its implications. For more recent feminists such as Luce Irigaray, Gayatri Spivak, Jane Gallop, Judith Butler and Naomi Schor, concerned with the ideas of sexual difference, the body is seen as the political, social and cultural object of utmost importance, on one hand signifying and signified; on the other 'an object of systems of social coercion, legal inscription, and sexual and economic exchange' (Grosz 1994, p. 18). This study concentrates on the analysis of dancing done by female performers and considers the implications of corporeality on the subjectivity of women in dance on screen, therefore directing focus on embodiment as a feminist strategy to challenge traditional feminist theory, presented in Chapter Two.

This thesis considers choreography as a collaborative practice and concentrates on the work performed by female dancers, which challenges ideas of authorship. Dancers construct subjectivity and identity through the process of dancing. In order to consider the role of dancers in the process of Fosse's dance making, I turn to Susan Leigh Foster's (1986) writing on four well-established and acclaimed American choreographers on their approach to choreography, performance, and identity. For example, Foster (1986) explains that in Martha Graham's work the body acts as an instrument to reach the potential of expressiveness and allow a dancer to embody the character they are portraying, therefore still enforcing a separation of the body and the mind, or in Graham's case

emotionality. However, Foster (1986) also argues that for Graham, movement manifests a person's true identity, thus, positing that the dancing articulates notions of identity. Dance performed by highly skilled performers requires cultivation of physical precision, strength, stamina and musicality, therefore it alludes to the cultural (and somatic) construction of identity. Albright (2011) challenges the idea of the body as a blank canvas, passive instrument as she writes:

‘dance, especially the contemporary dance I was surrounded by in New York City in the late 1980s and early 1990s, was increasingly political, and focused on the (sometimes contradictory) identities of dancers’ bodies, demanding different ways of seeing from the audience’

Albright 2011, p. 12.

The experience of dancing has its own intellectual credibility as bodies engage in kinaesthetic, visual, somatic, and aesthetic experiences (Albright 2011). Dancers negotiate their identity, including the performance of gender, with the physical choices they make. This research dissects Fosse's choreography (for the body and camera), however it emphasises performance by female dancers as a crucial element in construction of femininity. Foster (1998a) distinguishes between choreography, as a tradition of codes through which meaning is made, and performance, as individual execution of codes. In her distinction between choreography and performance and its effect on meaning projected. Foster suggests 'dance making theorizes physicality, whereas dancing presents that theory of physicality' (1998a, p. 10) therefore, choreography articulates identities as 'the choreographer engages a tradition of representational conventions' (Foster 1998a, p. 9), which are carefully chosen through the process of creating meanings and reflecting, reinforcing, or challenging the aspects of tradition. These ideas are further analysed in reference to case studies in chapters Two and Five.

Using a post-modernist approach, this thesis does not attempt to excavate a stable meaning regarding representation of gender in Fosse's work or try to understand his intention but rather to discuss 'an on-going "play" of meanings' (Novitz 2002, p. 161). Employing Roland Barthes' theory

of the 'Death of an Author' (1968), this research aims to contest the choreographer as the sole maker of meaning and argue for subjectivity and agency of female performers in a feminist reading. Barthes' theory requires an active reader, in this case the dancer and viewer, who create more meanings in the work. This playful approach 'destabilizes the reader's ordinary beliefs about language' (Novitz 2002, p. 161) or in this case, dance, choreography, and femininity.

The aim of this research is to decipher the identity of the Fosse woman by studying the aesthetics and the work of the dancers. I employ movement and film analysis to examine the choreographic and directorial choices that Fosse makes in order to project a particular image of femininity. Using some of the theories outlined above, I engage in an active interpretation of codes through analysis of movement and choreography. Focus on the corporeal presence of the dancers, aims to challenge the idea of authorship and contest conservative feminist theory (which will be discussed in Chapter Two). This thesis employs the idea that the act of dancing creates discourse, which has the power to subvert and transgress patriarchal structures.

Research Outline

The thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter One presents key theories on gender in performance, which provides a foundation for further analysis through all of the chapters. Utilising gender studies, gender in performance, and feminist film studies, this chapter will evaluate the concepts of masquerade (Riviere 1929) and hyper-femininity in performance (Harris 1999, Tyler 2003) in order to investigate the political ideas communicated by the female dancers in Fosse's work. Since this thesis concentrates on Fosse's work in film, I provide concepts and critical strategies in feminist film theory, such as the male gaze theory proposed by Laura Mulvey (1975) and the role of female spectators (Doane 1997) for evaluation of the images of female dancers in Fosse's work on screen.

Chapter Two presents properties of screendance, which prove useful in analysis of Fosse's dance repertory for film. These characteristics are used throughout the thesis to interpret how cinematic choices, including camera angles and editing, affect the image of femininity of the Fosse woman. This chapter introduces ideas regarding spectacle as a visual phenomenon and its political important

to dance in musicals in order to analyse aesthetics in Fosse's cinematic and choreographic work as a way to communicate ideas regarding gender. This chapter provides the contextual scaffolding for analysis of glamorous and grotesque aesthetics in Fosse's work as a political tool to question and contest representation of gender and the musical genre, which is pertinent in Chapter Four.

Chapter Three presents a choreographic and filmic analysis of Fosse's repertory to characterise femininity as an aesthetic and its critical implications. Drawing on gender theory presented in Chapter One and screendance properties in Chapter Two, this chapter aims to examine how femininity and sexuality are codified. The discussion considers the role of the choreographic and film tools, as well as, thematic choices that Fosse employs to render the female bodies feminine and sexy. Utilising the idea that analysis of aesthetics can serve as a political act, this section investigates the subversive potential of hyper-femininity, masquerade, and awkward sexiness imagined by Fosse and performed by female dancers. Furthermore, drawing upon camp theory, it examines the queering of gender with extravagant presentation of femininity and hyperbolic images of style and artifice.

Having set up the choreographic and cinematic methods that define the aesthetics of the Fosse woman, Chapter Four critically evaluates aesthetics of spectacle that highlight and contest theatricality of gender in Fosse's film musicals. This chapter argues that spectacle manifests through two distinct aesthetics of glamour and grotesque realism, which have the purpose to attract and disgust audiences in order to perpetuate spectacle as a visual and political idea. This analysis employs film theory on cinematic excess to discuss the cultural dynamics that result out of the aesthetic of spectacle. This chapter draws on aesthetics of hyperbole of femininity presented in the previous chapter, to argue that virtuosity as an example of glamour and excess creates a hyper-visibility of corporeality of the dancers and, thus, permits dance to theorise gender. Glamour underscores theatricality and artifice as key strategies to highlight hyper-femininity analysed in Chapter Two. This aesthetic perpetuates the codes of the musical genre, however, the inclusion of grotesque realism in narrative and movement complicates the representations of gender.

Whilst Chapters Three and Four concentrate on aesthetics projected and used to create the image of the Fosse woman, Chapter Five presents an investigation into the role of female dancers in the creative process using post-structural theory. Drawing on Ronald Barthes's idea of the death of the author it seeks to re-invigorate the creative labour of dancers as a fundamental component of dance making and refute the idea of the choreographer as a sole originator of choreographies. As a dancer I feel particularly invested in arguing for agency within the choreographic process. The chapter explores the tension between the film mechanism and dance agency, which results out of the corporeality of dancers as a crucial aspect in creating subjectivity and giving dancers agency within the film mechanism. Concentrating on Helen Cixous' (1976) idea of *l'écriture féminine*, or feminine writing, it examines how embodiment of female pleasure in dance challenges ideas regarding gender. Bodies gendered through choreography, cinematic techniques, and visceral physicality of the dancers form a discourse that theorises femininity in Fosse's dances for film.

Chapter Six presents an analysis of Bob Fosse's legacy of proposed language to communicate images of women and queering of gender by examining subsequent examples of popular dance on screen, which employ the Fosse aesthetic of femininity. Employing the lens of intertextuality, I analyse the effect on gender representation that occurs in the process transmission of dance styles and choreography in dance on screen. The study of case studies following Fosse in the chronological continuum illuminates the effect of using the particular style of femininity proposed in Fosse's dances to comment on gender and sexuality. Fosse's revolutionary dance style, his contribution to the way dance is filmed for screen, and image of femininity and sexuality continues to influence popular culture. In the conclusion, I assimilate the aesthetic properties posited by the choreography, used by the choreographer and director, and the contribution of physical and artistic choices of the dancers to define the Fosse woman in terms of movement, style, and transgressive ideas regarding gender.

This thesis examines images of women in Fosse's screendance. Using an interdisciplinary approach, this research seeks to understand the dynamics of gender representation in popular dance in cinema and television that changes drastically with Fosse's ideas regarding choreography of femininity and

performance. Through a detailed analysis of various case studies from the Fosse body work, it aims to decipher the physical language that theorises gender and provides material for expression of femininity and female sexuality in popular dance in film. This thesis sits within dance and film scholarship examining aesthetics and corporeality as foundational elements in construction of femininity and its political potential. The focus on the act of dancing by female performers provides a feminist lens to this study and adds a critical approach to the study of the body. The Fosse woman exemplifies the complexities of representations of women in dance in cinema, therefore, the analysis that follows aims to provide a multi-dimensional reading of femininity.

Chapter 1

Construction of Femininity and Feminist Film Theory

Dance serves as a theorisation of meanings and ideas on gender through the aesthetics of the body. This chapter presents major theories on gender, constructions of femininity, and feminist film theory, which provide material for the analytical chapters that examine the aesthetics of gender in Bob Fosse's work. The foundational work on gender by Judith Butler (1990) posits that gender is culturally constructed and not linearly connected to biological sex, which informs the majority of subsequent feminist and queer theory. This chapter presents theoretical frameworks on femininity, with particular emphasis on masquerade and subjectivity, which form critical strategies for initiating an analysis of images of female characters and dancers in Fosse's dance on screen. In Butler's view, gender exhibited via the body, as a 'variable boundary, a surface whose permeability is politically regulated' (1990, p. 189), is defined through a series of stylised and dramatic acts and gestures. In Butlerian terms, gender and sexualities must be declared through physical acts of speech, movement and fashion, therefore dance renders itself a vehicle of such expression.

Gender is created through a stylised performance of the body and therefore produces the illusion of naturalness by 'bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds' (Butler 1990, p. 191). On a choreographed body the 'play of presence and absence on the body's surface, the construction of the gendered body happens through a series of exclusions and denials' (Butler 1990, p. 184). This emphasises the conscious choice of gender representation, as each gesture and movement is accounted for; therefore, the study of dance leads to an analysis of how gendered identities are formed. Choreography relies on the idea that 'acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body (Butler 1990, p. 185). The dancing body highlights the idea of gender as a cultural construct, which is always a form of performance (Foster 1998b). Performative actions of the body project characteristics of identity and gender fabricated through bodily symbols. This chapter presents discourse on gender theory and performance, such as womanliness as masquerade, political potential of hyper-femininity, mimicry,

and camp sensibility as tropes through which the choreography of gender will be analysed throughout the thesis.

Movement analysis of choreography and cinematic techniques draws on the idea of gender as a cultural construct in order to draw conclusions regarding representations of femininity. This thesis concentrates on the performance of femininity in Fosse's work, as images of women in his work provide powerful ideologies surrounding the representation of women in screendance. As has been demonstrated in the outline of a brief history of women in musicals in the introduction, the images of women in Fosse's work serve as a radical departure from earlier images of femininity and its representations, and therefore demand an analysis of aesthetics, choreography, and political ideology associated with these. Even though images of women in Fosse's works vary greatly, changing alongside his career to reflect and absorb the social and political changes of the women's movement, there is a specific, highly stylised image of femininity projected in his screendance repertory that demands a close analysis. Throughout this thesis, I examine issues of labour, both in terms of the construction of gender and the physical work of dancers, which support the idea of masquerade. Looking at the theories presented here, which offer methods to deconstruct the performance of femininity by women in Fosse's screendance repertory, I consider masquerade and hyper-femininity as potential ways to queer representations of gender. The doubling of femininity plays an important role in this analysis, which focuses on Fosse's choreographic repertory. His work sits within the popular dance and film genre and complies, therefore, with the commercial needs of the genre whilst providing ways to contest traditional dynamics of images of women as passive on screen. This requires a distinct style of femininity which adheres to the gender dynamics of film whilst challenging representation of women within this format.

1.1 Masquerade, Hyper-femininity, and Camp

In order to understand and analyse the mechanisms of conscious construction of gender representation, I apply the concept of masquerade to examine choreography of femininity as articulated by women dancers in Fosse's pieces. Although vastly different, most images of women

in Fosse's choreographies feature a stylised, carefully constructed performance of femininity. This section presents some of the major tropes regarding masquerade, or 'womanliness,' which will be applied to an analysis of Fosse's choreography in order to elucidate the dynamics of construction of gender and its potential as a feminist political strategy so as to problematise the masculinist dynamics of film. A number of scholars in gender and feminist studies have discussed discourses of femininity (Riviere 1929, de Beauvoir 1949, Irigaray 1985, Butler 1990) as a cultural construct. Joan Riviere, a British psychoanalyst, first spoke of womanliness as masquerade in her article of 1929, in which she proposed that femininity and womanliness cannot be separated, thus defining the feminine gender as a product of labour. Riviere defines masquerade as 'womanliness that 'could be assumed and worn as a mask, both to hide the possession of masculinity and to avert the reprisals expected if she was found to possess it' (Riviere quoted in Tyler 2003, p. 25). Simone de Beauvoir's controversial at the time proclamation: 'one is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one' (de Beauvoir quoted in Butler 1990, p. 11) summarises the effort that the architecture of femininity requires. Riviere explains that women employ masquerade to consciously 'conceal their masculinity from the masculine audience they want to castrate' (Butler 1990, p. 70), and use it to provide an alibi by which to project their power and control alluding to the political necessity of gender performance. For Riviere, as well as Lacan, 'femininity itself is a travesty' and a simulation (Tyler 2003, p. 25). Masquerade explains the artifice and labour of femininity, which is useful in analysing the construction of gender in dance as it allows the researcher to unpack the various layers involved in the creation of the images of women. For the purposes of this study, masquerade is seen as a perspective from which to unpack the construction of gender in choreography and performance.

The concept of masquerade can be used to examine performance of femininity as a device to disrupt the male gaze configuration as the woman performing it actively engages in doubling the representation of femininity, only possibly accessible to female spectators. Masquerade, as hyper-femininity, is a feminist political strategy used to challenge presentations of gender on screen, which is heavily employed in an analysis, in Chapter Three, of the construction of femininity through choreography. This ideology of hyperbolised performance of gender also provides key ideas for

discussion on a stylised theatricality of glamour as a driving force in Fosse's work presented in Chapter Four. Geraldine Harris (1999), a theatre and performance scholar, refers to masquerade as a mechanism which reveals femininity as a purposefully constructed idea and performance, allowing a necessary distance for the female viewer to destabilize the image and the masculine structure of the gaze. Furthermore, intended hyper-feminine performance may be understood as a method to reconstruct, rather than deconstruct, images of femininity, therefore encouraging the female viewer to recognise that femininity as identity is inseparable from the image (Tyler 2003, p. 38), which is particularly valuable to this study as it focuses on an analysis of images of women in Fosse's work. Caricatured performances of femininity, according to Susan Bordo (1997), offer a method for the reader and viewer that forces them to recognise gender as a cultural statement. This is also supported by Carole-Ann Tyler, who argues that performance that 'mim[es] the feminine, playfully repeating it, produces knowledge about it: that it is a role and not a nature' (2003, p. 23). Film scholar Pamela Robertson states that 'women can use masquerade not only to disavow masculine power but also to gain strategic access to power and privilege typically denied to women' (1996, p. 78). In dance performance, an analysis of masquerade characterised as elaborately crafted femininity provides a lens to examine movement, gestures, and choreography of female images in order to recognise womanliness as a construct. The acknowledgement that femininity requires labour serves as a strategy to analyse and contest representations of gender, as it creates a distance between womanliness and the image, and, therefore, provides space to tackle these ideas and issues.

Stating that exaggerated performance of gender automatically questions ideas of femininity seems overly simplistic. Within the complex theoretical discourse on masquerade, 'femininity' can be understood as a role, an image imposed by male systems of representation (Tyler 2003), which perpetuates the problematic ideology that surrounds womanliness. Tyler, however, suggests that women practicing mimicry, such as exaggerated performance of femininity, have the ability to 'contest femininity through femininity' (2003, p. 37) by challenging patriarchal tropes from within. A woman miming a woman may fail to create the desired deconstructive impact as the mime of femininity may not clearly show itself as a fictional concept (Tyler 2003) due to a lack of distinction

between masquerade and mimicry, therefore, the subversive potential lies in the intentional queering and reading of a performance of femininity. Tyler (2003) proposes that exaggerating the performance of gender underlines it and ironically presents it, which leads to parody, as suggested by gender theorists, Judith Butler, Mary Russo, and Linda Kauffman; therefore, the performance of explicitly gendered movement creates new meanings regarding the construction of femininity for viewers. The idea of excess in the performance of femininity allows for an ironic distance that forms the critical distance necessary to interpret mimicry as a method to 'contest femininity through femininity' (Tyler 2003, p. 37). The idea that hyperbolic images of femininity emphasise and parody womanliness is utilised throughout this thesis to examine the political meanings regarding gender communicated in Fosse's dance performance by women.

Performances by musical divas, such as Bette Midler, American singer and actress, and Dolly Parton, American country singer, provide examples of intentional performance of hyper-femininity or purposeful masquerade, described as a 'female female impersonator' by Tyler (2003, p. 37). Roberta Mock describes Midler as a performer who displays her female physical features and clearly presents her heterosexuality, but 'acts as if she has balls under her dress' (Mock 2003, p. 27), which disturbs stable gender identities. In Fosse's body of work, excessive performance by larger-than-life female diva performers, such as Liza Minnelli, Gwen Verdon, and Ann Reinking, queer gender within the format of the musical film by physically and vocally embodying the strategies of hyperbolised femininity in a similar manner to that suggested by the two performers mentioned above, and the theories that describe them. This characterisation can also be applied to performances by divas in Fosse's work, which can be read as transgressive interpretations of femininity. Employing lesbian classifications of the type of feminine performance of gender, Mock (2003) proposes a heterofemme position – a heterosexual female performer who deliberately stages her femininity. This allows for a fluid reading of gender, even within the heteronormative prism, which situates femme femininity neither as a concrete term nor as biologically given, but rather as a malleable one within which the adorning of gender as a mask or costume exposes it as a fabrication. The heterofemme exerts a queer position as a body marked by gender and sexuality, which is

negotiated, rather than ignored through performance (Harris and Crocker in Mock 2003, p. 26). For a female performer to create and present a politically pertinent performance, she ought to intentionally contend with codes and rules of gendered behaviour and the power invested in her sexed body, as she wilfully acknowledges them to, then, subvert them by amplifying these characteristics, thus distorting preconceived ideas regarding gender (Mock 2003). The hyperbolic performance of gender exposes its artifice and thus allows the distance to recognise the labour of its construction. The concept of a queering of femininity through exaggerated performance of gender and sexuality will be analysed throughout the thesis, however particular emphasis will be given to the ideas of diva performances in Chapters Four and Five.

Mock (2003) draws the distinction between a staged theatre performance and performativity in its intention and perceived meaning. A choreographed performance, such as Bette Midler's and those by female performers in Fosse's work can be interpreted as an ironic, political statement by a heterofemme (Mock 2003). In order for a performance to create political commentary, it needs to clearly assert its subversive potential. Harris (1999) argues that in order for a mimicry or masquerade to be understood as an effective political strategy, performance of excessive femininity needs to clearly deviate from the 'normal' ideas of femininity which are accepted as given. Mock (2003) in reaction to Harris (1999) argues that the meaning projected in a staged performance does not solely depend on the author's intention, but essentially relies on the interpretation of the audience (Mock 2003, p. 30), therefore, the political pertinence of performance of femininity depends on a critical reading which informs the analysis of female performers in Fosse's work, independent of his motive and position. This offers a strategy to explore hyper-feminine, explicitly sexualised femininity as artifice in Fosse's work, which radically deviates from the earlier examples of femininity in musicals that heavily feature dance. The difference in performance between femininity and mimicry is in the intention: 'femininity is an unwitting masquerade, while mimicry is a witty redoubling of that doubling inherent to femininity' (Tyler 2003, p.27). Highlighted masquerade demonstrated through hyper-femininity grants an actively offensive strategy devised to 'make visible by an effect of playful repetition, that which is supposed to remain invisible' (Irigaray

quoted in Harris 1999, p. 60), which brings to surface the doubling required for effective masquerade. Tyler, based on the theories of Butler, Kaufmann, and Russo, concludes that ‘mimicry problematises the naturalness of gender through an excess that creates a perception of incongruity’ (2003, p. 23). Hyper-femininity, employed as a politically subversive perspective on the performance of femininity, offers a lens through which to question images of women in Fosse’s films. A critical reading of femininity requires the audience to recognise the signifiers of womanliness within the patriarchal system whilst searching for potential strategies to mimic and parody the construction of femininity in order to challenge its status.

Hyperbolised femininity, or masquerade, provides a crucial strategy for female spectators to challenge the notion of the male gaze. The masquerade flaunts excessive femininity, which creates a distance surrounding gender, an idea I use to analyse how femininity is constructed in Fosse’s work. This, then, offers resistance to patriarchal positioning with ‘its denial of the production of femininity as closeness, as presence-to-itself’ (Doane 1997, p. 185). Mary Ann Doane (1997) argues that masquerade positions women as the subject of discourse and therefore it destabilises the masculine structure of the image. Masquerade realigns femininity as it manufactures a lack in the form of distance between oneself and one’s image (Doane 1997). Doane offers a position for female viewers, stating:

The effectivity of masquerade lies precisely in its potential to manufacture a distance from the image, to generate a problematic within which the image is manipulable, producible, and readable by the woman.

Doane 1997, p. 191

Doane’s argument for the position of female spectatorship is based on the notion of distance by which the female spectator maintains a close relationship to the image whilst recognising its artifice. Film facilitates desire as it creates and activates a spatial distance between the subject and object in terms of voyeurism. Doane (1997) proposes that the distinction between the spectator and the object of her gaze is folded as she may engage in a process of identification with herself as an image. This

results in the idea that female spectatorship is described as some type of narcissism, akin to Irigaray's idea of autoeroticism. For the female spectator, the image of women in films is narcissistic as the female viewer identifies with the female subject so that the 'female look demands a becoming' (Doane 1997, p. 181). This creates a complex position for female spectators who critically examine images of femininity on screen while engaging in a process of comparison and identification with the given phenomenon. The woman maintains closeness to the image that does not allow for a fetishistic position, as she cannot construct a viewing position of herself that is not connected to the masculine, therefore essentially losing herself. Doane (1997) turns to Luce Irigaray's theory to exemplify her argument and says that 'the feminine can try to speak to itself through a new language, but cannot describe itself from outside or in formal terms, except by identifying itself with the masculine, thus by losing itself' (1997, p. 183). The female spectator's position causes a different relationship to the temporal and spatial position, which causes a perplexed understanding of desire and affects the notion of agency. The blurring between subject and object does not confound the spectating and the action of seeing, thus disturbing the binary of active/passive looking/being looked at. Doane (1991) argues that the idea of the cinematic image as a seductive lure applies even more strongly in the case of female spectatorship. Nally (2009, p. 638) proposes that the issue of the 'gaze' is more complicated as women, faced with their own image on stage (or screen) may be entitled to a 'sense of celebration, internal interrogation, and identification', providing space for the possibility of critical evaluation. The position of women on screen is dichotomous and polyvalent, demanding a recognition of the voyeuristic mechanism involved in the process of watching, which may reduce images of womanliness to an objectified position whilst engaging in a process of identification and pleasure of witnessing and experiencing femininity and female sexuality.

One of the methods to negotiate the dynamics of gender and the male gaze construction as a defining aspect of heteronormative performance is camp sensibility. Camp, as an exaggerated performance of gender with emphasis on style and theatricality, offers a method by which women can project a 'mask of serious femininity and another mask of laughing femininity' (Robertson

1996, p. 276). Scholars, such as Moe Meyers (1994), Fabio Cleto (1999), Richard Dyer (1999), and Jack Babuscio (1999) argue that camp is exclusively associated with gay culture, as a political expression and a challenge to heteronormativity, however, I rely on writings by Pamela Robertson (1999) who argues that camp can be applied to feminist aspirations of performances by women. Cleto (1999) admits that the term queer is associated with 'queering' of dominant cultures, hierarchies, and self-proclaimed naturalness, which implies that camp is a viable option for women to question issues of femininity. Robertson (1996) argues that women, as marginalised members of society can reclaim camp as a political method and rearticulate it within feminist thought. Camp performances by men include a display of consciously effeminate gestures amplified by stylised theatricality. In performances by women dancers, camp manifests as hyperbolised, heavily stylised and theatricalised images of femininity, which highlight gender as artifice and provide visual material to question the culturally codified images of women.

Camp characterised as political queer strategy relies on theatricality, parody, effeminacy and sexual transgression to question heteronormativity (Cleto 1999). This phenomenon, which defies concrete definitions, is often named as a style, aesthetic, sensibility and taste. An analysis of images of women in Fosse's work relies on camp as a strategy described by Susan Sontag in her seminal essay 'On Camp' (1964 ed. 1999). She describes camp as a term of artifice and exaggeration, stylisation of style which 'converts the serious in to the frivolous' (1964 ed. 1999, p. 54). According to Sontag (1964 ed. 1999) camp refers to extravagance, stylisation, and playfulness manifested in objects and performance. Masquerade, and furthermore mimicry, links to camp sensibility as it relies on a manifestation of artifice, stylistic choices, and exaggeration in order to create a powerful political effect. The display by Fosse's women of hyper-femininity as a manifestation of camp, underscores femininity as a core feature of his choreographic style. Masquerade, and furthermore mimicry, links to camp sensibility as it relies on a manifestation of artifice, stylistic choices, and exaggeration in order to create a powerful political effect. In Fosse's work, each meticulous wrist flick, roll of the ankle, and hip isolation communicates purposefully constructed femininity, which accentuates it as a

fictional construct. The display of hyper-femininity by Fosse's women as a manifestation of camp, underscores femininity as a core feature of his choreographic style.

In film, camp sensibility is manifested in the 'emphasis on sensuous surfaces, textures, imagery, and the evocation of mood as stylistic devices' (Babuscio 1999, p. 121) and its effectiveness on the fantastical feel of the film, rather than the importance to the narrative. Matthew Tinkcom (2002) argues that the emphasis in camp aesthetic on performative aspects of everyday life aligns closely with musicals, which involves its performers in moments which seek to validate the inexplicable burst into song and dance. He claims that 'a camp emphasis on performance also points in the opposite direction, implicating everyday life as performative, not least of which when it comes to thinking about gender' (Tinkcom 2002, p. 122). The musical relies on the tension between an evident artificiality of the genre and being able to create artificiality so well. Cleto (1999) proposes that camp gives possibility to penetrate culture as a key method of negotiation between art and commercial/consumer culture, taste and power, transgressive inscriptions and the process of subjectivation. Cohan (2002) argues that musicals are not an isolated, trivial aspect of culture but rather serve a political and social function. This leads to the idea that camp extends a strategy to question dominant hierarchies particularly in terms of gender and sexuality. Camp offers a method to question heteronormativity from an ironic stance, through parody and exaggeration, by inverting and disrupting the relations of structure to content and narrative, and surface to depth (Cohan 2002). Masquerade performed as hyper-femininity holds the power to contest uniform representations of women in Fosse's dances in film. The theories outlined above offer material to examine choreographic and filmic techniques in order to deconstruct performances of femininity and question its characteristics. Exaggeration of the performance of femininity, which leads to camp sensibility, creates a political statement that will be applied to analysis of performance of gender and display of sexuality in Fosse's work in order to contest the masculinist set up of the film spectatorship. Employing the ideas on masquerade in the discussion on presentation of femininity in burlesque and neo-burlesque performance below transfers to analysis of choreographic tools,

narrative structures, and performance by female dancers in Fosse's dances presented in further chapters.

1.2 Burlesque/Neo-Burlesque: An example of Hyper-femininity in Performance

An example of a performance of hyper-femininity and gender parody appears in burlesque, and more recently in neo-burlesque, which has gained a great deal of attention in academiaⁱⁱ. Firmly embedded in the popular idiom from its start, burlesque performance is characterised as a theatrical form which 'took wicked fun in reversing roles, shattering polite expectations, brazenly challenging notions of the approved ways women might display their bodies and speak in public' (Trachtenberg 1991, p. xii). Burlesque is a type of performance that centres around feminine sexual display combined with parodic humour, which gave it transgressive properties to question the roles of women (Allen 1991). The history of sexualised display of women in burlesque has provided an inspiration for Fosse's work in terms of aesthetics, which serve as an example of political pertinence of purposefully devised sexualised images of women who indeed have critical thought. In a number of cases, Fosse references a specific image of femininity in his dances due to his early performing experiences in burlesque houses in Chicago (Grubb 1989). Taken out of the context of burlesque houses, Fosse's work refers to the type of femininity and sexuality of the burlesque with critical elements also employed in neo-burlesque, such as wit and tease. Sherril Dodds (2011) defines neo-burlesque as a form of popular dance performance that re-emerged in the 1990s in which performers remove clothes to a partial nudity. It occurs in a cabaret setting and develops a repertory of striptease, however it includes critical commentary with 'humour, an erotic play, a solicited interaction and the desire to tease' (Dodds 2011, p. 106). Fosse's contact with the burlesque performance style is evident in the narrative of *All That Jazz* (1979), which presumably recalls experiences from his early performing career. The scene shows a young boy preparing to perform in a nightclub whilst two topless women tease him in a changing room. In the following shot, the young performer dances his tap number with a large wet stain on the front of his trousers insinuating involuntary ejaculation and indicating the sexual nature of his interaction with the women. Furthermore, Fosse alludes to the burlesque style in the content and aesthetics of numbers, such as

‘Whatever Lola Wants’, which communicates sexual politics through its stylised parody of striptease, I discuss in Chapter Three.

The history of burlesque performance in North America dates back to the nineteenth century with the arrival of British Blondes, led by Lydia Thompson in New York, which created a platform for performance of female spectacle (Allen 1991). Prior to the arrival of Thompson’s troupe from Britain in the 1860s, burlesque performances were ‘humorous stage shows based on the parody of a well-known classic’ (Altman 1987, p. 203), therefore the sexual politics that later defined it were not present then. Thompson’s troupe brought a new air to burlesque performance in which the female performer ‘revelled in the display of the female body as a sexed and sensuous object’ (Allen 1991, p. 125). This summarises the dynamics of sexual politics of burlesque in which women displayed their bodies but did so consciously and assertively. Their display was weaved into the male-focused entertainment with baring of sexed and gendered bodies, yet the nature of the performance in which women on stage addressed the audience directly created ‘awarishness’ (Allen 1991, p. 129), which contested the conservative images of Victorian women. Burlesque performance created a particular image of women who were complicit in their sexual subjectification and thus in control of their sexuality. By the 1920s a distinction between a burlesque teaser and a stripper had emerged whereby the stripper removed her clothing, whereas the teaser performed a disrobing act accompanied by swaying, winking, and cavorting, thus changing views on women on stage (Dodds 2011). Early burlesque and neo-burlesque performances combine sexual display with wit and humour to confront the viewers with politics regarding representations of femininity and female sexuality. As Allen explains ‘the burlesque performer ... compounded her nudity with raucous impertinences and self-conscious winks and leers’ (Allen 1999, p. 123). Burlesque performers presented themselves unapologetically, not hiding behind a character (Allen 1991). For the purposes of this thesis, in the analysis of the gendered and sexualised performances by women, characteristics of burlesque provide information to examine how these images reflect on the history of images in popular entertainment and exhibit critique within the specific needs of the genre.

Women in Fosse's work exhibit ideas regarding femininity and sexuality that characterise burlesque performance, such as deliberate sexual display, which is problematised due to their assertiveness, wit, and awkwardness. For example, 'Who's Sorry Now' number in the Hallucination Scene in *All That Jazz* features an ensemble of women, which references various traditions of women dancing in popular entertainments, such as chorus girls, burlesque, Broadway jazz, and Busby Berkeley's method of filming women. The number begins with a shot which captures a canon of female legs extending one by one whilst holding large feathers. The diagonal angle captures the lower part of the dancers' bodies in a manner reminiscent of Berkeley's filming methods. This is followed by the camera panning across the women's faces, all wearing heavy make-up. Finally, it reaches the last person in the row who is chewing gum thus parodying Berkeley's objectification of women with wit and in crude behaviour. Fosse combines aesthetics of concert dance styles, including arabesque lines and skilful turns, with skimpy costumes, wigs, and large feathers: a staple prop used in burlesque performance to conceal and reveal the body teasingly. This number is exemplary of the dynamics of Fosse's choreography of women as it consciously displays female sexuality whilst contesting it by means of awkwardness and humour. This is demonstrated in the end of the dance number in which the dancers gather their feathers in a clump to conceal their bodies fully. With the rhythmical sound of the heart machine, which intercepts the well-known classic song, they flick their hands in a sharp gesture that disturbs the nostalgic and melancholic feel of the song in its macabre implication of death.

In neo-burlesque, the intentional performance of femininity leads to an understanding of feminine identity as a cultural construct of patriarchal society, and therefore offers source material for feminist performance. Neo-burlesque differs from other forms of performances involving the explicit display of female sexuality conceived through consciously choreographed transgression. Burlesque relies on a public display of sexuality 'that depended on, first and foremost, an excessive femininity of appearance and gesture' (Ferreday 2008, p. 50). Displaying a sexual and eroticised body, as is often the case in burlesque performances, provides an opportunity for objectification and commodification of the female body, however, in neo-burlesque by presenting performers of diverse

shapes, sizes, ages, and races, they escape the ‘commercial approach to female disempowerment’ (Nally 2009, p. 623) as they reject the stereotypical, monolithic images of women associated with popular culture. Dodds explains how the neo-burlesque polymorphous aesthetic challenges the ‘unattainable bodies of consumer capitalism’ (2013, p. 78) as it presents unruly excess as a departure from the image of the socially acceptable female body. Burlesque exemplifies how performance of exaggerated femininity and female sexuality can challenge perceptions of the female body on stage and gender ideology. Throughout this thesis I seek to demonstrate how excessive femininity and choreographed sexuality affects the presentation of gender and sexiness in Fosse’s work.

Femininity is exaggerated in Fosse’s work in many different ways, ranging from glamorous, hyper-sexual images of women, to larger-than-life diva characters, representations of feminist camp through choreography and performance, and transgressively grotesque images. In *All That Jazz*, Fosse showcases elegant and polished dancers juxtaposed with the image of his mother, an image of a stereotypical housewife, dressed in drab clothes and attached to the cooker. He causes the viewer to question her position in the narrative and as an image of women in film by displacing the cooker in time and space of the film. The physical and technical control presented by means of the female dancers is contrasted with a female performer in *All That Jazz* who is shown lying on a bear skin hugging its head wearing earrings, heavy make-up and red lipstick on stage in a dark, confined night club. She lifts her body up to reveal her breasts wearing pasties, underwear and garters. Her body carries connotations of an oppressive feminine sexuality codified for the male gaze, which she simultaneously challenges with her soft, fleshy, naturally slim but not muscular body, presenting qualities of grotesque realism, to be discussed in detail in Chapters Two and Four. The excess of her body and sexuality highlights hyper-femininity so as to underline its constraints and, at once, ability to challenge gender norms. The analysis of the performance of femininity and sexual display in burlesque and neo-burlesque provides an example of the way hyperbolised gender presentation functions. This discussion on the conscious display of female sexuality in the examples presented above highlights how masquerade and the idea of femininity as travesty offers a feminist strategy to recognise gender as a cultural construct. Exaggeration provides a distance between the subject and

image projected, which underlines the analysis of images of women in Fosse's work. In order to carefully examine the potential of hyper-femininity and camp to subvert monolithic representation of femininity, queer gender, and contest the film mechanisms that privilege masculine spectatorship, attention shifts to feminist film theory.

1.3 Feminist Film Theory

Queer and feminist film theory makes an understanding of gender performativity and its political potential possible. This thesis concentrates on an analysis of gender through a feminist lens, therefore it is essential to consider masquerade, mimicry, and camp from this point of view in order to critique images of women in Fosse's dance on screen. In order to do this, and understand the significance of Fosse's work in regards to feminist representation, it is important to introduce some key ideas from feminist film theory, which will progress the analysis in this thesis. Cinema has provided a key terrain for feminist struggle which has fought to transform women's position from that of an object to a 'subject capable of producing and transforming knowledge' (Thornham 2001, p. 94), thus an analysis of images of women on screen, in Fosse's musicals, for example, significantly contributes to the women's movement. Feminist film theory began as an urgent political act in the 1960s. Sue Thornham (2001) argues that in the current climate we can no longer envision a straightforward relationship between film theory and political activity nor partake in a debate, which assumes that 'images of women' reflect the realities of women's lives, as cinematic representations have proven to be more complex than this. Doane (1991) reminds readers that masculine and feminine positions do not fully coincide with actual men and women who go to the cinema, therefore, it is important to remember that the images on screen are fictional and purposefully constructed whilst the idea of gender-specific spectatorship pertains to an abstract, albeit valuable, idea. De Lauretis' (1987) analysis of female spectatorship takes into account the position of the spectator as a psychical subject rather than a social subject; however it is important to consider various perspectives of film audiences in order to consider multiple ways that gender representation functions and challenges monolithic understandings of film and dance. Thornham (2001) states that films produce meanings through an organisation of verbal and visual signs. She

urges that instead of looking at images/signs of the “woman” as an interpretation of women’s lives in reality, theorists should examine ‘how the sign “woman” operates within the specific film text – what meanings it is made to bear and what desires and fantasies it carries’(Thornham 2001, p. 96). She explains how close analysis of these signs carriers of ideology leads to discussion of representation of gender.

According to Jean-Louis Baudry, cinema offers illusionary perceptions, similar to dreams, which ‘give access to unconscious desires and fantasies’, and whose entry is granted through the process of looking, the gaze (Thornham 2001, p. 93). The gaze has been conceived as masculine, implicitly by Christian Metz and Baudry, and explicitly by Laura Mulvey. Mulvey’s (1975) early work articulated a theory referred to as the male gaze theory in film, in which as she proposed, cinematic experience posited the male viewer as the active focal subject and female as the passive object on screen. This theory has shaped a great deal of film theory that followed, positing the image of the woman on screen as an object of voyeuristic, fetishistic, and narcissistic pleasure of men looking. However, in this thesis, I seek to challenge this male-dominated composition of the gaze by focusing on the possible ways that women in Fosse’s work exhibit agency within the cinematic format.

In Rick Altman’s (1987) opinion the societal view has influenced the idea of the image of woman as spectacle and man as spectator. He acknowledges the masculine dynamics of film viewing when he explains how the key element of backstage musicals of the 1930s through 1950s was to make women visible, casting men as the viewer, which has ‘far wider ramifications for the society in which the musical flourished’ (Altman 1987, p. 223). Through the male gaze, the female body is a theatrical illusion, a spectacle, and thus removed from corporeal reality and subjectivity. However, Altman (1987) proposes that this fiction offers women agency as they are physically isolated from the male viewer. Women on screen hold onto their dreamlike performance which posits them as a grand illusion, therefore remaining unreal and unattainable. This view is contested with an emphasis on corporeality as a method to exert political ideas via dancing bodies throughout the thesis. On the one hand, this reifies her position as an object of admiration, however, it provides space for women to challenge the oppressive dynamics even within the given theoretical format, as they hold a

powerful position over the male onlooker. Thus, film depends on the performer and viewer participating in a game of pretend, in which the woman pretends to offer her body and the male viewer pretends to prefer sexual consummation, creating a tension necessary to keep the fiction going. These ideas are further explored throughout the thesis as the analysis concentrates on the various dynamics projected by aesthetics of femininity employed by Fosse's images of women in order to explore its effect on the representation of gender. The masquerade highlights the illusion whilst also offering the necessary distance for women on screen to question and challenge image and identity.

In Fosse's film female characters perform what can be described as sexy dances. These can easily be interpreted as oppressive to women through traditional feminist film theory, as the body becomes objectified through the use of the movement that emphasises the sexual parts of her body. For Freud (1905, ed. 2016), any and each part of the body may be sexualised. The sexual mapping of the body is completely flexible and determined by the set of meanings attached to them through a network of desires (Grosz 1994). Using this idea, Fosse's choreography can be seen to map the body with isolations that focus on the hips, shoulders, and wrists. Additionally, Fosse's directorial choices further sexualise the body of the dancers as he directs the gaze to punctuate their sexual worth with fragmentation and close ups. As Grosz explains, 'sexual drives result from the insertion of biological or bodily processes into networks of signification and meaning' (1994, p. 55). The body is codified, in terms of sexuality, by a desire dependent on the mapping of the body, based on one's own and the other's network. Žižek interprets Lacan's definition of drive as tied to specific body parts resulting from a culturally determined fragmentation or, as Žižek refers to it, 'parcelling' the body (1992, p. 21). The movement of the body, along with the movement and editing of the camera construct the bodies, as well the dances, and by extension films, into desirable objects. Thus, this implies that the body is sexualised by means of a careful choreography filled with sexual symbols that are rooted in the network of desire, which is applied to an analysis of a choreography of the body, camera, and editing in order to decipher Fosse's methodology of sexualising the female body.

