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I want to continue our discourse about musicals, especially as a way of trying to lead into the two remarkable, in many ways landmark films we're going to juxtapose this evening. Remember that our plan here is to juxtapose one film-- a classic instance, even a culminating instance of the studio era and of the tradition of the musical in the studio era-- against another kind of musical that appears after the advent of television, and after the studio system has begun to break apart, and especially after the fundamental transformation that the audience underwent, migrating from an habitual, a regular, a weekly relationship to Hollywood films, to essentially a blockbuster relationship, in which the vast majority of Americans would attend the movies only once or twice a year. And if you think about the implications of that, that fact alone will explain how profoundly the movie industry was transformed.

Incidentally, I should mention to you that this is still not an idea that has been fully understood by what I'll call traditional film historians, who are so locked into an idea that film must resemble the kind of thing that I watched when I grew up as a boy, or as a young girl. And now that a tradition of scholarship has talked about, that is to say, those films that never were shown on television, or were never made for television, it causes a problem. Because what these scholars tend to do is they ignore the social context within which the function of the movies began to be transformed.

Partly there was a kind of hostility on the part of many older film scholars toward the notion that television might be a worthy place to look for a valuable cinematic narrative. And it took a long time before the community of film scholars-- even a part of it-- was ready to acknowledge that television was also an environment in which cinema-- what we might call cinema audiovisual narrative-- could be look at, taken seriously, and so forth. And of course, today it's taken for granted by many commentators, many of them no longer even with a cultural memory of the studio era, that what goes on on television-- that shows like *Breaking Bad* or *The Sopranos* are the supreme forms of audiovisual entertainment in our society. This too is radically oversimplified. And I will return to these questions a bit later when I talk about the Westerns, and about film in the '70s, in two weeks.

I want to continue our discourse about the musical then, first by giving you a very brief prospective drawn from the film scholar Leo Braudy, whose essay "The Aesthetics of Connection" is required reading I think for this week-- in any case, for this week or next week. And he talks in that essay, among other things, very richly about the musical, and about ways of thinking about the musical. And I'm borrowing from an argument he makes in that remarkable essay.

He makes a distinction in that essay, or a series of comparisons between Astaire and Kelly, the two great male leads we associate with the American film musical. And he sees them very helpfully as contrasting figures illustrating what we might call contrasting elements, or contrasting tendencies within the musical form.

If you think about Astaire-- and you saw him in one of his classic performances at the end of our last lecture, in that sequence "Cheek to Cheek," if you think about Astaire in this way, from that sequence you can get something of what Braudy had in mind. He reminds us that Astaire almost always dances-- and this is a partial exception in the film you saw tonight-- only a partial one. But almost always we see Astaire dancing in places that seem intended for performance. That is to say we won't see Astaire dancing in the middle of a corn field, or dancing up the side of the Empire State Building, as Frank Sinatra and Gene Kelly do in a musical-- it's called *On the Town*. And it's one of the wonderful MGM musicals. Kelly and Sinatra are dancing in spaces that are inappropriate for dance.

But almost all of Astaire's dances take place either in literal performance spaces or in public environments that seem as if they're quasi-stage or dance environments. In other words, he dances in spaces that we expect for dance. And he doesn't violate those spaces in some way.

He often in his films plays either a professional dancer, or a professional performer of some kind. So when he segues into his performances, there's a kind of natural connection. He's almost always very fancily dressed, as you saw in tonight's sequence, sometimes very often dancing in a tux and tails. But in any case, in formal dress of some kind. So he dances in space is appropriate for dance, dressed up in a kind of formal way, often playing a professional dancer or a performer.

But there's an immense grace and energy in his dancing. He's one of the great dancers-- many would say the greatest dancer who ever performed in American movies. And one way to talk about the attractions of what he's doing is we can say that what he embodies is the

principle of grace under constraint, like a great baseball pitcher. Look. A lot of people can throw the ball 97 miles an hour. But only a very small number of pitchers who make a lot of money can throw a ball 97 miles an hour and control where it goes.

