

The Presence of Physicality Indicated through Skew Lines of the Narrative and the Form: The Analysis of *Fade Out-Fade In*

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I. Introduction

According to the film scholar Rick Altman's indication, "of all the traditionally recognized types of musical, the backstage variety is certainly the best known and the most often commented upon" (200). Backstage forms or subjects appeared quite frequently in both stage musicals and film musicals. Whereas there are musical films illustrating a world of both theatre and film, rarely are there stage musicals describing a world of film but most describe theatre. Considering this situation, librettists such as Betty Comden and Adolph Green (hereafter, Comden & Green) who wrote both stage musicals and musical films about both theatre and film are distinctiveness. This essay focuses on their stage musical *Fade Out-Fade In* (1964, hereafter *FOFI*)⁽¹⁾ and clarifies through textual analysis what *FOFI* expresses about a world of film in theatre performance. In the next section, this article will explain *FOFI*'s synopsis and previous discourses.

1-1. The synopsis and previous discourses of *FOFI*

In Hollywood of the 1930s, an ordinary girl, Hope Springfield, is summoned to Hollywood to become an actress. Most executives cannot avoid suspecting that Hope is a different type of the studio owner Governor's taste. However, Hope shows her talent during shooting, and obtains the studio members' trust. In addition, one of the executives, Rudolph, is attached to Hope. Nonetheless, Hope is evicted from the studio because Governor finds she is the "wrong" girl. While Governor hires the "right" girl, Gloria, Rudolph tries to help Hope return to the studio. Finally, Governor decides to fire Gloria since he notices that she betrays his favor (she pretends to be attached to Governor and flirts with other actor in secret), and brings Hope back to the studio as a star; she achieves

her success and love. Briefly summarizing, *FOFI*'s plot looks like a mixture of a backstage and a Cinderella story.

FOFI has seldom been studied academically, and previous discourses can be divided into two perspectives: "a typical star show of the 1960s," and "a satire toward musical films of the 1930s."

First of all, numerous musical comedies for female stars were created in the 1960s (Wolf 23), including *FOFI*, because musicals had to survive a drastic alternation inside and outside of Broadway. A number of famous creators such as Oscar Hammerstein II and Cole Porter passed away, and the tendency of entertainment industries gradually changed corresponding to the rise of the TV industry⁽²⁾. To be precise, *FOFI* was a musical comedy in the growing age of TV, and the leading role, Hope, was played by TV star Carol Burnett; her performance was praised by critics. On the contrary, some discourses criticized the libretto and music based on academic prejudice against "star-driven" (Clum 313) musical comedies, stating that librettos and songs merely served the stars. Regarding *FOFI*, Henry Hewe, the critic of *The Saturday Review of Literature*, asserted there was "nothing particularly fresh or remarkable about the new musical *Fade Out-Fade In*, except Carol Burnett" (n.pag). Afterward, Thomas S. Hischak criticized the show's libretto as "scattered" (111) in *Word Crazy* (1991).

Next, *FOFI*'s theme has often been considered a satire with "affection and nostalgia" (Robinson 78) toward musical films of the 1930s, not only because the process of film making is described in the show but also because Comden & Green wrote the books for MGM musical films. One of their representative films, *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), is often cited as a comparison to *FOFI* because of the similar time and plot⁽³⁾.

Due to repeated troubles such as a delay of the show's opening due to Burnett's pregnancy and the show's temporary suspension due to Burnett's neck injury, which shortened the run of the show to 271 performances⁽⁴⁾, most of the criticisms do not go beyond impressionistic criticisms or commentaries toward *FOFI*; for instance, Hischak never clarifies what is actually "scattered" in the libretto, nor does Alice Robinson clarify what objective meanings are "affection and nostalgia" in the show. In the first place, musical comedies have scarcely been examined in musical studies, since scholars have observed that a musical comedy is not profound while a musical play called "an integrated musical" deserves to be analyzed seriously⁽⁵⁾.