The role of the gaze appears crucial in the construction of desire, which plays a key role in the perception of images of femininity and female sexuality on screen, and this has been a key feature of discussion in feminist film theory. Feminist film theory employs Lacan's idea of the gaze as it appears in the mirror stage in order to discuss the notion of the gaze in theory on spectatorship. Based on the idea of the mirror stage meaning, various scholars in film theory propose that the gaze represents a process of identification through which spectators create a relationship with the filmic images (Grosz 1994, McGowan 2007, Tyler 2003). Grosz explains how for Lacan, 'this relation of imaginary identification is fraught with tensions and contradictions insofar as the child identifies with an image that is and is not itself' (1994, p. 42). The child accesses an exterior view as an inverted image and is only able to see parts of the body. In film, viewers are always looking at an inverted image – one they seek to recognise themselves in, in the same fragmented way. This idea is replicated in the relationship spectators create with images on screen, which are always external and inverted representations of the body fragmented by the camera and screen projections, therefore creating desire for identification with a coherent body from the spectator (McGowan 2007). This, then, plays a key role in creating subjectivity for the female performers and spectators who aim to create a relationship of identification with the images on screen.

Several feminist film scholars, such as Mary Ann Doane (1980), Kaja Silverman (1980), and Judith Mayne (1981), have questioned and sought to redefine Mulvey's focus on the heterosexuality of the gaze and on the exclusively male pleasure in voyeurism provided by cinema. The first step in challenging, or extending Mulvey's thesis, was to expand her theory to women spectators. Mary Ann Doane's work in the 1980s sought to extend the impact of Mulvey's work by discussing the position of the female spectator. She posits that women, culturally placed outside of the historical, political tropes would be perfect spectators opposing feminist film criticism which insists that women are deprived of the gaze and subjectivity. She seeks to challenge the issues posited by feminist film criticism which asserts that the cinematic apparatus functions to align the image of women with the surface whereas the male characters adopt poses of activity, agency and involvement in the processes of narrativisation. This aims to challenge the overly reductive

dynamics of active/passive act of seeing/being seen linked to the female/male binary. Relying on writings by Mulvey, Linda Williams, and Teresa de Lauretis, Doane (1991) illustrates some of the major criticisms presented by feminist film theory. Her discussion focuses on 'woman's film' which deals with female protagonists and provides significant points of access to female/women spectators. Doane argues that contemporary filmmaking addresses some of these issues by means of the 'activity of uncoding, de-coding, deconstructing given images' (1991, p. 166) by exposing predetermined habitual meanings attached to the female body and constructs of femininity with strategies of demystification. While Fosse's films are directed and choreographed from a masculine point of view, in this thesis I concentrate on decoding the images and work of the female performers in order to demystify the spectacle of gender by focusing on the mechanics of choreographies of femininity.

Ann Kaplan and Teresa de Lauretis further refined and extended Mulvey's theory, shifting from the role of gender to redefining the function of pleasure in the gaze, and therefore providing ground for female spectators to enjoy the process of identification with images of femininity. Doane states that 'spectatorial desire, in contemporary film theory, is generally delineated as either voyeurism or fetishism, as precisely pleasure in seeing what is prohibited in relation to the female body' (1997, p. 179). Doane (1997) explains that the images of women in cinema allow a view into prohibited aspects of the female body, which implies that women's relation to the camera and scopic regime is different to men's. Manlove's analysis of Mulvey's reading of Freud and Lacan focuses on pleasure as an important factor for female viewers' experience as he states, 'pleasure and repetition work together, making the visual drive a dynamic, transgressive power' (Manlove 2007, p. 84). Manlove offers a possibility to alter the paradigms of the male-centred gaze by including pleasure of the image to possess subversiveness and politically positioned powers, particularly for female spectators.

Jackie Stacey (1999) calls for a more complex model of cinematic spectatorship which separates gender identity from sexuality. She acknowledges Mulvey's idea that films which represent women as sexual spectacle invite heterosexual, masculine desire and that the response varies according to a

vast range between acceptance and refusal. This idea calls for an analysis that takes into consideration various dynamics of dance in popular cinema, and which needs to untangle the masculinist organisation of film whilst deconstructing images of women in order to contest their passivity. Stacey raises the question of how female spectatorship may interpret another woman who offers cinematic pleasure through ‘highly contradictory constructions of femininity in mainstream films’ (1999, p. 398), such as presenting women characters who are on a wide spectrum of sexual exhibition – one innocent, naïve, others experienced, confident and provocative. This analysis aims to show that in Fosse’s work various registers of sexual display in female characters and dancers provide a method to question heteronormativity, the male gaze, and femininity as a monolithic construct.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented concepts concerning the construction of gender in performance, which will serve as a theoretical springboard for the following analytical chapters. The argument on the political implications of hyper-femininity and camp ties in with the idea of excess and spectacle, which will be presented in the following chapter, and their effect on representation of femininity. In the following discussions, I will refer to key ideas outlined in this chapter to discuss images of femininity in Fosse’s dance pieces from a feminist point of view. Masquerade, as a political strategy, highlights gender as an artifice and exposes the labour of gendered stylisation, therefore questioning the dominant patriarchal ideology that posits the idea of femininity as a fixed and passive idea. Exaggerated performance of femininity with camp sensibility empowers women and offers space to contest the commodification of female bodies. This chapter has introduced the idea of distance produced by masquerade, which yields an effective theoretical methodology to analyse the sexually tempting dances by Fosse in terms of gender, sexuality, and feminism. Masquerade and camp rely on theatricality to showcase femininity as a stylised performance of gender, which ties in with the theories on spectacle and aesthetics, presented in the following chapter, that support this vision of femininity. The properties of masquerade and hyperbolised performance of gender support

the analysis of aesthetics of femininity in the case studies in Fosse films, which will be presented throughout this thesis.

Chapter 2

Screendance Aesthetics: Spectacle and Grotesque Realism

This thesis concentrates on Fosse's screendance and therefore requires a careful consideration of properties of dance on film and aesthetics, which play a key role in creating and communicating a particular style of femininity. In Fosse's cinematic and choreographic work, spectacle constitutes a significant aesthetic feature, which is represented by the choreography and filming techniques. Fosse's dances for screen serve as an intersection between spectacle as an aesthetic, and spectacle as an economic and political term. Although definitions of spectacle in visual culture are elusive, for the purposes of this study it is understood as excess in terms of visual attraction and seduction (Robinson 2015). In Fosse's musical films spectacle functions within the specifics of the genre, therefore, it must be considered in relation to the particularities of musicals, popular culture, and film economics, in order to understand the effect of these factors on the construction of femininity. This chapter presents theories on spectacle, and its involvement with the musical genre, specifically Fosse's work for dance on screen, in order to highlight the importance of the cinematic apparatus for the choreographic product. The theoretical scaffolding presented here will serve as a springboard to analyse the contradictory properties of spectacle in Fosse's work and its effect on socio-political contexts, and specifically, the construction of gender in Fosse's dances for film.

2.1 Screendance and Aesthetics

Fosse's dances for film are purposefully formulated for screen, therefore analysis of his work relies on an understanding of choreography and properties of the filmic apparatus. Dance choreography for the body, the camera, and the editing produce a type of performance specifically designed for this medium. Screendance is an interdisciplinary dance medium which situates technology as an equally important aspect of the product as choreography and performance. Dance devised for film is based on a relationship between the dancing body and technology, therefore it is a product of a complex relationship, a 'collaborative, hybrid undertaking' (Rosenberg 2012, p. 1). Fosse's

directorial choices, including camera angles, filming and editing techniques in shooting dance scenes greatly influence the effect of aesthetics and choreography on gender. The process of screendance and its (re)production is conceptual and physical as the camera and editing constructs the performance of the body, therefore, an analysis of Fosse's dance for film relies on a movement analysis of the choreography and technological process.

Douglas Rosenberg (2012) defines screendance as 'a general term' as this ensures inclusion of various forms of dance intended for screen. Screen also encompasses a diverse range but he defines it as a 'receptor of an otherwise ephemeral image, and which reifies that image in the process of receiving it' (Rosenberg 2012, p. 16). In his discussion of a site-specificity of screendance, Rosenberg (2012, p. 17) states that dance is read in terms of the content and context that surrounds it. For example, dance scenes in films are guided and dependent on the narrative that envelops the numbers. He describes dance on screen as a system, which consists of a number of elements: first is the initial space in which it is filmed; the second occurs within the frame of the camera; and the third in the production of the image. The context and meaning is built on these several sites, which work together to make a complex and layered effect (Rosenberg 2012). The work of screendance resides and is site-specific in its intentional space, frame and context.

Screendance simultaneously offers a documentation of performed movement and a subsequent treatment through the editing process, therefore dance numbers, particularly the ones adapted from stage to screen, undergo a transformative process which turns them into their own entities dependent on the technologies of film. Fosse explains in the PBS documentary *Bob Fosse: Steam Heat* (1990), the process of adapting the number 'Big Spender' from the stage version to the film version of *Sweet Charity*, and the role that the camera angles play in the way the viewer experiences the number. He explains how in the stage version, viewers are allowed to direct their gaze anywhere on the stage choosing where and who to watch, whereas in the screen version the director has to make the choice how to film the choreography and direct the viewing experience. The documentary shows Fosse operating the tracking camera capturing dancers in the shot that scans the chorus of women placed on the railing, providing a focused and intimate view of each dancer. Unlike the stage version of this

number, which allows the audience to choose who to concentrate on, the camera and editing determines the spectator's viewing choices. The technology of film significantly augments the choreographic possibilities available, compared to those employed in live performance, such as fragmentation of the body and choreographic continuity, rhythmical complexity, and spatial distortion. The screen format offers capacities to experiment with the presentation of the body, which Fosse exploits.

Dance on screen provides a different experience of dance to live performance, which is important in understanding constructions of femininity. Rosenberg (2012, p. 28) explains how 'screen dance is predicated on the erasure of live performance's notions of linearity and temporality, as well as the fracturing of choreographic unity, for a new and different unity specific to the architecture and archival concerns of media space'. Screendance offers the possibility to interfere with the fundamental characteristics of dance, which are 'use of space, time and energy in relation to movement', according to Dodds (2001, p. 30). Dance on screen turns the dancing body into the spectacle with technological production, which grants an alternate reality to a live performance. According to Walter Benjamin, performance mediated by camera is not 'obliged to respect that performance as an entity' (1936 ed. 2008, p. 17), therefore, the camera provides a continuous commentary on the performance that is further processed by the editing and, thus, must be included in the analysis of gender construction as a fundamental part of its presentation.

Directing choices fragment the choreography of the body, characterise movement and its capabilities, and alter the ideology of dancers' physical presence. Fosse's framing techniques, such as that seen in the opening shot of 'Take Off with Us' in *All That Jazz*, which only shows a wrist and gloved hand performing his signature finger snap, eloquently articulates the importance of that particular movement for Fosse's style of screendance. This screendance technique of accentuating a small body part and its movement, combined with quick edits showing various scenes from the choreography, emphasises fragmentation and editing as an essential aspect of Fosse's choreographic style. The final outcome of the dance depends on the movements of dancers in synthesis with

camera placement, framing and editing, which influences the representation of femininity and female sexuality.

In performances conceived for screen, video dance offers a potential to create intimacy with the viewer as it invites the spectator to consider the details of the choreography, which play a significant role in the way 'the filmic apparatus constructs a representation of the dancing body that can appeal to a mass audience' (Dodds 2001, p. 37). The camera work and editing affect the rhythm and motion of the choreography, and have the power to turn the dancing body or even fragments of it into a spectacle with excessive attention on detail. Dodds asserts the importance of the camera through choreographer and director David Hinton, who states that 'any movement of the camera itself is more powerful cinematically than any movement of a person in a fixed frame' (Hinton quoted in Dodds 2001, p. 26). Rosenberg (2012) explains that the camera, with its telescopic and microscopic nature allows extended vision and creates intimacy by drawing activities closer to the viewer so that each gesture gains great importance through the cinematic apparatus. The camera guides the gaze onto the body, providing a way of seeing that is dictated by the director and the camera perspective. The camera provides spatial and temporal relationships that are impossible on stage (Dodds 2001), thus, altering representations of the body. In discussion of the construction of femininity, an analysis of the camera work and editing provides an essential contribution to the examination of the methods used to codify the body in terms of how gender and sexuality are displayed. Furthermore, an analysis of screendance properties in Fosse's work enriches the discourse on the male gaze and feminist theory surrounding these dances as the viewer empathises with the stance and movement of the camera.

Photography and film have the power to skew reality as 'the camera makes exotic things near, intimate; and familiar things small, abstract, strange, much further away' (Sontag 1999, p. 97). Therefore, it offers participation and alienation simultaneously, emphasising how all images are somewhat fictional. Technological images can be seen to enlarge a reality as they allow instant access to the real. As photographic images alter the way in which viewers relate to experiences and arouse images that are often not experienced in real life, they present an image of a fantasy of real

life, a magnified experience of emotions and thoughts that are caused by the image. Photography does not simply reproduce the real, rather it finds new uses and meanings to objects and events (Sontag 1999). The dynamics of the relationship of the camera and dance on screen have an effect on how gender is constructed and perceived as a fictional phenomenon, which aids in highlighting its performative properties.

Susan Sontag claims that the production process of photography causes an altered relationship between the image and the real, which affects the intensity at which the image is experienced. Sontag poetically states that 'photographs are a way of imprisoning reality' (1999, p. 85), by which she highlights the relationship between the subject and spectator, and the effect of the photographic medium on how the image is experienced. Photography, according to Sontag, pays homage to a subject: it is 'a part of, an extension of that subject' (1999, p. 81) and therefore by acquiring the subject, it gains control and power over it. In the simplest form, a photographic image possesses the subject by capturing it, the experience and memories attached to the image, therefore it holds an affective power to enchant the viewer whilst provoking critical thought. Technical image making and reproduction offers information rather than experience so the subject becomes part of the system of information which is classified and stored according to its overall cultural values, therefore understanding an image depends on its cultural and historical contexts.

Film, with spectacle at the forefront, explores this relationship of subject to the viewer with the manifold political and economic dynamics of production, reproduction, and dissemination. It creates a complex relationship between reality and illusion, which is the result of the camera work and editing. These technical properties of screendance change the perceived reality by offering a more detailed view of the real whilst distorting it. Benjamin (1936 ed. 2008) proposes that the camera penetrates deeper into reality and therefore provides hyper-definitive images, which erase the natural distance from the subject. On the other hand, the camera work distorts 'reality' (one that Benjamin resists to define) by providing a skewed view of the subject. This is exemplified in close-ups, which enlarge the subject, and in slow-motion, which expands time. The camera offers a different view than the one afforded the natural eye, such as the ability to showcase a single body part whilst

eliminating the rest of the body, therefore, disturbing the cohesive physicality of the dancing body. Benjamin argues that 'only the camera can show us the optical unconscious' (1936 ed. 2008, p. 30), yet it is important to note that this offers a distorted view of a given object, which may offer a more detailed and focused view but also one that misrepresents its 'real' appearance, such as size, texture, and sound. Although Benjamin recognises the whimsical nature of film, he claims that film gives a more detailed presentation of performance through the scrutinising nature of the camera lens that allows for greater analysability, which in turn increases the understanding of everyday lives (Benjamin 1936 ed. 2008, p. 29). The mechanical and technological properties of film have an effect on how spectators are guided by directorial choices to see the dancing body. Furthermore, Sontag argues that the mechanical and digital process that images endure modify representations of the real and provide 'more detailed and, therefore, more useful images of the real' (1999, p. 83). The focus of the camera and specific detail highlighted by the filming, skews what the spectator sees, and manipulates how images are experienced. Properties of screendance have a key role in creating an aesthetic of femininity in Fosse's work, along with spectacle, a visual and political idea, that will be discussed below.

2.2 Spectacle as an Aesthetic and Political Statement

In Fosse's films, the aesthetics of glamour, decadence, exaggeration, and the grotesque serve as visual appeal and a political tool. Aesthetics, communicated as visual markers, create active meanings and exert politically transgressive ideas. Spectacle manifests in Fosse's films as various representations of excess, such as cinematic (and choreographic) excess and grotesque realism, which provide tropes to contest the dominant western political ideology of the film industry. In screendance and film, aesthetics play a major role in communicating socio-political issues whilst perpetuating spectacle as a key feature of the musical genre. Fosse's screendance as a part of mass media, including film, embraces spectacle as an essential element in its production and appeal, however spectacle carries potent economic, and thus political, implications for its consumers. Themes and narratives, which include prostitution in *Sweet Charity* (1969), the rise of the totalitarian Nazi regime in 1930s Germany and the impending World War II in *Cabaret* (1972), and

serious illness and death in *All That Jazz* (1979), work in conjunction with exuberant dances and songs to create musical films filled with spectacle and excess. In musicals, dance numbers are considered cinematic excess, however, Rosenberg (2012) argues that insertion of dance scenes into the narrative require the viewer to remain active and participatory. Drawing upon Russian formalism, Kristin Thompson (1977) defines cinematic excess in film as elements of the work that exist outside of the structures and forces that strive to unify the film. These structures are image and sound which support narrative as an 'interplay between plot and story' (Thompson 1977, p. 54), whereby the plot is the actual presentation of events in the film and the story is the spectators' mental reconstruction of the events. Aspects that deviate from a direct progression of the efficient structure demonstrate excess (Thompson 1977, p. 54). Excess is often exhibited in stylistic, arbitrary choices that contribute to a character, or overall aesthetic character of the film. Elements that have no narrative function, such as musical numbers are labelled as excess, however, in musicals dance scenes generally drive the aesthetic and emotional narrative of the film. Often, debates surrounding excess posit narrative versus spectacle, but in Fosse's films cinematic excess, specifically dance, exists as the protagonist in the film narrative. Dance on screen embraces cinematic excess through a fragmentation of the dancing body, movement, and choreography, which provides a penetrating gaze into the dance whilst also deconstructing it by means of the production process.

In *Cabaret*, scenes featuring exuberant performances in the Kit Kat Club act as a contrast to the violent scenes of the brutal genocide and rising totalitarian regime in Weimar Germany of the 1930s and create a strong political commentary. In the number 'Slaphappy', images of enthusiastic dancers widely smiling and slapping each other in the face and various body parts are intersected with a scene of SS officers brutally beating a man. The Emcee and the chorines are dressed in lederhosen performing a dance loosely based on a German folk dance but mostly featuring hand clapping and various open palm hits. The dizzying feeling of the number arises from the fast-changing camera angles capturing fragmented parts of bodies and unconventional perspectives, such as underneath shots. Fosse employs various camera techniques in the dance, such as the close up of the Emcee, which only concentrates on his torso and upper part of the legs or the underneath shot from a camera

placed on the floor of the stage. This view captures the dancing bodies closely making it difficult to decipher who is dancing and what they are doing. The director also moves a static camera from one side of the stage to the other providing more velocity to the already manic choreography. Through choices of movement, Fosse creates a physical continuity between the dance that takes place on stage and the choreography of violence taking place on the street, in order to draw an association between the violent narrative and the dance. As a dancer slaps another dancer, her head turns. From here on, the action cuts to the scene of the brutal beating where the victim appears in the same position as the slapped dancer, creating a physical analogy between the two tableaux. Fosse films the beating part of the scene with a camera inserted into the action, which often moves side to side to amplify the disturbing spectacle of brutality. The dance constitutes cinematic excess, however it does not simply provide an aesthetic distraction from the disturbing content of the film, instead it strengthens strong political commentary on atrocities of the rising totalitarian regime. Music, choreography, camera angles, and editing give the dance a whirlwind feel, which perpetuates spectacle as a key aesthetic and political element of the film.

Fosse's choreographic work belongs to the commercial popular dance category as it has been presented within Broadway musicals or films. Musical, which present utopian and idealistic views of a better life, can also consciously critique the genre and the dominant structures that determine its look, feel, and place within society, which is crucial to an analysis of representation and gender within Fosse's musicals. Richard Dyer asserts that a musical offers an escapist window and therefore is utopian in the 'feelings it embodies' (2002, p. 20), however this idea is disturbed in Fosse's films, which provide a euphoric feeling through musical and dance numbers, however, contrasted with heavy imagery and narrative content. A feeling of utopia is created by means of the aesthetics: colour, texture, movement, rhythm, melody and camerawork (Dyer 2002). This is evident in many Fosse dance numbers. For example, the opening number 'Willkommen' of *Cabaret* introduces the audience to the Emcee, performing a number in the esoteric setting of the Kit Kat club. Surrounded by an all-female band and chorus of dancers, the sexually ambivalent Emcee communicates ideas that inform the film: exaggerated performance, gender confusion, sexual

perversion, and aesthetics as an expression of powerful political and historical ideas. The female dancers, wearing mismatched costumes and clown-like make-up perform seductive movements of sexy isolations, however their awkward disposition of inexpressive faces and taut limbs queer the representation of femininity. Choreography and movement enhanced by the camera angles and editing transmit influential ideas regarding gender within the safe space of a fantastical musical and dance number in Fosse's work, which will be analysed more closely in the following chapters.

Fosse often isolates the dance numbers from the narrative in the films he directed (*Sweet Charity*, *Cabaret*, *All That Jazz*) physically placing them in stage settings and temporarily suspending the plot, therefore, providing an aesthetic visualisation of the emotional narrative, whilst acknowledging the performative format of the film. This method allows Fosse to enhance stage production by augmenting choreographic possibilities and using the cinematic apparatus to frame spectacle and draw attention to its transgressive potential. Dances in Fosse's film are often contextualised within the film narrative as rehearsals, performances, or figments of someone's imagination, therefore allowing audience members to consciously recognise the role of songs and dances as aesthetic elements rather than pretending to accept the routines as an integrated element of the narrative. This purposeful fictionalising of events within film underlines artifice as a driving force of the films, which in turn, provides a platform to study gender as a performative and artificially constructed phenomenon. Fosse's choreography for films, specifically, works within this format, respecting the cinematic possibilities and limitations. These dances highlight screendance as a methodology and genre, even when set in theatrical settings, distinguishing its characteristics as a site-specific dance form. Furthermore, the dynamics and tension of the musical genre provide a terrain for analysis of gender that is highly specific to its format.

Jane Feuer (2002) argues that MGM musicals, which are firmly embedded in the myth of entertainment, perpetuate the codes of the genre. Feuer (2002) claims that musicals provide pleasure to the audience by showing what happens behind the scenes of a theatre or film, demystifying the production of entertainment. Backstage musicals do this in a calculated way, as their purpose is to provide entertainment, therefore they constitute a complete revelation of processes that destroys the

myth of entertainment. She argues that all musicals are self-referential in some sense as they exhibit a self-consciousness regarding the format (Feuer 2002, p. 31). Reflexivity, however, includes a deconstruction process which would be devastating to the musical genre, therefore, films only reveal what is necessary to maintain the appeal of this style of film. Steve Belletto (2008) explains how Fosse's directorial choices in the film *Cabaret* (1972) draw attention to musical numbers as 'aesthetic entities removed from – yet explicable by – daily life' (2008, p. 609) unlike conventional musicals which ask the audience to accept the unrealistic positions of musical numbers, escapist narratives, and seemingly psychologically undeveloped characters, as suggested by Steve Cohan (2002). Fosse's musicals hold a tension between utopian properties of the genre, decorated with extravagant musical and dance scenes, and deconstructive mechanics, which allow political ideas to emerge. Fosse's *All That Jazz* explores this notion through the narrative that follows the production of a Broadway musical alongside the grotesque decay of the main character's health, spectacular musical and dance routines, and carnivalesque scenes of the Angel of Death. The film, at once, celebrates spectacle with extravagant performances, hyper-femininity, and glamorous aesthetics whilst critiquing the gruesome demands of capitalist dynamics and commercial demands of show production with a dull-coloured palette and gruesome images of illness and medical procedures.

The investigation that follows throughout this thesis explores the dynamics of Fosse's dance films which combine escapism by means of exciting musical and dance scenes, and the political representation of gender exhibited through aesthetics and narrative, in order to explore femininity as spectacle. The analysis of over-the-top performances that include virtuosic singing and dancing, complex choreography, sexiness and hyper-femininity not only illustrates aesthetics as an indication of Fosse's style, but rather, allows for discussion which considers spectacle as a politically charged phenomenon. Focusing on the analysis of aesthetics and images constitutes a political act in itself as it reimagines film scholarship, promoting visual content as equal to narrative development. Highly stylised dance scenes create the aesthetic and affective character of the film and adhere to the political agenda of spectacle as seductive bait for consumption in an image-based capitalist society whilst also contesting the conservative view of film theory, which Rosalind Galt (2011) argues

privileges narrative and text. Drawing on writings of Plato and art history, Galt argues that cultures of cinema inherited a hierarchy of '(active) meaning over (passive) spectacle' (2001, p. 3), and therefore focus on narrative over aesthetics. Although, according to Galt (2011), film theory had traditionally favoured narrative and meaning over image, but film relies on aesthetic intrigue and consumerism, therefore in musicals the large production scenes hold a central position for commercial success.

Reservation towards aesthetics is fuelled by the political discussion surrounding spectacle. Several scholars have theorised the issues and roles of signs and images in society, as spectacle itself, and their effect on the political and economic landscape (for example, Benjamin 1936, Debord 1968, Barthes 1999, Sontag 1999). Spectacle, as articulated and critiqued by Guy Debord in his seminal text *Society of the Spectacle* (1968), defines capitalist society as one that relies on a series of images which replace real life. Debord critiques current society for being plagued by an accumulation of spectacles, not simply a collection of images but a society defined as 'a social relation between people that is mediated by images' (1968 ed. 2009, p. 24). An image saturated society replaces lived experience, however, spectacle cannot be positioned in opposition to concrete social activity as real life absorbs spectacle and aligns itself with it, making the spectacle real. A circular society defined by capitalist aspirations makes consumers of images mistake them for a representation of culture. Debord (1968 ed. 2009) sees mass media as the most superficial manifestation of the spectacle, developed in accordance with the spectacle's internal dynamics. Dean Lockwood explains how 'the proliferation of spectacles of the real attempts to conceal the fact of reality's disappearance but ironically services and accelerates the virtualizing work of the simulation industries' (2005, p. 74).

Spectacle, defined as a visual phenomenon, has traditionally been dismissed in academic scholarship due to its properties as excessive and decorative. Kershaw (2003) associates spectacle with excessive waste inferring that it is trivial, arbitrary and unnecessary. Several theorists, including Barthes, Heath, and Thompson (McGowan 2007, p. 26) have discussed the issue of excess in films, arguing that excess escapes analysis and that the act of writing about it functions to point out the narrative's lack of completeness. In contradiction to this, McGowan (2007) argues that excess

makes sense and is not beyond narrative. Cinematic excess exceeds the symbolically structured social reality because it deviates from conventional and /or linear narrative structure. The political power of cinematic excess results from its relationship to narrative. The ideology of including aesthetic entities subverts narrative and, furthermore, provides transgressive power to contest ‘the way in which social order creates ideological justification’ (McGowan 2007, p. 27). Cinematic excess, also understood as visual spectacle, is of great importance to films featuring dance. Dance scenes constitute cinematic excess, therefore, providing entertainment, however, an analysis of their political potential subverts conservative structures of film and dominant ideologies, including capitalism and patriarchy.

Guy Debord (1968 ed. 2009) asserts a major critique of spectacle as a phenomenon that fails to produce meaning, political pertinence and agenda. He writes, ‘the spectacle’s essential character reveals it to be a visible *negation* of life – a negation that has taken on a *visible form*’ (Debord 1968 ed. 2009, p. 26). Reproductive technologies of film, television, radio, video, and more recently, the internet, have been crucial in the creation of the society of the spectacle and performative society (Kershaw 2003). In Debord’s view, spectacle cannot be interpreted merely as the visual excess of mass media technologies, but rather as a view of society, therefore it problematises the political implications of the spectacle as a visual and abstract phenomenon. According to the theories presented above, images which form spectacle cloud consumers from real experience and culture.

Lockwood (2005) explains how Debord’s writing suggests that under late capitalism social reality is visually organised and this instills great power in aesthetics as a major component of capitalism and its subsequent success. This view was previously articulated by Sontag who argues that ‘a capitalist society requires a culture based on images’ (1999, p. 92) in order to stimulate consumption. For critics of spectacle, its function perpetuates a consumerist culture driven by instant gratification and lack of depth. Images provide information that can be used as spectacle (for the masses) and observation and surveillance (for the ruling bodies), therefore, they provide a double function: to stimulate consumption through escapism and exert power over consumers. Sontag comments on the role of images in modern society by stating that one of the chief activities of a society is ‘producing

and consuming images...that have extraordinary powers to determine our demands upon reality and are themselves coveted substitutes for firsthand experience...to the health of the economy, the stability of polity, and the pursuit of private happiness' (1999, p. 80).ⁱⁱⁱ Although, these theorists present a critical view of the function of images in modern capitalist society, they also underlie the affective power of visual materials. In Fosse's work, this contradiction plays a key role in the success of film. The films, and more specifically, the dance scenes, rely on spectacle as a visual seduction technique to attract spectators, however a number of other methods, which will be discussed throughout the thesis, provide subversive power to a critically engaged audience to question spectacle as a cultural and economic phenomenon.

Theodor Adorno critiques mass culture as an element of culture industry and an 'integrated component of the capitalist economy' (Bernstein 1991, p. 9), and although he acknowledges that both high art and 'industrially produced consumer art' (1944 ed. 1991, p. 3) are immersed in capitalist schemes of supply and demand, he continues to insist on a strict division between high and popular art as it relates to music. Adorno's (1944 ed. 1991) writing resulted as a reaction to Walter Benjamin's exalted theory on film, suggesting that it is difficult to distinguish between technique and technology (as it is in music) due to its nature. In music, the sound structure is distinct from its performance, however in film, technique and technology are equated as 'cinema has no original which is then produced on a mass scale' (Adorno 1944 ed. 1991, p. 180); its nature is defined through mass production. Thus, according to Adorno (1944 ed. 1991), the culture industry does not reflect autonomous expression of the present but rather a uniform representation of the commodities for the sake of production and consumption. Mass production requires a sacrifice of individuality as it seeks to satisfy tastes of large audiences and causes a standardised production of consumption goods (Adorno 1944 ed. 1991). This, then, generates the possibility of a manipulation of tastes. Debord critiques spectacle as 'the visual reflection of the ruling economic order' (Debord 1968 ed. 2009, p. 27), therefore its function, according to Adorno (1944 ed. 1991) is to manipulate the masses. The paradox of spectacle makes it 'internally antagonistic as the very society it aims to control' (1944 ed. 1991, p. 181) as its objective is to captivate the consumer to stimulate the demand

whilst trying to assert power over the same consumer. Acknowledging the economic dynamics of commercial film that Fosse directed and choreographed, this thesis argues for a specificity of dances and performances made for screen with an analysis that combines movement analysis, the camera and editing. In Chapter Five, I concentrate on the performances and creative labour by specific female performers in order to assert their collaborative contribution to the choreographic product.

This negative understanding of spectacle eliminates the individual agency of viewers who can recognise the mechanisms of capitalist production as they partake in it. For Kershaw, spectacle appears to intend to produce excessive reactions, and is at its 'most effective [when] it touches highly sensitive spots in the changing nature of the human psyche' (2003, p. 592). This implies that the emotional needs of viewers are at the center of spectacle. This view is contested in theories of popular culture, by authors such as Terry Lovell who suggests that 'cultural products are articulated structures of feeling and sensibility which derive from collective, shared experience as well as from individual desires and pleasures' (2009, p. 543), which may not necessarily reflect the needs and wants of the dominant culture. Popular culture is characterised by a distinct dichotomy which situates it within the capitalist system and simultaneously tries to resist it from within, therefore Andrew Edgar (1999) asserts that people are the producers and interpreters of popular culture, thus active participants. Stuart Hall (2009) explains that popular culture is active and a ground on which transformations are worked so that popular aesthetics do not become locked into traditions, and provide an adapting site for cultural tension and struggle. Bernstein (1991) critiques Adorno by stating that partaking in popular culture does not mean that viewers are not able to recognise the mechanisms and manipulation that create a desire for products. Instead, he acknowledges that the power of the culture industry is in its ability to convince viewers to consume the products despite understanding the transparency of the industry. The audience can consume, interpret and use products of popular culture according to their own needs, relating it to their experience and environment, therefore, popular culture becomes a site for ideological struggle between the interests of capitalism and cultural and political interests of the people (Edgar 1999). The receivers (consumers) of popular culture are not a hegemonic group, therefore, this raises issues of dominance

and resistance within the class system (Certeau 2009). Since ordinary people, as a varied group of individuals, are not passive, cultural dopes, the demand on popular culture is to constantly reinvent itself.

Musicals neatly fit into the capitalist schemes of film production as a commercial product, which aims to attract viewers with spectacular aesthetics. Dyer defines musical entertainment as 'a type of performance produced for profit' (2002, p. 19) asserting its commercial tendencies. Rubin states that films are 'a commercial product designed to appeal to a mass audience', therefore, 'the musical clearly reproduces the values of the mainstream culture it addresses' (2002, p. 15) as it attempts to lure it with spectacle whilst also raising gender, racial, and class issues. Ideals of entertainment reflect dynamics of capitalism so abundance (spectacle) signifies consumerism by presenting the wants of the consumer, whereas human power and intense emotionality mark ideas of freedom and individualism, and relationships (between characters and the audience) indicate freedom of speech (Dyer 2002). Mass media must reproduce social reality in order to attract an audience, therefore, it is not divorced from reality, and it can be said to 'reflect, express, and articulate social reality in a mediated fashion' (Bernstein 1991, p. 20). Musicals may represent mainstream ideas of gender, race, heteronormativity, and politics, while simultaneously serving as a site to contest social, political, racial, and gender ideologies, and relations between the genre and the audiences.

The number 'Steam Heat' appears to stand out from the linear narrative of the 1957 film *Pajama Game*, directed by George Abbott and Stanley Donan. Adapted from the successful stage musical, the plot focuses on the imminent strike by the workers of a pajama factory demanding a 7.5 cent (of a dollar) raise. The story revolves around the love affair between Sid (John Raitt) the superintendent of the factory and Babe (Doris Day), a factory worker. Typical of a 1950s musical, the film manages to deal with serious labour issues with songs and dances. Perhaps, the most striking number of the film is 'Steam Heat', choreographed by Fosse and justified as the entertainment portion of the union rally as cinematic excess. The dance takes place on a stage posited as a theatrical performance. Two men (Peter Gennaro and Buzz Miller) and a woman (Carol Haney) perform the number dressed in identical suits, white shirts, red bow ties, wearing jazz shoes and Fosse's signature bowler hats.

Fosse uses minimalism as a tactic to highlight rhythmical complexity and gender neutrality as major concepts in the dance. The unison work of the trio represents the voice of the worker's union, however the political implications of their flexing pistons is glossed over with ambivalent lyrics. The lyrics refer to the labour of the proletariat, the difficult economic situation, and a love/sexual need. The number illustrates the tension between the escapism of the musical genre and politics. The upbeat song and dance provide escapism, whereas technically proficient execution of the complicated and athletically challenging choreography offers material for discussion on political ideas, such as gender.

Dyer (2002) argues that in the entertainment industry, led by white, bourgeois, male ideology, issues of class, race, and sexuality are denied validity. He disputes this monolithic claim by proposing the idea that these cultural products are created by professional entertainers and defined by them, however they are also a product of struggle between 'capital (the backers) and labour (performers) over control of the product' (Dyer 2002, p. 19). In the production of musical films, marginalised groups, such as women, black people, and LGBTQI people held an important role in development and definition of entertainment (Dyer 2002, p. 20). The performers, in this case the labourers, are in a position where they can exhibit control over the product (unlike some of the other workers), therefore, the relationship of musicals (and their production) to patriarchal capitalism is complex (Dyer 2002). This idea is explored in depth in Chapter Five, which concentrates on the creative labour of female performers in Fosse's work and their corporeal presence, as a way to exert agency and challenge the conservative ideologies surrounding film production. Fosse's film *All That Jazz* aims to present the conflicts presented by the capitalist needs of the genre whilst also presenting possibilities and opportunities for creative labour to contest the dominant socio-political ideology of spectacle. Musicals present an exemplar of spectacle as a visual phenomenon and cultural system designed to attract and persuade viewers into consumption, and yet also challenges them to face the capitalist networks at play and implicit socio-political tensions.

2.3 Grotesque Realism Aesthetic

Fosse's work exhibits properties of grotesque realism as a form of spectacle with presence of carnivalesque ideology and the grotesque, two central ideas in Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin's work. The grotesque, interpreted as the excess of the body, sexuality spilling over, and the uncontained body, have a strong presence in Fosse's films. This is juxtaposed with the polished and excessively stylised dances, which creates a conflict and tension for viewers being engaged in a socio-political web of race, gender, and class. I will apply this theory to my analysis of Fosse's cinematic and choreographic choices, which complicate the usual 'aesthetic of perfection' in musicals and add a socio-political layer to the analysis. In Fosse's film, the carnivalesque and grotesque emerge in cinematography, narrative, violent brutality, and medical procedures. For example, Fosse's film *Lenny* (1974) opens with a close-up of lips which represents 'speech, sex, appetite' (Acocella 2007, p. 326) and allude to all things grotesque. The narrative of *Cabaret* holds grotesque at its core as it explores the aesthetic of Nazism at the time of its rising in Germany. The emphasis on aggression and violence of the totalitarian regime drives the spectacle of the film along with the hyperbolic performances. The contradictory aesthetics of Nazism, such as decadence, grandiosity, austerity, danger, theatricality, euphoria, indulgence, and extreme control as a fascinating macabre subject matter serve as manifestations of the spectacle that fuel the musical genre of *Cabaret* in an unlikely manner. The inclusion of the grotesque and carnivalesque throughout the movie questions the totalitarian regime, which illustrates the well-known disturbing aspects of fascist Germany during the first part of the twentieth century. Furthermore, the film also critiques the political situation of 1970s America and its involvement in the lengthy war in Vietnam.

The concept of grotesque realism, as articulated by Bakhtin (1965) is an analysis of language and literature which seeks to investigate individual and social manifestations of the Russian language. The ideas and concepts, which concentrate on the body extend to a cultural analysis involving the social constructions of the class system as well as theatre (or performance) and the interaction of the two. Written in 1941 and published in 1965, Bakhtin's text *Rabelais and His World* concentrates on the works of the artist's post-Renaissance period but really responds to the cultural shifts in Soviet

Russia in relation to communism. Therefore, it is a culturally specific text that requires a cautionary application to the reading of Western, capitalist cultural products. The reading of the grotesque depends on historical and cultural contextualisation, and so in this thesis I will employ ideas of the grotesque aesthetic within the particular framework of Fosse's work, taking into account the political and economic milieu that influenced the production of his films.

Kershaw (2003) identifies a connection between the carnival and spectacle, therefore delineating its aesthetics in terms of grandiosity and excess. Rosalind Galt (2011) argues that ugly images are needed to fend off a seduction of the aesthetics so as to avoid allowing the visual power to take over the film, and in this way disturbing the power of cinematic photography to re-affirm the importance of meaning over image. Like in the previously mentioned 'Slaphappy' number, the 'Tiller girls' routine in *Cabaret* combines the effervescent dance of the chorines with images of a disturbing harassment of the Jewish character in the film, whose door step is vandalised with the word Juden, and her dog murdered. In *All That Jazz*, the glamorous dances of the Hallucination suite of numbers, including Leland Palmer's 'After You've Gone' and Ann Reinking's 'There'll be Some Changes Made', are contrasted with images of the main character in a hospital bed connected to life-support equipment. Images such as the ones rooted in the grotesque aesthetic offer another form of a violent visual allure and perpetuate the spectacle, which enhances the over-the-top aesthetics of musical and dance scenes. Kershaw distinguishes between various types of spectacle including 'spectacles of deconstruction' (2003, p. 595), which includes phenomena that aim to displace the idea of the natural or real in order to raise ambivalence or a multitude of meanings surrounding an issue, perpetuating the tropes of spectacle as a shield from the real. If spectacle, as an exhibited phenomenon, serves to provoke a reaction of positive attraction or disgust, then the grotesque body offers aesthetic material to the subject of spectacle as it serves to capture the viewer. Following this vein of thought, the spectacle of the grotesque opens up possibilities for critical thought to question and contest the meanings created by the interpretation of the grotesque as spectacle. Although, Bakhtin argued for the revolutionary potential of the immersive spectacle of carnival (Kershaw 2003), one must consider its political connections to meanings that surround spectacle and tensions

that arise as carnivalesque, as spectacle exemplifies the conflicts that characterise this aesthetic. The spectacular scenes direct the attention of the viewer to the emotional and aesthetic context of the film.