And we can say that that kind of athletic power-- a lot of athletics involves this, where you're trying to control tremendous physical energy. And the physical energy has to be constrained in certain ways. And part of what we admire about the expression of that physical energy is how constrained or graceful it can become. There are many people who have made analogies between Astaire's dancing and what great basketball players do, showing tremendous physical energy, but also a kind of gracefulness within the constraints that are imposed upon them by the lines on the court, by the demands of the basket, by the claims of gravity when they jump, and so forth.

And I make allusion to these non-dance analogies, because so many people seem to respond more fully to those than to dance itself, even though those of you who have danced, or are dancers, or know serious dancers, will understand that dancers themselves are much greater athletes than most athletes, and that there is a profound form of athleticism, of physical energy, grace, and physical control involved in dance. And we see that in Astaire's performances.

It's as if he stands for a form of grace under constraint, of strength and power constrained but not undermined by the rules and boundaries within which it must operate. It's a form of classical art. And what we can say is that Kelly stands for classicism. I'm sorry. Astaire stands for classicism, and Gene Kelly, who is a kind of opposite in this way in his dances, stands for the romantic. The classic and the romantic tendencies or energies.

I'm oversimplifying here, as Braudy does. But again, it's a useful and illuminating simplification. Because we see Kelly for example, mostly he doesn't play professional performers, or professional dancers. He almost always wears ordinary casual clothing-- open shirts, jeans.

And this casualness of appearance is matched by the fact that the dances he engages in often take place in spaces that are not appropriate for dance, or almost hostile to dance. And one of the deepest principles of Kelly's performances-- of Kelly's dances-- in a certain sense is this contest between his exuberance and energy, and the constraints that surround him.

But unlike Astaire, he does not reveal the power and grace of his dance by acknowledging the constraints and living within them. The energy of his dance expresses itself in the moments

when he over-goes boundaries, when he violates borders of various kinds. And there are numerous examples of this in *Singin' in the Rain*. I'll mention some of them in a little while.

So the contrast between Kelly and Astaire in this way-- and look, in both cases I've simplified, because they also resemble each other in certain ways. But these tendencies distill quality. This argument distills qualities in them that clarify certain energies or tensions that can be said to be characteristic, not only of two dance styles and the kinds of movies these two stars are in, but also in the musical genre as a whole.

I'd like to say a couple of things about each of the two films we're going to see tonight, by way of framing some of the most important issues for you to think about. And these are very rich, complex texts. And 20 minutes of conversation, no matter how pointed, can never do full justice to them. I don't intend to do full justice to them. But I want to suggest some ways for you to think about aspects of these films as you're viewing them. And my hope and expectation is that these perspectives will energize and enliven the film for you, and cue you in to aspects of the film that you might otherwise not see as deeply, or might not occur to you until you reflected on the film after the case.

One way to think about *Singin' in the Rain*, then-- our example of a Hollywood musical, or a culminating instance of a Hollywood musical-- is to recognize that it belongs to a subcategory of musicals-- to several subcategories of musicals, one of which I've already mentioned-- the putting on the show, the backstage story. But here the backstage story is the story of a movie, instead of a play. But it's the same basic situation.

But it is also sometimes called a song catalog movie, because there's so many songs in it. And that's kind of a kind of catalog, or an encyclopedic object. An encyclopedia of film, of music, and of song.

And this is almost literally true of *Singin' in the Rain*. Arthur Freed, the executive producer of so many major films-- over 40 MGM musicals between something like 1939-- what was the great musical in 1939? *The Wizard of Oz*-- the first musical that is thought to be a musical in color. And think how organically *The Wizard of Oz* uses color. Arthur Freed was the executive producer of that film. From that point until sometime in the 1960s, he was the executive producer or the supervisor of something like 40-plus MGM musicals, of which *Singin' in the Rain* is a classic instance.

And so Freed had worked as a lyricist. Arthur Freed had worked as a lyricist at MGM with Nacio Herb Brown-- the songwriter-- many years earlier. And most of the songs in *Singin' in the Rain*, 1952, had been introduced in MGM musicals from 1929 on. So in a literal sense, the film is a kind of encyclopedia of older songs. And especially two key songs in the film-- "Broadway Melody" and "You Were Meant for Me," were both featured in that early and signature musical, founding musical that I mentioned this afternoon, *The Broadway Melody of 1929*. So part of the pleasure for older members of the audience in 1952 would have been to hear and see these numbers in the new, souped-up arrangements that were created for this film, and in such artful performances.