Nevertheless, *FOFI* deviates from the mediocre interpretations once one reads the following ending:

[S]he (Hope) lowers her face into the cement. There is wild cheering. It stops. For a moment of silence she is motionless... then we see that HOPE is struggling to get up. Hands on the sides of the frame, face hidden in the cement, she tugs and pushes, and we hear her stifled mumbles. The crowd freezes... L.Z. and RUDOLPH frantically rush to her, grab her arms, and start tugging. As they keep pulling desperately, to no avail, the music swells... And the curtain falls. (Comden and Green 1965 118)

As exemplified above, the conclusion seems funny, but at the same time absurd, because Hope, who has already acquired her love and success in the previous scene, struggles to get her face up from the cement. Notwithstanding this unique finish, studies have categorized the show such as “a star vehicle” or “a satire.”⁽⁶⁾ Therefore, a deeper analysis in terms of the show’s structure is needed to make clear the significance of the comical but strange conclusion.

Furthermore, we have overlooked the cardinal question about *FOFI*: why did Comden & Green write the backstage of a musical film as a stage musical? As stated previously, while there are numerous musical films about the backstage of a stage, stage musicals of films are slightly rare⁽⁷⁾. *FOFI*’s attempt was totally new in the 1960s “since *Stars in Your Eyes* (1939)” (1976 286) according to Ethan Mordden. Taking Comden & Green’s previous works as examples, it is obvious that they are self-reflexive toward the characteristics of forms or media⁽⁸⁾. Rarely did they make a statement about *FOFI*, this show, which describes a film’s backstage in the theater, is essential subject to investigate Comden & Green’s features.

Hence, this essay aims to clarify what *FOFI* is going to express by illustrating the world of films in a theater performance through a textual investigation⁽⁹⁾. First, the article will analyze the textual structure and the musical numbers’ functions to make clear *FOFI*’s new aspects without relying on the current understandings. Then, it will discuss how the formal characteristics are correlated to *FOFI*’s narrative content and in conclusion, this article will re-evaluate the show.

II. The story of the relation between image and substance — an analysis of *Fade Out-Fade In*

For the purpose of analyzing *FOFI* through the textual structure and the musical numbers’ functions, it is essential to focus on different notions between Hope and the studio’s members. These signify how the relations are cultivated between images⁽¹⁰⁾,

meaning semblances or appearances (like “a star image”), and substances, meaning personalities or the characters’ inner selves. In this chapter, *FOFT*’s Cinderella story is going to be interpreted as a process of a conflict and choice of different values.

2-1. The difference of the notions between the studio and Hope

This section mainly focuses on Act 1 and discusses the different values that Hope and the studio possess.

Taking the studio as a starting point, one tacit rule is laid down by the studio: proper images should be presented. In this case, as the owner L. Z. Governor states, “the public will like it whether they like it or not” (86), properness is judged by Governor who manages the public’s taste, and people in the studio eagerly try to create the appropriate semblances for the films or the stars, and allow Governor to approve them. Once the approved images are established, the studio reproduces the required images repeatedly. For instance, the representative actor Byron Prong exhibits his own image as “the matinee idol” on reflex, and the black actor Lou Williams superficially traces the existing image of “the black guy with the deep South accent” in the following.

AUTOGRAPH KID. (Kneeling to take a picture of BYRON, calls to him to look into the camera) Mr. Prong!

(BYRON turns his head, removes his sunglasses, and manages his most engaging smile, just as the picture is snapped. Then he turns it off instantly) (5)

LOU. “Mr. Bercovici...”

BYRON. “Yes, what is it, Lightning?”

LOU. “There’s a lady outside... kind of wants to see you.” [...]

CORKLEY. That’s enough. Lou, I don’t have to tell you what you’re supposed to do in this scene...

LOU. The usual, Mr. Corkley?

CORKLEY. The usual... [...]

LOU. (Deep South, mumbling) “Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmsah Buhkoveechee...” (42-43)

It is clear that both Byron and Lou have discrepancies between their external image and their substance. Thus, the separation of the superficial image from the characters’ genuine selves is considered a self-evident rule in the studio.

On the contrary, Hope appears as a slightly curious person, which means she is not only a novice but it is also dubious whether she possesses a proper star image or not, described in a stage direction as “far from ugly, but exactly the opposite of Hollywood oomph and glamour” (6). Moreover, Hope does not notice that the studio’s members live in alienated states between their surface and their substance, which emphasizes that she stands out among the environment. Since the executives and Byron never express their suspicion against Hope’s characteristics that are different from Governor’s taste, she is unable to think about their two-facedness. (An exception is that one of the executives, Rudolph, does not hide his doubt against her, which incurs her displeasure.) Then, how does Hope grasp the relations between the outer image and herself? This essay will take a musical number Hope sings, “Call Me Savage” as an example.