Carnavalesque performances, such as circus or folk performances provide an allegory for society (Bakhtin 1965). Carnival, however, is not a spectacular staged performance, rather it is an idea that people live and participate in (Bakhtin 1965). It is important to understand that the staged or choreographed body, in Bakhtin's understanding, reduces its parodic and transgressive potential (Lachmann, Eshelman, Davis 1988-1989) therefore Fosse's work, which exists within the commercial realm, potentially questions the dominant structures of capitalism and patriarchy. Bakhtin's critique of directed staged performance, which he sees as 'national propaganda'^{iv} and marks as different to vernacular folk culture, need to be considered with caution when applying his concepts of the carnivalesque and grotesque to Western cultural products. For the purposes of this thesis, carnivalesque is understood as an aesthetic to 'resist, exaggerate, and destabilise distinctions and boundaries that mark and maintain high culture and organised society' (Russo 1994, p. 62).

This aesthetic is prevalent in Fosse's work in the over-the-top costumes and styling, his parodic view on gender, the hyperbolic performances and choreography which may all function as a subversive tactic that obeys the demands of the musical genre whilst contesting the genre from within. As Bakhtin (1965) asserts, carnivalesque as a major component of grotesque realism serves to oppose the hierarchical culture, thus the role of the grotesque aesthetic is to contest the dominant cultural and political forces that surround the production. The grotesque body is central to the politics of the carnival. According to Kershaw, spectacle presents the 'carnival indulgence of the body' (2003, p. 601) providing a direct link to Bakhtin's theory on carnival and the grotesque body in relation to spectacle. Bakhtin's theory seeks to analyse the tensions between the dominant and marginalised perspectives of society as seen in 'a cultural mechanism determined by the conflict between two forces, the centrifugal and the centripetal' (Lachmann, Eshelman, Davis 1988-1989, p. 116). The centripetal force aims for unification and standardisation whilst the centrifugal promotes ambivalence that allows openness and transgression (Lachmann, Eshelman, Davis 1988-1989). This

pattern characterises Fosse's films, such as *Cabaret* (1972) and *All That Jazz* (1979) which employ the traditional cinematic techniques of a musical, namely spectacle, whilst introducing transgressive elements, such as queering of gender, and unpleasant themes and images that give these films political value. Spectacle, a key element in the film, functions to provoke a reaction that can be the subject of positive attraction or disgust. In *All That Jazz*, Fosse references theatricality and circus life by including scenes which show a person on a tightrope, Gideon in a clown face conversing with the Angel of Death figure, and an overly enthusiastic vaudeville-like number in which Audrey (Gideon's ex-wife) presents his medical case. This acts as a poetic metaphor by which show business and life are a circus, however the implication has a far-reaching impact on carnival in society. As a counter-production the grotesque realism aesthetic reflects the socialist state in the act of becoming, describing its affiliation with the leftist political current.

The idea of the grotesque body as politically charged allows for an analysis of the dancing bodies as well as cinematic ones in Fosse's films, which situate the performance of the body as a challenge to the dominant forces of Fosse's film productions. The grotesque negotiates the conditions and states of corporeality between birth and death, manifested most obviously through the excretion and elimination of bodily fluids (sweating, crying, sneezing), creating therefore an 'interchange and interorientation' (Bakhtin 1965, p. 234). Bakhtin explains how the distinctive character of the grotesque body 'is its open unfinished nature, its interaction with the world' (Bakhtin 1994, p. 228) exhibited through symptoms, such as the open mouth, sweat, protruding eyes, swollen face, and trembling. The political power of the grotesque body, as the body in the process of becoming, comes from its deconstructed appearance, which is reflective of the socialist state in the act of becoming. In Bakhtin's view, individual physical drama (including birth, death, growing, consumption of food and drink) applies to the 'larger collective one of the folk' (Lachmann, Eshelman, Davis 1988-1989, p. 124). Therefore, it describes how for Bakhtin the grotesque performance of a single body could present a political ideology of society.

Perhaps the most affective example of the presence of the grotesque body in Fosse's film repertory is the mud wrestling scene in *Cabaret*, which features two large women tussling in a ring of soil.

The Emcee acts as the referee for this event, however, rather than act as the neutral party he exacerbates the action by shouting at the fighters, laughing, and spraying them with water from a seltzer bottle. The references to sexual activity and the grotesqueness of the scene with its allusion to dirt and excrement complicate this seemingly trivial activity and its importance to the overall message of the film. The transgression and inversion occurs as the ‘traditionally and culturally “masculine” sport of wrestling’ is performed by women. Placing the women in mud (or any other slippery substance) subverts the masculine composition of fighting as ‘the execution of movements that constitute wrestling as an athletic activity are rendered comically grotesque’ (Allen 1991, p. 287). The Emcee, who stands in for fascism, controls the women’s bodies from a safe distance. The unsophisticated movements of the wrestlers present a vastly different representation of women to the female dancers who appear in control of their femininity, bodies, and sexuality. The scene ends with the Emcee scooping mud and spreading it on his face to look like Hitler’s moustache. This swift gesture, captured in a one second shot, aligns fascism with the grotesque, and critiques its arbitrary ideology of control, delirious euphoria, and spectacle.

Bakhtin creates the notion of the grotesque body in reaction to what he defines as the classical type of body exemplified in Renaissance painting and sculpture. Through the grotesque exaggeration of the mouth, stomach, and genitals, the physical body becomes open to interaction. This is opposed to the classical body that Bakhtin identifies as individualised and closed, which he claims was modelled during the Renaissance (Morris 1995). The grotesque body is conceived in opposition to the closed, smooth, impenetrable surface of the classical body transgressing its limits by disturbing the finished, limited, smooth body with protrusions, excretions, and dissections. In his historical discussion on burlesque performers, Robert C. Allen (1991) employs Bakhtin’s theory to argue that the burlesque performers had a transgressive impact on representations of femininity and female sexuality with their performance of the grotesque body. In order to stress this point, Allen distinguishes between the classical body defined as ‘closed, finished, smooth, symmetrically proportioned ... and separated from its connections with procreation, birth, and death’ (1991, p. 174) and the grotesque body which cannot be contained -- overflowing, literally and figuratively.

According to Allen (1991), the grotesque body is a disobedient body rooted in its physicality and its functions, such as eating, drinking, sex, and dance, which he reads in the voluptuous burlesque performance who challenge the audience with their sexual display and humorous speech. Allen (1991) perpetuates the binary of the classical and grotesque in his discussion on the burlesque in order to stress his point that burlesque has transgressive power, although the distinction between the two can be blurry. Allen (1991) explains that the bodies of the burlesque performers were considered disobedient in light of the nineteenth century Victorian ideals, which contradict the idea of trained bodies of performers, and this complicates the rigid binary.

The aesthetic of grotesque has a great influence on the reading of gender as presented in Allen's (1991) study on female performers in burlesque. For Mary Russo the female body is the site of the grotesque as it is based around reproduction, pregnancy and aging, and is particularly 'identified with the female genitalia' (1994, p. 114). The female body itself is posited within the grotesque due to its connection to earth and reproduction. As Abigail Dennis writes:

Engaged in a process of continual renewal, in which the functions of ingestion, excretion and reproduction are foregrounded and the orifices assume a central role, the grotesque is particularly associated with the earthed, physical feminine

Dennis 2008, p. 124

The human body as a central topos of culture provides a site for a re-enactment of social structures, hierarchies and social inversion, therefore images of carnivalesque women 'undermined and reinforced' the renewal of existing social structure' (Russo 1994, p. 58). The grotesque is understood in relation to the norm and that 'exceeding the norm involves serious risk' therefore grotesque realism is a transgressive methodology (Russo 1994). The female body within the ideology of the carnival may 'suggest an ambivalent redeployment of taboos around the female body as grotesque and as unruly' (Russo 1994, p. 56). The idea of the grotesque as an aesthetic and political strategy is used in an analysis in Chapter Four.

Bakhtin's theory stresses a materialism of the body opposed to spiritualism (Lachmann, Eshelman, Davis 1988-1989) therefore concentrating on corporeality as a key political concept to analyse dance. Opposed to spiritual or religious beliefs, Bakhtin bridges the body/mind dualism of Christianity with a 'hyperbolization and hypertrophization of corporeality' (Lachmann, Eshelman, Davis 1988-1989, p. 136), as this research focuses on physical excess and the material body as a product of dance to examine and question representations of femininity and female sexuality in Fosse's screendance. Although female dancers are discussed in terms of their hyper-femininity and corporeal subjectivity throughout this thesis, apart from a few isolated examples of the female grotesque, such as the women in the mud-wrestling scene or the provocative sexual strippers in *All That Jazz* (briefly discussed in chapter 4), Fosse applies the grotesque aesthetic to male characters, such as the main character in the same film, breaking down the stereotypical connection between the female body and the grotesque. His engagement with the grotesque, which also acts as spectacle, challenges the economic nature of show business particularly through the main character's narrative. The gruesome ending shows Fosse's scepticism of the capitalist machinery that fuels commercial theatre and film.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the concepts surrounding various specifics of dance on screen, spectacle as an aesthetic and political idea, and grotesque realism, serving as a theoretical foundation to analyse aesthetics as present in Fosse's work, and their effect on the reading of gender. Throughout this thesis, the discourse on properties of screendance informs discussion of gender in Fosse's work, as I discuss the effect of filming and editing on the images of women. A major theme that emerges from the aesthetic and political analysis of spectacle is excess, defining Fosse's work. This analysis takes into consideration the political ideology surrounding spectacle in musicals in order to examine how Fosse politicises gender. Building on the idea of spectacle, the following chapters will consider the theories and critical strategies that will inform the analysis of femininity in Fosse's work.

Chapter 3

Choreography of Hyper-Femininity and Sexiness

Judith Butler's (1990) theory posits that cultural identity forms through bodily gestures. In dance, choreography and movement communicate gender codes. In Fosse's work, femininity is choreographed in a meticulous fashion, which will be explored throughout this chapter. Building on theory discussed in Chapter One on the construction of femininity, this chapter examines the aesthetics of images of women in Fosse's work through choreography and cinematic techniques. Taking into consideration the properties of screendance, which were presented in Chapter Two, the analysis that follows aims to examine the particular style of femininity that Fosse women portray and display. This section presents an analysis of the movement, spatial and temporal choices, and framing choices Fosse makes in order to discuss aesthetics of hyper-femininity, masquerade and camp. Relying on movement and choreographic analysis coupled with gender and camp theory, this examination aims to discern the physical language created by Fosse's choreography and performance by female dancers to create images of femininity and female sexuality and the meanings attached to it. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the way that female bodies are marked as feminine with choreography and screendance techniques, concentrating on two dances, although these are supported by many more examples from Fosse's screendance repertory. The main examples are 'Whatever Lola Wants' from the 1959 film *Damn Yankees* and 'Big Spender' from the 1969 *Sweet Charity* as numbers which feature explicit choreography of femininity and sexuality as imagined by Fosse.

The number 'Whatever Lola Wants' performed by Gwen Verdon in *Damn Yankees* (1958) satisfies the needs of the film narrative. *Damn Yankees*, a film adapted from its Broadway stage version, directed by George Abbot and Stanley Donen and choreographed by Fosse, is loosely based on the German folk story of Faust. The plot of the film revolves around Joe Boyd, an avid baseball fan who sells his soul to the devil when his team loses. He is transformed into Joe Hardy played by Tab Hunter, a talented baseball player who seeks to return to his wife Meg throughout the film while the

devil aims to keep his soul. Lola, played by Gwen Verdon, is an employee of the devil who sets her up to seduce the baseball player Joe Hardy in order to keep his soul by detaining him from returning to his wife.

‘Whatever Lola Wants’ employs the idea of striptease as the central theme for the structure of the choreography. This solo number, performed in a locker room, adheres to the conventional methods of filming dances in musicals featuring choreography and performances by the likes of Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly, which favoured capturing the dancing figure in full- or medium-shot with few cuts to showcase the choreography in a theatrical way. Although, the film was not directed by Fosse, the analysis of his choreography introduces ideas regarding femininity and sexuality that evolve in his later works through choreography and Verdon’s performance style. These include the sexual mapping of the body through gestures and movement that results out of movement analysis that utilises writings from cultural studies and critical theory to examine socially constructed sexualisation of the body. The discussion that follows in this chapter considers choreographic and cinematic means to parody femininity and female sexuality, and hyper-femininity as a political strategy to queer dominant tropes surrounding representations of women in musical films based on gender theory presented in Chapter One.

Directed and choreographed by Fosse, the number ‘Big Spender’ from *Sweet Charity* (1969) features a group of ten female dancers. This first dance number in the film is an ensemble piece, which showcases the female dancers as New York City taxi dancers. The number starts with the entrance of the male actor into the club. In an unorthodox fashion, Fosse captures still bodies of female dancers from the back of the stage in various positions and includes the man in the back of the frame. Accompanied by sounds of raunchy trombone, the number rhythmically switches from a close up of a single dancer, to three dancers and then two who execute pedestrian turns of the head and lowering of a newspaper. Fosse establishes the aesthetic of the dance before the main action begins by showing heavily stylised hair and make-up, movement of large earrings, and bodies in positions of skewed hips, angular elbows and bent knees. Fosse’s directorial choices become evident as he films the dancers progressing backwards performing an exaggerated walk with sinuous

movement of the back, elbows, and hips. He only shows the torso, pelvis and top parts of the legs from the posterior view fragmenting the bodies of the dancers. The camera scans across the ensemble, eventually shifting to a diagonal view to begin a tracking shot, which features every dancer delivering their lines of seduction. As the camera tracks backwards, Fosse presents the iconic image of ten women draped over a railing, each in an idiosyncratic display of twisted ankles, tilted pelvises, and torqued backs. Their display of excessive femininity of carefully crafted images and aesthetics is a site of the femininity and sexiness that define Fosse's work. As the dance progresses, Fosse combines use of stillness with outbursts of movement enhanced with filming techniques and editing to portray a fictionalised idea of sex workers in a hyperbolic, theatrical, and witty way. The number employs movement and cinematic techniques as key elements in creating a particular aesthetic. The analysis that follows aims to examine choreography as a mechanism for showcasing femininity and female sexuality through analysis of movement, gestures, and aesthetics.

3.1. Choreographing and Filming Sexiness

Fosse's choreography oozes sexiness through movement choices and their arrangement on the body and in space. He fortifies the sexual effect of the dance and the women (and men) when he assumes directorial control so that the choices in the choreography of the camera and editing guide the viewer to focus on Fosse's version of femininity. In Fosse's dances, female characters perform sexy movements: in the earlier works (not directed by Fosse) sexiness results from his choreography and the performance by the dancers; however, in the later works, directed by Fosse, he amplifies the choreographic and performance ideas of sexiness with his directorial decisions. Fosse's ability to codify the body in sexual terms is evident in the short duet in the film *Kiss Me Kate* (1953), featuring Carol Haney and himself. Haney's entrance for Fosse's section of the dance is accompanied by a distinct shift in the music, introducing trumpets and the varying dynamics that help guide the complex choreography. Fosse introduces his ability to parcel the body from the beginning of the number as the two dancers perform simple walks layered with musical precision, movement of the hips and shoulders, and spirals which reveal and conceal the body in a subtle manner. He divides the body into small parts with isolations therefore imbuing them with

importance. The dancers pause, Fosse rolls his head while Haney looks back drawing attention to the head and neck and imbuing each body part with significance that provides material for analysis of sexual politics of the body. Fosse breaks the subtle sensuality with a large stag jump only to resume the choreography of sexiness within the parameters of the 1950s musical as he straddles the large pole with his knee and hangs his body over to one side towards Haney who is kneeling on the floor. Without looking at each other, they slowly pulse their pelvis and lower back and click their fingers adding rhythmical complexity to this image. The dance continues with the explosive dance section showing Fosse's quintessential knee slides in which dancers lower their bodies whilst turning onto a knee and dragging the other knee around in a circular motion with the pelvis propelling the body forward in space and eventually returning back to standing. The dance resumes its cool display of 'self-control and imperturbability' (Thompson 1974, p. 43) swiftly following large jumps with contained side steps in a large parallel second position. Fosse and Haney shift forward slightly in a turned in second position with arms outstretched sideways and diagonally and their head slightly turned away from the audience. They embody the aesthetic of cool, eloquently articulated by Robert Farris Thompson as an 'all-embracing positive attitude which combines notions of composure, silence, vitality' (1974, p. 42), exhibited with clarity of movement, smooth presentation of athleticism, juxtaposed with facial serenity. Haney adds a subtle undulation of the back to this simple step to assert its sexiness, which is a concept I explore later in the chapter. They shrug their shoulders and subtly move their hips. The position of their head, which is cocked sideways and downwards, gives the image an introverted feel within the musical genre and internalises their experience of movement and sexiness. Fosse establishes sexiness as a key stylistic choreographic element in this number that develops throughout his career.

The choreographer signals sexiness through specific movement choices, choreography, and, in later works, editing. The sexual mapping of the body happens through the choreography, which draws attention to or sexualises particular body parts and therefore makes them desirable. Grosz explains that 'sexual drives result from the insertion of biological or bodily processes into network of signification and meaning' (1994, p. 55), therefore through the process of choreography, framing,

editing, and performance the body is rendered sexy. Parts of the body do not carry sexual connotations, rather, they are charged with sexual values assigned by desire, which maps the body. The movement of the body, along with the motion and editing of the camera, constructs the bodies, as well the dances and by extension films, into desirable objects. The desirability does not occur through its being but rather through the framing of the subject into such a network. Žižek (1992) deconstructs mechanism of production of desire by explaining that an everyday object undergoes a transformative process as soon as it becomes caught in the network of demand, such as film, which frames and stages desire. Thus, careful screendance choreography that includes sexual symbols organises the body as sexualised and places it in the network of desire. The filming process alters the way the body is perceived by distorting the physical reality of the dancing bodies. Fosse's attention to isolations and camera angles that purposefully include and exclude body parts cause the viewer to focus on specific physical details therefore parcelling the body into desirable elements.

In later dances, when Fosse assumes directorial control, the movement of the camera and editing play a crucial role in the choreography. In the 'Wilkommen' number in the 1972 musical film *Cabaret*, Fosse creates the sense of speed and action through the movement of the camera which appears to circle the dancers performing high kicks in line formation. He captures the backs of legs and buttocks mid-kick from a low camera angle fragmenting the female bodies in a sexualised, yet also grotesque manner as he draws attention to the flesh of their legs. Fosse employs some of the images of femininity seen in his earlier works with a specific movement quality, yet the choreography, which distorts the lines of the body with breaking of joints, isolations, and fragmentation achieved with movement, camera angles, and editing disturb and unsettle the ideas of gender, and femininity in particular.

With his choreographic and directorial choices Fosse instructs the spectator where and who to watch. In his dance 'Take Off with Us' from *All That Jazz*, Fosse sexualises the body with a playful attitude. The film follows a backstage musical format presenting the process of creating a show. This number, along with the more risqué 'Airotica', is presented to the producers of the show as an open rehearsal to ensure their continuing financial support. The lyrics of the song talk about the

experience of flight attendants, however, they also pose as euphemism for sexual exploration. The song, filled with sexual innuendos, compliments the playful mood of the dance whilst also distracting from the overtly sexual content to drive forward the seemingly light-hearted musical genre. The dance is set on a female soloist and an ensemble of dancers dressed in rehearsal clothes accentuated with fetishistic pilot hats and gloves. The dance begins with a close up of a gloved hand hanging off a wrist, which is activated with a percussive upward flick of the wrist and finger click. Fosse alternates various shots of dancers and the ensemble to create the rhythm of the dance. Ideas of sexuality occur in the tension between the female soloist, played by Sandahl Bergman, and the writhing group of dancers. The soloist, wearing black briefs over flesh-coloured tights, a black cropped top revealing her midriff, requisite high heels, and leg warmers, performs a slow, seductive finger roll. Fosse isolates her from the group, either by presenting her alone on screen tapping her fingers seductively on her knee or doing a side *développé* lying on the floor, or by changing her facing in unison sections, so that she faces the back of the studio while the rest of the ensemble faces front. The soloist leads the group in an iconic move: the dancers do a simple step to the side led by the circular motion of the hips advancing from one side of the studio to the other. The body is further complicated by small rotation of the wrist that adds another rhythmical and physical layer to a body fragmented by isolations and shifting across the screen space. Each body part transforms into a code of sexuality as the movement draws attention to its sexual possibilities.

As 'Take Off with Us' progresses, Bergman advances through the floor bound group of dancers, and shifts through the space with sauntering hip rolls that radiate through her whole body spreading to her arms and legs. The members of the group, on the other hand, slide, and undulate their individual bodies which create the effect of a mass moving together. Isolations juxtapose the slippery feel of the movement to draw attention to specific body parts, namely hands, wrists, and hips and transform them into vehicles of sexual desire. The lubricated movement quality of these simple moves sexualises various body parts. Fosse injects sexual tension and meaning into bodies and body parts by stressing their importance – each finger, wrist, ankle roll, undulating spine, isolated hip and shoulder implies sexiness. Fosse choreographs the section featuring various whirlwind lifts by the

couples with camera angles which focuses on conjoined body parts. During this section, Bergman crosses the front of the studio with an inward pirouette and kick showing her technical prowess. All dancers spread out through the studio executing small syncopated isolations but it is the movement and framing of Bergman's body that draw attention to the body sexualised. Camera work is instrumental in production of desire in 'Take Off with Us'. By varying points of view of the camera, Fosse stresses the notion of parcelled bodies with the combination of inclusion and exclusion. Positioned in the front right corner of the screen, Fosse only captures her torso and legs placed in a lunge accenting the backwards pull of the pelvis, which allows her to thrust her pelvis forcefully forward and back. With a simple exclusion of her head in the shot, Fosse directs the gaze to the pelvis and legs and sexualises the body. Fosse's ability to divide the body with movement, the quality with which it is performed, and the camera work mark the body in sexual terms.

For Fosse femininity is sexiness, which acts as a mechanism to symbolise femininity. In his screendance, the choreographer and the dancers, create, perform, frame and edit femininity. The body becomes a sexualised entity with various techniques, such as fragmentation and parcelling of the body through choreography and filming, and deliberate staging of femininity. The theatrical processes involved in creating the images of women in Fosse's work highlight femininity as a spectacle – a fictional product resulting out of labour. Allen (1991, p. 81) argues that the idea that the body is staged and choreographed for the audience to see causes a woman's body to transform into a spectacle. Displaying the sexual female body is a mechanism itself to critically consider the dynamics and processes that highlight femininity as a construct.

The examples discussed above demonstrate that sexiness and femininity are choreographed and displayed. In 'Whatever Lola Wants' Fosse uses striptease as a device to signal femininity and sexual display. Striptease as a culturally classified performance of provocative sexuality and femininity highlights these notions and marks the performance in sexual terms. Made in 1958, 'Whatever Lola Wants' includes many ideas arising from the history of striptease and burlesque. Striptease holds the performance of female sexuality at its core and, as Rachel Shteir explains, is commonly thought of as 'a combination of posing, strutting, dancing, and singing, punctuated from

time to time by thrusts and twists of abdomen called ‘bumps’ and ‘grinds’ (2004, p. 2). According to Jessica Berson, the aim of striptease is ‘to entertain and seduce audiences; display the dancer’s body; engage individual audience members visually, verbally, and often physically’ (2018, p. 165). In order to determine what constitutes sexy dancing, Berson (2018) turns to Judith Lynn Hanna’s (1998) writing on exotic dancing who explains that the movements employed in this performance style often ‘simulate culturally constituted rhythms of lovemaking ... through a dance-vocabulary of movements highlighting secondary sex characteristics, such as breasts, buttocks, and hips, in addition to genitals’ (Hanna quoted in Berson 2018, p. 167). These highly stylised movements differ greatly from the physical mechanics of sexual activity.

Fosse uses the idea of striptease, which Shteir (2004) clearly distinguishes from the act of undressing. Disrobing is the simple act of taking one’s clothes off in private, whereas the performance of striptease is a spectacle of female sexuality, which Fosse employs to emphasise the idea of femininity as a grandiose performance. She explains:

Undressing occurs casually, sometimes without style and grace, and probably lacking in costume and prop, while striptease implies ritual and performance, allure, tension, and generally speaking, an audience, as well as exhibitionism, with all of the flagrant come-hither posturing... striptease is more about the relationship of being dressed to being undressed than about mere nudity.

Shteir 2004, p.7-8

Lola’s performance is designed around the pretense of striptease, but it only utilises tease as a performance tactic, as she has no intention of disrobing entirely. Tease, employed by Lola, is an essential element in the seduction game and a political strategy, often used in burlesque and neo-burlesque performances as discussed in Chapter One. It plays upon the notions of wit and seduction and operates simultaneously as a performance of seduction and a playful critique commenting on female sexuality in the act of undressing (Dodds 2013, p. 79). This complicates the sexual display of the female bodies as they simultaneously provide commentary on the performance of femininity

through humour, as evidenced in burlesque and used as a strategy in Fosse's presentations of gender. Tease offers an adult version of play, which becomes a primary element in constructing the creative way to play out the sexual dynamics. Looking at Sigmund Freud's writing reveals that child's play is a first trace of imaginative activity, which the child clearly distinguishes from reality, therefore, play is not opposed to seriousness but reality (Sommer 2008). The playfulness, in Bakhtinian terms, brings up the ambivalent connotations as it denotes 'negative elements of debasement and destruction ... and the positive elements of renewal and truth' (Bakhtin in Sommer 2008, p. 288). Tease, as an interpretation of play, embodies the prescribed, 'official' gender norms and offers a method to challenge them with humour and folly. This analysis relies on drawing a parallel between Fosse's re-imagining of a theatrical interpretation of striptease and gender and sexual dynamics of burlesque performance, as it examines hyper-femininity and parody, along with wit and tease, as political strategies to question gender, which were introduced in Chapter One.

The pulse of the body, which reappears throughout Lola's dance, as well as the seductive walks and isolations, all indicate a choreography of seduction and sexuality. Verdon begins the dance with a seductive twirl of her finger and raising and lowering of her eyebrows as she sings 'do like Lola tells you to do' demonstrating the connection between the gestures and lyrics. The choreography of striptease is abstracted into Fosse's jazz dance vocabulary as she drops her arm keeping her focus on him, slightly hunches her shoulders and begins the dance with two slow lubricated rotations of the ankle showing the sexy quality of the movement. As she begins to sing, she takes a slightly awkward position in profile with shoulders hunched forward and pelvis very slightly thrust forward. She remains in this position as the camera tracks towards her to capture her taking her glove off and throwing it casually over the shoulder indicating to the viewers that this indeed is a striptease. Verdon returns her focus to her subject and pulses her body slightly, progressing the pulse in to her shoulders and slight shake of the head.

During the first verse, Verdon hardly moves, only allowing a small pulse to affect her body, which shifts attention to the lyrics of the song explaining to Joe the premise of her business, which is to take his heart and soul. The pulse grows into slinky seductive walks accentuated with subtle hip

isolations, which take Verdon across the locker room. When she reaches Joe, she sharply protrudes her hip to him and switches her weight seemingly tempting him with her posterior. With her body facing forward to the camera and sideways to Joe, Lola rhythmically presses into the hip while she sings the chorus of the song repeatedly saying ‘whatever Lola wants’. Joe’s eyes dart around the room uncomfortably as she continues to sharply shift her pelvis from one side in a semi-circular motion that sends her pelvis forward pausing to accentuate the movement and allowing time for the viewer to absorb the image. Verdon does not really pay attention to Joe in this instance as she indulges in her performance of sexuality and seduction of protruding her hip out and presenting her buttocks to him indulging in the experience of her own sexuality and devious game. The movement emphasises her pelvis, drawing attention to the sexual center of the body as she tantalizingly presents her crotch and buttocks to Joe in this section of the choreography as illustrated in figure 1.

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Figure 1. Gwen Verdon in 'Whatever Lola Wants', *Damn Yankees* (1958). Screenshot.

Like the dance vocabulary of burlesque and neo-burlesque, ‘Whatever Lola Wants’ includes the ‘bump and grind’ (pelvic isolations and circular movements), shimmies of the buttocks, tassel twirling (which involves a careful articulation of the movements of the breasts), and innovative ways to remove specific clothing, such as gloves, stockings, and corsets. Fosse’s theatricalised interpretation of this lexicon of movements occurs throughout the dance. One example is the moment that Lola walks away from Joe singing ‘I’m irresistible you fool. Give In. Give In’. The line is interrupted by a firm shimmy of the arms, shoulders, and hips, which tightens her buttocks and shows off the muscularity of her body accentuating the uprightness of her placement and shows

opposition to the soft, seductive movement she has performed in the number so far. Verdon performs a shimmy that takes her into a full parallel *plié*, out of which she rises with a deep contraction of the back, pushing her buttocks in rather than out in the exact opposite direction (aesthetically and figuratively) to the movement employed by erotic dancers whereby they rise out of a deep squat by protruding their pelvis backwards in order to tempt their clients with their posterior. Verdon simultaneously performs the sexualised movement and contests it as she engages in the stereotypical physical vocabulary of shimmies, hip and shoulder rolls of striptease yet her execution interrupts the coherent sexuality available for objectification as she squeezes her muscles, scoots on the floor, and playfully changes her voice. Verdon handles her sexuality with comic flair as she prances with accented skips, sickles her feet, and crawls on the floor. She woos and growls to accompany the unpredictable combination of movement, which includes small facetious gestures with dramatic steps that propel Verdon's body into multitude of directions. The paradoxical nature of the movements and the sequence in which Fosse arranges them raises sexual politics reminiscent of burlesque by which women display their sexuality yet convolute it with wit, tease, and parody.

In this number, striptease serves as a discourse on femininity and female sexuality. Employing concepts of sexual display associated with striptease and burlesque performance affects the choreography of sexiness in Fosse's number and Verdon's performance. During the act of striptease, the woman performs a series of coverings upon the body with clothing, gestures and movement that create a sexualised spectacle of her dancing body. Fosse abstracts the choreography of striptease in 'Whatever Lola Wants' with the use of his jazz dance vocabulary evident from the beginning of the dance as Lola drops her arm keeping her focus on Joe, slightly hunches her shoulders, and begins the dance with two slow, lubricated rotations of the ankle. The sexy quality of the movement from the circular movements of the foot and the gaze are contrasted with the posture of the body and limp arms which introduces Fosse's specific vision of sexuality combining playfulness, tongue-in-cheek attitude, explicit sexuality, and wit. As she begins to sing, she takes a slightly awkward position in profile with shoulders hunched forward and pelvis slightly thrust forward introducing Fosse's image of awkward sexiness. Taking her glove off, she casually turns sideways and sharply turns her head

forward on the musical cue combining seemingly nonchalant and contrived movement qualities to support the juxtaposing movement and performance qualities that complicate the reading of gender, sexiness, and sexuality. Throughout the dance she removes her gloves (casually), her headdress (with a toss), her skirt (with rhythmically punctuated flare) and her trousers (awkwardly by scooting backwards on her buttocks). The choreography, as well as the choice of costume and lyrics, serves to highlight femininity and sexualisation of the female body. In this number, Fosse turns to striptease as a performance tool that codifies female sexuality in clear terms: the female performer executes a playful dance of removing articles of clothing in order to entice the male viewer. Lola's performance presents a deliberately constructed presentation of choreographic and technical skill rather than performances by strippers, which Berson (2018) describes as largely improvisational. The number exploits notions of striptease as Lola seductively removes articles of clothing, however, this is ultimately a dramaturgical device within the narrative of the film, distinctly distinguished from the intention of a striptease, which aims to arouse the male viewers for economic exchange.

Lola's performance deviates from the standard performance of striptease and therefore offers parody as a critical strategy to negotiate gender. Parody is used as a tool to complicate gender identity through hyper-femininity as caricatural masquerade in 'Whatever Lola Wants'. Verdon's playful and vigilantly choreographed performance evidenced in her altering use of the voice, adopted fake accent and variation in movement illustrates derision. Fosse's choreography in this dance alludes to many dance styles including Broadway jazz, social dances of the early twentieth century, and Spanish dances creating a parodic effect by 'assimilating numerous genres and styles of feminine in a Bakhtinian dialogism' (Tyler 2003, p. 23). The choreographic design does not follow a predictable rhythmic, spatial or movement patterns as Verdon switches from one movement style to another, changes levels and directions, and appears to change from one musical meter to another therefore presenting an unpredictable dance composition, which also underscores the politics of gender.

Verdon mocks the conventions of seductive performances, such as striptease, with comical dance steps and ridicules the premise of the presentation of seduction with the use of humour, which allows her to make fun of, advocate, and critique the striptease body. In this section, the emphasis is

on the movement of the body as there is no singing – the narrative aborts for a one minute and sixteen seconds during which Verdon examines, questions, challenges, and queers a performance of femininity and seduction. By playfully handling the stereotypical images of female sexuality, such as the stripping woman or pin-up girl or the taxi girl, Fosse tackles ideas that Dodds discusses in terms of neo-burlesque performance which ‘arguably ... allows performers access to a critical space whereby they can take pleasure in nostalgic femininity, while playfully unsettling or subverting those images’ (Dodds 2013, p. 81). Like the neo-burlesque performers, Fosse uses humour to provide a playful commentary situated in the confrontation between sexuality and mockery. Lola’s taut, straight legged, high-heeled small and fast second position *bourrées* are comical and, therefore, subvert the uncomfortable eroticism of the striptease. She throws her trousers against the floor in a dramatic matador fashion. Moving from one funny movement sequence to another, the whole rhythmically dissonant and cartoon-like section mocks the precision of carefully choreographed seduction and tease complicating the image of femininity. Her caricatured and awkward approach to sexiness underlines parody as a critical strategy to present femininity as an identity in flux. This dance break section of the song ends as Verdon assumes a powerful, firmly grounded second position singing ‘I always get what I aim for’ asserting her power in this game of seduction.

Verdon’s performance combines masterful execution of complex choreography with a cheeky approach to create a satirical performance of femininity and seduction. Posited within the heteronormative prism, Verdon exhibits heterofemme characteristics – a hyperbolised femininity and witty redoubling of gender expressed through parody. The visible awkwardness points out the ludicrousness of sexual display of striptease and staged seduction and thus deviates from an uncontested presentation of monolithic images of women available for consumption. Through the lens of masquerade and intentional parody, Fosse’s dances offer a cultural product to question presentation of femininity. The choreography and performance includes sexualised and hyper-feminine movement and gestures, as well as, caricatural and witty aspects that create a particular style of awkward sexiness, which is present in ‘Whatever Lola Wants’ as well as other examples in Fosse’s repertory.

The queering of the presentation of sexiness through an aesthetic of awkward sexiness defines much of Fosse's work. Fosse continues to problematise presentations throughout the trajectory of his career by presenting paradoxical notions of sexiness, which combine hyper-femininity, sexual display, and parody. For example, in the opening number of the film *Cabaret* (1972) the female dancers project various registers of femininity and sexiness through choreography, staging, styling, and performance style. As the Emcee (Joel Grey) introduces each dancer by name they execute a small pulsing movement. They wear mismatched costumes and heavy make-up that highlights the contrast between their sexualised isolations and dead pan expressions. Fosse captures the dancers' faces and upper parts of their torso so that the viewer cannot be sure where the movement stems from. Although, the protagonist of this scene is the Emcee, Fosse draws attention to the powerful female presence including an all-female band and ensemble of dancers. In this number, the exaggerated make-up complements the contrived femininity, which is evident in the strained execution of luxurious isolation opposed with straight spines and taut limbs. The dancers perform sexualised movements, such as titillating side-to-side hips sways, however their exaggerated posture of projecting their pelvis forward, straight legs, elbows pulled back and head protruding forward take away the lusciousness of indulgent pelvis isolations. Their dead-pan facial expressions fortify the awkwardness of their physical attitude and movement execution. Fosse confronts the viewer with feminine sexual displays as he films a dancer swaying her hips. His unconventional filming technique captures the dancer in profile in a flat back position, which juxtaposes the looseness of her pelvis. The camera angle favours this dancer who is facing back and placed on the edge of the stage, taking precedence over the rest of the ensemble, therefore, focusing on the unorthodox method to capture the female dancing body. As Fosse switches the camera to capture the entire stage, the audience is faced with an unruly compositional arrangement of the dancers. A trio of women emerges performing exaggerated turned in walks accentuated with the lift of the knee and flexed foot, which exemplifies the awkward aesthetics of sexiness and confrontational hyper-femininity. The sexy movements, such as hip rolls and shoulder rolls, are tempered with straight legs and stiff arms, which allows for a critical reading of gender.

Costumes play a large part in the type of femininity projected in Fosse's work. Clothes (and movement) are 'intended, not to conceal or even protect the body, but, in large part, to render it sexually attractive... to accentuate rather than to conceal' (Steele 1985, p. 15) therefore the choice of Verdon's costume, including a heavily structured black halter neck leotard, and the design of the choreography serve as a map to formulate the body as seductive and sexualised. As Anne Hollander argues clothes reconfigure the female body in order to negotiate sexual proportions so that 'the placement, size, and shape of the breasts, the set of neck and shoulders, the relative girth and length of rib cage, the depth and width of the pelvis and the exact disposition of [the body's] fleshy upholstery, front and back' (1993, p. 91) perpetually shift visual perceptions of desirable proportions in women. Movement, combined with the choice of costume, serves the same purpose in this number to accentuate the desirability of the female body. This performance articulates the construction of desire through choreographed placement and removal of clothing, which is crucial to the effectiveness of striptease. The costume codifies the body of the dancer in sexual terms. This codification changes through the number, as Verdon begins by wearing a tulip shaped skirt on top of her leotard; once she removes her skirt, she reveals a pair of tight-fitting, lace cropped trousers. Finally, she removes her trousers and performs the remaining number in the heavily constructed halter-neck leotard, which remains firmly placed on her buttocks and hips. The luxurious materials and polished tailoring project a glamorous image which contrasts the parodic dance and cheeky narrative of the song to create a paradoxical image of femininity, which combines elegance, restraint, comedy, and sexiness.

The movements and gestures communicate a highly stylised, carefully constructed performance of femininity. The choreography for Lola presents precisely crafted movement therefore alluding to a theatrically constructed performance of gender communicated through elaborately coded femininity (Solomon-Godeau 1993). The deliberate choreographed performance of femininity and sexuality purposefully exposes womanliness as a fabricated phenomenon. Choreography and performance register masquerade, a laborious construction of feminine gender. The performance of deliberate hyper-femininity, such as that demonstrated by Verdon in 'Whatever Lola Wants' and Bergman in

'Take Off with Us' and the all-female ensemble of 'Big Spender', offers a political strategy to destabilize the image of femininity by revealing it as a construct. Referring to Carole-Anne Tyler's (2003) idea of the function of exaggerated performance to highlight femininity as a fictionalised creation, the performance of explicitly gendered movement and costumes as exemplified in all these dances creates understanding of the construction of femininity. Verdon's deliberately hyper-feminine performance may be understood as a method to reaffirm, rather than break down, images of femininity therefore encouraging the female viewer to recognise that femininity as identity is inseparable from the image (Tyler 2003). Femininity relies on visibility, therefore, turning gender into spectacle makes it more discernible leading to conclusion that dance in Fosse's work exposes gender on the surface of the body. Fosse's and Verdon's interpretation of Lola affirms the performance of gender as an artificial construct through hyper-feminine and hyper-sexy choreography. The performance acknowledges the on-screen sexual politics of womanliness whilst including illusive disruptions, such as awkward movement, unconventional compositional methods like use of stillness, mixing of styles and rhythms to subtly undermine prescribed notions of femininity and female sexuality in musicals. Fosse recognises the male gaze by including an audience of men in 'Take Off with Us, Joe watching Lola, and the lone male spectator in 'Big Spender'. The hyperbolic aesthetic of the dance and performance mode, however, provides space to contest this. By complicating the body with complex rhythmical structure, isolations that distort the image of the body, and filming style that fragment the coherency of the body through framing and editing, Fosse exaggerates the physicality of female dancers to produce physical excess that represents masquerade.

The choreography for Lola and the ensemble in 'Take Off with Us' demonstrates carefully crafted masquerade, which presents the feminine gender as a product of labour. This contrived embodiment of feminine presentation highlights the performance of gender through the display of adornments including costumes, movement, and gestures. Furthermore, the amplified performance exposes its theatricality and underlines the labour that the construction of femininity demands. In films where gender roles are fictionalised and, therefore, not intended to pass as real, showcasing active

performance of masquerade exposes it as a mask (Case 1999). Fosse's women present corporeal evidence of gender as labour through their activity of dancing, which is a result of training and rehearsing as well as the actual effort required to execute these dances. Verdon's (and Bergman's) performance of masquerade denotes Irigaray's idea that a deliberate, artificial construction of femininity and an exaggerated series of acts performed by a woman function as an actively offensive strategy devised to 'make visible by an effect of playful repetition, that which is supposed to remain invisible' (Irigaray quoted in Harris 1999, p. 60). She refers to masquerade as a mechanism to reveal femininity as a purposefully constructed idea and performance to allow the necessary distance to the female viewer to destabilize the image and the masculine structure of the gaze. The fictionalised, theatrical performance of femininity imagined as masquerade serves as a tool to unpack gender as an idea, which affirms the separation between the image of femininity and performance of gender and provides the viewer with distance to question the discourses surrounding the female presence on screen. Performances of hyper-femininity produce knowledge about it as it allows for a process to study femininity by intensifying the distance between the image of femininity and its production.

The combination of sexiness and awkwardness is also clear in 'Big Spender' (1969). The facial expressions of the dancers indicate an uninvolved emotional stance opposing the sexual tension of the lyrics and narrative of the scene. Even though all the dancers face forward their energy is static rather than projecting beyond the confines of the stage and the railing, therefore, their performance mode is in juxtaposition to the seductive lyrics they sing and provocative narrative they participate in. The dancers create extreme and awkward positions of bent limbs, legs turned in or draped over the railing and straight backs projecting a linear composition, reminiscent of a city skyline, made up of female bodies. As they sing, they deliver suggestive lyrics, yet their faces ironically remain motionless. Tyler (2003) explains that the use of irony distinguishes mimicry from masquerade. The dancers deliver the entire first verse in complete stillness, which allows the viewers to absorb the images of exaggerated femininity that are in sync with the fashion of the period. The lack of sexual energy in performance contrasts the lyrics made up of sexual innuendos and titillating movements exposing the performance of sexuality as a sham. As they sing the chorus of the song saying:

'Wouldn't you like to have fun, fun, fun
How's about a few laughs, laughs
I could show you a good time
Let me show you a good time!'

Coleman, Fields 1966

they stretch the sense of time allowing long pauses between each line. Their upper bodies remain in their distorted position whilst they stamp with one foot accompanied by a single or double click of a drum. Their faces remain absolutely devoid of expression, opposing the sexually inviting nature of the lyrics. The combination of unwieldy, fragmented lines of the bodies, with ironic delivery of sexually charged lyrics, extravagant styling, use of stillness, and then wild movement creates a contradictory representation of femininity and sexuality that defines Fosse's work. Female dancers embody sexiness and exhibit hyper-femininity through choreography, which highlight womanliness as a fictional construct and spectacle; yet the multi-faceted approach allows for a negotiation of gender for the viewers.

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Figure 2 Ensemble in 'Big Spender', *Sweet Charity* (1969). Screenshot.

Fosse's radical choice to employ stillness not only defies the expectations of the musical genre for constant movement and entertainment but also presents political commentary through the dance aesthetic. Fosse's use of economy of movement and stillness achieved through movement choices and editing functions as a choreographic method to contrast the complexity of isolations and

rhythmical layering, however, it also challenges the idea of spectacle as it defies the constant need for entertainment. In capitalist society built on the idea of maximum entrepreneurial productivity, use of minimal movement and stillness, reflects a post-modern sensibility which rejects speed as ‘the dominant mode of late capitalism’ (Lepecki in Osterweis, 2013). Osterweis (2013) explains that the hyperkinetic choreography laced with great velocity does not correspond to capitalist ideology as it ignores the idea of maximum capitalist productivity evidenced in efficiency in movement and choreography. Different to stasis, stillness does not imply a retardation of progress, but rather requires a specific kinetic intensity, which Fosse employs to intrigue the spectator and concentrate on the awkwardness of the image. He disturbs the stillness of the bodies with carefully placed cross-fades offering different angles from which to consider the still dancing bodies. Fosse contrasts the stillness with outbursts of movement which involve the whole body undulating in a multitude of directions, therefore, demanding spectatorial attention with unruly movement that can only result from painstakingly trained bodies. This cinematic technique adds subtle rhythmical texture to the opening verse of the number, which complicates the stage choreography into screendance specific composition. The combination of stillness, economical movement, and explosive outburst of movement force the viewer to see the female dancing body in complex terms. Stillness provides another layer to awkwardness as it resists the need to satisfy the viewer with perpetually stimulating motion. This forces the spectators to face the eroticism of the body in a blatant and unconventionally awkward style.

However, other aspects of the ‘Big Spender’ number adhere to the patriarchal rules of sexual economy and the male gaze theory of the perspective of the film viewer. The number begins with a shot of a male patron next to the ‘Dancing with Beautiful Girls; 1 pm to 4 am’ sign. To the sound of a trombone, the camera moves sharply in to a close up of the opening door and the man affirms his position within this setting as viewer, consumer, and voyeur. As he walks along the railing positioned at the front of the stage where the dancers stand, the lateral camera movement follows him, concentrating on each dancer delivering their lines, their lack of emotional involvement creating a palpable distance between the dancers and viewer. As soon as he walks by, their focus

diverts from him to a dead pan look forward and they take their position on the railing. The camera shifts to two central dancers, eliminating the male figure from the picture, who approach the railing while making a 'come hither' gesture and barely audible whistling noise. The camera then tracks back to include all of the ten dancers in the shot, the railing and the disco ball, which provides photographic imagery that Abigail Solomon-Godeau characterises in terms of properties that are fetishistic, such as 'a screen for the projective play of the spectator's consciousness' (1993, p. 269). Although the scene acknowledges the masculine dynamics of watching female images on screen, the awkward presentation of exaggerated femininity, challenges the patriarchal tropes of the male gaze as the dancers contradict the monolithic presentations of gender in musical films.

As discussed above, here once again Fosse employs fragmentation as a choreographic and cinematic tool that affects the visual and communicative properties of female bodies on screen highlighting the sexual value and emphasising fetishised parts of the female body. In 'Big Spender', dancers begin with a backwards walk with their hands on their lower backs and elbows jutting out. They perform a large hip roll with each step that they take, decorated with a luscious shoulder gyration, which dissects their bodies into a composition of individual body parts rather than a presentation of the body as a single entity. This is further fragmented with the framing of the camera that excludes their heads and lower part of the leg. Furthermore, Fosse features two dancers partially shown so that the viewers are faced with a torso and legs of one dancer featured in profile, with her pelvis protruding backwards, bent elbows and hands resting on the waist. Fosse disturbs the placement of the dancers' bodies with positions that stretch their bodies laterally, such as severe isolations of the ribs, which result in the shift of the pelvis or the leaning of the entire body at the forty five degree angle. This technique has a dual purpose: on the one hand, it separates the bodies of female dancers into sexualised entities available for fetishistic consumption; on the other hand, the awkward, uncomfortable, jagged positions of the body draw attention to the grotesque aspects of the body as it disturbs the classical beauty of the neatly designed sculptural positions. Bodies that are perpetually broken up and disturbed by isolations become a site of resistance of cultural prescriptions as they disobey the format of classical bodies defined by their closed surface and cohesive physicality.

Additionally, Fosse allows alternate spatial perspectives by filming the dancers from the back of the stage. He offers unexpected shots as he privileges an image of a static woman with her finger pointed forward whose physical presence saturates the visual space over two female dancers who are dancing. With this he contests the way femininity and sexuality are shot. Fosse disrupts the neat way of filming the dancing body in full figure by fragmenting the body with choreography that breaks their bodies through positioning, isolations, and psychedelic outbursts enhanced with editing and close ups of body parts. Fosse's work contests conventions of filming dance by accentuating various individual body parts and thus instilling them with choreographic and filmic importance and combining stillness with exuberant movement. The discordant positions of female bodies and camera framing choices which play with proportions communicate unorthodox, disjointed representations of femininity, which serve to destabilise a rigid image of womanliness.

3.2 Camp as Feminist Strategy

Images of hyper-femininity are complemented by the aesthetics of the dances and film to create the effect of camp. The hyperbolic images presented as an element of style, artifice, and decoration are represented in the setting of the dances and movement of the case studies discussed in this chapter. The notion of artifice is exemplified in the ambience and movement of the dances, as well as, costumes, styling, and precise choreography. The artificial space of 'Big Spender' is highlighted by the contrast of the setting of the previous scene filmed in New York City Central Park emphasizing the natural environment and daylight. The dance number takes place in a dark, cramped club, produced to resemble an urban space with use of furniture, railing, and disco ball. The colour palette of the costumes based in earth tones is treated with stylistic choices, such as glitter, shiny materials, and sequins to accentuate the texture of the bodies as well as movement as they reflect the light with each luxurious hip movement and rib isolation.

In 'Big Spender', as well as in the performance of Lola, women in Fosse's work draw on images from burlesque, pin-up icons, and fashion photography to create an extravagant and distorted performance of gender that raises questions about femininity and sexuality. Theories of camp

provide a way to read hyperbolised and overstated images of women in 'Big Spender' as a critical practice that inverts firmly embedded culturally prescribed imagery. Robertson (1996) proposes that glamorous and flamboyant images of women are powerful modes of critique, rather than oppressive images, concluding that camp is aligned with feminist practice. Camp, as satiric play, gives the female viewer an ability to distance herself from her own image by handling it playfully and with laughter, by 'making fun of, and out of, that image – without losing sight of the real power that images has over her' (Robertson 1996, p. 277). As has been discussed in Chapter One, masquerade with a critical edge of parody, connects to camp with strategies of exaggeration, theatricality, and artifice. Camp, including performance of hyper-femininity and caricatured masquerade, allows a woman a critical strategy to recognise herself as a stereotype and her ability to manipulate that notion as it allows the female protagonist an ironic distance from the stereotypes (Robertson 2002), therefore, the conventional images of sexualised women in all of the dances mentioned in this chapter allow Fosse and the performers to manipulate femininity with a critical eye. In performance, artificial theatricalisation provides a strategy for female performers to manipulate their own stereotypical image as well as take pleasure in its performance. Using the lens of camp sensibility as a subversive tactic for marginalised groups reveals that the hyperbolic performances of femininity align with theatricality of the sexual politics of the musical genre and its ability to communicate transgressive social ideas.

A female performer exhibiting excessive femininity needs to clearly expose gender as artifice in order to queer the heteronormative, patriarchal dynamics. In 'Big Spender', the over-the-top aesthetics of the 1960s and the character narrative provide a fruitful visual map to build extravagant images of femininity and female sexuality, which acknowledges the fashion of the time but also allows for a critical reading. The ludicrous, camp look of the dancers in 'Big Spender' maybe closely linked with the excessive fashions exploited by drag queens, which are designed and projected to manifest and parody gender conventions with the excess performance of gender (Nally 2009). In the case of drag queens, the gender queering process is amplified by the juxtaposition of gender performed on stage and off stage. Nally suggests that drag artists, and I argue the same can

be applied to the female dancers in 'Big Spender', hold up to 'ridicule, not women, but gender assumptions as a whole' (2009, p. 625). Halberstam (1998) asserts that drag signifies theatricality of all gender identity and, therefore, argues for its relevance for female performers employing an exaggerated interpretation of femininity. Drag performance does not only describe discontinuity between sex and gender as imagined in performance but rather 'incongruence becomes a site of gender creativity' (Halberstam 1998, p. 236) allowing for experimentation in performance of gender. Drag offers a mode to parody gender. David Gere (2001) employs camp theory in his analysis of the political importance of effeminate gestures performed by a male dancer in order to question the societal and cultural constructions of gendered movement. Whilst, Gere's argument concentrates on the political strength of gendered movement in performance of effeminate gestures, the ideas can be applied to exaggerated performance of femininity by women. Gere, relying on Bakhtin's theory, argues that 'excessive body' (as demonstrated through exaggerated and excessive gestures) is a method of social critique of official culture and demands rejection of gender naturalism and bodily restriction (2001, p. 356). Importance of deliberately exaggerated, purposefully hyper-feminine aesthetics in Fosse's work leads to an interrogation of choreography, movement, and gestures as a powerful political strategy to question dominant dynamics of gender in musical films.

Fosse applies the concept of artifice physically by choreographing severe and uncomfortable positions for the dancers. Chita Rivera sings 'Do you wanna have fun?' whilst standing with her right arm resting over her head. Her left hand is wrapped around behind her back and resting on her right hip. Her torso is twisted by the position of her left arm causing her upper body to simultaneously face forward and side. The awkward position causes her waist to spiral and pelvis to protrude backwards. She rolls her splayed fingers sequentially six times replicating the rattle sound in the music. Her position is discommodious, extreme, and unnatural. In one sense, Fosse choreographs a painful looking position, torturing her body and figuratively breaking her, therefore, creating a problematic commentary regarding women. On the other, Rivera rejects the conservative positioning of the female body in a pretty, symmetrical manner, rejecting the Western canon of

femininity as presented in the image of the classical ballerina. The overly staged theatricality of gesture creates a camp effect for presentation of femininity.

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Figure 3 'Big Spender', *Sweet Charity* (1969). Screenshot.

Fosse inserts difficult positions throughout the dance as demonstrated by a dancer standing with her left hip pushed out and her ribcage compensating for this movement. These extreme positions challenge the physical strength, coordination, and flexibility of the dancers, whilst urging the viewer to consider the disturbed linearity and directions of movement. The dancer arches her back and places her left hand on her hip with fingers stretched to display her hand in a staged way. The dancer raises her index finger with a visible long nail while making a 'pssst' sound, slightly pauses and lowers her finger to the railing. Another dancer bends over in a flat back position with one arm hanging over the railing; the next dancer has her bent leg placed on the railing however she appears slightly off-centre. Often dancers exhibit flat backs and firmly held upper bodies, which accentuate the contrived use of the spine. This, in turn, asserts the affected and stilted nature of choreography. The methodical approach to movement, as demonstrated in the analysis of the carefully planned and executed choreography, reveals a self-conscious and, thus, self-reflexive approach to presentation of femininity.

Fosse borrows dance movement from vernacular, social dance of the late 1960s. He stylises ideas from popular social dances to create his idiosyncratic movement vocabulary, which contorts the

body into unwieldy movement and positions. The nature of the movement becomes artificially constructed material with introduction of technical Broadway jazz dance codes and refinement of the bodily execution resulting out of formal dance training. The choreography employs heavily stylised gestures and movement to highlight the idea that this movement is contrived and, thus, artificial. Choreographed gestures such as the one in which all dancers bend their finger twice in a calling action in a highly articulated movement in unison, exemplify camp as a movement strategy. Again, Fosse uses a connection between lyrics and gestures as he stages the entire first verse in stillness. Combining exaggerated gesture with humour the dancers open their hands, spreading their fingers as they sing 'I don't pop my cork for every man I see' making a powerful statement about their control over their sexual choices even as sex workers. Images of female excess as an expression of artifice function to 'undermine and challenge the presumed naturalness of gender roles and to displace essentialist versions of authentic female identity' (Robertson 1996, p. 268). The excessive spectacle created through the layering of stylised gestures, resistant movement, innuendo-filled lyrics, and the cynical attitude of the dancers support the artifice of the number and furthermore the campness of femininity and the jaded performance of sexuality. The combination of double *entendre* in the lyrics combined with the sensualised display of the female bodies in 'Big Spender' calls for the spectators to view the women in a transgressive manner. The dancers deliver the lines, such as 'Hey, fellow. Can I talk to you for a second? What's the harm in a minute talk?', 'Hey guy do you wanna dance? A little dance won't hurt ya!', 'Ooh, you're so tall!', and 'Let's have some fun!' in that deliberate uninterested way, which creates an ironic distance from the seemingly inviting, fun, and alluring phrases. Fosse's work is filled with witty sensibility demonstrated in the lyrics and the dance choices, which provides space to raise challenging questions regarding gender and sexuality. 'Big Spender' comments on performance of gender through exaggerated positioning of the body, precise finger clicks and isolations, and slinky undulations of the arms and backs. The ostentatious decor including a velvet lined railing, plastic tinsel, and a disco ball accentuate the aesthetic of the dance to create a powerful statement on women, sex, and campness in musicals.

'Rich Man's Frug' from Fosse's 1969 film *Sweet Charity* also encompasses ideas of hyper-femininity, camp, awkward sexiness, and display of physical prowess. This dance takes place in the celebrity club where the aesthetic of decadence is presented through the décor of the space, as well as styling of women who exhibit the popular fashion of the time by wearing simple black shift dresses. The little black dresses worn by the female dancers and well-tailored suits by the men indicate the attention to glamorous fashion that compliments the aesthetic of the space and dance. Conceived as a performance, the dance takes place on stage decorated with Hellenistic sculptures and a fire, highlighting the theatricality of the number. The aesthetic of decadence amplified by the quick edits introduces the glamorous imagery for the dance. Although, Fosse employs similar choreographic and directing strategies in 'Big Spender,' earlier in the film, 'Rich Man's Frug' appears purposefully designed to portray glamour associated with film stars and wealthy high class with quick shots around the club showing women reclining in specifically placed positions with ponytails carefully strewn out; exotic animals in cages; shots of champagne; or Caesar-like feedings of grapes. Suzanne Charney leads the mixed-gender ensemble to display artifice, body distortion and fragmentation, and display of physical control. The dance begins with three dancers entering the stage with exaggerated walks while a number of dancers remain static in mannequin like positions, such as a woman who is standing in parallel fourth position facing back but completely rotated in the waist to face forward with her straight arms and flexed hand stretched placing her body in to a discommodious and, therefore, highly contrived position. The two paused male dancers look like they have been halted in a walk, however, their straight legs indicate that this is not a natural, pedestrian walk but rather a purposefully choreographed one. The female soloist who enters the stage walks with her pelvis protruding forwards, while the two men wearing suits glide through the space pushing their pelvis backwards with one hand in the pocket and the other deliberately lifted at the elbow to present the cigarette in their hand.

The camera shifts to the front centre of the stage and shows the female dancer advancing forward with small steps whilst performing wrist isolations that move forward and back in front of the body and side to side. She embodies control and coolness maintaining a steely face expression as she

sways her hips sideways with accompanying smooth arms movements and her head demurely moving side to side. She appears conscious and confident of her sexiness although the movement is internalised. Charney's unchanging stoic facial expression resists the demands of happy-go-lucky entertainment of early musicals to focus attention onto her execution of the movement. She contains her power with appropriate application of tense energy, unleashing it in certain movements, only to resume her internal cool. Following a movement pause, she undulates her back in quick rhythmical succession, rotates her head flipping her high ponytail around and faces backwards sitting sharply into the hip. Charney's ability to perform musically dictated isolations with subtle dynamics, distort her body in to extreme positions, whilst performing with coolness and control demonstrates her technical ability as a dancer and performer. The complex layering of isolations and physically embodied rhythms extrapolates the labour of the female body, as well as, excessive movement as a foundation for performance of hyper-femininity. Emphasis on exaggerated positions communicates the camp aesthetic on female and male bodies.

Conclusion

Women in Fosse's number embody sexiness. One can argue that with their sexualised presence they conform to the male gaze dynamics of film, yet Fosse gives space to contest femininity and sexiness through choreography that features awkwardness, cynicism, and wit. Lola's performance represents the two approaches as she presents a caricature of striptease and yet her slim, fit body and the control she presents with her movement alludes to the American ideal of the chorus girl. At one point in the dance Lola performs a series of poses reminiscent of pin-up girl positions, which symbolize the American standards of beauty in the 1940s with primary function to offer a voyeuristic seduction by the image. Pin up images constructed the American ideals of femininity and sexuality in a similar way to the sexuality of chorus girls so that the positioning of the attractive women was key to creating the provocative persona. She embodies contradictory ideas regarding the female dancing body on screen, one which may have served as a prototype for objectification of women due to its sexual nature and another which problematises predetermined ideas surrounding femininity. The exaggeration of the make-up, clothing, hair, and jewellery of the women in

‘Wilkomenn’, ‘Whatever Lola Wants’, and ‘Big Spender’ permits a critical reading, as a conscious and exaggerated display of the ‘feminine’ adornments. The fiction seen in the fabrication of femininity in performance offers the woman agency and posits her as a grand illusion that remains unreal and unattainable. Witty, playful, consciously aware performance of femininity problematises the display of female sexuality as it exposes femininity as masquerade.

Elaborately crafted through choreography, performance, and filming techniques, sexiness, like masquerade, highlights the labour required in its performance. Masquerade, mimicry, and camp offer tools to analyse images of women in Fosse’s work with regard to gender as a cultural construct. The dances can be understood in terms of objectified female images, the male gaze theory, and even misogynistic application to the distortion of the female body. However, I propose that exaggerated images of femininity and sexualised movements can serve to undermine the patriarchal dynamics of gender identities from within. The female body on display does not occupy a single identity rather it embodies an identity in flux. Fosse choreographs hyper-feminine and sexually enticing images of women as camp methodology to question femininity as a cultural construct. Fosse’s witty approach to the performance of femininity and female sexuality turns the performance of masquerade into parody which ultimately questions and contests the kind of images of gender, and specifically femininity, in commercial musical films. By doing this, it can be argued that he allows for a critical reading of not only gender but the genre as a whole and its conventions and traditions of the early and mid-twentieth century. The next chapter builds on the ideas of exaggeration in performance of femininity to analyse aesthetics of spectacle, namely glamour and grotesque, as a factor in construction and presentation of gender.

Chapter 4

Spectacle: Glamour and the Grotesque Realism in Fosse's Choreography

In the previous chapter, the discussion concentrated on the choreographic and cinematic tools Fosse employs in order to create a highly specific image of femininity. The theatricality of gender is conceived through a carefully formulated hyperbolic performance of femininity that Fosse problematises with parody and camp sensibility. Building on analysis of hyper-femininity, masquerade, and camp in the previous chapter, this section critically evaluates the aesthetic properties of spectacle in Fosse's choreography and its effect on implications of femininity. Both sections explore the aesthetics of exaggeration in the construction of femininity, which manifest in the choreography, filming, and editing of female dancers and performers in Fosse's work. Having established the concept of masquerade as a political strategy for the performance of gender earlier in the thesis, this chapter examines the role of spectacle envisioned as aesthetic excess in images of the Fosse woman.

In musicals, the term spectacle functions as a visual phenomenon and political gesture as discussed in Chapter Two. Whilst spectacle is a core element of film aesthetics, musical theatre employs spectacle as a key attraction (Kellner 2003). In a capitalist culture comprised of images, aesthetics provides a crucial element to participate in its market place and cultural network. In this chapter, spectacle acts as the protagonist for the discussion of Fosse's screen work. Fosse draws on the spectacular history of musical theatre and translates it to the screen where it is increased by the technical abilities of the filming process. In Fosse's cinematic and choreographic work spectacle is created by the choreography, filming techniques, and the employment of glamour as a visual manifestation of this phenomenon. I argue that Fosse employs two particular aesthetics of spectacle, which are as glamour and grotesque. These aesthetics act as an expression of spectacle and provide commentary on and critique of the cultural dynamics they represent. As previously established in Chapter Two, aesthetics create active meanings and political ideas, therefore, turning attention to analysis of excess and exaggeration in Fosse's work leads to an analysis of visual properties that

perpetuate spectacle as a driving force in the musical genre. Alternatively, as discussion on hyper-femininity aims to show, examining glamour and grotesque in their various manifestations in these screendance examples seeks to illustrate the subversive potential aesthetics offered by the representation of femininity. Through the analysis of specific aesthetic strategies Fosse employs in *All That Jazz* (1979), this chapter argues that spectacle in Fosse's work has a direct effect on the representation of femininity as it highlights the theatricality of gender performance.

Following the traditional backstage musical format, *All That Jazz* follows Joe Gideon (Roy Scheider), a Broadway director and choreographer, in the process of making a new show and editing a film. In Fosse's film, Gideon tries to balance the creative demands of creating a show, rehearsals, finishing of a film, and his personal life, throughout which he is accompanied by a female ensemble, including girlfriend Kate (Ann Reinking), ex-wife Audrey (Leland Palmer), daughter (Erzsebet Foldi), the Angel of Death (Jessica Lange), and various other womanising conquests. The pace of the film reciprocates the plot, which describes his various addictions to amphetamines, work, and pleasure, as well as his rapidly deteriorating health. Aesthetically, the film combines various elements, such as dance scenes that are either staged as rehearsal footage in a rundown studio or as highly stylised and glamorous performances; scenes from everyday life lacking the glitz of performance scenes; and the carnivalesque scenes, which include performances in small theatre inspired by biographical moments of Gideon's life or circus imagery that accompany conversations with the Angel of Death.

Fosse's choreographic signature style promotes spectacle as a key aesthetic strategy. His highly theatrical and stylised choreographic style employs glamour as a seductive exhibition of spectacle; yet the aesthetic of grotesque realism present in the dance movement and thematic choices complicates the utopian, escapist mode of musical films. These ideas are communicated through choreographic and movement choices, costumes, camera and editing approaches. The section that follows aims to analyse the political meanings regarding gender that glamour offers. In the latter part of the chapter, the analysis concentrates on the examination of the grotesque as a transgressive strategy.

The driving force in *All That Jazz*, as well as much of Fosse's work, is the idea of excess and spectacle – a combination of glamour and grotesque - as a major aesthetic impulse. Glamour, as a representation of spectacle, alludes to social and economic mobility with prevailing notions of bodily perfection, high style, and unrequited desire. Several scholars (Banner 2010, Dyhouse 2011, Gundle 2008, McMains 2006, Williams 2013) have theorised ideas of glamour yet it remains a phenomenon that eludes concrete definitions. Carol Dyhouse's (2011) historical overview of glamour in everyday fashion, magazines, and cinema links the phenomenon to ideas of magical charm, visual seduction, sophisticated allure and 'always ...link(s) with artifice and with performance' (Dyhouse 2011, p.1). Glamour acts as a manifestation of spectacle in Fosse's work and is therefore crucial in understanding how spectacle functions in his work. Fosse engages glamour in the stylised performances in film and dance through spectacular display of choreography, dance technique and performance, and filmic style. Glamour is a style, a sensory perspective which carries connections to excess, pleasure, sensuous and sensory stimulation, and projections of power (Dyhouse 2011). The polished aesthetics of musical and dance numbers provides the seductive appeal of the films combined with captivating thematic development. Although, glamour is a slippery, fluid term it holds a consistent connection to Hollywood cinema, theatricality, modernity, capitalism, and fashion. For Stephen Gundle (2008), glamour represents an intersection between a culture of spectacle and consumerism, theatre, and theatricality. In Fosse's work, dance plays a major role in creating a glamorous presence in films as it explicitly places the body on display. Dance provides an excellent visual interpretation of glamour designed to attract consumers of the musical genre.

All That Jazz introduces the aesthetic properties of spectacle, glamour, and excess in the opening of the film, which shows alternating images of flamboyant credits, the grotesque body, and dance. The film begins with a sideways shot of the sign with the title words *All That Jazz* made up of hundreds of light bulbs that illuminate in patterns. The camera pans around the turning sign to end in a shot of the opening credits lit up with innumerable light bulbs accompanied by the fanfare of Broadway jazz music, demonstrating the razzle-dazzle of the musical genre. The opening credits of the film support

the aesthetics of the spectacle as visually-driven stylised images of grandeur designed to exhibit excessive material. This image is immediately replaced with Gideon's morning bathroom routine performed to Antonio Vivaldi's 'Concert in G', which highlights the workings of the face, such as the opening of the bloodshot eye, coughing, and the ingestion of dissolvable medicine, a sequence repeated throughout the film. Within the first few minutes, Fosse introduces the major ideas of the movie: glitz and glamour as spectacle along with the irony of the grotesque aesthetic, which presents an unruly excess of the body as a spectacle of deconstruction. This visual trend continues through the dance scenes all the way to the dramatic ending.

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Figure 4 Opening credits *All That Jazz* (1979). Screenshot.

The opening sequence is followed by the audition scene, which marks the first step in the process of Gideon's show. Set in the theatre, the scene features Gideon on stage teaching various dance sequences in order to cast the chorus line. This scene signifies the anticipation of the spectacle presented throughout the film with a stage filled with an extremely large group of dancers, complex filming techniques, and emotional tension. With the increasingly amplifying volume of George Benson's song 'On Broadway' (1978) the camera pans back to show the stage packed with dancing bodies. An overhead view captures the sea of dancers and increases the feeling of volume and excess as the screen is saturated with a large mass of moving bodies, which exudes an overwhelming sense of the crowd. Gideon's casual and quotidian movements as the choreographer

giving directions juxtaposes the excessive filming and editing techniques. His small movements appear unchoreographed and unrehearsed providing a contrast to the theatrical staging of the dancers moving with urgency and tension. Fosse shot the scene with various camera angles and multiple shots of the same movement, which are then enhanced by quick editing. The filming and editing choices include perspectives which would be unavailable to a theatre auditorium spectator, such as the overhead shot, and complicate the temporal and spatial choreography on screen by disturbing the linear progression of the number and offering multiple perspectives of a dance. Fosse's filming technique for dance varies greatly from the more traditional examples of straightforward full-body shot examples of choreography in musicals of the first half of the twentieth century. His extension of the choreographic and filming paradigm of earlier musicals mobilises dance as a complex idea filled with manifold meanings. In this scene, the combination of movement and cinematic techniques adds urgency of movement, which sets up the tense and complicated narrative of the film. This dance scene simultaneously exposes the appeal of the musical genre and points out the gruesome reality of the process through its stylised staging of the 'cattle call' audition. The musical and dance numbers that follow sustain the overpowering commercial nature of the musical genre introduced by the flashy graphics of the title, whilst the grotesque imagery of Gideon's damaged body communicate the disturbing spectacular aesthetic and challenge the dynamics of show-business from within.

Although, the audition scene in *All That Jazz* directly relates to the narrative of the backstage musical and aims to depict the process of a Broadway show production, it clearly uses spectacle as a key stylistic element in Fosse's work, creating an aesthetic and a feeling of abundance and excess. Throughout the film, dance numbers in the film adhere to the idea that spectacle is visualised through cinematic excess in films. Dance scenes form cinematic excess in different ways based on their setting and context. For example, the rehearsal footage and 'Take Off with Us' and 'Airotica', which are set in the dance studio and performed with rehearsal clothes relate to the narrative of the show's production and portray exaggeration and excess through choreography. The Hallucination suite of dances following Gideon's heart surgery veers from the story of the film, yet has an important function in the emotional and visual fantasy that defines the musical genre. The four

dances of the sequence, including 'After You've Gone', 'There'll Be Some Changes Made', 'Who's Sorry Now', and 'Some of These Days' emerge out of this heavy narrative content as a fantastical performance through the narrative and glamorous staging. The final number of the film, 'Bye Bye Life', illustrates Gideon's imminent death with an exuberant and cathartic performance in style of rock concerts, which will be described later in the chapter. Fosse sets up the Hallucination scene suite of dances and the closing number 'Bye Bye Life' as theatrical performances justified by the plot but isolated from the rest of the film thematically and aesthetically.

Whilst these dances exist outside of the dominant structure of the film, specifically plot and narrative, and therefore constitute cinematic excess, they demonstrate the stylistic, subjective choices that contribute to the overall aesthetic character of the film. Applying Linda Williams' argument that excess visualised as 'sex, violence, and emotion are fundamental elements of the sensational effects' (2000, p. 208) in horror movies, chick flicks, and pornography to the analysis of the Fosse musical allows for an examination that considers dance and musical numbers as essential factors of the aesthetic and emotional narrative of the film. Several theorists including Barthes, Heath, and Thompson (McGowan 2007), have discussed the troubling issue of excess in films arguing that it escapes analysis and that the act of writing about excess functions to point out the narrative's lack of completeness, however in *All That Jazz*, musical numbers have a crucial role in creating the emotional and aesthetic nature of the film, as well as, drawing attention to the arbitrary choices that define the musical genre in a critical and celebratory manner. Musical and dance numbers in *All That Jazz*, as well as other Fosse musicals, such as *Cabaret* and *Sweet Charity*, exist as cinematic excess and are, therefore, spectacle, however, they also demonstrate the importance of aesthetics in the visual development of the story. *All That Jazz* relies on spectacle, decadence, glitter, and sequins to illustrate the hedonistic and self-indulgent emotional whirlwind of both the main characters and the musical genre.

Often debates surrounding cinematic excess, as presented in Chapter Two, posit narrative versus image, however, in *All That Jazz* spectacle acts as a lead character in the narrative. Fosse's insistence on including dance scenes of various styles, such as the audition and rehearsal scenes

footage, the highly theatrical and glamourised dances of the Hallucination scene, the performance commemorating Gideon's imminent death, and even the living room dance performed by Gideon's daughter and girlfriend, acknowledge the conventions of the musical whilst questioning its political and economic structure. By including these carefully choreographed dance sequences that disturb the linear progression of the narrative, Fosse acknowledges that cinematic excess contains the potential to subvert conservative film structures, which according to Rosalind Galt (2011) privileges meaning over image. By relying on aesthetics expressed through excessive stylishness, this film carries political meanings that seek to subvert the idea that decorative and aesthetically pleasurable commercial film is subservient to art film where images serves meaning, which refers to Galt's (2011) ideas regarding aesthetics in film discussed in Chapter Two. This range of musical and dance performances and visual composition combined with other expressions of cinematic excess, such as the conversation with the Angel of Death, and recollections of Gideon's past (also conceived as performances, such as Audrey's vaudeville number or dances by strippers) give the film its specific identity, which combines aesthetic pleasure, spectacular dance numbers, the images of illness and death, with potent socio-political commentary that these structures exhibit. Through its complex structure of independent, yet aesthetically and emotionally connected elements, which convert cinematic excess into the cinematic core, *All That Jazz* exceeds the symbolically structured social reality by deviating from conventional and /or linear narrative structure. Musical and dance numbers, which form cinematic excess in Fosse's film, give his work its distinct character of communicating socio-political ideas through aesthetics, specifically glamour and the grotesque.

4.1 Glamour: Choreographic Excess

Many Fosse dance numbers encompass visual strategies of glamour, this analysis will focus on 'There'll Be Some Changes Made,' a solo performed by Ann Reinking in the Hallucinatory suite of dances in *All That Jazz* as an example of glamour as a tool to attract and seduce the audience. The suite of four dances illustrates Gideon's delusionary vision following open heart surgery. The sequence takes place on a vast sound stage and combines narrative, illusion, and a process of deconstructing the film and dance process. The sequence, which features the dances, begins with the

film clip board and call to action, followed by a long tracking shot that shows the scaffolding of a sound stage including the rigs, lights, and camera placement. The composition of the scene features unconscious Gideon in the hospital bed. Right next to him is another Gideon directing the scene – this Gideon is vibrant, alert, and in control. Fosse devises all four numbers in musical theatre aesthetics with overly-decorated costumes, make-up, and hair. He creates different choreographic ideas for each dancer, however, they all communicate a glamorous aesthetic of perfection typical of the Broadway jazz genre.

The dances of the Hallucination scene are posited as performances choreographed, rehearsed, and prepared for filming. Aesthetically different to the rehearsal dance scenes, these numbers employ theatricality as a narrative tool to highlight fantasy and delusion as a part of Gideon's emotional and psychological landscape. The four dance numbers combine glamour and glimpses of the mechanics of filming and dancers' preparation in order to provide the audience with a well-measured amount of backstage information, whilst still keeping the utopian aesthetics of the musical genre intact. In the first number 'After You've Gone', Audrey (Gideon's ex-wife and star of the show) exhibits her highly skilled singing skills along with her dancing. She wears a high-neck, long-sleeve, heavily embellished dress with a long-fringed skirt. Audrey's body is not exposed at all – she wears gloves and tights creating a classical body aesthetic akin to sculpture, which due to its material is considered asexual despite full or partial nudity. Katie and Michelle dance behind her on pointe representing the virtuosic world of ballet technique. This dance references the vaudeville tradition of variety style of entertainment popular in the US in the early twentieth century that Audrey (Leland Palmer) had performed earlier in the film, however, this time Palmer presents a more polished and glamorous version. In the dance presented earlier in the film, Audrey performs on the stage that Fosse uses to recall Gideon's early life. She accompanies the doctors who present Gideon's case incoherently as they speak quickly and at the same time. Palmer wears tails and a top hat and presents an overly exuberant interpretation of Gideon's medical case with animated jazz hand gestures and shimmies. In the latter dance, in the Hallucination sequence, Palmer does not perform many steps but they are purposefully choreographed and performed. She struts the stage supported

with the rhythmical cues from the music. Palmer executes a sideways pelvis thrust to both sides accented by the sharp sound of a trombone. She proceeds to perform a large circular isolation of the pelvis, which causes her upper back to react and bend over in a flat back and shows the purposefully theatricality of movement. She maintains a playful attitude as she performs fragmented arms and head gestures that follow the rhythm of her complex scat rendition, a style of jazz music in the speak singing medium that showcases her high skill of singing.

Fosse uses glamour to highlight the fantasy of the sequence. Glamour communicated through choreographic and staging choices, aesthetically constructs the image of femininity in Fosse's work, as demonstrated in Palmer's solo. Visually, glamour is evident in the materials which promote a specific texture, look, and touch perpetuating its association with artifice, theatricality, luxury, and wealth. In Fosse's dance numbers that heavily employ glamour as an aesthetic strategy, costumes, staging, and highly skilled performances of technically complex choreography exhibit glamour. Glamour markets seduction, as a shrewd manipulation, which needs to appear effortless in its calculations, therefore, it connects to display of virtuosity, which will be discussed further on in the chapter. Glamour operates as an aesthetic manifestation of spectacle and thus capitalist ideas. Thrift offers that glamour is defined as 'the spell cast by unobtainable realities' (2010, p. 297) as an economic and imaginative force. Glamour functions within the everyday realm engaging familiarity with imagination to offer a glimpse of another life, of possibility therefore alluding to aspirations of forward-driving economic and social mobility (Thrift 2010). This phenomenon holds a key position in producing allure as an element of affluence and thus connects to issues of class. However, glamour also communicates meanings regarding spectacle, economics, gender, class and race.

Since Fosse's work sits within the screendance medium, it is important to consider how dance theorises gender through aesthetics by acknowledging spectacle while also, concurrently, contesting it. Although dance scenes in musicals represents spectacle directly by deviating from the narrative structure, they also provide material and a method to decode representations of the moving bodies as socio-political possibilities for meaning making. Analysing the glamour and virtuosity of his dances as aesthetic visualisation that suspends the plot, acknowledges cinematic excess as spectacle,

however, it also turns focus onto dance as a political expression, particularly regarding femininity. Glamorous dances provide the promise of utopian fantasy that Thrift (2010) proposes. In these moments of pleasure, the dance on film obstructs the importance of corporeality as dance poses as fantasy. Blanco Borelli recognises the perils of screendance as the ‘filmic apparatus uses dance to render bodies virtuosic and sublime while simultaneously erasing the labour involved in training these bodies’ (2014, p.165). If dance in films is understood as a fantasy in Žižekian terms, then, it resists interpretation, cannot be analysed and thus dance sequences are a mere fantastical phenomenon devoid of analytical, political, and cultural potential (Blanco Borelli 2014).

Dance scenes offer sensational escape and therefore encourage the viewer to enjoy dance numbers separately to the narrative, possibly halting the analytical ambitions of the viewer. However, as Blanco Borelli argues ‘dance can also move comfortably alongside politics when attention shifts from its spectacle to the power relations and corporealised significations of the dancing bodies’ (Blanco Borelli 2014, p.171). Turning focus onto dance provides material for political potential of bodies dancing. This analysis relies on Blanco Borelli’s argument that dancing bodies constitute subjectivity through action composed of sweating, training, rehearsed, edited choreographies and bodies producing ideologies through movement (Blanco Borelli 2014). Employing Blanco Borelli’s (2014) notion of the ‘corpo-Real’, one can argue that dancing directs attention onto the corporeality as a political tool to create meanings that challenge the obfuscating properties of spectacle. Focusing on corporeality (which will be discussed in Chapter Five in detail) interrupts the fantasy of virtuosic dancing bodies courtesy of the choreographic and filmic apparatus. Examining dances performed by female dancers in Fosse’s work allows for a concentration on the labour of their performance, as well as, construction of gender.

Reinking begins her solo ‘There’ll Be Some Changes Made’ by assuming a quintessential Fosse position (see figure 5). Reinking, who was Fosse’s real-life girlfriend, plays Gideon’s partner Katie in this film. This narrative informs the choreographic idea, as she appears strong, confident, and sexually assertive. Different to Audrey’s dance, Katie pleads with Gideon to change his lifestyle, yet her manner remains stoic and direct. She delivers the threatening lyrics in a straight-forward

manner, which allows her dancing to take on the main role. Glamour in this number is seen in the choreography and the way it is filmed, Reinking's cool performance and impeccable technical prowess, and the costume and styling choices. Reinking's dancing ability and physique offers iconic imagery to Fosse's work, such as the silhouette for *All That Jazz*, which translates into an iconographic image that continues to embody and promote the Fosse dance brand. This dance is the epitome of glamour with its polished, precise, luxurious, and opulent style.

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Figure 5 Ann Reinking 'There'll be some changes made', *All That Jazz* (1979). Screenshot.

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Figure 6 Poster for *All That Jazz* (1979). Private Collection.

Reinking appears in profile with her weight on the taut back leg pushing her hip out as illustrated in figure 5. Her front leg is bent and her arms frame her body accentuating her long legs. On the first count she switches position with a dynamic, sharp movement and solidifies this number as exemplary of the Broadway jazz aesthetic of perfection. The camera focuses on her steely face with doll-like features comprising of large blue eyes and a small mouth. Fosse alternates the long shots capturing her whole dancing body at the centre of the screen with close ups of her face allowing the viewer intimacy whilst establishing the distance from Reinking's perfectly poised and controlled body. The stark setting allows for a vast, clean sense of space polished with an off-white backdrop and sterile lighting. Reinking's dancing and costume stand out against this minimalist background. Sharp isolations, such as flicks of the wrists and shoulder shrugs, disturb the architectural image presented at the beginning of the dance, which introduces alternate techniques to presentation of well-assembled women on screen. The classical line of her body is broken with a sickled foot placed behind the knee in the parallel *passé* position as she pulses her hips forward introducing the grotesque aesthetic into this perfectly polished dancing body manifested through choreography 'which often deals with awkward and unflattering movement that is simultaneously comical and disturbing' (Dodds 2006, p. 128). Fosse's dance uses tension between the arresting display of glamorous dance style and movements that complicate the meanings projected by the quirky and unpredictable gestures.