In “Call Me Savage,” Hope shows off being “a femme fatale” (31) to triumph over Rudolph who formerly affirmed Hope as the “wholesome, girl-next-door type” (18). At first, “Hope looks uncomfortable and embarrassed” (26) before the music starts because she cannot fit herself into the tempting costume that a costume mistress gave to her. This emphasizes the inappropriateness of the flamboyant dress with her ordinary self. Nonetheless, Hope tries to excite Rudolph’s passion singing “CALL ME SAVAGE, CALL ME PASSION’S CHILD” (27) with “Latin-percussion” (Mordden 2001 54) music, and transforms herself into “a femme fatal manner that is highly energetic” (31) with song and dance. In this number, Hope does not play the sensual woman superficially while keeping her ordinary personality unchanged like Byron and Lou; instead, she attempts to transfigure herself corresponding to the outer image⁽¹¹⁾. Therefore, it can be said that Hope reveals the clearly different interrelations between image and substance from the studio.

In reference to one of the features of the musical by Andrea Most, “the performative mode” (2004 31) of acting, one can find that Hope’s acting style corresponds to the musical’s distinctive style. Most claims that there are two perspectives of a musical’s performance: “the psychological mode” (2004 31) of acting that emerged in musical plays after the 1940s, and “the performative mode” that flourished in musical comedies from the 1920s to the 1930s. According to Most, characters with “the performative mode” are “self-conscious about performance, acknowledging that they are on stage and gleefully making full use of the conventions the stage allows them for self definition” (2004 31). On the contrary, an integration of narratives and numbers through “the psychological mode” of acting has been supposed to be a sort of idea that progresses narratives and illustrates characters’ emotions. Creators, critics, and scholars have argued

that musical comedies with “performative mode” of acting are old-fashioned, because musical shows should possess a seamless unity. (Musical shows possessing such an idea are generally called “integrated musicals.”) Since the 2000s, musical studies started commenting that such a notion was merely established after the 1940s; Most’s research can be positioned as one of these studies. Most points out that “the performative mode” plays an important role to comprehend acting in musicals because every musical contains numbers for characters to sing and dance with “performative mode” (2004 31). Thus, “the performative mode” of acting is responsible for part of a musical’s characteristics. Furthermore, in terms of this article’s purpose, it is worthy of note that “the performative mode” of acting urges characters to be transfigured into the new selves and reform their own images (2004 10).

Concerning *FOFI*, there is no comparison between “the psychological mode” and “the performative mode,” because *FOFI* is the unmistakable musical comedy: every character in *FOFI* is self-conscious about their performance. However, there is one point distinguishing Hope from the studio members in terms of their performance modes, which means whether they intend to self-invent both their image and themselves through performance. In the following, two musical numbers “Lila Tremaine” in the end of Act 1 and “Fear” in the middle of Act 1 are featured as examples.

After Hope shoots the musical film *The Fiddler and the Fighter*, she is given the stage name: Lila Tremaine. She repeatedly utters her birth name and her stage name, and changes her behavior corresponding to each name. She “cackles like a witch” (75), says to herself “Goodbye, Hope Springfield!” (75), and then “instantly transforms herself” (75) into Lila Tremaine with a “very operatic – half contralto, and half coloratura” (75) voice. Declaring “I’M GONNA BE A NAME – A NAME TO REMEMBER” (75) confidently, Hope attempts to be transformed through her performance into the star appropriate to the image of an actress called “Lila Tremaine”⁽¹²⁾. Hence, Hope tries to alter herself into a certain image and establishes the mutual relation between the image and herself.

On the contrary, the studio members are not able to self-invent their image and substance through song and dance. In “Fear,” the executives and Byron, known as the cowards who are afraid of the autocratic Governor, sing aloud their “brotherhood of fear” (17). This number is “a heroic-sounding marching tune” (16) with the lyrics claiming how they are “cowards.” This discrepancy between the music and the lyrics does not show the cowards’ false display or their transformation into heroes. The heroic image through the music is separated from their cowardliness; instead, “Fear” represents metaphorically

the state of alienation between appearance and substance.

As analyzed above, one can find that Hope possesses different beliefs in the relations between appearance and substance from that of the studio. In the studio, the disconnection between the external image and the characters' inner selves does not matter as long as the suitable images for their films are outwardly presented. However, Hope aims to correlate the outer image with herself through her performance; Hope is an appropriate heroine of a musical comedy using "the performative mode" of acting.