The statuesque position allows for a careful consideration of the perfectly assembled aesthetics of her body, projecting the spectacular dancing persona rooted in the glamorous dynamics of accessibility and unavailability. Reinking penetrates the performing space and the visual field of the camera with forward charging movement enhanced by the action of the camera confronting the viewer with her sexual and feminine presence from the safe distance of a screen. As the camera moves backwards she travels forward closing the physical and emotional distance between herself and the viewer, constantly maintaining her central position on screen and confirming her central position in the musical and dance spectacle. The relation between the body and its structural

environment is exaggerated in scale and detail (with costuming and camera work) making her body disproportionately large compared to her surroundings, allowing her to overwhelm the screen space and, therefore, to exude control over the viewers. This connects to McMains' idea that 'glamour ... depends upon an object's being simultaneously visible and inaccessible, a conflict that produces desire' (2006, p. 3) and inserts the character, and more precisely her dancing, into the network of desire. The glamorous image projected by Reinking is highly desirable but unattainable, therefore creating tension between visibility and inaccessibility. Using glamour, Fosse displays femininity as an illusion on display, which codes 'sexuality that is deployed but contained, carefully channeled rather than fully displayed' (Bailey 1990, p. 148). Femininity relies on the visibility of the performance, therefore, employing the artifice of glamour underscores its connection to hyper-femininity. Furthermore, camp as an aesthetic strategy uses the overly stylised sensibility of glamour to emphasise gender as a social construct.

For the purposes of this chapter, I employ McMains' idea to argue that in order to produce glamour through choreography, dance makers and dancers rely on carefully crafted movement and structure to communicate a sense of control, magic, and sensuous artifice as evidenced in Fosse's exact choreography and Reinking's performing prowess that results out of formal dance training.

Glamour has an effect on the particular style of femininity the Fosse woman projects as it provides the distance necessary for an effective masquerade, which plays with tension between desire and agency. This luxurious, theatrical aesthetic highlights an elaborately crafted approach to the construction of femininity, in which glamour, like masquerade, uses hyperbole to present the artifice of gender and the musical genre.

4.2 Glamorous Virtuosity

Reinking's solo, and many other Fosse dances, utilise virtuosity as an exhibition of glamour. Fosse and the dancers in his work embody a particular type of dance virtuosity that appears effortless, controlled, and immaculately executed. Virtuosity, exhibited as physical power and excess, operates through luxurious movement that separates and elevates the dance and dancers to an extraordinary,

unattainable level. The Fosse dancers exhibit Osterweis' (2013, p. 57) and Brandstetter's (2007, p. 179) definitions of virtuosity, which posits that performance exists in the tension between outstanding technical skill and an expressive and moving performance whilst also carrying the responsibility of creating the emotional narrative and furthering the plot of the film. Reinking's virtuosity and impressive physical presence enable Fosse to explore choreographic possibilities as he combines impressive leg extensions and musical complexities with unexpected movements, such as stomps and movements of buttocks. Reinking's command of the challenging design of the choreography situated in the highly specific stylistic details allows her to approach performance in a subtle manner as she combines these physically demanding movements with carefully designed facial expressions. Reinking's virtuosic presence cannot be reduced to her extraordinary physicality as she fabricates a performance that combines subtle dynamics and facial expressions that project the indescribable charisma of a virtuoso performer.

Fosse and Reinking abstract explicit sexuality with coolness and elegance that results out of the polished choreography, virtuosic performance, and glamorous styling. Her performance combines athletic excellence with artistic expression as exemplified in the moment when she sweeps her leg in an inverted *rond de jambe* ending in a parallel fourth position captured from a front diagonal camera angle. The next shot, a close up, concentrates on her face looking backwards over her shoulder. Fosse captures her face as she lowers her gaze seductively in a choreographed blink. The careful staging of this simple movement indicates the multiple elements that synergise to create an aesthetic of glamour, high style, styling, and femininity that defines the Fosse woman. Throughout the dance, Reinking displays her virtuosic handling of the choreography that promotes glamour as an element of the kind of femininity she performs.

An analysis of virtuosity requires consideration of the historical context. The musicologist Susan Bernstein situates virtuosity within the 'specific history of music, of the economics and politics of entertainment and spectacle' (quoted in Osterweis 2013, p. 58) alluding to its importance in discussion between art and entertainment. Osterweis (2013) claims that virtuosity is celebrated when perceived to further high art and condemned when used in popular or lowbrow settings reinforcing

the high art/low art division in a highly problematic way. In the post-modern contemporary dance setting (which privileges composition over performance and outright rejects virtuosity as a tool of seduction) the emphasis is on the compositional reach of a dance work rather than a focus on the performer as a person promoting the choreographic value of a work. Contemporaneously to the American post-modern dance development in the 1960s and 1970s, Broadway jazz dancers demonstrated virtuosity in the precision, finesse, and control of the movement, as well as individual style creating a specific rendition of dance performance that promotes a vastly different idea of femininity to the gender-neutral questioning of post-modern dance.

A number of scholars have articulated ideas about virtuosity (Brandstetter 2007, Osterweis 2013, Hamera 2000) in dance seeking to understand its characteristics and implications. Osterweis (2013) argues that discourses of virtuosity are linked to ideas of excess. Her discussion concentrates on Desmond Richardson's dancing ability evidenced by his impressive career including performing with American Ballet Theatre, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, the *Fosse* musical, and Complexions Dance Company, which he founded with his fellow Ailey alumnus Dwight Roden. Richardson's recognisable physique presents a physical manifestation of a dance virtuoso defined through athleticism, charisma, precision, speed, and extraordinary versatility stemming from training in ballet, contemporary, jazz, and experience in poppin' and voguing. For Osterweis, Richardson's dancing shows a 'virtuosity of versatility' (2013, p. 57) exemplified with an extreme technical execution of physically challenging movements of a hybrid of dance styles. In her analysis, Osterweis (2013) distinguishes ability, skill, and virtuosity asserting that virtuosity extends beyond inherent ability (talent) and training to include charisma and the ability to generate excess. For the purposes of this analysis, the tropes of excess that arise out of discussions of virtuosity prove useful in an analysis of hyperbolic femininity and style. Extreme physical prowess, as an example of excess and glamour, ties into ideas of spectacle, which offers an image of a visually arresting and impressive physicality. Although, virtuosity perpetuates spectacle as an image that provides utopian ideas regarding the body, and furthermore femininity, it simultaneously posits physical labour and embodiment as key characteristics of the Fosse woman. Glamour, exhibited as dance in Fosse's

films, creates a platform for ideas of femininity to play as it employs heightened stylistic components that perpetuate masquerade as a tool to present and question femininity whilst feeding the capitalist needs of the musical genre and spectacular allure. Glamour and virtuosity then, aid in defining femininity as artifice, a construct that requires undetected labour. The act of female bodies dancing challenges the passive ideology of fetishised female bodies on screen.

In 'There'll be Some Changes Made' Reinking showcases her personal charisma as a performer and extraordinary physical skills and training with her dancing. Extensive dance training, virtuosic movement, and fully staged choreography, as well as Reinking's status as a Broadway celebrity and extraordinary dancer, represent glamour. Virtuosity, as excess performance of physical indulgence, becomes the spectacle itself, contained in the glamorous power of the performer over the choreography and the spectators. The choreography in this number stretches her body to its visible physical limits as she performs high-kicking *grand battements* followed by a sharp break of the back, which project her hips forward and bends her legs creating a spectacle of the body fragmented by technique 'where each limb of gesture or expression is cut into successive sites of labour and never completely reassembled' (Hamera 2000, p. 51). This kind of complex, physically straining movement fragments the body into disconnected particles affirming the artifice of the movement in discommodious fashion that connects to ideas of camp discussed in the previous chapter. Simultaneously, it presents the extraordinary physical skill required to execute such complex movement, whilst presenting the body as a spectacular image. Reinking physically handles movement designed to disfigure the verticality of the body with skills that require physical multitasking only attainable through extensive dance training. Reinking adds singing to her dance performance, which further conceals the effort required to perform well as she demonstrates stamina through breath control.

Virtuosity functions as excess movement designed to awe and impress spectators, however, it conceals the labour and effort required to execute it. This highly stylised and theatrical style of dancing works in the same way as glamour: it represents notions of luxury and opulence that acts as a seductive and effortless attraction. Like glamour, virtuosity promotes control and accuracy

removing any discordant elements from the image to make difficult appear easy. Virtuosity produces glamour, which is exemplified and amplified by dancing bodies which showcase a ‘spectacle of a body caught in the grip of intense emotion’ (Williams 2000, p. 209). The virtuosic dancing bodies, as exemplified by Reinking and other dances in the Hallucination suite and rehearsal performances throughout the film, visualise the excess of the body. They present the emotionality of the narrative with careful execution of choreography whilst maintaining the control of their bodies and performance. Virtuosity functions in contradictory terms as it exhibits the spectacle of the body designed to impress and awe the spectator whilst also affirming the materiality of the body through skilful performance of technically demanding movement. According to Gabrielle Brandstetter (2007), the virtuoso provides affective excess whilst concealing the mechanics of the movement. She states:

The virtuoso is revenant of a different notion of art and technology; he is a magician whose actions appear to contravene the boundaries of the physically possible while at the same time concealing from delighted audiences the nature of his transgression.

Brandstetter 2007, p. 178

Virtuosity is a hyperbolisation of corporeality, therefore, forcing the spectator to concentrate on the materiality of the body imagined to its extreme possibilities. Fosse’s virtuosic and seamless dance technique functions as glamour, as the seductive tool for his audiences.

For Thrift (2010), aesthetics is one of the key means by which all allure functions, however it is his concern for glamour as one of the technologies of allure that is pertinent to this chapter. Within the capitalist system, glamour is a commodity which drives the spectacle forward. Thrift follows Gabriel Tarde’s model for understanding economies, which states that in order for economies to be engaging, they must ‘generate affects and then aggregate and amplify them in order to produce value, and that must involve producing various mechanisms of fascination’ (2010, p. 290). In Fosse’s films and, more specifically his dances, glamour offers an aesthetic tool necessary for

economic survival. Williams (2013) argues that aesthetics provide the only way to stand out in an over-crowded marketplace. Glamour, then, offers a seductive system of visual representation, which simultaneously obscures its role in perpetuating the capitalist structures and hegemony (Williams 2013, p. 42). This aesthetic strategy, with its emphasis on visual appeal, promotes the fascination of the aesthetic rather than the mechanisms and hardships of labour necessary to produce such an effect. In dance, this is achieved with display of virtuosity of the dancing body defined by Judith Hamera as 'a model of extraordinary physicality' (2000, p. 147) mounted on a 'hyperdisciplined, hyperlaboring thus hypervisible' and at the same time elusive body, thus presenting a tension between the material and transcendental female body on screen. Virtuosity as a result of technical mastery allows the dancer to build the distance from the spectator as seductive armour. However, the virtuoso body is not quite simply awe inspiring due to its seductive powers, it is also a monstrous presence 'remarkably mobile, permeable, and infinitely interpretable' (Halberstam quoted in Hamera 2000, p. 149) therefore lying on the edge between awe and disgust in a similar way to spectacle.

Fosse's film relies on glamour as aesthetic seduction and an affective mechanism to instigate experiential pleasure and consumption, however, the use of excessive styling, polished choreography, and virtuosity exert complex meanings for the presentation of femininity that complicates it with an emphasis on the materiality of an active body. He uses an aesthetically pleasing and spectacular style of dance, such as glamorous costumes and styling and virtuosic dancing, as a marketing device for his films, yet by shifting focus onto the dancing and singing performances by women in film provides opportunity for analysis that concentrates on the corporeality as a method to exert agency. In Reinking's solo, Fosse showcases her virtuosity as he captures her high leg *développé* from a low diagonal angle offering a clear view of the underside of her legs and her crotch, which presents spectators with her body as the spectacle. Her body, presented from this angle, offers an alternative view of the movement as her body saturates the screen. The vectors of the movement are spread in opposing directions and thrown off axis showing the multi-directionality of the movement, indicating the skill of the dancer, the choreographer, and

the director. Fosse's choreography in this instance breaks the comfort of the highly codified logic of movement and linear arrangement so that the spatial form of the dancer is 'defigured through multiple joint locations' (Brandstetter and Ulvaeus 1998, p.45) that is only available through cinematic techniques. The architectural positioning of the body is used as a point of reference and a resting point for the eye which Fosse then dissolves through isolations of individual body parts playfully handling the virtuosic corporeality of the dancer.

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Figure 7 Ann Reinking in 'There'll be Some Changes Made', *All That Jazz* (1979). Screenshot.

Reinking wears a structured, tight fitting sequined blazer, sequined bowler hat, high-heeled leather ankle boots, a high-cut leotard and tights. The play of textures of the various materials of her costume, as well as her carefully coiffed bun and immaculate make-up create the polished look of glamour. The outfit only enhances her well-proportioned physique and the great technical ability to promote the stylish aesthetic of the dance. The tailored costume covers her skin creating an illusion that dehumanises her body to a statuesque presence in a similar way to her athletic dance performance. Reinking's muscular body emphasises the physicality of the dance, however, the labour of her trained dancing body is carefully concealed with choreography and virtuosic execution to project an illusion that transcends the material body. It can therefore be argued that the skilful

execution of the choreography is the spectacle as it only exposes the idea of glamour as the seductive tool for consumption rather than presenting the process of dance production.

The hyper-visibility of the virtuosic dancing female body exhibits exaggerated femininity. Glamour highlights the aesthetics of highly theatrical artifice and thus exposes hyper-femininity as a performative construct. Additionally, it exposes the difference between masquerade as an aesthetic performance and labour that it requires to allow for satirical mimicry to take place. Virtuosity acts as a tool to underline performances of intentional hyper-femininity, which defines divas in musical theatre and film traditions. As discussed in Chapter One, virtuoso performers are larger-than-life diva characters, who destabilise and politicise gender with strategies of hyperbolised femininity. Michelle Dvoskin (2016) defines diva roles in musicals as impressive characters which drive the film with virtuosic, outsized performance style. A diva is characterised as a female performer (usually a vocalist) with excess talent, ambition, and attitude, and/or a grand, starring performance by a female performer (Dvoskin 2016). Diva roles, such as Ann Reinking's Katie, Gwen Verdon's Lola, and Liza Minnelli's character Sally Bowles in *Cabaret* (1972), demand attention by singing loudly and taking up space 'both narratively and physically' (Dvoskin 2016, p. 94) and thus subvert the passivity of the female image on screen posited by the male gaze theory.

Vastly different to Reinking's performance in style, Liza Minnelli commands attention with her virtuosic singing. Minnelli hijacks the film with her solo performance of 'Mein Herr' but even more so in the 'Cabaret' number in *Cabaret* (1972). She performs alone on stage in the latter song relying on her extraordinary singing ability and emotional delivery to halt the film and demand the viewer's attention. Dvoskin argues that in a culture that posits women into passive roles, a 'woman who sings loudly and demands attention in the public space of performance challenged normative ideas of gender' therefore highlighting the queer feminist power of such performance (2016, p. 95). The term queer, as employed here, signifies 'resistance to the regimes of the normal' (Michael Warner quoted in Dvoskin 2016, p. 94), therefore, challenging gender norms and normative heterosexuality as discussed in Chapter Three. Reinking (as well as many other leading female Fosse dancers) embodies the definition of a diva.

Using cinematic and choreographic excess, Fosse turns femininity into a performance associated with artifice and theatricality, conceived as hyper-femininity, masquerade, and hyper-sexuality. Dvoskin (2016) asserts that the excess of diva roles performances exposes the scaffolding of gender construction and breaks limits of normative femininity. Employing Carole Anne Tyler's (2003) theories on the excessive performance of femininity as a political act, she states that 'divas require us to both see and hear women as women' (Dvoskin 2016, p. 95). Glamour, as a heightened sensory and visual strategy highlights femininity as a spectacle because it magnifies masquerade with emphasis on style and artifice. Glamour works with physical excess seen in the rhythmical complexity, isolations, and virtuosity of Fosse's choreography to highlight the contrived artifice of gender and hence expose femininity as a carefully crafted masquerade.

Glamour, then, has an effect on gender representation. Gundle (2008) classes glamour as a gendered system, a specifically feminine phenomenon closely aligned with cinematic practices. Megan Williams (2013) critiques Dyhouse's overly enthusiastic view of the feminist power of glamour as she notes that the author undermines the risks associated with glamour as a fetishizing tool to turn women into objects of consumption. 1960s second wave feminism identified a hostile stance towards feminine adornments and cosmetics as exemplified by Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex* (1949), which argued that a woman's obsession with her appearance was narcissistic and conducive to passivity which transformed her into an object. Susan Bordo in her article 'The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity' suggests that women's preoccupation with management and discipline of bodies leads to docile bodies – 'bodies whose forces and energies are habituated to external regulation, subjection, transformation, "improvement"' (1997, p. 91). For the powerful 1960s political feminist movement glamour signalled 'false consciousness fostered by patriarchy and capitalism' (Dyhouse 2006, p.153). Dyhouse (2006) claims that the 1960s saw a drop in the popularity of glamour as there was less need for glamorous expression interpreted by the powerful feminist movement of the time as sexually objectifying and concludes that women who performed glamour, ultimately, contested conventional models of femininity.

All That Jazz offers a possibility of glamorous transformation as it leads from the seemingly unprocessed movement material in the audition and rehearsal scenes to perfectly polished and executed dance performances, such as Palmer's and Reinking's solos. Reinking's glamorous embodiment of virtuosic choreography and performance surpasses conservative physical conventions of feminine demureness allowing her a powerful position on screen. Masquerade as discussed in the previous chapter, displayed with glamorous theatricality, employs excessive performance of femininity as a political strategy. This is evident in the carefully designed choreography, which exposes femininity and female sexuality, glamorous styling, polished aesthetics enhanced with sharp editing and well-placed lighting, and masterful execution of dance movement. Furthermore, Dvoskin (2016) argues that an exaggerated performance of stereotypical femininity is so over-the-top that it critiques it. The hyperbolised and heavily-stylised performance of femininity augmented with glamour showcases the construction of gender as a performative, and furthermore, theatrical phenomenon.

This section has considered the effect of glamorous aesthetics on the ideas communicated by the Fosse woman. The women in Fosse's work demand attention with their dancing and technical ability as well as the charisma of the virtuoso performer, therefore, complicating the ideas regarding female dancers on screen. Using glamour as an aesthetic tool, Fosse creates commentary on the images of women in his work. The artifice and theatricality of the performance of gender relates to the political implications of the camp sensibility, which offers a feminist position to queer femininity as discussed in the previous chapter. The highly stylised and opulent style of choreography, filming, and costume choices serve to highlight exaggeration as a catalyst for construction of hyper-femininity, which politicises gender. Virtuosity causes women to be hyper-visible and turns the focus to corporeality as a means to expose the labour of dancing and masquerade.

4.3 Spectacle of the Grotesque

Fosse's use of excess in the body, spectacular virtuosity, an emphasis on corporeality, and a hyperbolised femininity and sexuality connect to Bakhtin's idea of the grotesque body. The chorus

of women in the film *Cabaret* (1972) and the number 'Big Spender' in *Sweet Charity* (1969), as discussed in the previous chapter, exhibit grotesque properties as they queer sexuality and gender designed for easy consumption with circus-like, exaggerated make up and mismatched costumes. The movement fragments the body into unmanageable parts creating a well-trained unruly body resistant to conservative ideas surrounding gender. Laura Madeline Wiseman (2000) explains that the carnivalesque destabilises the prescribed binary categories of gender and offers an avenue for momentary expression of social transgression. The female body within the ideology of the carnival may 'suggest an ambivalent redeployment of taboos around the female body as grotesque and as unruly' (Russo 1994, p. 56) thus the focus on the materiality of the body amplified by dancing provides a political strategy to question gender and the female body as a closed system of objectification.

The hyperbolic and the disjointed aesthetics make the appearance of women grotesque. The excess of the body fragmented by complex isolations, the blatant sexuality of the somatic and lyrical narrative, and divergent visual representation of women in the chorus of the 'Big Spender' and 'Wilkommen' disturb the idea of femininity as a contained and rigid idea. The mismatched costumes and exaggerated, smudged make up of female dancers in the opening number *Cabaret* create a carnivalesque look which serves to oppose, resist, and destabilise the neat presentations of women and challenge the aesthetics and the meanings attached of femininity in the musical film genre. Each performer has a different costume, an unusually incoherent visual representation of attire, and although Fosse provides the visual field with harmony with unison movement section, the choice of movement provides an excessive physicality in the dancers. With emphasis on movement of the pelvis, the choreography draws attention to the sexual and reproductive parts of the female body acknowledging its grotesque corporeality, therefore, providing transgressive potential to patriarchal dynamics of commercial film. The choreography resists the seductive manipulation of salacious isolations with the staccato quality of the side-to-side hip shifts, forward pelvic thrusts and rolls. Through hyper-femininity, dancers stress the materiality of their bodies confirming the political charge of physicality to subvert gender norms on screen with theatricality and unruliness.

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Figure 8 'Wilkommen', *Cabaret* (1972). Screenshot.

Fragmentation of the body also turns the presentation of women into grotesque images. Ideas of grotesque are communicated with excessive costumes, make-up, and hair in the 'Big Spender' and *Cabaret* that actually rendered the women difficult to watch. The contrast between the polished dancing and mismatched costumes (either on a single body or within the ensemble), along with their dead-eyed facial expressions, confuses the images of sexiness. Envisioning dancers in this way, coupled with unpredictable and awkward movement, defies the well-placed, elegant images of women of the 1940s and 1950s musicals therefore causing risk to the status quo of the wholesome musical. Even *Lola* offers moments of carnivalesque imagery with comical parody which alludes to its transgressive potential. In *All That Jazz*, Fosse's choreography of femininity turns more grotesque as female dancers transform into unruly women by exaggerating the masquerade, which allows them and the viewers a temporary release from the traditional hierarchy by not adhering to the prescribed modes of look and behaviour.

One of the methods that Fosse includes as the grotesque aesthetic is in the way he films female dancers. In a sequence of rhythmically edited shots in 'Big Spender', Fosse captures only the stamping legs of dancers. Showcasing only the lower half the body may serve to sexualise the female bodies however their turned in positions and bent knees create an angular aesthetic that defies the male gaze. Furthermore, the grounded and downward movement relates to grotesque

realism as it refers to the lower part of the body, concerned with defecation, sexual intercourse and birth, connected to earth and material living. According to Bakhtin, 'images of the material bodily lower stratum... debase, destroy, regenerate, and renew simultaneously' (1965 ed. 1994, p. 212), therefore affirming the presence of the material body and female corporeality as challenge to the passivity of the male gaze.

Although, dancers exhibit some grotesque aesthetics, particularly in the examples mentioned above, their polished and stylised bodies are well-trained and disciplined, creating a dichotomy in terms of the meanings they present regarding femininity. In *All That Jazz*, strippers in Gideon's early life showcase women who exhibit certain grotesque properties. The burlesque dancers/stripper features in the same scene as the semi-nude performer moving her body on a bear skin discussed in Chapter One. The scene switches to the dressing room where the burlesque dancers are chatting to young Gideon while he is trying to study. Their bodies are almost naked but sexualised with pasties and underwear so that the softness of their flesh and the unruliness of their bodies are exposed emphasising their physical presence. The human body as a central location of culture provides a site for the re-enactment of social structures, hierarchies and social inversion therefore images of carnivalesque women 'undermined and reinforced' the renewal of existing social structure' (Russo 1994, p. 58). The image of the unruly woman could affirm the woman's undermined position in society, or allow a temporary release from the traditional hierarchy by not adhering to the prescribed modes of look and behaviour. In the scene, the burlesque dancers/strippers toy with Gideon teasing him. Finally, he is seen on stage with a wet patch on his crotch, which alludes to ejaculation and emphasises sex, the lower stratum of the body, and the expulsion bodily fluids.

Even though images of the female grotesque occasionally appear in Fosse's film *All That Jazz*, the spectacle of the grotesque imagery is most potent in the images of illness, medical procedures and death that Gideon endures. Rosalind Galt (2011) asserts that filmmakers often include ugly images to fend off the seduction of the aesthetics and avoid allowing the visual power to take over the film. It is possible to argue that the gruesome scenes in *All That Jazz*, which vividly illustrate the physical experience of a heart attack, showing Gideon reacting to pain or hallucinating through the hospital

corridors, distract from the aesthetic pleasure of the musical and dance scenes. Images like surgery present ‘an attempt to counter ... “aesthetize drowsiness”’ (Galt 2011, p.), however, it is possible to argue that they actually offer another form of violent visual seduction.

Throughout the movie, Gideon visibly sweats, lacing his pale complexion with a sheen that contrasts the bodies of dancers in the Hallucination suite who do not exhibit signs of perspiration despite their physical activity. The grotesque body displays the outward and inward working of the anatomy by concentrating on organs and therefore its internal functions. The body transgresses its limits by disturbing the finished, limited, smooth physique with protrusions, excretions, and dissections. Typical symptoms of the grotesque body in addition to sweat are the open mouth, protruding eyes, swollen face, and trembling. The close ups of Gideon’s face, specifically his eyes, which exposes the redness of the strained vessels characterise the ‘visual excess produced through the close range camera work is a key feature of the grotesque, which is known for extravagance and exaggeration’ (Dodds 2006, p. 130). The close up, devised to familiarise the spectators with the emotions of the protagonist, also serves to create a grotesque representation of the body and to make the familiar appear alien and uncanny (Russo 1994) as it intensifies the overall impact of the grotesque aesthetic and offers the body up for scrutiny. The repeated scene of Gideon’s bathroom routine turns the body in to a performative landscape by exposing the grotesque within the body and transferring the performance of spectacle from the stage to the bathroom and, ultimately, onto a single, imperfect body. Gideon’s quotidian actions contrast the polished aesthetics of perfection associated with Broadway shows and musicals which aim to hide the mechanics of effort and casualness of bodies. The presentation of the male protagonist’s body in the process of dying contrasts with the female bodies’ display of control and glamour.

Illness places the body in process of oscillation between birth and death in the grotesque sense of the body in the act of becoming. Pain and medical drama, as spectacular thematic and visual material, have been fascinating topics for films and television as witnessed in the recent surge of scripted shows as well as reality television shows, which specifically concentrate on various medical issues (Bonner 2005, Kupperts 2007). Petra Kupperts explains: ‘Pain is expressive: its body vocabulary can

be huge and anatomically exciting, presenting the body in extremes' (2007, p. 76) therefore offering exciting material for film narrative and aesthetic stimulation. Staging illness and medical procedures constructs a form of excessive exhibition, a visual and emotional spectacle, a carnivalesque performance, a freak show. Fosse stretches the imagery of the body and how the spectators perceive it by taking its abilities and boundaries to the extreme with footage of the grotesque but also with the virtuosic presence. Koppers articulates a conflicted position for the viewer as she writes that 'ideally, the viewer attains the moral high ground through the action of staring at the freak' (2007, p. 80). This occurs through the mechanism of sentimentality for the ill or disabled body. Koppers explains this mechanism as she states 'sentimentality appeals to the affect of pity, and this pity brings with it a social affirmation of being superior' (2007, p. 79). Fosse alternates between the aesthetic of glamour in dance scenes with the grotesque as manifested in Gideon's presence and medical situations, clearly positing spectacle as the central characteristic of the film.

The dissected body, through surgery, virtuosity, or fragmentation of the camera, is crucial to the imagery of grotesque body and draws attention to individual body parts and dismembers the body in to autonomous body parts. Additionally, it clearly plays with the notion of death, which is also a key feature of the grotesque and this film. Mary Russo (1994) draws on Foucault's *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973) to explain the centrality of anatomy and dissection to the grotesque. She explains: 'through the dark models of pathological anatomy, counter-nature, and death, the illumined modern body emerges in what [Foucault] describes as merely "a syntactical reorganization of disease" in which "the limits of the visible and invisible follow a new pattern"' (Russo 1994, p. 116). Dissection and surgery reorganises the body in to systems and parts, which creates a crucial distinction between 'the body as site and the body as content' (Russo 1994, p. 116) and allows for alternative considerations of the materiality of the body. Fosse's dances, as embodied by the female performers, do the same: they force the viewer to imagine the physical existence of dancers in a way that can confront their preconceived ideas of gender.

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Figure 9 Open Heart Surgery in *All That Jazz* (1979). Screenshot.

In the scene showing open heart surgery in *All That Jazz*, viewers are faced with the fragmented image of the body as they witness the incision of the torso and insertion of the chest clamp that allows for the view inside the body and blood. The body of the patient is literally fragmented in the operating room so that the 'body is enlarged into a field of actions that are outside the borders drawn around the individual body' (Kuppers 2007, p. 93). The close up of the beating heart and the softness of the flesh and blood is juxtaposed by the metal medical equipment, yet the mechanical anatomy of the human body is underscored in this scene. The image of the heart is abstracted with medical imagery. The monitors and other machinery visualise the body outside of its physical boundaries and create an aural landscape therefore augmenting the visual spectacle with the audio presence.

In *All That Jazz*, presenting the medical processes and showing of bodily fluids draws attention to the body in the process of decomposing. Illness places the body in the process of oscillation and consequently, Gideon's progressing illness and death supports the grotesque in the film and complicates the ideas surrounding the body. Gideon's failing body is a spectacle in itself, but a vastly different one to the one presented by the dancing bodies. All of the physical possibilities presented by Gideon's progression and various dance circumstances serve to entice the viewer and

connect them to the materiality of the body using vastly different bodily vocabulary. The bodies, which are perpetually broken up and disturbed by isolations in dance and deconstructed through illness and surgery, become the site of resistance of cultural prescriptions.

Fosse's focus on the physical experience of pain materialises in the table reading scene in the film. The whole cast of Gideon's new production sits around the large table reading the script. In the beginning of the scene, Gideon sets up the premise of the exercise with a cigarette hanging out of his mouth. He touches his left arm repeatedly, shifting attention onto his body. The room erupts in laughter with the first joke. Fosse takes away the sound of the people in the room. Instead, he makes the choice to concentrate on the aural landscape of Gideon's gestures, by augmenting the tap of the finger on the table, the small drag of the chair on the floor, the extinguishing of the cigarette on the floor, the breaking of the pencil. Cinematically, the camera moves from Gideon, who sweats, holds his arms, and squints, and the cast who continues to read the lines and laugh. By excluding their sounds, the focus shifts to Gideon's physical pain. Kuppers uses writings by Drew Leder to explain that the 'pain is one of the conditions that brings our fleshy character to the forefront of our experience' (Kuppers 2007, p. 76). By removing background noise, Fosse focus on the somatic and emotional experience of pain stresses embodiment as an affirmation of material presence. Gideon's discomfort in this scene, aided by Fosse's directorial choices, illustrates the body in flux, which demonstrates the grotesque body in an artistic manner. Gideon's medical urgency creates suspense, which drives the spectacle of the film forward.

The final number 'Bye Bye Life' in *All That Jazz* further embodies spectacle, combining glamour, imagined as high style, theatricality, and virtuosity, and the grotesque. The number marks Gideon's imminent death in spectacular fashion. The number begins gently as Gideon sings the lyrics that invert The Everly Brothers' 1957 song 'Bye Bye Love':

'Bye bye life
Bye bye happiness
Hello loneliness
I think I'm gonna die

I think I'm gonna die
Bye bye love
bye bye sweet caress
Hello emptiness
I feel like I could die'

Lyricist uncredited

During this time the stage transforms with the arrival of a futuristic-looking band, which emerges out of the floor. With the quickening beat of the music, the two female dancers dressed in white unitards, decorated with veins and arteries, begin a percussive dance of gestures and isolations. O'Connor Flood, played by Ben Vereen, a Broadway dancer and singer, joins the dancers in accented rolls of the pelvis. Taking central stage on screen, he takes over the number and begins to sing the same lyrics in an upbeat manner. Both Gideon and Flood wear sequined outfits – a representation of the glamorous glitz and glamour of the opening credits and the musical genre. The aesthetics of the genre are enhanced by the multitude of brightly coloured lights placed as the backdrop of the stage.

The exuberant number illustrates the macabre topic of Gideon's death showing the musical film's ability to handle the heaviest of themes with exaggeration, glamour, and wit. Vereen dances with the two female dancers whose performance is designed to provide the glamorous grotesque aesthetic, by showing images of the inner workings of the body abstractly. The number combines disparaging elements of the rock band, Gideon's exalted singing, Vereen's glamorous performances of singing and dancing, and the female dancers to comment on the genre. The lack of cohesion indicates the musical film's paradoxical character, which combines spectacle as a mode of attraction and way to comment on disturbing themes in a self-reflexive manner.

The number establishes cinematic excess as a driving force in this film. The women in this number constitute aesthetic excess, but rather than filling a decorative role, they communicate ideas about aesthetics and gender. Visually they contrast the two men dressed in black with their white unitards. Furthermore, they oppose the euphoric performance of Vereen and Scheider with contained energy demonstrated in every choreographed move. The unitards, which encapsulate their slender bodies

completely, deny the fleshiness of the dancers' body, however, the decorations extrapolate the inner body graphically alluding to the grotesque. The choice of the costume juxtaposes the ideas of the classical body as sculptural with the grotesque. The choreography affirms the materiality of the body, as the two dancers (and Vereen who joins them at times) navigate the dance, which combines elegant lines of the limbs and rhythmically and physically complex isolations. The virtuosity with which they handle the choreography hyperbolises the dancers' corporeality. In the first section of the number, they execute simple positions, such as extension of the arm away from the body that compliments the knee and hip crossing over. Fosse disturbs this aesthetically pleasing position with a series of quick shoulder raises. As the music quickens and the beat appears, the dancers react with hand gestures and hip and back movements. They fully engage their bodies in large undulating movements of the head, which travel through the body to include the upper body, hips, and limbs. The circular pelvis rolls draw the eye to the lower part of the body emphasising the grotesque preoccupation with the reproductive possibilities of the female body.

Conclusion

The main character in *All That Jazz* stands for spectacle and excess. These two characteristics drive the film. Fosse recognises the power and need for spectacle in commercial film by exploiting seemingly disparate aesthetics of glamour and the grotesque thus perpetuating the dynamics of the genre. Beyond the implications on the genre, Fosse's *All That Jazz*, contest the musical genre from within using the production of the Broadway show as a commercial example. Aesthetics, namely glamour and the grotesque promote spectacle yet act as politics from within the genre and its economic implication. In *All That Jazz* Fosse showcases dance numbers that introduce viewers to the pragmatic process of the show production including the audition and rehearsal scenes, however instead of culminating in a performance the film ends with the death of the main character. This film relies on visual content to communicate the ideas regarding show-business, the capitalist ventures that fuel it, and progressing illness. The real backstage development is the trajectory of Gideon's pain, illness, hospital stay, and the ultimate showstopper, death.

The emphasis on artifice and theatricality highlights gender as a construct. Virtuosity and the grotesque hyperbolise the corporeality therefore making the bodies of dancers and the protagonist hyper-visible and impossible to ignore as politically powerful. These two aesthetic principles function as a method to impress and repulse ,hence supporting the ideology of spectacle designed to attract and allure consumers. They also carry repulsive qualities as they distort the body in to deconstructed entities and therefore challenge the fantasy of glamour. Virtuosity and highly stylised choreography and dance performance as glamour showcase athleticism and charisma of performers therefore highlighting the labour and careful crafting of performance.

Iconic performances in Fosse's repertory rely on the charisma of the performers, exploiting their idiosyncratic characteristics as movers and singers. Fosse provides arresting images of technique, sexuality, power, and sexual appeal which arise out of a combination of choreographic and filming choices. The provocative, yet unconventional crotch shots break the conservative demure images of femininity and female sexuality and simultaneously stimulate desire and assert the unattainability of female performers. Functioning as glamour, virtuosity perpetuates spectacle, which presents a dichotomy of blinding seduction and captivating corporeality. The theatricality of the body achieved through this methodology highlights femininity as an artificial, yet carefully crafted construct. The distance formed by the dynamics of glamour and the grotesque which posit the female bodies as desirable yet unattainable provide a platform for effective hyper-femininity and masquerade allowing for a politicised expression of gender. The corporeality of the female performers politicises their bodily presence which is exercised through virtuosic display. The attention on the female performers' dancing shifts focus to corporeality as key method women through which exert power and political meaning in dance on screen, which leads to the discussion presented in the following chapter on the collaborative involvement of dancers in the production of the Fosse style.

Chapter 5

Challenging the Male Gaze: Corporeality and Female Pleasure

In the preceding chapter, I have established the image of the Fosse woman as assertive, physically persuasive, dynamic, and effective in transmitting radical ideas regarding femininity and female sexuality in popular dance on screen. Having established hyper-femininity, artifice, and theatricality as major aesthetic components of the Fosse woman, this chapter turns its attention to the artistic and physical contribution of female performers to the construction of femininity. In order to get a sense of the Fosse woman, I combine analysis of the visual perceptions, i.e. aesthetics with an investigation of the corporeal presence of female dancers. Description in dance relies on the analysis of the visual as well as kinaesthetic perception essentially pairing the ‘performer’s discourse of sensation with the spectator’s discourse of visual reception’ (Franko 2011, p.1). Although, I do not have experience in performing Fosse’s repertory, as a professional dancer I rely on the idea that the experience of a performance is ‘inevitably perspectival’ (Pakes 2011, p. 34), therefore, taking into account the dancers’ corporeal presence in the creation of the images of femininity. In this chapter, I turn attention to dancers to examine various methods that a reading of their performances exerts over masculinist dynamics of film. As demonstrated in the thesis, aesthetics of femininity, fortified by the glamour and virtuosity, display deliberately staged gender. In this chapter, I focus on the corporeal labour required in the choreographic and performative labour of the female dancers, examining the construction of femininity through the performance of female dancers in Fosse’s choreography and the multiple ways this challenges the male gaze.

Susan Leigh Foster (1998a) raises a compelling question when she asks if gender is performed, what narrative script or choreographic score is being used to enact it. The script or score refers to the structure, spatial, and temporal shapes that the film and/or dance follows. This calls for a careful consideration of the separation and characterisation of choreography and performance as separate entities, which allows for individual analysis of the choreographic and directorial choices made by Fosse and the physical and artistic choices employed by the female performers. In this section, the

analysis concentrates on the performances of female dancers of Fosse's choreography to examine the ways in which they construct subjectivity and challenge the masculinist dynamics of screendance as imagined by Fosse, as this furthers the discussion on ways that the hyper-feminine and virtuosic performances contest the male gaze. Additionally, Foster's provocation causes this analysis to consider the dynamics of the masculinist set up of the filmic apparatus, the issues of choreographic authorship, the involvement of dancers in the creative process and its effect on how gender is constructed and performed in Fosse's screendance.

In this chapter, the analysis focuses on the work performed by the female dancers and shifts away from the idea of Fosse as the sole creator of the repertory of his dances for the screen. I argue that the female performers exert agency over the choreography through the physical and artistic labour required to create the performance. Having set up that the Fosse style of dance on screen carries a particular choreographic and cinematic signature, it is important to consider the role that his long time dance collaborators have on it. This means that Fosse's recognisable style can be seen to have been constructed and conceived in collaboration with the stars of his work, such as Ann Reinking, Liza Minnelli, Gwen Verdon, and Chita Rivera. As suggested in the previous chapter, these diva performers create larger-than-life performances that transcend the narrative of the film with their virtuosic dancing and singing, however their contribution exceeds a well-executed performance. With strong emphasis on embodiment, which takes place through active dancing of Fosse's choreography, the labour of the female performers provides an additional discourse to a discussion of femininity in his work. The analysis in this section concentrates on bodily writing by female dancers, This device ties into Foster's (2003) idea presented in the Introduction, which posits that the dancing bodies create individual identity and political potential. The female dancers in Fosse's choreography create subjectivity through their dancing and are responsible for co-creating the numbers, thus, their corporeal identity plays a large role in the creation of the Fosse woman. They assert their agency with their grandiose, spectacular, and excessive performance resulting out of their carefully trained and rehearsed bodies, loud voices, and exaggerated performances of femininity. According to Wolf, musical theatre exuberant performativity is already aware of its

nature as performance, therefore 'in a musical, no matter how expertly presented, the performers can never truly disappear into their role' (2011, p. 96), meaning that the spectators often watch performers' their celebrity persona somewhat and not their characters in performance. The performances of such divas of the musical genre exceed the frame of the narrative, so that their performances stand out as sovereign entities and its stars as themselves. This means that not only do dance numbers exceed filmic structures, the presence and performances of the Fosse musical stars halt the narrative progression and make cinematic excess thus subverting dominant film dynamics.

This chapter investigates the role of dancers in the construction of femininity by employing Roland Barthes (1968) theory, which contests the idea of the author (in this case choreographer) as the sole producers of meaning in an artistic work. Focusing on the creation of performance of female dancers and their individuality challenges the male dominated dynamics as it directs attention away from Fosse and onto the labour performed by women. Furthermore, this chapter concentrates on the corporeal presence of the dancers and the active way they challenge the male gaze with their dancing and the authorship of the performance. The latter idea relies on Helene Cixous' (1976) feminist idea of *l'écriture féminine* as feminine writing, which reclaims authorship for women. This applies to the creation of performance, construction of femininity by the women in Fosse's work, as well as, display of sexual pleasure as a way to focus onto the female experience and contest the male gaze.