Notwithstanding that, she is ostracized from the studio as an inappropriate actress with an inappropriate image at the end of Act 1, since Governor finds Hope is not the one he wanted in the first place. While musical comedies apply the mechanism that a character assimilates to the community through performance in general⁽¹³⁾, this mechanism does not work in *FOFI* and she cannot help but leave the studio. Since Hope does not have any opportunity to convince Governor with her performance like in "Call Me Savage," she is not able to avoid being assessed as the wrong girl. Supposing that, should Hope change her values on images and substances to assimilate with the studio?

2-2. The transitions of Rudolph and Governor

In the previous section, the article analyzed the differences of the correlation between images and substances and of the acting style between Hope and the studio. In this section, it will investigate two characters who transform themselves through making contact with Hope both directly and indirectly: Rudolph and Governor. This argument will interpret Hope's comeback owing to the changes of Rudolph and Governor as an affirmation of the linkage between image and substance.

At the time Rudolph first meets Hope, he obeys the earlier mentioned rule of the studio without doubts. Although he is described as an "earnest" (14) person in the stage direction, he accepts the given image of "a genuine coward" (15) obediently. He also incurs her ill feeling because he bluntly says, "I didn't say I *didn't like* her type... I only said she's a different type from Uncle Lionel's type" (18); one can discover that Rudolph considers Governor's intensions prior to his own impression of Hope.

Nonetheless, Rudolph gradually changes his attitude after he sees Hope's performance of "Call Me Savage." For instance, Rudolph apologizes for saying that Hope is "wholesome" in the following:

RUDOLPH. (Tentatively) Hope? (She stares at him impatiently as he unfolds a piece of paper) Uh... you see what I wrote on this? It's what I once said to

you: "This girl is not the movie type." (He chuckles) Well, I'm ready to eat my words... (He starts to put the paper in his mouth.) (59)

Rudolph asks for Hope's pardon not only with rhetoric but also with his behavior by being willing to swallow a piece of paper, which expresses his own earnestness detached from the appearances of "a coward." Additionally, Rudolph begins to take action to let Hope return to the studio by storing the disposed film starring her in secret, and by criticizing Governor directly and desperately. His devotion to Hope urges himself toward the active behavior. Once Rudolph accepts the discrepancy between the external image and his genuine self, he is converted to the mutual state of the image and himself.

A musical number also plays a function in Rudolph's alternation. In "Notice Me" at the latter part of Act 1, Rudolph reveals his resolution by singing "I'VE GOT TO CHANGE, I'VE GOT TO MAKE YOU NOTICE ME" (60) to gain Hope's attention. In this number, one cannot find a discrepancy like the one in "Fear" to express the disconnection between appearance and the substance by the skew line of music and lyrics as analyzed previously. Rudolph is attempting to renovate both himself and his image through singing; his style in "Notice Me" can be inferred as "the performative mode," similar to Hope's earlier performance.

As examined above, the encounter with Hope leads Rudolph to change the belief from the discrepancy to the linkage of images and substances, supported by the musical numbers. Notwithstanding being considered a tiny supporting role⁽¹⁴⁾, he actually acquires an important part to let Hope come back by showing his transformation.

Not only Rudolph but also Governor's transition leads to Hope's return. Governor wields his power toward the appropriate image by ordering to destroy the film starring Hope, firing Hope mercilessly, and summoning the proper girl Gloria. In addition, one can suggest from the dialogue with the psychiatrist Traurig in the first scene of Governor's appearance that Governor adheres to the image's properness and is reluctant to connect image with substance.

Governor has nightmares repeatedly and explains them to Traurig as "I'm a little boy in my classroom at school. My teacher is marking papers with a live snake... she is sitting in her chair, naked..." (48), albeit he cannot grasp their implications. It is noticeable that Governor rejects Traurig's interpretation that his dreams are full of "sex symbols" (51) and condemns him as "You dirty... *dirty* man!" (50). His response exposes the rejection of the connection between the images in his dreams and his intimate desires. Considering that Governor repeatedly patronizes his type of young women (18-19),

Traurig's indication is not wrong. Nonetheless, Governor tends to consider his own image as a "King" (51) or "Julius Caesar" (51); he is afraid of ruining the validity of his image by his dirty substance, including sexual desire. Since the interrelation between image and substance threatens Governor, he attempts to detach the external image from his inner self and stick to the presentable appearances.

Nevertheless, Governor does not share the discrepancy between semblances and substances with the studio members in view of his rage against Traurig's indication. As pointed out in the previous section, it does not matter what personalities the executives and Byron have as long as their images are proper. Gloria can also obey the studio's rule in terms of her unconcern about the discrepancy⁽¹⁵⁾. If Governor were not concerned about the inconsistency as well, he could be satisfied with establishing the image of the king superficially, no matter how dirty he is. His stubbornness in denying his sexual desire demonstrates his denial of his two-facedness, the external image and his own personality, which the other studio members accept. Hence, the studio's value also endangers Governor; he is caught in the gap between two different beliefs Hope and the studio members possess.

Eventually, Governor notices Gloria's two-facedness when it is revealed that she is attached to him superficially and flirts with Byron in secret, and he chooses to share the value with Hope. His order of Gloria's dismissal points out that he rejects the separation between image and substance. Moreover, it is suggestive that Governor blames himself as "a blind, stupid old man" (114) when he begs for Hope's return, since it points out that Governor, who considered himself as "King" or "a giant" (69) admits his own stupidity. In this scene, Governor apologizes to Hope by kneeling and kissing her skirt, which also reminds us of Rudolph's swallowing a piece of paper in the same circumstance; Governor tries to transform himself from his own stupidity to become the preferable studio owner through his performance. Once Governor obstructs Hope's success, he accepts the correlation between image and substance.

Concerning a musical number, we can perceive a sign of Governor's change towards sharing the same value with Hope through his performance style. Take "Close Harmony" in Act 2 as an example, Governor decides to reshoot the film *The Fiddler and the Fighter* with Gloria and sings this number to persuade reluctant Byron to participate in the film. As one can see the stage directions, there is no discrepancy between music and lyrics like "Fear" in this number; Governor encourages all the members in the studio to unite in close harmony (like the number's title) through singing in favor of the film's success. This time, Governor shows his performance with "the performative mode," as Hope did. As opposed

to Governor, Gloria and Byron pretend to agree with “Close Harmony” impersonally; however, they arrange a rendezvous in secret during the number as:

ALL. [...] CLOSE HARMONY!

BYRON. (Speaking to Gloria, as he and L.Z. dance around her) My place tonight?

ALL. CLOSE HARMONY!

GLORIA. (Speaking to Byron) No – mine!

ALL. CLOSE HARMONY! (90)

To be precise, the inconsistency of the performance styles emerges in “Close Harmony” in the same way as that of Hope and the studio members in Act 1.

Consequently, this article clarifies that *FOFI*, which is formerly considered as an ordinary Cinderella story, can be understood in the following discourse. The show illustrates the conflict and transition of the value of the relation between image and substance, and affirms the correlation of both. Similarly, the musical numbers function to highlight the conflict and choice of different beliefs about the level of the characters’ performance style.

Grounded in this analysis, one can discover that Rudolph’s and Governor’s changes allow Hope to return to the studio and transfigure herself into the star “Lila Tremaine.” Generally, ordinary musical comedies end up at this point with some uplifting musical numbers celebrating the protagonists’ success; nevertheless, as stated in the Introduction, *FOFI* ends with the heroine’s struggle to get her face up from the cement on the Walk of Fame. Not only are there musical numbers in the last scene, but also Hope cannot sing in spite of being the heroine of the musical comedy. As a matter of course, this finale made the audiences laugh (if not so, we could have read reviews with titles such as “Burnett’s convincing choked performance!”), but it still looks absurd. Why did Comden & Green decide to conclude *FOFI* in such a way? There are reasons for such a strange conclusion: the ending states that Hope’s belief is finally represented on the stage as the inseparable state between her face print as an image and her body itself as a substance.

After five years from Hope’s return to the studio, we can find that Hope is eventually overwhelmed by the studio’s rule that the proper image should be presented, and starts to create her star image superficially as Byron did. For instance, the stage direction indicates her behavior as “reminiscent of Jean Harlow in *Hell’s Angels*” (118) when Hope is about to make her face print of Lila on the Walk of Fame. Therefore, one can understand that *FOFI* attempts to exhibit the values accepted through the story with

a criticism against Hope's alternation. However, there is still one question about this ending: why can the conclusion indicate the criticism against Hope's change. To answer it, we need to move on to the next chapter by focusing on the skew between the narrative content and the form: the back stage musical of a musical film on the stage.