5.1 Challenging Authorship

A number of iconic performances by female performers stand out in Fosse's repertory, including performances by Gwen Verdon in 'Whatever Lola Wants', Chita Rivera and Paula Kelley in 'Big Spender' and 'There's Got to be Something Better than this', Ann Reinking in 'There'll be Some Changes Made', and Liza Minelli in the 1972 film *Cabaret*. Fosse choreographed for each of the leading women using their strengths as dancers and performers. For example, Gwen Verdon's solo 'Whatever Lola Wants' explores complex rhythmical structure and precise isolations; Reinking's

solo (discussed in detail in the previous chapter) features her long extensions and cool demeanour.

Julie Van Camp stresses the importance of dancers in the creative process as she writes:

‘The choreographer can provide more or less of the design details through individual coaching. Every dancer necessarily “creates” when he adds details not designed in advance by the choreographer’

Van Camp 1980, p. 30

This idea is evident in many of the iconic performances in Fosse’s work. Liza Minnelli presents her impressive singing abilities throughout *Cabaret*, however, they are particularly highlighted in the two solo numbers ‘Maybe This Time’ and ‘Cabaret’ which appear less choreographed than many of the other examples. The dance vocabulary in both numbers is limited. In ‘Maybe This Time’ number, Fosse concentrates the camera on the close up of Minnelli’s face and upper bust. She remains in the same spot for the whole song, only stretching her hands or lifting her arms as the song builds emotionally. ‘Cabaret’ does not feature choreographed steps and dance sequences. In this number, Minnelli walks around the stage, rhythmically sways from one foot to another, and performs gestures that accent the song. In these two numbers, Minnelli dominates with her powerful, idiosyncratic voice and stage presence. The ‘Mein Herr’ number, featuring Minnelli and the chorus of women, provides compelling material for analysis of corporeal and aural presence that showcases Minnelli as a performer and creative force. The choreography relies on stylised positioning of the body rather than virtuosic technical dance steps, therefore, allowing Minnelli a more casual approach to physicality than the one presented by the other leading women in films such as *Sweet Charity* and *All That Jazz*. Minnelli uses Fosse’s choreographic scaffolding to create a performing style distinctly hers. In an interview with Eileen Prose, Fosse explains his relationship with Minelli and states ‘Liza is pretty damn good on her own. I don’t think she needs much help... She has this enormous amount of talent. All I had to do was push a button or make a slight suggestion’ (Prose 2017). He alludes to the importance of the performer who he trusts to make artistic choices.

Minnelli's performance in 'Mein Herr' solidifies ideas of corporeal presence and individual style as a powerful strategy to contest the stereotypical ideas of female images as passive objects within the cinematic apparatus. She struts onto the stage wearing a stylised waist coat, tailored shorts, thigh high stockings with garters, and a bowler hat. The first verse of the song employs economy of movement, punctuating the singing with a small shake of the head, finger twirl, and seductive roll of the ankle. As she *developés* her leg perched on the backwards-facing chair, it is clear that her body has technical limitations as her leg drops in height when extended. Choreographically, Fosse replaces this image swiftly, however, with the iconic lunge erasing any doubts concerning Minnelli's physical abilities (Figure 10). She places her leg on the chair whilst extending the other to the floor; she crosses her arms at the wrists and gently pushes against the chair causing her back to curve and shoulders to come up. The contrast between the blackness of her costume against the flesh of her upper thighs, back and arms forces a focus on the materiality of the body enhanced by the lubricious pulse of the hips. She transitions into large circles of the pelvis squatting on top of the chair affirming her sexuality in movement. Minnelli confronts the spectators with her physical presence as she holds the back of the chair and crosses her legs in a deliberate manner that features the backs of her thighs along with her taut upper body accentuated with the plunging décolletage.

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Figure 10 Liza Minnelli in 'Mein Herr', *Cabaret* (1972). Screenshot.

The pace of the song and choreography allows Minnelli the time to build her performance of femininity and sexuality. Minnelli's particular dancing style is a combination of tension and casual

movement, artifice and nonchalant attitude. She crafts her performance of this choreography to appear spontaneous, vivacious, and capricious. Minnelli pays attention to the careful positioning of the body proposed by Fosse with precision and detail in the placement and execution of each minute body part, yet her transitions and movement around the stage indicate an impulsive approach to movement, which exceeds the demands of Fosse's choreography and shows Minnelli as a performer with personal style. The physicality of the performance asserts her as a corporeally dominant woman; the grounded movement such as manifested in a firmly planted second position proclaims her sexually powerful presence (Figure 11). As I have written in the recently published essay '*Cabaret: a Study of Fascism, Sexuality, and Politics*', Minnelli presents forceful female sexuality with confrontational posturing of the body, firmly grounded movement, and sensually indulgent performance (Milovanovic 2018b). This results from the precision of choreography, theatrical performance of hyper-femininity and sexuality, glamour, and Minnelli's personal style and persona. Her body moves in an individually distinctive manner as her back folds in a natural way as sways her arms showing an uncontrived approach to femininity and female sexuality rather than a muscular product of dance training. Minnelli pays attention to details of each gesture, which juxtaposes her lack of precision in dance technique, such as her limitations of flexibility and use of her back. She walks around the chair to lean against its back taking special care and time to place her hand on the prop. In the process of moving her hand from the front of the body to the back, Minnelli adds a movement of the wrist that adds to her physical signature as a dancer. In the next move she leans back supported by the back of the chair and crosses her legs alternatively to reveal the back of her thighs and twist of her pelvis. She demonstrates her lack of dance experience and strength as she lifts out of this difficult position by pushing her hips forward awkwardly rather than engaging the core of her upper body and revealing the effort trained dancers skilfully conceal.

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Figure 11 Liza Minnelli in 'Mein Herr', *Cabaret* (1972). Screenshot.

In relation to Fosse's dancers, the dancing body corpo-realises the subjectivity of the women to create a physically assertive image of femininity and sexuality. Sally Potter, a choreographer and film director, suggests that dance provides ways to 'construct the female body on screen as empowered, fully present, and subjectified' (Columpar 2003, p. 115). For Corrin Columpar (2003), corporeality, as envisioned and experienced through dance, directly leads to the construction of female subjectivity of the dancer, which then complicates the idea that the woman on screen can be reduced to a fetishistic object as they have agency. Columpar offers a valuable tool for analysis of dance on screen which bring awareness to 'how all bodies make and bear meaning continually throughout the film' (2003, p. 113) so that the focus on corporeality provides political space to articulate female subjectivity that is grounded in embodiment. This ties in with Blanco Borelli's argument already presented in Chapter Four, which posits that dancing draws attention to corporeality as a political tool. She asserts that the bodies are raced and gendered by 'the actual corporeal' and not just external economies (Blanco Borelli 2015, p. 65), and thus proposes that shifting the focus onto the body as a 'real, living, meaning-making entity' allows for an understanding of how subjects find and assert their agency with movement (2015, p. 64). Young states 'the idea of the lived body recognises that a person's subjectivity is conditioned by sociocultural facts' and proposes that each lived body has its own subjectivity, which is 'particular in its morphology, material similarities, and differences from other bodies' (2005, p. 25). These ideas allow for analysis of dance in Fosse's film, which include the corporeal identities of dancers as well as choreographic and filmic choices that create the specific image of femininity.

Employing Albright's argument that 'focus on the corporeal as a key element in the constitution of subjectivity' (Albright 2011, p. 8) allows feminist dance scholars to concentrate on the moving body as a key way to challenge patriarchal tropes. The experience of dancing has its own intellectual credibility as bodies engage in kinaesthetic, visual, somatic, and aesthetic experiences (Albright 2011). Turning attention to actions of female dancers in choreography designed by a man disturbs the traditional patriarchal dominance in dance and provides a feminist lens to the study. In feminist terms, the simple act of women moving their body, taking up space, asserting their weight, honing

their physical skills, can guide women 'into a heightened sense of their own physical power' (Albright 2011, p. 9), which in turns can provide ground for political expression and activism. Women create a corporeal subjectivity with their dancing, hyper-femininity, and virtuosity that investigates, acknowledges, and challenges dominant film structures and theories. Sally Banes, a dance scholar, states dancers are 'seldom passive objects of the gaze ... but rather, it is precisely their *doing* that is the active subject of the gaze' (Banes 2007, p. 328), therefore their physical act of moving challenges the notion of femininity as passive and the male dominated construction of the gaze. The dancing bodies resist traditional notions of the male gaze as an active body choreographed in way that its actions are designed to draw the attention of the viewer. The materiality of the body, manifested through the sweaty labour of dancing, is a site to exercise the multiplicity of forces working to create an image of femininity in Fosse's work, therefore, providing analysis of the dancing by female performers can cause a shift in the way images of women are perceived on screen.

Elizabeth Grosz (1994) argues that in order to understand the role of the corporeality in the production of knowledge systems, cultural production, and socioeconomic exchange the relation between body and mind needs to be renegotiated. Contrary to Van Camp's argument, which compares dancers to passive objects with the quote 'the choreographer's choice of bodies is as important as his choice of scenery' (1980, p. 31), Grosz (1994) asserts that dancing bodies disrupt the body mind dualism as they create a form of discourse. Iris Marion Young, reactionary to abstract theorisation of gender, calls for a concept of lived body, which is a 'unified idea of a physical body acting and experiencing in a specific sociocultural context' (2005, p. 16). The materiality of the body is visualised with dancing in Fosse's work challenging the idea of passive images of women on screen. The lived body, as a material, physical act, is 'a subjective locus of worldly experience rather than an objective fact, a complex of subjectively felt sensation or embodied thoughtfulness, not *something* separable from the consciousness' (Pakes 2011, p. 41). Kinaesthetic experience of the performer and viewer highlights the subjectivity of corporeality as a 'possibility of experience rather than a physical fact' (Pakes 2011, p 42). Vivian Sobchack e's eloquently articulated definition of embodiment as a 'radically material condition of human being that necessarily entails both the body

and consciousness, objectivity and subjectivity, in an *irreducible ensemble*' (2014, p. 4) provides a key strategy to analyse corporeality of dancers in film. Her idea of the 'film's body' (Sobchack 2000), which calls for a consideration of material properties of film, allows for an embodied analysis of form, content, and context. Minnelli's assertiveness stems from her performance, which stands in antithesis to her character of Sally Bowles, who is naïve, uncertain sexually, and vulnerable. In the dance and song numbers, she performs with the physical confidence of a diva. Minnelli, like the other female performers in Fosse's work, embodies her subjectivity highlighting the importance of corporeality in identity construction.

Looking at Fosse's work from a post-structuralist perspective shifts focus from the idea of Fosse as the creative originator and rather focuses on the dance, choreography, and performance as a collaborative practice. The idea of authorship has been challenged by Roland Barthes in his 1968 influential essay 'The Death of the Author', which contests the position of the author as the owner of the meaning. Barthes shifts focus away from the author by arguing that the reader (or viewer) compiles the work of the creative team as 'someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted' (Martin 2003, p. 33), therefore, attempting to transfer focus from the director as the sole producer of meaning and vision. In Kaja Silverman's view, Barthes 'announces the death of a specifically male-defined idea of the author' (in Chaudhuri 2006, p. 59) providing possibilities to employ a feminist lens to analysis and interpretation of creative work. Shohini Chaudhuri, however, explains the danger of Barthes' arguments which have 'generated an indifference towards who is speaking - which is just as uncongenial to the search for the female authorial voice as male-based notions of authorship' (2006, p. 59).

Barthes challenges the idea of the author as a single and only producer of meaning by claiming that it is the language that speaks, and not the author. This translates to the idea that it is the dance that speaks in a piece of choreography and not only the choreographer. Barthes' idea that writing is 'that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing' (1977, p. 142) lends itself to the study of dance where dance builds identity separate from the choreographer and lives in bodies that carry it.

Following this idea, it is crucial to consider the input of dancers on the choreographic process, performance, and the legacy of the given dance pieces. Pieces of repertory performed by new casts change with each particular dancer who brings their idiosyncratic physicality, training, technique, and persona to the role. This allows for a critical reading, which considers the role of the female dancers rather than the assigning all creative power to the male choreographer and director.

Foster asserts that meaning in dance stems from the intention of the choreographer 'but is equally a product of the dancer's and then viewer's interaction with the choreography' (1986, p. 56). Furthermore, dance, not only as choreography or performance, has its identity that fluctuates between bodies and morphs through time. Dance only exists in the body of the dancers - even notation is not dance, it is simply a record of the structure (although it records quality as well as action). Anthea Kraut (2016) argues that since 'choreographic works are corporeal in nature, they carry strong ties to the bodies that generate them (2016, p. xiv), therefore, the first person to perform a work, who originates the piece with the choreographer has a great influence on the work produced. Kraut asserts that original choreography is often 'anchored in the individual personalities and corporealities of the dancers' with whom the work was made (2016, p. 272), therefore, they are crucial in the process of dance creation and circulation of choreography. Works that constitute repertory in various forms of dance are usually passed on through 'authorized body-to-body transmission' (Kraut 2016, p. 275) in order to preserve the original choreography as accurately as possible, however it is each of these bodies that bring their personal mark and inscription to the performance, which in turn alters the meaning, and possibly even structure, of the choreography. This leads me to argue that any discussion of Fosse's choreographic and directorial work needs to include the creative labour of the dancers, actors, and singers as collaborative authors of the performance.

In prescribed choreography with carefully outlined spatial and temporal structures, steps, gestures, and movements, it is important to discuss the fine line between choreography and performance, in order to clarify the roles of dancers. Foster (1998a) distinguishes between choreography, as a tradition of codes through which meaning is made, and performance, as individual execution of

codes. Van Camp (1980) explains that dance critics differentiate between creative aspects of dance (composition and design) and interpretative aspects (performance and execution). According to these proposals, choreography may be seen as equivalent to a musical score or film script. Insisting on the idea that dancers execute choreography remains problematic as it posits dancers as instruments who are in service of the choreographic plan. Armelagos and Sirridge define identity of a dance work as ‘the work ... determined relative to a stable choreography or plan of movement, construed as the specification of a sequence of movements’ (1978, p. 129), however they do not discuss the impossibility of choreography without the interpretation of the dancing bodies. Aili Bresnahan challenges McFee’s suggestions that a dance work is ‘an authored work created by a choreographer that has a historical identity, meaning, and continuity’ whose performances ‘are performed and interpreted (but not created by) dancers’ (Bresnahan 2013, p. 143). Bresnahan (2013) suggests that dancers need be considered as collaborators in a dance making or reconstructing process as ‘creative, imaginative, thoughtful, and originative’ contributors (2013, p. 143). According to these scholars, choreography, as a score, is important to determining the identity of a dance work. As they present their analysis of the idiosyncrasies of dance, its creative process, and performance, they conclude that choreography presents an unreliable criterion for a dance work attributing this confusion to the precarious nature of performance, dancers’ individuality, and issues in notation. Since dance deals with physical abilities and limitations of humans that affect the choreographic process, a sharp distinction between creative and interpretative elements becomes blurred and problematic.

A simple comparison of two performers dancing the same piece of set choreography proves fruitful in determining the creative and artistic input of each dancer. Fosse created the role of Charity in the stage version of *Sweet Charity* (1966) on and with Gwen Verdon who was not cast in the film version. A comparison of Shirley MacLaine’s performance of the solo ‘I’m a Brass Band’ to Gwen Verdon’s performance of the same number on the Ed Sullivan show (1966) illustrates how each performer uses the skeleton of the choreography to create their own signature style and superimpose their creative power in the dance. In this analysis, the physical style of each dancer draws focus over

issues of costumes, setting, directorial and editing choices, which vary vastly given the specifics of each performance. Both women perform the same steps but their corporeal identity decorates each performance. The differences do not only manifest in the height of the kicks (Verdon's are higher and more effortless) but in the way each of the women uses her feet and hands. MacLaine's smooth use of her hands contrasts her playful approach to gestures and isolations. She performs the isolations compactly with staccato quality. Verdon pays a great deal of care to the way she places her feet on the ground in each movement, which ricochets through her body and creates controlled malleability in each step and her whole body. She is grounded, using the lubricated bend of the knees to execute large positions and cover space. The placement of MacLaine's feet and execution of simple *tendus* is direct, which removes plasticity from her body yet gives her signature percussive style. MacLaine articulates her gloved hands so that they lag slightly behind the movement of her arm, which adds an additional flare, however, it also disturbs the clarity of the lines of the arms. Verdon, on the other hand, uses her hands with technical precision and grace and without any tension to complete her movement. Verdon's approach to movement stems from her formal training, which allows her to move her upper and lower body independently creating a physically confident performance. She embodies the movement fully, executing isolations smoothly but with rhythmical clarity.

The two dancers interpret Fosse's complex rhythmical section of choreography accompanied by the drumming differently. Verdon's control of her core and back gives freedom to her limbs and a big range to her isolations, which then in turn seem to require less effort. Verdon chooses a laid-back approach to musicality catching the musical intricacies of the choreography with unhurried confidence. MacLaine accents each of the movements with precision and dynamic efficacy. She handles her straight legged pivots with attack that respects the choreography but seems to add an extra musical accent. She executes each movement with muscular tension that assaults the rhythm and gives her full control of the choreography and movement. MacLaine authors her performance precisely in time with the choreographic score dancing in the centre of the musical beat, which demonstrates her determinate physical and rhythmical prowess and fluency. Each of these dancers

creates corporeal subjectivity with the physical choices they make, which are a product of their bodily shape, dance training and experience, and individual style. The purpose of this comparison is not to determine which dancer executed the choreography better, but to establish that each performer interprets the skeleton of the choreography with their individual style that includes their physical attributes and artistic choices.

The two performances of the same dance create a different version of the choreography. Although, the steps are the same, each of the performances is laced with the physical signatures of Verdon and MacLaine. Not only do they dance differently, but the way that they are filmed has a large effect on the performance the spectators witness. In the film version, Fosse adds his directorial choice to project ideas regarding excess and femininity. The film version takes place at Lincoln Center in New York City, featuring MacLaine with a marching band wearing stylised traditional military orchestra uniforms and thigh-high red patent boots. The number features changing camera angles, which alter the continuity, spatial and rhythmical structure of the choreography. Fosse employs a variety of camera angles, such as mid-shot, high-diagonal shot, low angles, and close ups. He moves the camera to include unexpected choreographic choices, such as the decision to include men leaping in front of MacLaine and the chorus penetrating anterior screen space creating a complex interpretation of screen. The recording of Verdon on the Ed Sullivan Show features her in a simple long-sleeved black dress and black boots and accompanied by a smaller group of male dancers shot simply with a single camera, which moves forward to zoom in on Verdon's face and swivels to include the full cast and choreography, therefore allowing the audience to concentrate more on her performance rather than the example of screendance, which aggregates many components to project a dance number designed for film.

Using the idea that the dance communicates issues of femininity and sexuality as envisioned by individual dancers, it is important to consider the relationship between dance, dancer and choreographer. Discussion regarding the role of dancers as co-authors in the creative process appears crucial here. Foster (1986) examines the role of dancers in the choreographic process of four major American dance makers. Concentrating on concert dance, Foster examines the work of

Deborah Hay, George Balanchine, Martha Graham, and Merce Cunningham, who operate in different genres, including neo-classical ballet, contemporary, and post-modern dance. One of the premises of post-modernist dance is to challenge the idea of dancers as passive instruments by involving them in the creative process. This is illustrated in Foster's (1986) discussion of Hay's work as she states that dancers showcase their uniqueness by exhibiting a presence that results out of their full concentration on the movement so that the dance permeates their bodies and simultaneously their bodies saturate the movement. The dancer's subjectivity merges with the dance through Hay's technique of cellular consciousness as dancers practice cellular movement extending to the surrounding movement (Foster 1986). As dancers do not embody a character, they negotiate their identity between the self and the image they consciously display (Foster 1986). This is also the case in Cunningham's revolutionary post-modern work, whereby the dancers are directly involved in Cunningham's dissociated choreographic process. The choreographer presents movement sequences, their timing and spatial orientation, however the dancers are allowed to 'refine the phrasing, comprehend the value of each movement and the logic of sequence, accomplish the movement within a precise amount of time, and attend to movement's expressivity' (Foster 1986, p. 38).

Even in more conservative choreographic practices in which the choreographer composes each step, movement, and gesture, dancers create their corporeal subjectivity rooted in the materiality and physicality of the body. Balanchine referred to choreography as a craft of putting pieces together with dancers (Foster 1986). Foster explains that for Balanchine, dancers were directly involved in the creation of the work as 'ideas for a ballet come from the dancers' own technical expertise, their particular flair for moving, and their idiosyncratic mastery of specific movements' (1986, p. 17). In a choreographic process, the vision of the structure and movement depends on the somatic interpretation of a dancer, therefore, the choreography as the physical score assimilates with the dancer's envisaging of the choreography and their performance. Bresnahan addresses this idea as she argues that a key aspect of dance and what the audiences find compelling is 'the way that a dancer performer conveys the piece, that may not be merely an interpretation of what the

choreographer has envisioned but something creatively new that the dancer has added' (2013, p. 144). The dancer imagines the choreography through their bodily experience, which is affected by their cultural and artistic influences.

This way of thinking comes from post-structuralist approaches to the text, which argue that it cannot be reduced to a line of words with a single meaning but can be conceptualised as a space in which a variety of writings, none original, blend and clash. Therefore in the choreographic process, the bodily writing of the choreographers and dancers amalgamate to produce a dance. In order to highlight the importance of dancers, Foster, in the distinction between choreography and performance, proposes that 'dance making theorises physicality, whereas dancing presents that theory of physicality' (1998a, p. 10). For Foster, the creative process of choreography articulates identities as 'the choreographer engages a tradition of representational conventions' (Foster 1998a, p. 9), which are carefully chosen through the process of creating meanings and reflecting, reinforcing, or challenging the aspects of tradition. Fosse creates a map of political meanings regarding femininity with the frame of choreography that the performers embody and materialise, adding and making their own corporeal inscriptions. The choreography is the immaterial object brought to life with performance, creating physical meaning, identity and subjectivity for the female performers. Each performer builds individual subjectivity with idiosyncratic gestural language, which functions in tension with the mechanisms of dance and film.

Dancing bodies are a product of the collective labour of teachers, choreographers, dancers, vernacular and formal dance forms, therefore, watching a choreographic body of work involves watching an assimilation of dance cultures rather than the work of a single creative genius. The labour of the dancers is manifested through bodily exertion and is, sometimes, revealed through physical actions such as sweating. Foster explains 'dancers, by participating in classes, rehearsals, and performances, come to understand who they are when they dance' (1986, p. 49). In order to eloquently articulate their bodies in time and space, regardless of the technical style, dancers need to train extensively. The dancers sensitise their bodies to respond to musical, emotional, and physical impulses and perform particular movements. For each different dance style, dancers master a

technique defined as a set of physical skills, which Foster characterises as ‘mastery of a specific set of movement skills’ (1986, p. 29). Bodies of dancers are ‘a form of performative labour’, which embody and produce knowledge and social ideologies (Blanco Borelli 2014, p. 66). Aesthetically in jazz dance, the dancer is trained to project an effortless presentation of the physicality of their training and performance and the audience is conditioned to perceive it as such, yet the viewers consume the effort exhibited. This ties into ideas presented in the previous chapter on virtuosity, which acts as a spectacular theatricality yet confronts the viewers with materiality of the female dancers and causes a resistance to the idea of passive images of women in cinema. The skilful embodiment of choreography by the female dancers, which is a product of active training and labour, makes the dancer visible. The dancing body, cultivated through training, highlights the idea of gender as a cultural construct always a form of performance.

Employing Priya Srinivasan’s ethnographic research, which offers valuable insight to politics of the dancing body as a labouring body, by stating that ‘the sculpted bodily form moving in space is her labor made visible’ (2012, p. 11), I argue that heavily stylised and theatrical dancing affirms the creative work of the female dancers and affirms their involvement in the choreographic process. Ultimately, the dancers do not display or manifest characters and emotions but are rooted in the materiality and physicality of the body resulting in corporeal subjectivity. Dance presents ‘body writing of muscular exertion’ (Grosz 1994, p. 144), thus, the activity and performance of dancers in Fosse’s works of hyperbolised femininity and physical pleasure highlights corporeality and masquerade as a strategy that challenges the male gaze and immovable definitions of gender.

Dancers in ‘Big Spender’ exhibit their muscularity and actively flex their muscles. Fosse places their bodies on display, yet creates confusion for the viewer as the dancers simultaneously seduce the viewer and become objects of display, by employing aesthetic strategies of glamour and the grotesque. The muscular bodies of dancers challenge traditional ideas of female dancing. Ann Cooper Albright (1997, p. 33) asserts that the presentation of dancing bodies ‘carries meaning regardless of the narrative or conceptual theme of the dance’ conceived by the choreographer as dancers and viewers project their own interpretations and meanings onto the dance. Chita Rivera and

Paula Kelly, the two central dancers in 'Big Spender' confront the viewer with the display of their back muscles (figure 12). Prompted by the beat of the music, they turn forward sharply. Fosse pauses the movement of the camera as they shake their heads subtly and lower their bodies changing the movement quality from the previous percussive turn. Kelly and Rivera show kinaesthetic awareness with altering dynamics and qualities of movement, which results from the control of their muscular system. Dancers' bodies embody their training, which has a major impact on their performing persona and is 'grounded in the phenomenological realities of weight, space and movement intentionality' (Albright 1997, p. 50). The display of well-defined muscles achieved through physical training defies patriarchal models as women's bodies resist physical passivity, however, the fitness process that is required can be understood as another 'normalizing practice' which tames bodies into technical production instruments (Albright 1997, p. 45). The display of hyper-feminine and hyper-sexualised dancers may present an opportunity to objectify women's bodies, however, the intense and purposeful physical activity and the muscular look resist gender norms. Their physical language communicated with high level of skill, along with aesthetic choices, and corporeal presence make a statement on femininity as deliberately conceived hyper-femininity that destabilises gender. Dance materialises the bodies of female dancers, therefore, communicating a heightened sense of physical power. Precisely choreographed bodily movement dramatises gender as it highlights femininity as a construct, which requires labour.

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Figure 12 'Big Spender', *Sweet Charity* (1969). Screenshot.

5.2 Female Pleasure Embodied

The corporeal presence of female dancers on screen challenges the traditional notions of the gaze with the authorship of performance and display of physical prowess. Furthermore, the deliberate embodiment of sexiness, masquerade and femininity, flaunts the enjoyment of an embodied femininity. The display of excessive physical pleasure, both sexual and dancing, by female dancers in Fosse's work presents *jouissance* as a transgressive tool as it redirects focus on to the female somatic and artistic experience. Dodds speaks of the pleasure of performing the choreography of erotic display in neo-burlesque as she writes

I discovered the profound pleasure from ... the feeling of command that I hold over spectators as I remove clothes in dialogue of tease, the liberation of appearing almost naked in an affirmative social space, and the thrill of dolling myself up in a theatricalized hyperfemininity

Dodds 2013, p. 83

Female dancers in Fosse's work are granted a path to *jouissance* which gives them pleasure to experience dance, exaggerated femininity, experience of sexuality through their feminine writing, or authorship. The notion of *jouissance* connects to Helene Cixous' (1975) *l'écriture féminine* as a model that allows feminine desire to reclaim the expression of the female body against the masculinist dominated rhetorical structure that has defined language over time. A woman must explore and 'write' her own body, discover her *jouissance*, her sexual pleasure in order to bring down the phallogocentric discourse, which privileges the masculine in language (Alexander 2004, p.

2). According to Geraldine Harris (1999), *l'écriture féminine* serves as a tool for a sub-genre of political, female performance art. Harris' analysis concentrates on female performance artists who, in some form or another, seek to discover or reclaim a feminine form in order to address issues of subjectivity, agency, and authorship. Female dancers in Fosse's work perform works choreographed by the male choreographer, thus, need to seek agency within the masculine-dictated paradigms of choreography and film directing. The skilful female dancers perform *l'écriture féminine* in Fosse's work as they create iconic performances defined by their personal dancing and artistic style and creativity. The woman reclaims her body (through feminine writing) and gains power through self-expression of language that is not available through masculine language, politics, or economics. Therefore, the female dancers theorise ideas of subjectivity and agency with creative interpretation and execution of the dances. Female performers in Fosse's work construct subjectivity as they exercise tension between their corporeal agency, creative labour and the external structures of the male-led choreographic and directorial process.

Following the idea of *l'écriture féminine* as feminine writing and pleasure, it is possible to argue that the active and creative authorship and performance of Fosse's dancers, gives these women access to the physical pleasure of the erotic, and, furthermore, allows visual pleasure to female spectators through a process of identification. The display of embodied female pleasure, or what Audre Lorde (1978) has coined the erotic, provides a pleasure of feminine power. In order to understand how female pleasure is exhibited through the dances, a theoretical overview of the ideas surrounding female pleasure follows with a look at writings by Lorde (1978), Harris (1999), and Tyler (2003) who employ feminist performance theorists Helene Cixious' (1975) theories. Lorde argues that the erotic is a suppressed resource of power and information for women as it 'offers a well of replenishing and provocative force to the woman who does not fear its revelation' (1978, p. 54). The erotic functions as joy, pleasure in physical, emotional, spiritual forms. For example, the way a body responds to music may resemble an erotically satisfying experience providing a self-connection, thus dance provides an avenue for women to embody and exhibit the experience of joy. The erotic is an internal experience and sensation of satisfaction, connected to sexual satisfaction and pleasure.

Harris recognises the critique of Cixous and Irigaray who appear to value sexual difference in their theoretical writings, however, she extends her argument to describe how ‘the polyvocal, poetic and ‘open’ form of Cixous’s own theoretical writings meant that this remained a matter of interpretation, and the debate has never been resolved’ (Harris 1999, p. 48-49). As Harris explains for a reader (or spectator) prepared to engage with Cixous’s idea of *l’écriture féminine*, the very same notion is supposed to produce erotic *jouissance*, a distinctly female pleasure that draws on pre-linguistic, pre-Oedipal relationship to the maternal body. Since in psychoanalytic terms, we are defined as subjects through language, the *jouissance* implies surrender or ‘a deliberate giving oneself up to ‘unintelligibility’ (Harris 1999, p. 49). Harris alerts the reader to the dangers of surrendering to this pleasure since it may imply a loss of discrete sense of self as given by ‘our cultural psycho-sexual norms’ (Harris 1999, p.49). Yet, it is exactly through this mechanism that *l’écriture féminine* are forms that pose a challenge to phallogocentric norms. The reader, or the audience, ultimately decides on the meaning of a work, therefore *l’écriture féminine* might only function for those who are willing to contest the patriarchal system and voice in the first place (Harris 1999). This ultimately means that a work may be understood as subversive through this mechanism should the audience choose to employ it. In film, female spectatorship is affected by ‘instability in the relations of subjectivity’ (Kuhn 1999, p. 198) as partaking in the pleasure of cinema inevitably leads to woman’s involvement in power relations inscribed by the constructs of gender and sexuality. This, however, may not imply a negative understanding of gender power relations as female spectators may destabilize the male-centric gaze with a narcissistic, self-identifying gaze. By focusing on the actions and artistic involvement of female dancers in Fosse’s work, women in Fosse’s work challenge the male-centred gaze in dance film and re-direct attention on to the pleasure of moving in dance and in displaying hyper-femininity and female sexuality as political right and reclaiming womanliness as an unfixed identity perpetually in flux eligible for interpretation by the practitioners and viewers.

Performance of sexuality exists in many of Fosse’s dances as exemplified in the ‘Take Off with Us’ number and ‘Big Spender’. In all of these dances, including ‘Whatever Lola Wants’, the

performance of sexiness and sex is communicated playfully and through innuendos in movement and lyrics. Fosse pushes the boundaries of sex, disrobing, and nudity in 'Airotica', the dance following 'Take Off with Us'. Fosse's 'Airotica' in *All That Jazz* (1979) offers a dance illustration of sexual pleasure or sex as pleasure within a large mixed gender ensemble cast. Apart from embodying the sexual history of the sexual revolution of the given time, 'Airotica' provides challenges to heterosexual relations by presenting various permutations of gender in partnering and focusing on the sensations of sexual experience. The number occurs about half way through the film in the rehearsal studio. As lights go down 'Airotica' begins with a close up of male dancer unzipping his top changing the standard aesthetic of playful sexiness to a directly stated image of sexuality. A performer holds a torch to his face and says 'Welcome. Welcome aboard Airotica,' insinuating an invitation to an orgy of sex, dance, and sensual experiences through touch, lights, and music. The sensual dance that follows features same and mixed-gender partnering in which dancers touch each other provocatively. In the central duet, performed by a man in a dance belt and a woman wearing a cropped top and thong, the male dancer thrusts his pelvis forward pressing his crotch against the back of the female dancer's buttocks as she suggestively arches her back. The contemporary dissonant music with no lyrics deviates from the conventional musical choices in the genre removing the number even further from the playful, cheeky presentations of sexuality, such as Verdon's presentation of Lola. Unlike previous examples of performance of sexuality discussed in the thesis so far, which represent sexuality and sex implicitly, 'Airotica' employs sex, or a choreographed representation of it, as the theme of this dance and a form of self-expression. As dancers circle their heads on top of one another, move their hips and backs seductively, and exhibit facial expressions of sexual tension in a smoke filled room, the dance clearly becomes about sex and sexuality. Although these are a feature of some of the other numbers, 'Airotica' pushes the boundaries of how these ideas are presented in this film. This number references the act of sex as a major element in forming the performers' identity. Sex, then, is an essential element of creating and expressing an individual's self in performance, therefore, it comments on the position of gender and sexuality and its role in the society of the time with a performance of sexual self-expression.

Fosse uses movement reminiscent of the sexual act in the tense quality of the dance material. Yet often the explicit sexual content is abstracted with Broadway jazz technique, which represses the salacious tone of the number. Indulgent rolls of the head, undulations of the spine, and snippets of scenes in which dancers blatantly touch each other in sexual ways (as illustrated in figure 13) communicate the sensation of sexual pleasure. However, the abstracted virtuosic moments propel the climax of the dance (figure 14) as the number builds choreographically in response to the growing intensity and instrumentation of the music. The movement intensifies to include the ensemble in this orgiastic dance. The dance itself supports Lorde's (1978) idea that the erotic gives an energy that heightens, sensitises, and strengthens the experience as a feeling that keeps developing and morphing. Sharing the joy of the erotic implies that the power is shared. The effectiveness of displaying the physical pleasure of indulgent sexuality results out the choreography, which combines choreographed interpretation of sex and virtuosic technique, experience of dancing intensely, and dancers' complete corporeal involvement.

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Figure 13 'Airotica', *All That Jazz* (1979). Screenshot.

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Figure 14 'Airotica', *All That Jazz* (1979). Screenshot.

Whilst, the dance explores various relationships and practices of sex, it ultimately concentrates on the experience of female sexual pleasure as the climax of the number featuring a Sandahl Bergman in an ecstatic finale. As she lies on her back on the scaffolding a male dancer splits her straight legs open. She takes her top off revealing her breasts and her legs are manually closed again by a fellow dancer. The chorus performs dynamic jumps falling to the floor, which signify the intense physical experience of sex. She performs extreme positions, including a one-handed handstand and exaggerated lunges, using the scaffolding as a prop. As the music intensifies, she writhes her body keeping her bent legs together while her head and pelvis execute furious circles. Visible sweat further sexualises her body beyond movement and her semi-nudity. The emotional experience of the dance intensifies as dancers all gather around the scaffolding hitting it with their hands. Bergman gyrates her entire body culminating in ecstatic movement or *jouissance* as she surrenders physically to repetitive and all-consuming, as well as sexualised, movement. Her climactic performance causes the viewers to focus on her torso and pelvis, therefore, fragmenting and dissecting her body. Groups of dancers break out in a grounded *piqué* attitude position with a high lift of the upper body and move away from the scaffolding. The whole group of dancers executes a large turning double attitude jump landing on the floor and rolling into a position on the knee in unison. Their stylised dance movement reinforces the growing climax of the scene. They all roll their heads and fall down to the ground in a canon created by the editing of the camera. Finally, the Bergman falls on to her knees in a hinge with her pelvis pressed forward and head hanging back, holding on to the railing focusing attention to her crotch. After the dance finishes the dancers are shown sweating, breathing heavily trying to catch their breath implying a post-copulation physical exertion and drawing attention to the material workings of the body and its excretions. Overt sexuality and the implications of sexual intercourse in 'Airotica' defies conservative ideas of gender and sexuality in film.

This display of corporeal pleasure, which integrates a self-assured exhibition of female sexuality and skillful dancing, provides the possibility to Bergman to assert her agency. Having presented her

playful, tongue-in-cheek interpretation of sexiness (as described in Chapter Three) in the 'Take Off With Us' number, Bergman shows off her diversity as a dancer and, furthermore, complicates the female identity. Her vastly different performances demonstrate the feminine identity in flux and its multiple representations. Bergman reclaims her agency through authorship of her performance and blatant display of female pleasure of dancing and self-expression.

5.3 Returning the Gaze

Women in Fosse's film flaunt the embodiment of femininity and sexual pleasure as they assert their corporeality through dancing. As this chapter demonstrated, female performers construct their subjectivity through actions of dancing and singing and display their hyper-femininity and physical prowess thus contesting the male gaze theory, which posits women on screen as passive objects available for scopic consumption. Performers in Fosse's film use a powerful tool to challenge the male gaze by directly addressing the camera and the viewers with their gaze. This simple act of looking at the camera disturbs the traditional ideology of cinematic mechanisms and theory and adds forceful commentary to the type of confident femininity the Fosse women project with active somatic presence and embodiment of physical pleasure. All these factors synergise to form a sexually confident image of hyperbolised femininity of the Fosse woman. This method may disturb Mulvey's idea of the heterosexual male gaze and passive female presence on screen, most often conceived in terms of her male partner. The specificity of the *woman's gaze* is more important in determining her position as the subject/object. The woman who looks directly at the camera takes the initiative and 'detaches . . . from an image world of fantasy and comes to occupy an ambiguous realm between the real and the imagined' (Solomon-Godeau 1993, p.299). In the 'Rich Man's Frug' number the main dancer, Charney, often looks directly at the camera. The dance takes place on a stage with an audience, therefore, she often looks out to the audience. However in cinematic terms this means that she faces and addresses the camera placed in front of the stage (Figure 15 and 16). The movement fragments her body in an unwieldy manner making it difficult for spectators to exert

mastery over the image. She appears in control of her physicality and sexuality. Borrowing Nally's argument regarding the neo-burlesque performers, one may argue that when a Fosse dancer stares with full sexual power she exudes 'a form of self-assertion and self-possession' and transforms into 'a woman confident in her body and in her sexuality' (Nally 2009, p. 639). The directness of the piercing gaze fortifies the agency exerted with the eloquently authored physicality. Her gaze confronts the viewer causing them to concentrate on her dancing body and powerful corporeality complicated with complex isolations and rhythmical patterns.

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Figure 15 Suzanne Charney and ensemble in 'Rich Man's Frug', *Sweet Charity* (1969). Screenshot.

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Figure 16 Suzanne Charney and ensemble in 'Rich Man's Frug', *Sweet Charity* (1969). Screenshot.

A striking example of the female performer directly addressing the camera and, thus, the spectators occurs in the final scene of *All That Jazz*. In this scene, Angelique, the Angel of Death character, (Jessica Lange), stands in a corridor made of theatre scaffolding wearing a white dress. Initially she appears as a silhouette towards which Gideon is moving to. She is calm, collected and composed as opposed to Gideon, who is sweating profusely, highlighting her elegance, classical presence, and sexual power. Her feet are not visible under her dress giving her an illusion of floating on air presenting her angelic, supernatural presence. She does not move as the camera approaches her and focuses on her face and bust in a close up which features her looking directly at the camera (Figure 17). The song is abruptly cut, followed by an image of Gideon being zipped up in a body bag. Her stare (which lasts 6 seconds) exerts such power that Gideon dies.

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Figure 17 Jessica Lange in *All That Jazz* (1979). Screenshot.

Angelique presents pertinent ideas of femininity and female sexuality. Lange's performance as Angelique provides dichotomous ideas as she operates between the classical and grotesque, virginal and sexual, caring and dangerous. She intercepts the narrative of the film as an eerie, fantastical, and sexy presence. In Angelique's first appearance in the film, she sits in the middle of the frame amongst a mess of industrial materials, dark grey and black things, establishing her as a central persona of the film as an antithesis to the cumbersome mechanics of the stage set up and film theme. Wearing all white, a large hat with a veil, she is shot from a distance so her face is not clearly seen. She sits on a chair, legs crossed, one arm at her chin, other on the arm of the chair casually asserting her sexuality, power, and supernatural presence on screen. Right from her first screen appearance she sets up the dangerous game of seduction - one when fulfilled results in Gideon's death.