III. Disclosure of film's artificiality, accentuation of physicality, and affirmation of theatricality

In this chapter, the article will point out that the skew lines between the form and the narrative content can not only disclose the film's artificiality but also expose theatrical physicality in *FOFI*.

What is the meaning of *FOFI*'s form being not film but theater? *FOFI*'s plot itself, an unknown girl transformed into a star is approximate to the alternation of Cathy (Debbie Reynolds) in *Singin' in the Rain*. Although backstage musical films are not uncommon especially in the studio era from the 1930s to the 1950s, stage musicals about films are infrequent, as stated in the Introduction. While backstage musical films raise the question about what musical films describe through representing a world of theater, does *FOFI* raise the question in a similar manner, asking about what stage musicals describe through representing a world of film?

Backstage musical films have been studied from the following viewpoints: a structural dynamism overlapping the transition from backstage to a performance with one from reality to a dream; the linkage between a protagonist's romance and success, and the conflict between an opportunity for liberal self-expression and a responsibility or an obligation to a community⁽¹⁶⁾. Nevertheless, when *FOFI* is investigated from the view of its form or medium as this article has been attempting, the study of Jane Feuer is suggestive.

Feuer states that musical films in the studio era, in which Comden & Green participated, attempt to provide audiences with something close to theatrical experiences by producing a spontaneous and unrehearsed atmosphere against the productive and artificial inherence (3). Furthermore, considering *Singin' in the Rain*, Feuer examines that the work demystifies musical films emphasizing the productive aspects and at the same time remystifies them by camouflaging spontaneous performances with technology (45-47). For example, the film is demystified when Don (Gene Kelly) and Lina (Jean Hagen) attempt to shoot a film with sound technology and end up with a comical and disastrous atmosphere. It is also remystified when Don constructs a romantic mood with mechanical equipment and sings "You Were Meant for Me" to Cathy without rehearsing,

and when Cathy sings “With You” beautifully to dub Lina’s cracked voice. Backstage musical films aim to conceal the innate artificiality by establishing a certain atmosphere as if characters sing and dance on impulse, even though they cannot avoid the fact that musical films are collections of technology⁽¹⁷⁾.

On the contrary, *FOFI*, a stage musical about a musical film, intends to represent the opposite notion to Feuer’s: it accentuates artificiality and technology. One can see this when the black actor Lou switches his accent, stressing the film’s superficiality as exemplified previously. This disguise of spontaneous performances can be seen in other scenes such as dancers checking their choreography before rehearsal, Hope’s mistakes during a shooting, the director shouting “Cut!” (45), and a removal of sets right after shooting. If *FOFI* exposes a construction of the artificial illusion as such, what does it try to express? Although it is no wonder that the above examples indicate “a satire” as previous discourses have mentioned, this work rather paradoxically reveals theatrical physicality.

As an illustration that highlights physical presence in *FOFI*, there is a remarkable scene where Hope starts to establish the film’s libretto through her physical performance. When she finds that the screenwriter has not finished the book on the first day of the rehearsal, she shows the performances with words and gestures referring to the shooting term at the same time:

HOPE. [...] (She rises, begins to act it out feverishly) Shot! We see Madison Square Garden... he’s losing the fight... his heart isn’t in it ‘cause she’s left him. Pam! Pam! Pow! Cut to the Carnegie Hall... she’s playing the concerto. Cut back to the Garden... Ow! Ugh! Cut back to Carnegie... Eeeooooo eeeoooo eeeoooo (Playing the violin) At a break in the violin part she... (In fight announcer’s voice) Kid Bercovici is being slaughtered... He’s *down!* One! Two! Three! Cut to the Garden... (39)

The accentuation of physicality unites with an exposure of the film’s productive features in the shooting scenes as well. In one of the production numbers “I’m With You,” there is a stage direction designated to a choreography reminiscent of the kaleidoscope shot by Busby Berkeley, the representative director and choreographer of the 1930s (56-57). If it is a filmed image, the attractive kaleidoscope shot results from the chorus girls’ geometric dispositions through a fixed camera on a ceiling; nonetheless, the presence of dancers’ bodies are demanded to reproduce the effect of the kaleidoscope shot in the

form of theater. Hence the appearance of both technology and physical performativity is indivisible in *FOFI*.