Angelique shows up throughout the film revealing parts of her physique but remains fully dressed at all times drawing focus to the materiality of her body. Although her supernatural existence is implied, the spectator is faced with a physical presence of a woman who flirts using her sexuality and asserts her femininity. Her minimal movement and subdued demeanor allow her control, over

Gideon's and her emotional state, and in turn control over the viewers. Angelique's relationship with Gideon is crucial to her powerful sexuality as she is his confidante and a keen listener. Her demeanor towards him is soft and caring, even though the objective of their relationship is macabre as she guides him towards his inevitable death. She often appears with a soft smile on her face pulling him to her with a welcoming expression. This is exemplified and accentuated with a close up of her face featuring her covered in thin lace creating a barrier to her flesh and making her look even softer. The sexual/fetishistic dynamic of the film is seen as he hints and voices his fear of dying and Angelique places her hands on his face and pulls him in for a kiss. Her position within the narrative, combined with the way she uses her physicality, provides her with tools to project an assertive sexuality and hyper-feminine performance as methods to subvert the passivity of women in cinema.

Angelique's seduction is not only addressed towards the main character of the movie but also to the spectator as illustrated in the scene of the table reading in which she acknowledges and manipulates the gaze. In this scene, the action alternates between the cast of the Broadway show that Gideon leads in the table read and shots of Angelique. This scene, as described in the previous chapter, concentrates on Gideon's physical experience of his heart attack as all of the actions and voices of other actors are muted forcing spectators to concentrate on his aural experience of pain. His physical experience is accentuated and juxtaposed by an insert shot of Angelique slowly turning to face front to face the camera lifting her veil and removing her hat and looking straight into the camera. Her chin is lowered, her eyes are soft, her lips held together with a hint of a smile. Footage of Audrey (ex-wife), Katie (current girlfriend) and producers of the show making their way to the hospital intercuts with shots of Angelique. As action returns to Angelique, she is pictured slowly letting her hair down in a stereotypically coded cinematic seductive move and revolving from back to front. She does not appear to be doing the turning; rather she looks like she is positioned on a revolving podium minimizing her physical effort denying the labour of her body. By eliminating the exertion of the body the focus shifts to the direction of the gaze which penetrates the space between the female actor, camera, screen, and spectator. She exerts agency over the cinematic apparatus with the direct look into the camera, the knowing and purposeful acknowledgement of the dynamic of the

gaze (Figure 18). In another close up, Angelique slowly and seductively blinks and holds her gaze on the camera confronting the gender dynamics as she highlights the stereotypical performance of femininity in a hyper-choreographed masquerade, thus, acknowledging the theatricalised performance of gender, whilst contesting it. The camera captures her calm, unhurried manner which is in contrast to the urgency of the medical emergency. The scene alternates between the urgent, panicked situation at the hospital and Lange's performance of femininity and seductive sexuality. Angelique's direct address and recognition of the camera, film apparatus, and audience disturbs the predisposed theories of the passive female object on screen presented for the scopophilic male gaze, as she contradicts the stillness of her body with the assertiveness of her gaze.

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Figure 18 Jessica Lange in *All That Jazz* (1979). Screenshot.

Scopophilia is the idea that the process of looking at images in film offers sexual pleasure (Mellencamp 1977). Therefore, watching Angelique can be sexual pleasure itself for the viewers. Her conscious performance of seduction and returning of the gaze is similar to that presented by Edouard Manet's painting *Olympia* (first exhibited in 1865), a painting of a nude, female prostitute looking out to her viewer. This painting is discussed by Bernheimer (1989) who raises a question of whether the woman can be objectified in the same manner if she consciously offers herself as such by returning a gaze full of awareness of the active male viewer. Bernheimer (1989) proposes that *Olympia's* disobedient body (in terms of the above mentioned patriarchal masculine mechanism of looking) lacks representation as it creates a mirror effect by which *Olympia* reflects back the desire

motivating the gaze of the male viewer. The idea of the mirror also refers to Lacan's idea of the mirror phase whereby the spectator perceives a reflection of self 'enabling a permutation of possible identifications' (Mellencamp 1977, p.34). Olympia's arresting, blatant stare, like Angelique's, disturbs and confronts the position of the viewer in relation to the subject. The viewers are asked to absorb the dichotomy of the image (in Manet's Olympia and Fosse's Angelique) by interpreting various signs of representations of femininity, such as the fragmentation of Olympia's body which happens with ribbon around her neck and wrist and images of parts of Angelique's body, the sexualisation of Olympia's and Angelique's soft flesh and at the same time direct returning of the gaze. The explicit performance of sexuality (seen in Angelique's performance and dances described throughout this thesis) combined with the agency contained in the direction of the gaze distorts the prearranged representation of the female body and feminine performance as a comfortable, cohesive image ready for consumption. These dichotomous images of female representation raise anxiety as they cause the (male) viewer to question the sexual difference that he thought he had mastered (Bernheimer 1989) and exposes the dynamics of the production of woman as fetishistic erotic spectacle. This is displayed through the erotic spectacle of the female body, thus, signifying passive submission to male desire by which the woman seemingly confirms his mastery with the seduction by reinforcing the illusion of the magnifying glass of phallic power, yet, the mirror instead presents the distorted representational field (Bernheimer 1989). These paradoxical dynamics of viewing women affects the image of women displayed in Fosse's work, which also connects to the cultural ideas arising out of burlesque. In burlesque, which was discussed in earlier chapters, the women place their sexual bodies on display whilst subverting patriarchal tropes of female representation with assertive, unapologetic display of indulgent female sexuality.

Conclusion

The Fosse woman projects an assertive, hyper-feminine persona rooted in her corporeality. Corporeal identities of dancers, along with their performance charisma, activate Fosse's choreography and create the particular image of femininity. The analysis of representation of women in Fosse's work for cinema needs to take into account the aesthetics of theatricality of

femininity along with performers' discourse and embodiment. Within the format of choreography and film, dancers theorise gender with their performance. They author their interpretation of gender as they embody and exhibit the pleasure of hyper-femininity, parody, and theatricality.

The issues of the male gaze cannot be ignored within his work, which often includes the onlookers within the frame of the scene. The experience of watching Fosse's dances on screen involves the pressure between the dynamics of the film mechanism including its patriarchal organisation and various readings of gender, which allow the (female) spectator to question and contest femininity. For female spectators this tension may result in a viewing experience that contains attraction and appeal in the same mechanism as spectacle. Within this format, female dancers assert subjectivity through their corporeality, a material shifting of the dancing body which refuses passivity and objectification. Dance articulates the materiality of the body. Their bodily writing and corporeal inscription on screen is assertive, grounded, and feminist. The physical labour highlights the labour of femininity as masquerade and creates its own discourse which raises issues concerning the body, gender, and pleasure. The physical assertiveness of the female performers is fortified in instances in which they purposefully return the gaze toward the camera and the audience. Fosse imagines gender through a choreography of gestures however it is the female performers who imbue these performances with their personal style challenging ideas of authorship. The performers undertake creative labour which becomes a conscious transgression of economics and politics.

Dancers challenge heteronormativity as they embody desire and return the gaze. Tyler (2003) argues that women's identity (in narrative) remains within definitions of hetero-normativity though the focus has shifted from romance and marriage to sex. Still, good sex continues to be defined by masculine parameters, which implies that a woman's (sexual) identity depends on the masculine desire, as well as hers, as a result of this. *Jouissance*, then, unravels identity as it implies a loss and 'unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relations with language' (Barthes quoted in Tyler 2003, p. 76). This leads to the idea that *jouissance*, as transgressive, excessive pleasure, leads to an overhaul as to how identity and femininity are interpreted. Their blatant display of physical pleasure (dancing

and sexual) contests the patriarchal structure as it diverts attention to the female experience, albeit as envisioned by a male director. This decisive performance of femininity, which combines codes of choreography and physical signature women performing Fosse's repertory, serves as an inspiration for later screendance examples in popular dance. Considering the importance of aesthetics and corporeality in creating the specific image of the Fosse woman, discourse shifts to ways that this is referenced in subsequent examples and the way that the physical language for presentation of female bodies changes.

Chapter 6

Fosse's legacy in popular dance

This thesis has explored arguments regarding the representation of femininity produced and negotiated in Fosse's work for female performers. The dances embodied by performers in Fosse's screendance repertory have created ideas of hyper-femininity, campness, awkward sexiness, glamorous and grotesque aesthetics. The dances and performances feature new physical vocabularies and ideas regarding gender that have radicalised and politicised gender in popular dance. This representation has influenced and informed images of women in popular dance in the late twentieth century and early twenty first century. An analysis of a number of case studies in this chapter shows that Fosse's choreography and filming techniques have had a strong impact on the way dance is imagined and produced in popular dance since the 1980s, which has an effect on discourse regarding gender for dance on screen.

This chapter focuses on analysis of a number of case studies that refer to or borrow the Fosse dance vocabulary and screendance aesthetics. The transmission of dance material through time calls for scrutiny regarding authorship and copyright of choreography, dance steps, and ideas regarding gender. Building on the discussion regarding the role of female dancers in creative process and composition, the section that follows investigates the corporeal transmission of dance and its effect on politics of gender performance. This thesis has focused on issues of femininity and its presentation in Fosse's work. Although this study has focused on female performers and their corporeal presence, which has been validated and established through choreography, it also needs to consider tropes of gender fluidity and the effect it has on performance of gender, and more specifically femininity. The music videos and films that refer to the Fosse dance material use his screendance strategies to comment on ideas of gender in their particular dance frame. Examining the Fosse legacy through dance examples that rely on his iconography offers valuable information on the characteristics of femininity raised by his original work and allows an understanding of these properties in a conclusive manner.

The Fosse legacy continues on stage and screen. His choreographic works are protected by the Verdon Fosse legacy organisation founded by Fosse's and Verdon's daughter Nicole Fosse. Their mission, as stated on the website, is to 'promote, protect, and preserve the artistic and intellectual property of Bob Fosse and Gwen Verdon' as well as oversee 'the licensing of Bob Fosse's work for theatrical staging' (The Verdon Fosse Legacy LLC). This organisation, in collaboration with the Library of Congress, protects Fosse's stage work and offers masterclasses by Fosse collaborators aiming to preserve the style and repertory. The collaborators of the organisation, Fosse's past performers, oversee the staging of work ensuring that the dance heritage is passed on through the authorised process of learning repertory from dancers who have experienced and performed it under the watchful eye of the choreographer and director. The organisation is only concerned with re-staging of Fosse's work. It ensures its validity with corporeal transfer of knowledge so that new casts are taught by the performers in the original casts, whenever possible. The issue of copyright is clear in performances of Fosse's stage repertory, but the situation is murky when it comes to issues of ownership and rights for works that simply reference his style, choreography, and aesthetics.

Fosse created a dance style that has been used since or referenced by a number of performers working within popular culture, in order to project a specific image of sexiness and femininity, which will be discussed in the analysis that follows below. For the purposes of this study, Fosse's work acts as a focal point in history from which one can look forward and back to try to gain some understanding on how his choreographic ideas and aesthetics of gender continue and change over time in popular dance. In order to avoid a short-sighted view of popular dance history as a linear genealogy, I seek to explore issues of choreographic transmission and borrowing in the historical continuum that posits Fosse as a choreographer building on previous developments in jazz dance and one who influences the subsequent growth of jazz dance through his legacy. In order to understand the movement of ideas regarding gender from Fosse, and his predecessors, to subsequent popular dance on screen examples, it is important to consider the dynamics of intertextuality and its effect on movements of trends in history. Dance history draws on a multitude of past and present dance forms, styles, and works of choreographers, as well as social dance forms to create new

choreographic ideas. In the process of dance making, in concert and social settings, the choreographers and dancers absorb influences from the political, social, and art trends of a given time (Desmond 1998, Foster 1998b). The new forms of dance inform successive dance developments but also reflect on the works referenced thus creating political meanings that respond to the current socio-political ideology.

In order to avoid a limited view of Fosse as a creative originator, which was discussed in Chapter Five, it is important to consider choreographers and dance styles that he references in his work. An analytical comparison between Jack Cole's number 'No Talent Joe' from the 1951 film *Meet me After the Show* and Fosse's 'Who's Got the Mambo' from *Damn Yankees* (1958) reveals Cole's choreographic influence on Fosse's work. Interestingly, both numbers feature Gwen Verdon in a duet. In Cole's number she shares the screen with Betty Grable; in Fosse's number she dances with the choreographer himself. Grable, in Cole's number, performs hip isolations and shimmies to mambo music, which was a popular dance of the 1950s, however, certain movements stand out that later appear in Fosse's choreography. Holding a hat in her hand, she moves it away from her body in a circular elbow motion accompanied by a shift of the hip and then returns the hat to cover her crotch with a hip roll. Cole's choreography adorns the body with elaborate and multiple isolations, causing a fragmentation in the body, which is a technique Fosse later adopts. Joined by two other dancers (Verdon and an unnamed female performer), Grable executes an exaggerated running step with a pelvic and head accent that makes the dancers appear like they are precariously losing balance and ground. The directors, Richard Sale for *Meet me After the Show* and George Abbot and Stanley Donen for *Damn Yankees*, capture dancers in full figure shot mostly facing the camera, which was a conventional filming technique for screendance in the early twentieth century. Both of the choreographers use the duet sections to divide the screen in the middle and use choreographic symmetry to focus the action onto the dancers. Fosse's number contains a similar approach to isolations to Cole's, as Verdon and Fosse use their hips when they step forwards and sideways with bent knees. They perform the stylised runs and the circular hat isolations more generously than the dancers in Cole's number as their movements are bigger and devour more space. Although, the

dances follow the Broadway jazz dance style of the era and therefore contain striking similarities in some movement choices they carry a clear choreographic signature of each dance maker.

There are numerous examples that illustrate the intertextual movement within dance history and the references that choreographers choose to embody in their work. Jack Cole's choreography for Gwen Verdon in the 1951 film *David and Bathsheva* resembles the traditions of Ruth St. Denis, an American pioneer of modern dance, specifically her iconographic work *Radha* (1906). In this number Verdon dances wearing a Cleopatra style wig and trousers and a cropped top reminiscent of a belly dancer. She undulates her arms in manner of St. Denis and embarks on a presentation of a ritual as she lights incense that give off smoke similar to the choreographed ritual presented in St. Denis dance *Incense* (1906). She continues to dance using scarves that were attached to her trousers, moves her head side-to-side and executes large circular movements of the back and arms. The choreography presents Cole's distinct style combining elements from his dance research in Indian and Middle Eastern dances with Western concert dance, yet it also seems to reference St. Denis's aesthetic from dances such as *Egypta* (1910), *Radha* (1906), and *Incense* (1906) with the choice of staging, costume, and movement. In order to demonstrate the complex interweaving of choreographic influences in dance, I turn to Royona Mitra's article 'Akram Khan rewrites *Radha*: The 'hypervisible' cultural identity in Kylie Minogue's *Showgirl*' (2009). In this essay, Mitra (2009) discusses the cultural exchange and politics of collaboration between Khan, a British Asian dancer and choreographer, and the Australian pop star Minogue. She describes St. Denis' *Radha* as a solo for a woman combining sensuality and eroticism. Mitra (2009) draws a similarity between the setting of St. Denis *Radha* and Minogue's *Samsara*, Khan's choreography for her 2006 *Showgirl* tour, which is, coincidentally also applies to the setting for Cole's dance. All of these dances use stylised visions of 'Oriental' aesthetics as envisioned by Western choreographers and directors. In *Radha* and Cole's dance in *David and Batsheba*, the scenery consists of a shrine that alludes to a Hindu or Egyptian temple. The five large screens, accompanied by fires, seem to resemble the idea of a temple (Mitra 2009). All three women in the numbers mentioned here, St. Denis, Verdon, and Minogue, wear costumes that draw inspiration from Egyptian and Hindu iconography, including

midriff-revealing tops, bejewelled outfits, and headdresses. Mitra (2009) argues that St. Denis and Minogue's, and I would also argue Cole's number for Verdon, performances share an aesthetic of Orientalised visual spectacle with showgirl imagery indicating the intertextual references in dance styles of various genres and time frames. These examples illustrate the interweaving of influences that can transmit across dance genres and histories.

As discussed in Chapter Three, Fosse's choreography draws influences from the social dances and trends of the 1960s. The 'Rich Man's Frug' from the film *Sweet Charity* (1969) takes place in a glamorous, wealthy club reserved for movie stars, where the aesthetic of the dance is introduced with women who exhibit the high fashion trends of the late 1960s, such as futurist wigs indicating the space age, heavily lined eyes resembling the Twiggy doe eyed look that was hugely popular at the time that the film was made, and wearing simple black shift dresses. Fosse references the 1960s dance, the Frug, as well as the Chicken. The transmission of cultural ideas and influences is not only reserved for dance history. Fosse also includes movements from popular children's games of the time period, such as the thumb war and *Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots*, which was a toy invented in 1964 featuring two plastic robots boxing in a plastic ring with mechanical, jerky movements, therefore, demonstrating the effect of numerous cultural ideas on the choreographic product.

Determining the identity of a dance work requires an intertextual reading, which acknowledges the fact that dance history has a tangled trajectory not confined to a streamlined chronological heritage. An analysis of dance references illuminates intertwining influences and forces that make rigid taxonomy slippery. This has an effect on identity politics in dances, which must take into account the multi-directional socio-political movements and tendencies and their effect on dance development. According to Allen, intertextuality marked a poststructuralist attempt to 'disrupt notions of stable meaning and objective interpretation' (2000, p. 3) thus allowing for an analysis that destabilises dance ideas as concrete and allows for a discussion of history and ways in which dance moves and changes across time, space, and culture that considers the multi-directional pull of transmission. Furthermore, the acknowledgement that dance shifts across cultures and history adds

to the discussion on authorship as it questions rigid ideologies regarding unique and sole sources of creativity.

As dances and dance style shift through time they are influenced by new ideas, which intersect and enter into dialogue. Dance styles and categories can be understood as fluid and constantly shifting, defined by new additions and the relationship between them (Hall 2014). Therefore, dance examples, such as Paula Abdul's music video *Cold Hearted Snake* (1989) and Beyoncé's *Get Me Bodied* (2006) and *Single Ladies* (2008) (which will be discussed later in the chapter) that reference the Fosse dance style, absorb and adjust ideas of femininity according to the medium and socio-political development. Foster explains 'a body ... its habits and stance, gestures and demonstrations, every action of its various regions, areas, and parts – all emerge out of cultural practices, verbal or not, that construct corporeal meaning' (1998b, p. 180). This idea aids the analysis of Fosse's dance heritage as it appears in cultural products that employ the aesthetic communicated by female dancers in his works for screen. Fosse's work exists at the same time as other new trends and developments in dance, the arts and culture more broadly, which would have inadvertently had an influence on his work.

In popular dance history the issues of transmission indicate a complex trajectory. Layla Brown resists searching for 'racially authentic art forms' (2008, p. 7) by arguing that popular practices resist purity. She eloquently states that popular 'expressive forms are inherently promiscuous, absorbing everything in their wake. They are contaminated from the minute they hit the air, and they refuse to be contained (Brown 2008, p.7). Following this ideology, popular expressive forms, including dance, are always in a process of permutation, osmosis, influence and change. Brown makes a compelling argument as she asserts that searching for the origins and inceptions is a difficult project as 'with gestural vocabularies there are no beginnings, only continuation' (2008, p.7) As dance forms clash and blend, a physical dialogue forms which offers new possibilities for choreography, style, and meanings therefore an analysis of case studies that refer to Fosse's style may reveal how his dances of the past fold into dances of the present and negotiate ideas regarding identity of the dance and the meanings attached to it. Furthermore, by referencing Fosse's dance

style, choreographers and dancers include material and ideas from dance history that have informed Fosse's choreographic work. Through an intertextual mode of analysis, ideas on gender in Fosse's work produce new meanings and interpretations, which do not exist in a linear pattern but rather function as web of concepts that interrelate in a multitude of ways. Intertextuality allows an interpretation of somatic ideas, which are useful in understanding how Fosse's particular dance style continues to influence popular dance.

Dance forms carry history, fold it into present, and continue to be altered by history and its interpretation. Each body, as it comes into contact with dance, creates corporeal meaning defined by relations of gendered, ethnic, or communal identities (Foster, 1998b). Intertextuality, as articulated by Barthes, theorises the relationship between texts seeing them as 'a tissue, a woven fabric' (Barthes in Allen 2000, p. 6), which depends 'on the figure of the web, the weave, the garment ... woven from the threads of the 'already written' and the 'already read'' (Allen 2000, p. 6). Using the post-structural approach explains the transmission of dance styles and choreographic ideas from one dance to another, so that each choreographer absorbs physical material from the preceding dance developments. This happens in multitude of ways but a major way that the transmission occurs is through dancers who work with various teachers and choreographers and, therefore, transfer dance knowledge with their corporeality laced with multiple techniques of the body. Therefore, dance gathers traces of history and socio-political information with every dancing body that it encounters. Hall (2014) draws on Bakhtin's writing on language to explain how movement passes from body to body through a necessary process of absorption always infused with hints of other movements. In dance, this addresses physical habits, training, and trends that permeate dancers' bodies, at times without formal training but through a process that resembles osmosis, hence various influences are always present in dance regardless of whether they can be clearly identified. Writing dance history requires a careful act of choreography, which seeks to make sense of how present bodies represent and communicate bodily discourses through moving. This dispels the idea of originality, which will be discussed later in the chapter. Also, the way that each choreographer chooses to represent gender

largely depends on the intertextual blending of physical identities, which was presented in Chapter Five in analysis of the role of dancers in Fosse's choreographic identity.

6.1 Choreography of Femininity Post-Fosse

Fosse's instantly recognisable iconographic style and visual aesthetic has often been quoted in music videos, TV shows, and films featuring dance, as a choreographic expression and a language to express a particular brand of femininity and queerness. The analysis that follows presents a number of case studies taken from various genres of popular dance on screen to demonstrate Fosse's influence on commercial dance. The many examples range from musical videos, TV shows such as *So You Think You Can Dance*' and *Dancing with the Stars*, *Glee*, and films like *Burlesque* (2010)^{vi}. For example, the number 'Express' in the film *Burlesque* (2010) performed by Christina Aguilera directly replicates the staging, movement, props, and costumes from Fosse's number 'Mein Herr' performed by Liza Minnelli in *Cabaret* (1972). The number is performed on a set that resembles the stage scenery of the *Fosse* musical revue (1999-2001), which features a row of light bulbs that spans the length of the proscenium contrasting the blackness of the back stage wall and wings. The dance employs movements from the same musical including a vast repertory of the choreographer's work including wrist rolls, finger clicks, turned in legs, and flexed feet accentuated with high heels. The 'Welcome to Burlesque' number in the same film is an imitation of the 'Wilkommen' and 'Mein Herr' numbers from *Cabaret*, including Aguilera's offstage preparation, which also marks the beginning of 'Mein Herr' by Liza Minnelli. The chair bound dance vocabulary features the cross legged squat and circular wrist motion that activates the finger clicks from 'Mein Herr'. The dancers perform the exaggerated walks in which they cross with the high lift of the knee and flexed foot borrowing from Fosse's vocabulary of complex and awkward choreography of sexuality. These are combined with ideas from 'Bye Bye Blackbird' from the TV special *Liza with a Z* (1972) in which a clump of dancers perform isolations in antiphony and sexually charged and provocative aesthetics influenced by the musical *Chicago* (1975-1979, revival 1996-present). The number also features the more explicit presentation of sexuality in movement often seen in music videos and commercial burlesque performances, such as the ones by the *Pussy Cat Dolls*, a Los Angeles based dance troupe

and later famous music group. These movements include straight legged shakes of the pelvis that the dancers perform bent over from the waist. The camera captures this moment from the back, therefore, presenting their provocative sexuality explicitly.

Fosse's choreographic style for screen has been influential for many examples of screendance employing his signature movement style, visual aesthetics, and approach to filming and editing dance. Paula Abdul, an American pop singer, has openly spoken about her admiration for Fosse and quoted him as inspiration in a *Rolling Stone* magazine interview in 2014 for her *Cold Hearted Snake* video, which she choreographed in 1989 (Parker 2014). The video, choreographed by Abdul, uses the narrative of Fosse's number 'Take Off With Us' from *All That Jazz* (1979) as producers arrive at a dance rehearsal featuring a scaffolding in a studio. Abdul employs Fosse's hypersexual and fetishistic aesthetic in costumes and movement choices. She wears a pilot hat and a net top, whilst the other dancers wear mismatched costumes made of thigh-high boots, shorts, bras and jackets. She utilises Fosse's structural strategies placing five women in a V formation in a well-established second position that five men slide into to penetrate the space in between their legs. Although, Abdul clearly quotes Fosse as dancers climb the scaffolding, perform large extensions, and rub each other sensually, she also employs a distinct 1980s jazz dance style with numerous pirouettes, sharp kicks, and fast changes of direction, which is different to Fosse's rhythmical complexity and compact isolations. Her video acts as a commentary on Fosse's tantalising number in a safe way, which dilutes his sexually challenging work to attract a younger, MTV audience. Abdul's (and therefore Fosse's) vision and aesthetic is further re-imagined in the television show *Glee* (Fox Broadcasting Company, 2009-2015), which features student performances of well-known musical and dance numbers. In the *Glee* version, five female dancers perform simple movements on revolving scaffolding, which mostly consist of deep dips, body rolls, and hair flips. The women dance in short black dresses and high heels, thus perpetuating the Fosse glamorous and sexualised aesthetic as perceived by Abdul and now the directors of *Glee*. However, in this version the choreography overly simplifies Fosse's signature movement. The movement mostly consists of rolls across the scenery, head flicks, pelvis presses and dips. The posturing and rhythmically exaggerated

walks allude to Abdul's performance and Fosse's influence but the choreography and filming style lack the complex approach to femininity that Fosse proposes along with his performers.

The similarities between Michael Jackson's dance moves in his iconic *Billie Jean* (1982) video and live performances and Bob Fosse's solo from the film *Little Prince* (1974) has been highlighted in a YouTube video that pairs two dance videos side by side to expose Fosse's influence on Jackson's dancing style. Jackson appears to adopt Fosse's posturing including the body positioned in profile with weight on one extended leg and the other bent in order to show off the forward thrust of the pelvis. Jackson's signature jerk of the foot which is quickly retracted at the knee appears in Fosse's solo first. The quality of movement in Fosse's work (taken up by Jackson) depends on sharp isolations of the head, shoulders, and hips, the resistance in the opposition of extending arms whilst bending the legs and pushing the hips out. Jackson, however, creates an individual style that references Fosse yet maintains a dance identity that characterises this performer. Perhaps the most striking choreographic method that Jackson borrows from Fosse's dance style is his use of musicality, specifically his method of layering rhythms and use of pauses and stillness to punctuate the movement. Jason King describes Michael Jackson's dance styles as 'a magical mix of pop-locking, mime, Broadway jazz, James Brown and Jackie Wilson funk, and much more' (King 2014, p. 201). Although Jackson's iconic dance style employs numerous ideas that have been analysed in this thesis in regards to Fosse, such as spectacle, virtuosity, hyper-sexuality, campy excess, the late pop star's distinct dance style only briefly references Fosse's choreography and style by using specific postures and movement. Jackson's superstar persona is emblematic of extravagant performance style which contains music, dance, and a carefully crafted 'sci-fi technomegaspectacle' (King 2014, p. 192). His skillful practice builds an idiosyncratic style which serves as a platform to highlight his musical groove, sensuality, and sexuality creating his particular musical and dancing brand. Jackson, as a male performer, embodies many of the characteristics of performance of gender employed by women in Fosse's work, therefore, raising a number of issues regarding gender fluidity presented by Fosse's choreography.

Certain positions of the body such as the one described above, initially performed by Fosse, then used by Jackson, are also used in an iconographic image from Reinking's solo 'There'll be Some Changes Made' in *All That Jazz*. This indicates that ideas regarding gender in dance performance to shift cross time and gender. The image of gender proposed by Fosse, which in case of women uses hyper-femininity as a strategy to query gender, takes on a thought-provoking discourse when performed by male bodies. Fosse's solo in *The Little Prince* (1974) features his dance vocabulary. His character, a snake, slithers whilst walking swaying the hips smoothly and undulating the arms through the elbows and wrists. Fosse crosses and bends his knee causing his pelvis to drop whilst extending his arm and articulating his wrist. He struts lifting his knees in an affected manner. He arrives with one leg bent causing his pelvis and weight to shift to the other in an exaggerated fashion. Fosse shifts his body forward reaching his arm behind him with a carefully rotated wrist. His posturing is like the one performed by Reinking in *All That Jazz* in 1979 and Michael Jackson in *Billie Jean*, showing its gender fluidity. In each rendition, the position carries artifice as its key characteristics and lends itself to the hyperbolising of gender. Fosse's attention to small gestures of the hands, hips, and dainty use of feet and knees, could be read as effeminate, however, his performance employs choreographic tools of the body decorated with excessive gestures to queer gender by blurring it with artifice.

Whilst this thesis focuses on images of women in Fosse's work, it is important to look at the few examples of performances by male dancers in order to understand their influence on the representation of gender, and more specifically femininity. Referring to David Gere's argument presented in Chapter Three, on the political power of men performing effeminate movements, I argue that men in Fosse's repertory raise issues regarding gender. Gere (2001) describes a number of gestures codified as effeminate, such as the broken wrist, fluttered fingers, raised pinkie finger, and crossed legs. For Gere, these excessive gestures are grotesque and camp, distorting 'rigid conventions legislating gender roles' (2001, p. 359). Building on Susan Sontag's writing about camp, Gere proposes that the displacement of gender roles through exaggerated movements creates an androgynous presence, which he describes as a 'smooth blend of male and female choreographed

in the gestures and postures of the body' (2001, p. 359). Although, this argument reifies gender binaries and thus must be considered with caution, it offers theoretical ground to employ hyperbole of gender performance as a method to 'subvert standard notions of gender' (Gere 2001, p. 360). Desmond (2001) explains that gender codified movement can create statements about sexualities, however this is based on the belief that a broken wrist is a characteristically female or feminine movement, which does not necessarily signify clear division in choreography of movement. The flamboyance of gestures draws attention to over-decorating of bodies to challenge societal norms of gender behaviour. In performances discussed above by Jackson, Fosse, and Reinking dance is the primary communication tool, which embodies the corporeal manifestation of gender queering. Hyperbolising of gender, as discussed in Chapter Three, exaggerates the political potential of the body as it exposes the artifice and theatricality of gender, which is evident in the choreography that creates an excess of the body with rhythmically complex gestures and isolations.

The camp representation of men is evident in many examples of Fosse's repertory, such as the male dancers in the ensemble of the 'Rich Man's Frug', Ben Vereen's performance in *All That Jazz*, and the Emcee character in *Cabaret*^{vii}. With these performances, Fosse allows representations of gender to queer heteronormativity as he applies similar physical tactics to men and women. The examples of male dancing, especially the camp ones, complicate the dynamics of film and 'the representation system of classical Hollywood cinema' (Cohan 1993, p.47). According to Steve Neale, the musical challenges representations of masculinity in Hollywood cinema as he writes that it is 'the only genre in which the male body has been unashamedly put on display in mainstream cinema in any consistent way' (Neale quoted in Cohan 1993, p. 46), which complicates the display of gender in film that posits the female body as passive and available for voyeuristic consumption. Fosse applies similar choreographic, filmic, and stylistic methods for men and women to question the gender binary and show the fluidity of gender performance. Fosse's choreography rejects sexual difference as a gender defining ideology therefore allowing a feminist reading of female and male dancers, as he gives the same dance vocabulary to women and men.

The representations of women and men in Fosse's work raises an ambivalence of gender and highlights that blurring of rigid gender norms is key in questioning it as an idea. Halberstam writes that 'ambiguous gender ... is inevitably transformed into deviance, thirdness, or a blurred version of either male or female' (1998, p. 20). With this statement, she actualises the gender binary, which calls for a more fluid understanding of gender representation. Androgyny, a blurring of genders, which makes neither gender stand out, presents a pertinent methodology to challenge rigidity of gender classifications. In Fosse's dance style, the hyperbolic performance of femininity encompasses a fluid range of gender representation, which communicates an uncertainty regarding gender. Young defines androgyny as an 'ideal social condition', which a person's biological sex would not have impact on person's life prospects (2005, p. 13). In her view, androgynous persons would simply be people with various bodies, which would allow for a society free from categories of gender (Young 2005, p. 13). The representation of gender fluctuates and, therefore, presents it as a fluid idea. This, then, democratises its presentation with possibilities of identities that can be feminine, masculine, or both. As a performative image, androgyny allows for a feminist reading of femininity as it questions its very rigidity. Without falling into over-reductive classifications of gendered dancing, these ideas apply to Fosse's envisioning of gender. As has been argued throughout this thesis, representations of gender are exaggerated through choreography, corporeality of the dancers, and filming techniques, which does not suggest an absence of gender proposed by androgyny but, rather, a democracy of gender performance. For example, Fosse's performance in *Little Prince* (1974) and Reinking's solo in *All That Jazz* (1979) share a number of similarities in movement, which implies that Fosse does not discriminate masculine and feminine dancing. Furthermore, the duets from his early career, such as 'From this Moment on' from *Kiss Me Kate* (1953) and 'Who's Got the Pain' from *Damn Yankees* (1958), show an egalitarian treatment of gender, which contests the gender binary.

In order to discuss issues of transmission of dance and the gender connotations it carries, the following discussion focuses on music videos, which quote the Fosse film and dance aesthetics. His influence is further shown in comparison of 'Rich Man's Frug' to Beyoncé's *Get Me Bodied* (2006)

and Arianna Grande's *Problem* (2014). In Grande's video, the inspiration occurs in the general aesthetic of the video such as the black and white kaleidoscope projection, the 1960s influenced costumes, and the use of a walk with side-to-side swaying arms. Grande's styling which includes a short sequined black dress, a high pony tail, and the cat-flick eyeliner resembles Suzanne Charney's look in 'Rich Man's Frug'. However, this video also sits in the conventions of the twenty first century music video, including the use of diluted hip hop moves, sexually-objectifying close ups of the lips of the young performer. The video is shot with a high definition digital camera, which offers the images sharpness and supports the austere aesthetic of the minimal set. The fast editing of the music video disjoints the dance sequences into movements that range from two to four counts in music. The dance sequences are intersected with fragmented close ups of Grande and a male singer, which sexualises their presence. The video presents excerpts of Fosse's dance on screen aesthetics, particularly presentations of gender through movement and filming style adapted to the twenty first century spectators.

Beyoncé's *Get Me Bodied* (2006) showcases the effect of Fosse's choreographic influence on this artist's use of dance in music videos. The video starts with a subtle reference to Fosse as four dancers (including Beyoncé, her sister Solange, and her former band members in *Destiny's Child* Kelly Rowland and Michelle Williams) walk forward whilst placing their wrist on their forehead. One minute and fifteen seconds in to the video, Beyoncé walks into a club that looks uncannily like the one in Fosse's *Sweet Charity* (1969) and brings the song to a halt. A number of quickly edited shots with various performers saying 'who is it?' strongly resembles the scene featuring Shirley MacLaine right before 'Rich Man's Frug' begins in *Sweet Charity*. The scene creates a rhythmical introduction to the dance. The action of the video shifts to the stage showing a group of dancers in an exaggerated walk borrowed from Fosse's dance lexicon executed by male and female dancers, demonstrating his approach to gender equality. The dancers' bodies, tilted to a forty five angle from their pelvis and spine, embody somatic aesthetics of camp and Fosse's awkward sexiness, which, in turn, communicates complex gender politics. The video continues with Beyoncé filmed from the back performing the undulating isolations of the elbows and wrists referencing movement from

Fosse's number (See Figure 19 and 20). This contrived use of the body highlights many of the ideas of gender discussed in this thesis, such as choreographed hyper-femininity, camp, glamour, and virtuosic skill. This has an effect on the representation of gender in Beyoncé's video. Although, the choreography develops into the dance vocabulary often seen in her videos, including circular isolations of the chest and hip bumps, the dance relies on movements from Fosse, such as the deconstructed pecking motions of the head accompanied by elbow pumps and fist isolations that travel vertically across the body. The arrangement of the dancers on stage is almost the same in both numbers: using a scattered alternating group that occupies the whole stage, the triangle shape, and the diagonally travelling line (See Figures 21 and 22). Of course, these formations are heavily utilised in choreography, particularly in popular dance, however in Beyoncé's video they are combined with movement and rhythmical choices which bear resemblance to Fosse's choreography. Apart from the movement and setting that parallel Fosse's dance, her styling also references Charney's in 'Rich Man's Frug' who wears a 1960s style dress and hair in the high sleek ponytail.

The discussion so far has concentrated on the transmission of dance style and choreographic ideas through intertextual analysis. The analysis focuses on Fosse's work to establish his influence on popular dance on screen, which includes his dance vocabulary, choreographic style, and filming techniques. Although this raises issues regarding authorship and copyright, which will be examined further on in the chapter, it also stimulates a discourse on representations of gender in dance in popular culture, namely film and music videos. Some of the examples addressed so far in the chapter reference the Fosse dance style, which means that they absorb ideas regarding gender and sexuality from his work. This calls for a discussion on how this reflects on the ideas of femininity presented in Fosse's work and, furthermore, the new implications of gender representation in the new millennium, which will be discussed with considerations of post-feminism later in the chapter.

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Figure 19 Suzanne Charney in 'Rich Man's Frug', *Sweet Charity* (1969). Screenshot.

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Figure 20 Beyoncé in *Get Me Bodied* (2006). Screenshot.

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Figure 21 Charney and ensemble in 'Rich Man's Frug', *Sweet Charity* (1969). Screenshot.

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Figure 22 Beyonce in *Get Me Bodied* (2006). Screenshot.

Beyoncé's music video *Single Ladies* (2008) also borrows heavily from Fosse's aesthetic and dance style. In a 2008 interview for Black Entertainment Television, Beyoncé discusses seeing a video of

Fosse's dance 'Mexican Breakfast', which was created for Ed Sullivan television show in 1969^{viii}. Although, Beyoncé acknowledges Fosse as an inspiration for *Single Ladies*, she does not mention the extent of choreographic borrowing from 'Mexican Breakfast' and 'There's Got to be Something Better than this' from *Sweet Charity*. She states that in this age of multiple cuts in music videos she was inspired by Fosse choreography, performed by a trio of women featuring Gwen Verdon, to make 'a non-stop dance video, one take all the way through' (Beyoncé 2008). The *Single Ladies* video, directed by Jake Nava and choreographed by Frank Gatson and JaQuel Knight, quotes Fosse's choreography in terms of structure, spatial arrangement, and dance steps. Beyoncé's hugely popular video *Single Ladies* with five hundred million views on YouTube^{ix} features elements of Fosse's choreography adjusted for the demands of the twenty first century music video. The dance in this video also includes movements from dancehall, a popular Jamaican social dance form, and waaking, an African-American dance style of frantically moving arms created by the LGBT community in Los Angeles, which add new ideas regarding expressions of femininity rooted in the peculiarities of the each dance styles' cultural contexts (Thomas 2014). Shot in a stark environment of a white background, three female dancers wearing stylised black leotards perform movement from Fosse's repertory with great speed and decorated with complex rhythms and hip isolations. The dance of *Single Ladies* and 'Mexican Breakfast' begins with the same movement phrase of hip thrusts prompted by a sharp weight change, followed by a 'Fosse-esque' drag of the foot which brings the knee in. The dancers turn the knee out whilst keeping the bent leg on the floor followed by a forward extension of the leg. The sections of complex rhythmical isolations performed on a single spot are broken up with movements, such as the accented run and drag which utilise the entire performing space. The similarities in choreography are very clear, even including two signature moves in Beyoncé's video: the accented arms movements which punch the air on a downward diagonal with alternating movements of the feet and legs and sharp turning of the head and the large circular motions of the arm in a crossed legged position with the extended flat back accented by the undulation of the spine which also occurs in the Fosse's trio 'There's Got to Be Something Better than this' from *Sweet Charity* (See Figures 23 and 24).

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Figure 23 Chita Rivera, Shirley MacLaine, Paula Kelly in 'There'll be Some Changes Made', *Sweet Charity* (1969). Screenshot.

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Figure 24 Beyoncé, Ebony Williams, Ashley Everett in *Single Ladies* (2006). Screenshot.

Traces of Fosse's choreographic and screendance ideology and techniques can be detected in numerous popular culture examples that reference his aesthetic style, as has been exemplified in the case studies analysed so far. As this thesis has argued, Fosse, in collaboration with female dancers, has created a dance style that communicates a particular image of femininity that has been used or referenced by choreographers and performers working within popular culture. Fosse's movement language expresses an exaggerated image of femininity and female sexuality therefore it provides an excellent vehicle for Beyoncé to present her hyper-visible, sexual persona in the *Single Ladies*

video. Given the socio-political development regarding gender, feminism, and the growing theory on queer politics, the representations of women in popular culture have changed and, thus, the case studies that reference Fosse reflect these shifts.