Furthermore, it can be said that the mutual coherence between images and substances, stated in the last chapter, connects to the emphasis on both productivity and physicality. For instance, during the shooting scene where Hope plays the violin, the director instructs her to “supply emotion” (45), and practice the following trick:

CORKLEY. (Calling offstage) Okay, boys, bring the backing! ([...] [T]wo men dressed completely in black – including hoods – enter, one carrying the violin, the other the bow. Except for the fact that they carry these and that each is wearing a long white glove on one arm, they look exactly like medieval executioners. Two stagehands bring on a black backing flat. [...]) Just put your hands behind your back!

(HOPE does, and at a signal from CORKLEY, the four men surround HOPE – two of them holding the flat behind her, and the other two standing directly behind her, holding and playing the violin, which has been placed under her chin.) (45-46)

If one saw this scene in the finished film, it would be the scene of Hope playing the violin spontaneously; nevertheless, the audience of *FOFI* only sees the trick by the four stagehands pretending that Hope is playing it.

It may seem that this arrangement attempts to reinforce “an image’s properness”; we may find that the superficial image (playing the violin) is separated from Hope’s own ability. However, the maneuvers to present suitable images affect Hope herself because she is accustomed to the trick with the four stagehands; she “joins the game” (46) with “the four men moving in step with her about the stage, as she looks passionately fraught” (46), and finally “finds herself holding the bow and violin in her own hands” (46), with “the two men having withdrawn theirs” (46). Thus, the praise of theatricality or physicality indicated in *FOFI*’s form is closely linked with the innovation of both image and the characters’ genuine selves through performances. To be more precise, the following schema can be established in this show; the subjects perform to create some image, which emphasize the film’s artificiality; similarly it emphasizes the characters’ physical presence, which feeds back to the characters’ transformations.

Given that analysis, one can find that *FOFI*’s conclusion that Hope buries her face in the cement praises not only the mutual connection between image and substance, but

also a theatrical physicality through Hope's actual writhing body appearing on the stage. Perhaps, the content of a musical film and the form as theater never come together, but both of them stick to one point: the affirmation of physical presence. In *FOFI*, physicality is re-evaluated as the intrinsic characteristic of theater. However, this affirmation never looks gently with "affection and nostalgia," but accompanies a complicated atmosphere with humor, irony, and cruelty in the heroine's suffocation. It seems to be quite symbolic for *FOFI*'s audiences that TV star Carol Burnett shows theatrical physicality by being suffocated on the stage because one can find the physical presence that the conventional musical number could not express. Therefore, we can understand that *FOFI* is the distinctive musical show that coexists the laughable comedy with the rigorous sincerity toward the theatrical characteristics through theatrical manner⁽¹⁸⁾.

IV. Conclusion

FOFI has not been studied at length, only gaining banal understandings such as "a star-driven musical comedy" or "a satire toward musical films in the 1930"; however, this article has clarified *FOFI*'s new aspects as follows:

First, the article has analyzed the narrative structure and the musical numbers' functions. The story is based on the conflict and choice of the belief in the interrelation of image and substance, and the connection of both is valuable in the end. Next, the article has focused on the skew lines of a narrative content and form, represented as a stage musical about a musical film's backstage, and has revealed two aspects: *FOFI* reveals a musical film's intrinsic artificiality intended to be concealed in the studio era and emphasizes the theater's inherent feature, that is, a physical presence. This formal idea is linked to the narrative content in respect of the notion that physicality or performativity is affirmable as a formal singularity. Thus, *FOFI* can be re-evaluated as a self-referential musical comedy toward a stage musical's features through the subject of the world of film.

Moreover, this essay has shown the significance of studying musical shows by focusing on the relation between theatre and film to clarify how the inherent characteristics of each form are expressed.

Furthermore, this article has promoted a deeper analysis of Comden & Green. Since their style has been believed to inherit the conventions of musical comedies from the 1920s to the 1930s⁽¹⁹⁾, they have scarcely been investigated from academic viewpoints. However, as this article clarifies that Comden & Green always raised the question; what are a musical's uniqueness and the formal distinctiveness? Therefore, future research about Comden & Green from new perspectives is to be expected in order to make musical

studies advance.

Notes

- (1) *FOFI* opened on May 24 1964 at the Mark Hellinger Theatre; Comden & Green collaborated with the composer July Styne. *FOFI*'s original title was *A Girl to Remember*.
- (2) Laurence Maslon and Michael Kantor indicate Broadway's struggle with the rise of TV in their book *Broadway* (2010 282-83). And Philip Auslander writes briefly about the relationship between theater (and almost all performing arts) and mass media (especially TV):

[A]t the level of cultural economy, theatre (and live performance generally) and the mass media are rivals, not partners. Neither are they equal rivals: it is absolutely clear that our current cultural formation is saturated with and dominated by, mass media representations in general, and television in particular. (1999 1)

- (3) For instance, Thomas S Hischak points out that "the story recalled the broad kind of Hollywood satire that the team (Comden and Green) had provided for the film *Singin' in the Rain*" (2002 114).
- (4) Harvey Sabinson, *FOFI*'s press agent, describes the details of trouble and the arguments between the producers and Burnett in "Starlight, Starflight," which is included in Steven Suskin's *Second Act Trouble* (2006).
- (5) "An integrated musical" means that a musical is based on a certain notion: "integration" that "all elements of a show – plot, character, song, dance, orchestration, and setting – should blend together into a unity, a seamless whole." (McMillin 2006 1)
- (6) Even though only does Gary Konas mention that *FOFI*'s ending is absurd, he does not mention what the meaning the ending possesses. See Konas (2008 106).
- (7) Before *FOFI*, a musical about the silent film *Goldilocks* was produced in 1958. Considering a musical about a musical film, the stage version of *Singin' in the Rain* (1985) is representative.
- (8) For example, *Singin' in the Rain* is a musical film about the pioneer days of musical film. *It's Always Fair Weather* (1954) satires the rise of TV in a musical film. Above all, *Bells Are Ringing* (1956) uses telephone as a medium to bring out the characteristic performance mode of musical theater. See Jane Feuer (1993), Robert Stam (1985), and Sahoko Tsuji (2012).
- (9) Since there is no recorded video of *FOFI*, the author can only examine the show from the text, the score, the photos, and the soundtrack. However, considering the fact that this article is one of the studies about Comden& Green's characteristics as librettists, it does not seem that this article's validity is ruined by the lack of a recorded resource.
- (10) Hereafter, "image" without any notes means "concept" or "semblance" in this article. Referring to W.J.T. Mitchell. *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (1986).
- (11) Although Hope looks "unconvincing" as a femme fatale in the stage direction, it is important for Hope to aim to be metamorphosed into the notions provoked by the seductive costume and

- the name in a song like “MATA HARI” or “SALOME” (27) through her performance.
- (12) In the manuscripts and soundtrack, Hope lists star’s stage names like Fred Astaire or Cary Grant, and suggests that all of them could not have succeeded if they had used real names. This mention disappeared in the published text during the show’s suspension.
 - (13) Andrea Most’s research on *Oklahoma!* (1943) analyzes the peddler Ali Hakim’s assimilation to the community because of his ability to lead a musical number. Raymond Knapp also examines that Annie in *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946) is able to join several communities like the Wild West Show or the tribe of Native Americans with her performance. See Most (2004 104-118) and Knapp (2006 209-215).
 - (14) Referring to *Open a New Window* (2001) by Ethan Mordden p54.
 - (15) While Gloria shows her outer impression that she is attached to Governor by calling him “Uncle Lionel” (82), she exposes her inner thinking against him to Byron, complaining, “I don’t need L.Z. anymore – I’m a star! He’s a stupid, boring, dirty old man!” (111).
 - (16) The article refers to studies by Rick Altman in a structural dynamism and a correlation between show business and romance, and ones by Andrea Most in an ambiguity between self-expression and a communal identification. See Altman (1987) and Most (2013).
 - (17) According to Kimura Tatsuya, musical films before the 1950s produced the beginning of musical numbers naturally and logically on the basis of “the operative efficiency and the technological disciplining” (2008 446). See Kimura (2008 427-61, 2013 203-31, translated by the author).
 - (18) Albeit this article does not discuss in detail, it is suggestive that *FOFI* is produced in the same period of the rise of Happenings or the Living Theatre in the United States.
 - (19) According to Denny Martin Flinn, Comden & Green’s “work reverberates with the ‘my dad has a burn’ style of bouncy musical comedy that flourished in the 1920s and never completely gave up its grip on the musical stage” (1997 395).

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