In representations of gender in the twenty first century popular dance on screen, it is important to consider the changing terrain of feminism. One of the developments that affect the images of women on screen is the rise of post-feminism, which escapes concrete definitions. Gamble characterises post-feminism as a term that originated in the 1980s from within the media as a ‘joyous liberation from the ideological shackles of a hopelessly outdated feminist movement’ (Gamble 2011, p. 44). Gamble argues for a distinction between post-feminism and third wave feminism explaining that third wave feminists engage with political activism, seeking an ‘approach that will actively work against social injustices’, which are still a major part of everyday experiences for women. On the other hand, post-feminism, according to Rosalind Gill and Jane Arthurs (2006), is a sensibility with a number of themes, such as: femininity as bodily property, the shift from objectification to sexual subjectification; emphasis on self-regulation; focus on empowerment, choice, and individualism; evident sexualisation of culture; emphasis on consumerism and consumption. Whilst post-feminism advocates ‘compulsory (sexual) agency’ (Gill 2008, p. 440) at its core, as a liberating approach to femininity and female sexuality, it also calls for an intensified scrutiny and remoulding of the female body. Agency shifts so that women’s practices are presented as freely chosen, reiterating the emphasis on self-monitoring and self-disciplining.

Recent music videos that use the Fosse aesthetic, adjust representations of women to the needs of the current popular culture market. For example, the 2015 video *Earned it* by the pop singer The Weeknd from the film *Fifty Shades of Grey* (2015) features a group of women dancing on stage while the singer watches them from an empty auditorium. The visual spatial composition resembles a Fosse number as the stage is styled with simple chairs. The ensemble of women wears black outfits consisting of black shorts, which lack fabric on the buttocks. The buttocks are marked with two black X signs made of fabric. Their breasts are covered with black pasties which are further defined with two straps, which cross the front of their body and attach to their shorts. The isolated

use of saturated spotlights along with the architecture of the chairs bears resemblance to Fosse's 'Mein Herr' from *Cabaret* (1972). The movement vocabulary in The Weeknd's video includes simple walks, hip gyrations, and provocative upper body undulations. Sam Taylor-Johnston, the director of the music video, fragments the body suggestively focusing on buttocks only. The female dancers do not have the power to exert agency over the image of femininity they are required to project, thus, presenting a diluted version of potent femininity communicated by the women in Fosse's choreography. The face-less women's individuality is erased with uniform wigs, costumes, and movement that is excused through the lens of post-feminism, which will be discussed below. The hyper-sexualisation in this video directed by a female director, compared to female dancers in Fosse's work, is disguised as a self-empowering exploration of female sexuality.

Rihanna's 2018 Grammy performance of her hit *Wild Thoughts* (2017) pays homage to the structure and aesthetics of Fosse's 'Rich Man's Frug'. The creative director Philippa Price acknowledges a number of influences including Fosse, as well as the 'Crazy Horse', a burlesque house in Paris, the 1970s African American dance and music TV show *Soul Train*, and South African dance Gwara Gwara (Kornhaber 2018, Valentine 2018). Choreographed by Tanisha Scott and Parris Goebel, the number employs a pastiche of dance styles and extravagant aesthetics to comment on gender. The number begins with DJ Khaled introducing Rihanna who walks through a sculptural arrangement of dancers. Their tilted posture, positions of the arms lifted at elbows and adorned with droopy wrists, and 1960s Art Deco styling refer to Fosse's aesthetic from *Sweet Charity*. Rihanna awakens the passive women with a slow pelvis thrust, as they all join her with the same movement. They continue the fluid motion of the pelvis accompanied with a simple alternating leg step and sharp turns of the head. The dancers replace the simplicity of this movement with flowing hip and upper body isolations that cause them to change levels from standing to kneeling. The performance embodies the sexualised movement of the new millennium as three women dressed in tight black dresses and wide-brimmed hats join hands and isolate their pelvis towards Bryson Tiller, the featured singer and rapper, finishing with an exaggerated twerk. They do not register his presence, rather, they appear to concentrate on the experience of this luxurious dance step. The

choreographers quote Fosse's triangle formation from 'Rich Man's Frug'. All of the dancers execute marching walks with accented shoulder isolations lifted from the Fosse dance. They continue with side body rolls and figure eight undulations of the upper back that illustrate the fluid melody and rhythms of the song. The inclusion of men in the dance number provides an egalitarian approach to gender. Post-feminism provides a lens to read the images of women in this number as empowered and in charge of their sexuality. The choreographers use the iconography from various sources to provide a multi-layered commentary on gender and sexuality, which recognises the feminist strides of post-feminism, yet falls into a lens that sexually objectifies women.

Identity politics in dance are difficult to untangle. The issues of expression of femininity in the current climate raise serious feminist concerns. As has been demonstrated in the discussion on post-feminism, the representation of women carries paradoxical ideas. According to Katie Roiphe and Rene Denfeld post-feminism can be used to 'signal an epistemological break with feminism' (Gill and Scharff 2011, p. 4) and offer an alternative to second wave feminism that, they argue, has become totalitarian and inflexible. Like the theoretical movements of postmodernism, post-structuralism, and post-colonialism, post-feminism seeks to question existing rigid tropes surrounding established discourses. Employing this positive outlook on post-feminism lends itself to interpret images produced by women in Fosse's work. Corporeally powerful, women in Fosse's dances assert agency with their hyper-femininity and virtuosity, carefully crafted masquerade of performed gender. They equally queer patriarchal dynamics of film as they exhibit awkward sexiness, humour and parody, and grotesque fragmentation of femininity. On the other hand, popular culture responds to the signs of the time, therefore advertising (like Beyoncé's and The Weeknd's videos) distils feminism into a user/consumer friendly signifier free of political motivation.

Beyoncé promotes her star persona as a feminist one^x but this can only be true in the age of post-feminism, which promotes the idea of women as empowered, self-governing agents in charge of their own sexuality who correspond to the current neo-liberal capitalist schemes. Sarah Gamble (2001) eloquently posits the major problem with post-feminism by saying that it lacks concrete

definition and therefore causes debate on whether it is actually a valid phenomenon. Susan Faludi portrays post-feminism as a backlash against second wave feminism as she explains that defines itself as ‘an ironic, pseudo-intellectual critique on the feminist movement, rather than an overtly hostile response to it’ (Gamble 2011, p. 45). Following this line of thought, post-feminist stance is a privileged position for wealthy, western society. In post-feminist terms, heteronormative feminine sexuality is reconceived as sexual subjectification offering women pleasure and power, thus not considering alternative sexualities, racial groups, ethnicities for the purposes of feminism. Chatman (2015) argues that Beyoncé’s music provides accessible yet superficial feminism, which lacks awareness of complex gender. Her feminism is distilled to fit the user-friendly format so that it actually becomes a commercial strategy rather than a politically challenging activity.

Beyoncé’s re-imagining of Fosse’s style of femininity, builds on his ideas of hyper-femininity, glamour, and virtuosity to highlight the representation of the woman. She excludes the parodic elements of awkward sexiness and grotesque, which problematise the male gaze for the women in Fosse’s repertory. Dayna Chatman (2015) describes Beyoncé’s relationship to feminism as paradoxical as she has created numerous women-centered songs which promote ‘girl power’. ‘Girl power’ was a phrase coined in the 1990s as ‘a radical counter-culture through alternative music and literature’ (Chatman 2015, p. 931) and appropriated by the mainstream music industry most notably by the artificially made all-women group *The Spice Girls*. These female celebratory songs promote girls as strong, independent, yet feminine subjects therefore promoting post-feminist ideas. Beyoncé’s representation of femininity and female sexuality feeds into Gills’s (2008) argument, which advocates that images of women sell the idea of women as active, desiring heterosexual subjects^{xi}. Gill proposes that contemporary advertising (and music videos) constructs a new femininity which is powerful, playful, and narcissistic – ‘less desiring of a sexual partner than empowered by the knowledge of her own sexual attractiveness’ (Gill 2008, p. 438) therefore drawing connection to the active performance of masquerade. It causes a complex relationship to woman’s subjectivity which highlights the way in which power and ideology are constructed through negotiation, mediation, resistance, and articulation rather than imposed from the top.

Although women in Fosse's work function within an oppressive medium of film, the exaggerated performance of femininity provides an opportunity to read these images in a challenging manner. In recent examples of performances of femininity in the music videos, the images proposed by women in Fosse's work weaken with self-scrutinizing gaze which creates hyper-sexual images of women stemming from the needs of the male gaze.

6.2 Authorship and Copyright

Having established that the images of the Fosse woman resulted out of the choreography and filmic technique of Fosse along with the corporeal authorship of the female dancers, it is important to consider how dynamics of transmissions affect copyright issues of movement and performances of gender. The dynamics of choreographic inspiration or borrowings raise questions regarding ownership of these images of femininity and dance choreography. Borrowing choreographic material illuminates issues with identity of the work as ideas regarding performance gender shift across time, cultural contexts, and medium. In dance, where choreographic structure (including spatial and rhythmical patterns, movements, gestures and steps) changes with every interpreting body, the new meanings regarding socio-cultural ideas emerge with each new performance as seen in the case studies studied so far. The identity politics communicated through dance shift and morph over time and contexts as they are infused with subjective corporeality of each dancer. Works that refer to, or use other dance pieces as inspiration, include the political meanings of the earlier works. With every new rendition the performances change with additional current and projected meanings, therefore, it is important to consider the dances and dancers that refer to and re-make the Fosse choreography as a way to embody meanings of the past and add implications of the present. The argument presented in Chapter Five, which challenged the idea of Fosse as a sole author of dance movement and choreography of femininity, adds to this discussion. With new interpretations of popular dances that reference, quote, or copy physical ideas from the Fosse repertory, the discourse on authorship changes as it connects corporeal histories in a dynamic web of meanings regarding representations of femininity.

Beyonce's use of Fosse's choreography has inspired debates on choreographic copyright as seen in Philippa Thomas (2014) article 'Single Ladies, Plural: Racism, Scandal and "Authenticity" within the Multiplication and Circulation of Online Dance Discourses' and Anthea Kraut's book (2016) *Choreographing Copyright: Race, Gender, and Intellectual Property Right in American Dance*. A discourse on choreographic borrowings reveals the complex power and economic dynamics of authorship in dance (Kraut 2016). Thomas (2014) and Kraut (2016) raise important issues regarding the racial politics of these dance dynamics, however, for the purposes of this thesis, the focus remains on performances and constructions of femininity. This analysis relies on Foster's (1998a) separation of choreography and performance, whereby, the complex issues regarding choreographic copyright apply to the dance score more clearly than to the performance of gender in all of the case studies. The numbers presented in this chapter, showcase representations of gender modeled on dancers in Fosse's repertory and, therefore, utilise ideas regarding images of women to project a specific type of femininity.

Choreographic borrowing calls into question an intricate relationship between the artistic process and authorship specifically in dance on screen. Chapter Five argues that a choreographic process lies in the collaboration between the choreographers and the dancers, who all contribute to the cultural identity of the dance with their corporeal histories. Kappenberg suggests that 'hybrids like screendance are able to combine different practices and strategies, capitalizing on both the technologies of reproduction and the singularity of performance' (2010, p. 38), thus, deriving its identity through blending of choreographic, filmic, and performance features. Furthermore, the examples of dance on screen amalgamate the choreographic signature, physical histories of dancers involved in the creation of the original examples, changing technological developments, and the subjectivities of new dancers. The case studies rely on Fosse's use of spectacle and hyper-femininity to create an aesthetic of excess, however the skillful use of dance makes the performances political. In the process of dance making, Kappenberg articulates the role of the dancers and the work performed by them as she states 'this attempt to make original work is reinforced by the fact that individual bodies contribute a certain unpredictability on which the choreographer can draw to

secure a uniqueness of the work' (2010, p.32). With each new interpretation, dancers create their subjectivity, which acknowledges the creative and physical labour of the dancers in previous versions and additions of choreographers and dancers involved in the later examples.

One can argue that musical and dance numbers serve as remakes of the original works, which bring new meanings to the current and past examples of dance on screen. Thomas Leitch's (2002) discussion on film remakes brings light to issues of copyrights, originality, and audience perception. Film adaptation, remakes of movies based on another movie, is 'defined by its legally sanctioned use of material from earlier model, whose adaptation rights the producers have customarily purchased' (Leitch 2002, p.38). He explains that remakes are 'parasitic on their original films in a uniquely legalistic way' (Leitch 2002, p. 39) since most supersede the original and build an entirely new audience. Leitch explains that in order to avoid plagiarism, adaptations must be made in a different medium whereas remakes do not have the same requirement. Copyright is reserved for 'original' works of authorship, however originality is hard to define. For Allen (2000), originality or uniqueness of a cultural product is no longer possible as every artistic object is assembled from existing parts of ideas and works of existing works of art. Kraut argues that copyright is granted to works that demonstrate 'the absence of verbatim copying and the demonstrable presence of a modicum of creativity' (Saint-Amour quoted in Kraut 2016, p. 229). The situation with social and vernacular dance is far more complicated as it is often seen to belong to a group of people, without a single identifiable author, therefore financial transactions are impossible, however, heated debates regarding transmission of cultural capital continue. This leads to the conclusion based on the discussion on copyrights that physical ideas, as well as, performances of gender do not belong to anyone as reiterated in the opening of this chapter. Instead, each new version feeds into a web of meanings that stems from historical and current ideology regarding gender and feminism.

Claudia Kappenberg's (2010) discussion on originality versus appropriation contributes to the debates on authorship in screendance. She argues that in Appropriation Art the act of quoting practice relies on the idea 'of borrowing or copying rather than making something "new"' (Kappenberg 2010, p. 27). In Appropriation Art, a 1970s and 1980s post-modern contemporary art

practice that relies on conscious borrowing or copying the artist ‘highlights a disinterested kind of authorship’ (2010, p. 33) whereby the artist does not need to emphasize originality and allows meaning to unfold according to cultural contexts that surround the original work of art and the new re-conceived one. According to Walter Benjamin, traditional ideas of works of art envisioned as original and unique are shattered by the technologies of reproduction (in Kappenberg 2010). Kappenberg opposes Benjamin who claims that the value of the work diminishes with each copy by arguing that it continues to exert the same presence across infinite number of copies, therefore the new works, which reimagine an older artistic piece embody the history and the cultural context of the original work and also create new contexts and meanings. The artists act as interpreters and therefore provide critical commentary on the ideas of authorship without relinquishing the idea of originality (Kappenberg 2010). In instances when an artist borrows and references existing works of art, the new work poses as a ‘response to what was already there’ (Kappenberg 2010, p. 32) therefore creating debates regarding authorship and perception of gender. Through this conscious practice of quoting and referencing existing work, artists question and expand notion of originality. In these artistic processes, the idea of the death of the author deliberately draws attention to the material rather than the creator. The examples of dance videos discussed here act as an interpretation of numerous references found in popular culture and therefore challenge the rigid tropes of dance creators as sole producers of dance material and the meanings communicated. Video dance creates ‘a combination of the particular time and space, the unique history and the evidence of this history in the art object’ (Kappenberg 2010, p. 39), which can be transferred from the art object to the object of representation such as screen-bodies which can communicate the history and cultural context through the experience of the viewer. The spectator has a double experience of recalling the original piece of work and the new one, therefore engaging in the study of history, identity politics, and concerns about authorship.

Beyoncé’s examples of videodance, as well as those of Abdul, Jackson, and Grande, ‘cause a shift from meaning that is located within the image to meaning that is created by the new series and the new context’ (Kappenberg 2010, p. 29). Beyoncé’s work may not be unique but it carries a distinct

stamp of her pop star empire. Like the trend of the 1970s Appropriation Art which included blending of genres and categories by including images from popular visual culture, Beyoncé relies on existing sounds and images to attract a new audience and spin controversy, and therefore publicity, surrounding her latest work. This discussion demonstrates the fluid identities of dance, which shift with changing contexts. Remakes, in Leitch's (2002) opinion, rely on the originals to attract an audience only to deny them the perspective of the original. As Leitch explains 'the success of a remake depends either on its providing different pleasures to audiences who have different kinds of knowledge and interest in the original film, or more often on its establishing some common ground from which audiences of different interests can assimilate it in the same way' (2002 p. 43). In more revisionist terms, an updated work can interpret an original work (usually literally) to the needs of a contemporary audience (Leitch 2002). In remakes, often of well-known works, Leitch (2002) argues the aim is not to determine the true meaning of the work but rather appeal to the demands of contemporary relevance. Images of femininity in Fosse's work served a radical departure from the early twentieth century representations of women in popular culture, and more specifically dance on screen. The examples of dance on screen that draw on aesthetics of femininity from Fosse's work rely on the politicising of gender that his work introduces. The dance used in music videos and other examples in popular culture reflect on the history of women in popular dance in film and music videos, whilst proposing new ways to create female subjectivity. Using this perspective, Beyoncé's work creates new meanings that correspond to the twenty first century YouTube generation, which exists in digital and global markets. Simultaneously, one could argue that *Single Ladies* brings attention to the Fosse's dances and, therefore, call for a more critical reading of gender in Beyoncé's work. Furthermore, it employs ideas regarding performance of femininity proposed in Fosse's works and accommodates them to the needs of the contemporary audience.

Conclusion

Each of the case studies presented in this chapter theorises gender according to its contemporary politics and feminist developments. Exchanging of ideas in dance permeates its history. In the

process of creating a map of meanings a messy history emerges regarding representations of women in Fosse's work. Whilst, a number of issues occur during transmissions of physical ideas between cultures, format and contexts, they provide enlightenment in terms of how history weaves and intersects. Each dance product, vernacular, concert, or commercial responds to and absorbs the socio-political climate of its time therefore allowing dance to function as 'a means for communication, forming new communities, remembering, and cultivating cultures' (Brown 2008, p. 15). In the earlier works discussed, dance connections exist and influence dance development. For example, Jack Cole studied with St. Denis learning aesthetic as well as visual dance material. Carol Haney and Gwen Verdon, who were collaborators in Fosse's work, also danced with Jack Cole therefore carrying his, and inadvertently St. Denis', legacy in their corporeal history

In mediated screendance, transmission of corporeal ideas across time occurs in an unwieldy manner. Intertextuality provides a method to excavate influences and references therefore providing an analytical tool to celebrate Fosse's legacy in many dance examples. Fosse's signature style of dance movement, particular framing of the body, and rhythmical editing, paired with powerful performance of the women in his work offer a language of femininity, sexiness, and excess that lends itself to numerous interpretations and imitations. Referencing past works, in this case material from Fosse's work, gives new works an ability to embody historical pathways and cultural references. Dance changes with each new body it encounters as each dancer imbues the movement with their corporeal subjectivity. By using existing dance movement, dancers embody physical history and ideas regarding gender to create a double representation and a double experience. Beyoncé's, like the other examples discussed in this chapter, adopt the images of hyper-femininity proposed in Fosse's work, to communicate a map of meanings regarding gender at a specific time. In these examples, ideas from the past enter into dialogue with current tropes of thinking and dancing to present an image of femininity and female sexuality adjusted for the given period.

Circulation of cultural capital in popular dance underlines the idea that movement cannot be owned. Although, issues of copyright continue in dance, the complex history of interweaving ideas challenges rigid ideas concerning authorship. Dance, situated in dancers' bodies, continues to morph

through time affected by the techniques of the body. All of the dance borrowings analysed here illuminate how images of women in Fosse's dances continue to influence popular dance. Furthermore, historical and cultural references in popular dance challenge the rigid ideas of authorship. The meanings regarding identity politics, history, and cultural exchanges are located in dancers' bodies, laced with their subjectivities, and altered with each new interaction.

Conclusion

The popularity of Fosse's choreographic work is evident in the continuing legacy through the longevity of his shows, popularity of his films, and numerous screendance examples that have been influenced by his style as discussed in Chapter Six. Despite the commercial and critical success, Fosse's work has continually been overlooked in the study of dance, musical theatre and film. The steady rise of popular dance scholarship that Dodds (2011) notes in the last fifteen years has created many opportunities to study works, cultures, and tendencies in dance that have so far been ignored. Employing a populist approach, which reflects movements in cultural studies striving to disturb the out-dated high/low art hierarchy, this study of Fosse contributes to continuing discourse on the role of popular dance in the understanding of socio-political meanings that are communicated by popular culture products.

This research sought to critically examine the construction of femininity in Bob Fosse's dance on film. Furthermore, this study looked to investigate the implications of gender construction on subjectivity, agency, and feminist discourses of images of women in Fosse's work. As demonstrated throughout this thesis, the study centres on the corporeality of the dancers and the physical act of dancing as the primary source material to examine constructions of femininity and female sexuality. Focusing on the female dancers, rather than the choreographer, this study aimed to disturb the hierarchical tendency in dance scholarship to favour the creative work of the choreographer over the creative and physical labour of the dancers. This research examined the cultural construction of identity as well as the actual materiality of the body and its visceral experience through dance to form and represent identities.

Firmly embedded in dance analysis, this research is supported by an interdisciplinary methodology which draws from dance studies, cultural studies, feminist film theory, and gender studies. Throughout the studies I have concentrated on choreographic and movement analysis by examining the physical actions of the body therefore rejecting the idea of dance as text but rather concentrating on corporeality as a key signifier. With the specific focus on women, this thesis is supported with

research methods proposed by gender and queer studies. As a feminist work, this study relies on methods and theories of feminist film theory as well as post-structural theory with a specific emphasis on intertextuality. Employing critical strategies offered by the above mentioned theoretical systems the following concepts were established in this study. In this thesis, I have analysed the various factors that blend together to create images of women in Fosse's dance in film. The representations of gender in Fosse's work demonstrate radical progress in the display of women in musicals. The politicisation and queering of gender highlights the ability and need of popular culture to reflect the socio-cultural changes aesthetically and choreographically. The analysis presented aimed to show that dancing makes the body political relying on theories by dance scholars, such as Susan Leigh Foster, Ann Cooper Albright, Jane Desmond, and Mark Franko. Dance theorises gender in complex, and often, paradoxical ways as discussed in this research.

Following the analysis presented in this thesis, a number of characteristics of Fosse's style and images of femininity become apparent. Fosse's choreographic work demonstrates a departure from the traditional, and somewhat, generic dance vocabulary of Broadway jazz used by choreographers in films of the early and mid-twentieth century. His iconographic style, which builds on numerous dance traditions, veered from the American history of Broadway jazz which mostly utilised elements of ballroom dance, ballet, modern dance, and tap. Fosse created a dance vocabulary that includes isolations, syncopated rhythms and reductive use of movement. As has been previously noted in the introduction, Fosse used his limitations as a dancer and created steps that featured turned in legs, sickled feet, and curved use of the spine. Perhaps most importantly, Fosse's ability to direct screendance set a precedent for the way dance can be filmed. His specialised position as a choreographer and director permitted him freedom and possibility to insert the camera into the choreography in order to present various perspectives of the dance, as well as, fragment bodies. The editing has a great effect on Fosse dances in cinema, as it adds cinematic choreography to the product and alters the way dance functions on screen. Apart from the dance and film inventions that Fosse created, the innovations in movement and cinematic techniques have an influence on the meanings communicated with these cultural products. For the purpose of this study on constructions

of femininity in Fosse's work, choreographic and screendance properties are at the core of the analysis. Fosse's choreographic and directorial choices lead to the specific aesthetic of femininity created specifically for dance on screen. These images rely on visual perception and corporeality of the female dancers. This femininity results out of the combination of aesthetics used and aesthetics created with the dancing bodies.

Women embody sexiness that Fosse choreographs with their dancing. He sexualises the body with culturally codified presentations of sexuality, such as striptease in 'Whatever Lola Wants', sexual innuendos in 'Take off with Us', sexual activity in 'Airotica', and sex workers in 'Big Spender'. The choreography and camera work draw attention to the sexual characteristics of the body culturally coded as such. Isolations fragment the body into sexualised parts, such as salacious movements of the pelvis and rib cage that codify sexy movement. Camera angles focus on isolated body parts and offer alternate views of the body highlighting the sexualised style of choreography. Fosse, in collaboration with the female dancers, creates an aesthetic visualisation of femininity. The deliberate details in choreography codify femininity as a stylised and carefully constructed performance of gender. The exaggerated choreography of sexualised gestures in Fosse's work creates a performance of hyper-femininity, which serves as a feminist strategy to read gender. The choreographic and filmic analysis in Chapter Three employed a critical reading of femininity, which illustrated how hyperbole in performance draws attention to the mechanisms of its construction and, therefore, exposes gender as a fictional construct. Femininity in Fosse's work is conceived as masquerade through bodily symbols which consists of choreographic architecture and the labour of dancers.

Fosse's choreographic and film aesthetics, as well as the femininity displayed, are characterised by theatricality. The precisely articulated dance style exudes theatricality as it acknowledges the contrived setting of the musical genre. Furthermore, femininity in Fosse's work highlights the performativity of gender. The exaggeration of performance of femininity points to the theatrical staging of gender, which is manifested in the camp aesthetic of Fosse's dance repertory discussed in Chapter Three. The theatricality perpetuates the fantastical and utopian style of the musical genre, however, it also presents a self-reflexive dynamic that questions its very artifice. The dramatic

presentation of style, choreography, aesthetics, and feminine display portray excess as a characteristic of Fosse's work and a method to perpetuate spectacle as a driving force of the musical genre. Alternatively, the amplified display of over-the-top aesthetics and intensified corporeality through choreography leads to analysis of these fabrications as a critical method to query the genre and gender.

Theatricality is one of the major aesthetic strategies in Fosse's work, which supports and communicates spectacle. As one of the main features of the musical film genre, spectacle occurs in Fosse's work as cinematic excess and excess of the body. The possibilities of the body are exaggerated through the apparatus of the camera, hyperbole of gender performance, and hyperbole of corporeality exhibited with virtuosity. Fosse employs aesthetic strategies of glamour and grotesque realism to exhibit hyper-femininity as artifice and highlight theatrical performativity of gender. The subjective stylistic choices give Fosse's films and dances their character, which responds to the demands of the musical genre whilst also contesting it from within. Glamour and grotesque utilise excess as a major property, albeit in different ways.

Spectacle, as a key strategy, drives Fosse's work forward and strongly influences the images of femininity on screen. Aesthetics have affective power yet they communicate political ideas. In Fosse's work, spectacle exhibited as excess, provides a platform to consider the dynamics of the musical which need to perpetuate the commercial nature of the genre whilst subverting them from within. Spectacle exists in opposing visual ideas to attract and to disgust in order to capture the viewers as consumers. Images of the body grotesque, illness, and pain serve to neutralise the seduction of the glamorous aesthetic, however, continue the spectacular fascination with visual enticement. Glamour perpetuates desire for consumerism whilst grotesque realism challenges the dominant, in this case capitalist, dynamics of the musical genre. Glamour, as excessive stylishness, ties in with the ideas of spectacle and camp. This visual characteristic defines polished dances which communicate control and restraint. Glamour creates desire as it presents tension between attractive images and the unattainable images. Glamour facilitates distance between the woman as a subject

and the image provided. The women are physically separated from the viewer by the screen and film apparatus and figuratively by masquerade.

Dance and musical numbers stand out as cinematic excess, features of the film that deviate from and supersede the narrative structure. In Fosse's work, however, these entities drive the aesthetic identity of the film and provide powerful commentary on socio-political discourses. Glamour, as discussed in Chapter Four, has a dual function in dances, as it creates seductive attraction to the product and dancers, whilst creating a distance from the subject and viewer in a form of aesthetic armour. The distance created with glamour also connects to the idea of masquerade, therefore, allowing the space to recognise femininity as a cultural construct. In Fosse's dances, glamour appears in the decorations of the dances, such as costumes, staging, lighting. In dance terms, it manifests in the virtuosic display of the female bodies. Virtuosity simultaneously conceals labour of the dancing body as it serves to render the physicality effortless, whilst conceiving excessive corporeality and, thus, affirming the material prowess of the dancers. Based on Melissa Blanco Borelli's writing, presented in Chapter Four, glamorous dancing provides fantasy of the spectacle with dancing, however, the shifting focus on what the dancing bodies are doing allows for a political discussion regarding the ideas they carry and communicate. Virtuosity impresses the spectators, therefore, seducing them with the skill of the performer, which can cloud their ability to critically read the meanings created by the dancing bodies. In Fosse's dances, as discussed throughout this thesis, the precision of choreography and its attentive execution emphasise visual appeal to attract audience, however, focusing on corporeality provides a site of resistance to monolithic presentations of women in dance on screen. Glamour allows the viewer to acknowledge artifice and theatricality as tools to construct the performance of gender.

Grotesque realism functions in the same dichotomous dynamics as glamour, therefore, adhering to the properties of spectacle devised to attract the audiences. This aesthetic is displayed explicitly in *All That Jazz*, with Gideon's performance of illness, decaying body, and death as discussed in Chapter Four. However, Fosse employs this concept in more subtle ways in choreography and styling. For example, Fosse often uses mismatched costumes, awkward choreography and

movement, and carnivalesque aesthetics, which challenges the uniform representations of femininity. The disjointed aesthetics and emphasis on the carnal body represent grotesque realism as articulated by Bakhtin, which provides transgressive power through physical power of the bodies within the spectacular genre. The grotesque aesthetic makes the bodies hyper-visible, therefore, drawing focus onto their political potential.

Whilst Fosse controls the choreographic product with precise choreography, the position of the camera, and the editing, the result focuses on a celebration of a certain kind of woman that occurs – sexual assertive, physically superior, and in charge of her femininity, rather than him. Working within the patriarchal dynamics of film, Mulvey's, now slightly out-dated theory realises on screen as Fosse acknowledges the masculinist set up of the camera and filmic apparatus. Yet, as this thesis has attempted to demonstrate a number of ideas arise from the dances that challenge the hetero-normative and patriarchal set up of the film production. Within this medium, dance provides material to contest dynamics of gender and discuss socio-political ideas of women.

This thesis has approached performance of gender from a number of perspectives. Using theoretical discourses on masquerade, camp sensibility, and feminist film theory presented in Chapter One, choreographic and filmic analysis has analysed numerous ways that femininity has been constructed and presented in Fosse's screendance. The discussion of 'Whatever Lola Wants' and 'Big Spender' in Chapter Three addressed ways in which Fosse maps the body in sexual and feminine terms. One of the ideas that projects through this analysis is that masquerade envisions the construction of femininity as a deliberate fabrication of gender and highlights the labour required to perform femininity. This, in turn, showcases the artifice and theatricality of gender. Deliberate hyper-femininity, as presented in Fosse's dances, destabilises gender and intensifies the critical distance. Femininity projected by women in Fosse's work contains sexiness and masquerade wit, and awkwardness. Each solo dancer, such as Verdon, Reinking, MacLaine, Minnelli, Sandahl, and Charney, craft their presentation of femininity differently. Using the physical language proposed by Fosse, they challenge monolithic presentation of womanliness. Using feminist camp, I find the spectacle of hyper-femininity a political expression that highlights the labour of masquerade as

womanliness exposes the artifice of gender production. For example, as explored in Chapter Three, the choreography of striptease in ‘Whatever Lola Wants’ performed by Gwen Verdon in *Damn Yankees* extrapolates performance of femininity in theatrical terms. Verdon’s Lola communicates hyper-femininity with stylised gestures, sexy isolations, and pastiche of dance movement using a culturally-codified sexual display of the female body. Similar to tactics used in burlesque and neo-burlesque performance, Verdon’s performance complicates the unapologetic display of female sexuality with humour, awkwardness, and camp aesthetic.

The identity of Fosse’s work lies in the choreographic and directorial choices he made and physical and artistic choices of dancers. Focusing analysis on physical prowess and corporeal identity of dancers, challenges notions of authorship. Female subjectivity forms through dance. Dancing materialises bodies, thus, affirming corporeality as a strategy to contest the idea of passive images of women in cinema. Turning focus onto the labour of female dancers creates a form of discourse surrounding female bodies as political agents. Dance situated in bodies of dancers gives women a heightened sense of physical power which is underlined with virtuosity. Virtuosity exhibits excess; a spectacle that presents a dichotomy. It acts as protective armour and highlights the labour needed to master the dancing. The heightened physical dexterity communicates a fantasy however it also hyperbolises corporeality. The virtuosic divas in Fosse’s work demand attention and therefore resist passivity. Diva personas of Verdon, Reinking, MacLaine, Minnelli, and later Beyonce, exceed the music and dance numbers. Instead, the spectator concentrates on the performance of these women, whose skilful performances carry the signature stamp of their performing charisma and persona.

This thesis concentrates on women in Fosse’s dance for film. Through the analysis presented here, the research shows multiple, and often, contradictory forces that blend to create the image of femininity in Fosse’s work. The Fosse woman exercises tension between film mechanism and agency achieved through dance. As women embody physical pleasure, through dance and sexual enjoyment, they reclaim power within the film format. Performances by women in Fosse’s work challenge the passive fetishised objectification of the male voyeuristic viewer by returning the gaze and embodiment of female pleasure. Through confident performance scripted through feminine

writing, *jouissance*, embodiment is subversive. The dancers claim ownership of dance numbers as they rip choreography out of the choreographers' hands. This research has shown various ways that performances of women subvert and transgress oppressive politics of gender and create commentary on femininity with their dancing.

Fosse's legacy lies in the choreographic style and language to express femininity and sexiness. As this thesis has demonstrated, femininity in Fosse's work is constructed in a particular way, which has influenced contemporary popular dance on screen. His subtle queering of gender through hyperbolised, parodic performance of femininity has informed discourses regarding performances of alternative sexualities. Given the nature of this research which has so far examined representations of femininity and sexuality, the 2015 video 'Fosse meets fetish' commissioned by organisers of Folsom Street Fair (an annual BDSM and leather subculture festival) in San Francisco, provided ample material for analysis of gender. Featuring Broadway performer, Colon Cunliffe, nightlife promoter Mario Diaz, gender-queer drag queen Grace Towers, and a variety of San Francisco dancers and performers, the video utilises Fosse's iconography in terms of movement, staging, and musical references to celebrate the community and show 'the positive impact kin and leather subcultures can have' (Kantor). Kinky and sexually explicit, the video uses Fosse's vocabulary as a springboard for expression of sexiness, campness, and queerness.

The video begins with explicit sexual content – a couple having sex, whipping, a man masturbating. With the first exhale of sexual excitement of whipping, the rhythm of 'Cell Block Tango', a dance from Fosse's musical *Chicago*, begins. Sounds of bare buttocks being slapped and sexual exhales replace finger clicks from Fosse's repertory. This develops into a dance of campness performed by men and women in bondage gear executing snippets from Fosse's movement repertory such as body rolls, subtle shoulder rolls, wrist curls, and pelvic thrusts. The style is deconstructed to fit the non-trained and trained dancers and suit the political needs of the video. Fosse's methodical and deliberately developed language to represent hyper-femininity and hyper-sexuality is taken up by the homosexual and sexually experimental community as the perfect vehicle to communicate issues regarding gender and sexuality. The choreographers reference and quote Fosse's choreography and

therefore acknowledge its subversive potential, however, the sexual content of the video occurs through the costumes and explicitly sexual content rather than the dancing. The director and promoters of the video and the festival use Fosse, as a named style that conjures images of sexiness and extreme sexuality, however they employ his choreographic techniques loosely. The video offers a new interpretation, more politically explicit ideas regarding gender, queerness and sexuality as reinterpreted for the twenty first century.

Studying intertexts, allows examples like this to discuss popular dance as an interrelated web of physical dialogues, ideas, and permutations. This analysis offers a methodology to dissect movement and transmission of popular dance forms, which in this case concentrated on dances in Fosse's repertory. His legacy of dances for women continues to inform how images of femininity are constructed in popular dance, including musicals and music videos. As dance exists in bodies that perform femininity, it is important to discuss dynamics of how dance changes when it encounters and comes into contact with bodies, which are gendered and raced through their corporeality. As examination of identity politics in dance presented in Chapter Six has indicated, popular dance cannot be contained as it is influenced by everything it touches. Each new permutation, re-imagining of the material carries corporeal history of the choreography, dancers who performed it, and performers who execute it in the new rendition. Directing attention on the dance and the corporealities of dancers further questions ideas of authorship as it recognised the bodily history as a fundamental part of web of meanings presented in dance.

This thesis considers historiography of Fosse's dance style by considering the earlier works that have influenced his work as well as look at examples that draw upon his style to create videodances that quote or imitate his dances. With this discussion I draw attention the longevity of Fosse's work in its original format, as well as the new versions by various artists which re-imagine the aesthetic and choreographic material. Transmission of trends, ideas, and movement across time and cultural contexts reveals complex issues regarding authorship, appropriation, and choreographic copyright that occur in circulation of dance.

This is not an exhaustive study of Fosse's repertory on screen and it does not address his large body of work for stage for practical reasons. A number of case studies analysed in the thesis have been translated from the stage version therefore may be applied in a further study of Fosse's choreography on Broadway whilst adding from repertory that only appeared in stage settings. Although, this research concentrates on the work of one choreographer within the specific medium of dance in commercial musicals, it aims to highlight the work and images of women in dance and therefore can serve a springboard for studies in other styles of dance and film. This study explicitly focuses on the study of women and images of femininity, therefore not analysing performances devised and performed by men. As this thesis has demonstrated, Fosse's work is female-centred including a larger number of dances created for and on women. A few dance pieces performed by men, however, deserve scholarly attention in terms of the impact they created at the time for representations of masculinity and the physical expression made available to contest gender in performance within the popular format.

This research contributes to existing models of studying gender in dance, with particular emphasis on screendance. The study of images of femininity in Fosse's work sheds light on issues of gender in commercial musicals on film and the complex history that surrounds it. This study utilises feminist film theory which critiques representations of women in film, however, it also challenges a monolithic approach to femininity in performance. Employing post-structural and intertextual theory, this study challenges the gender systems by offering agency and power to female subjects in dance on film. Extravagant images of femininity in Fosse's work highlight gender as a cultural contrast. Female dancers in the case studies analysed throughout the study embody sexiness, parody hyper-femininity and hyper-sexuality, and exert agency over the images they project with their skilful and purposefully built corporeal subjectivity. By focusing on the visceral experience of the material body of the dancers through analysis of their dancing, this study argues for the capacity of female dancers to exert control over the images of femininity projected on screen.

ⁱ Here is a selection of a few examples of the work of the choreographers for dance in films:

Busby Berkeley (*42nd Street* (1933), *Gold Diggers of 1933* (1933), *Footlight Parade* (1933), *Gold Diggers of 1935* (1935), *Stars over Broadway* (1935))

Fred Astaire (*Roberta* (1935), *Top Hat* (1937), *The Sky's the Limit* (1943), *Easter Parade* (1948), *Funny Face* (1957))

Hermes Pan (*Flying Down to Rio* (1933), *Shall We Dance?* (1937), *The Barkleys of Broadway* (1949), *Kiss Me, Kate* (1953), *Silk Stockings* (1957), *Pal Joey* (1957), *My Fair Lady* (1964))

Gene Kelly (*Anchors Aweigh* (1945), *An American in Paris* (1951), *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), *Brigadoon* (1954))

Jack Cole (*Kismet* (1944), *Meet me on Broadway* (1946), *David and Batsheba* (1951), *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953))

Michael Kidd (*The Band Wagon* (1953), *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954), *Hello, Dolly!* (1969))

Jerome Robbins (*The King and I* (1956), *West Side Story* (1961))

Gower Champion (*Bye Bye Birdie* (1963))

ⁱⁱ See Allen (1991), Altman (1987), Dodds (2011, 2014), Nally (2009), Ferrerday (2008)

ⁱⁱⁱ Sontag articulates concerns of an image based society, technical image making, and reproduction, offering information rather than experience, therefore, the subject becomes a part of the system of information which is classified and stored according to its cultural values. This alters reality as it fragments space, time, and memory into framed segments. Reality is manipulated with photographic recording and allows means for control.

^{iv} Lachmann, Eshelman, Davis' discussion of Bakhtin's interpretation of folk culture and folklore draws on the Soviet Socialist Realism movement which used work or folk clothes to promote institutional hierarchy whilst erasing sexual differences in staged circumstances.

^v Kelley Abbey's number 'Blackbird' for Australian So You Think You Can Dance Season 1 is listed on YouTube as SYTYCD AU: Blackbird –Fosse routine.

^{vi} Manohla Dargis 2010 review of the film *Burlesque* in the New York Times mentions the influence of Fosse's Cabaret on the film.

^{vii} I have discussed the political implications of the performance of gender by the Emcee in Cabaret in my recently published article 'Cabaret: a study of fascism, sexuality, and politics' in the *Perspectives on American dance: the twentieth century* anthology edited by Jennifer Atkins, Sally R. Sommer, and Tricia Henry Young.

^{viii} A number of online articles have discussed Beyoncé's use and referencing of choreographic material including Robert Simonson who discusses Fosse's numerous inspirations in his article 'Channeling Fosse: Beyoncé and Beyond' published in Playbill on November 20, 2009. The Op-Ed piece by Erika Ramirez entitled When Beyoncé's Inspiration Turns into Imitation tries to analyse numerous borrowings in various Beyoncé videos and distinguishing between inspiration and imitation.

^{ix} Accessed on July 1st, 2017. The same video had 412 million views in October of 2015.

^x Beyoncé's performed in front of a large sign that said 'FEMINIST' on her Mrs Carter tour (2013-2014). In an interview with Elle Magazine in 2016, the singer explained that she included the word feminist in her Flawless (2013) song to 'give clarity to the true meaning. It's someone who believes in equal rights for men and women... When we talk about equal right, there are issues that face women disproportionately' (Beyoncé in Gottesman 2016)

^{xi} She discusses this idea at length in her article 'Supersexualise me: Advertising and the 'Midriff's'.

Mainstreaming Sex: The Sexualization of Western Culture, which address current issues in advertising.

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