There's one song in the film that my colleague Martin Marks-- M-A-R-K-S-- he sometimes teaches this course in the spring. He's a professor of music. And he sometimes-- and I encourage all of you to consider taking it-- teaches an advanced course in the American musical. It's a wonderfully interesting course. And he knows more about the musical, I think, than almost any living human being.

And I'm stealing from some of his teaching notes here when I say this. One song that Marty Marks loves to talk about is a minor song in the film. And I'm mentioning it because you might miss it otherwise. It's called "Would You?" And it's a song that chose the process of dubbing. And it's a song that actually has a kind of a plot, and historical function within the film. It comes near the end of the film.

And when it was sung in this moment, it was already old-fashioned in its original day, when it was first written and sung. And by 1952 it's much more outmoded, Professor Marks tells us. Although it's a simple and graceful waltz, it uses an antiquated diction, for example. And there are other signals-- even the fact that it's a waltz-- that show it to be kind of old-fashioned in a way.

But in *Singin' in the Rain*, this old-fashioned song is used to telescope the process of recording for films shot-by-shot. Watch how it happens. It's a very exciting moment. And so what happens then is that the old-fashioned song becomes the cornerstone of the new technology of sound recording. Watch how it happens in the film.

And what this calls our attention to is something I've talked about earlier, and will return to in a moment-- the idea that in the most remarkable works of art we are surely aware of the fact that we're in the presence of what the literary critics and the art critics sometimes call organic

form, in which the form of the text contributes to its meaning, in which form and content are married, can't really be separated. That the formal behavior of the text enacts or embodies or articulates or dramatizes what the film is about, what the text means. I'll come back to this point in a minute with even more dramatic examples, I hope.

And an added point about this "Would You?" song, just this one sort of minor sequence-- I'm mentioning this partly to show you how deeply you could actually dig into particular sequences and particular songs in the film, and find meaning, relevance, and complexity there. When Debbie Reynolds, who sings the song, looks point blank at Gene Kelly as she sings it, she drives home the question of whether he'll be brave enough to love her, So it even implicates itself in the love story that's at the heart of the film.

Her singing voice, we might note ironically and comically, in this scene is actually dubbed for this song. And you'll understand if you haven't seen the film why that's a comic and ironic commentary. She had the wrong kind of voice. It was too flat and nasal for this operetta-like number. So they dubbed her voice.

So there's a double irony here, because she's playing a dubber when she's singing the song. And you might compare the voice in "Good Morning," another number in the film, where Debbie Reynolds is really singing. And you can see the difference between the two voices.

So the implicit point that I made in talking about this one number, the "Would You?" song number, it has to do with what we might call a central element or feature of *Singin' in the Rain*, its profound self-consciousness, the profound way in which it shows itself to be aware of itself-- to be aware of itself as a movie, to be aware of itself as a bearer of traditions of singing, of dancing, and performance.

And so it isn't simply an encyclopedia of musical history. It's almost an encyclopedia of almost all forms of performance. I don't want to go too far. But there's many, many forms of performance are incorporated in the film's grasp, in the film's embrace. All right?

One way we can think of it as an encyclopedic recapitulation of the history of musicals, and of films in general. As you'll notice when you look at the film, *Singin' in the Rain* begins by being about the problem of changing a silent film into a sound film, because the silent has been made just at that cusp moment when the transition to sound is occurring. And the film in that sense is also a wonderful sort of historical reprise for our course, even though it wasn't made for that purpose, alas.

So in the film, then, we also get an allusion to and a representation of silent movies. But not just some generic idea of silent movies-- a very particular kind of swashbuckler adventure film is dramatized there.

But then later, in a scene I mentioned earlier today, in the audition scene, the beautiful girls sequence in *Singin' in the Rain* where a megaphone suddenly turns into a circle of dancers, alluding to the Busby Berkeley tradition, we have a very specific reference to another kind of movie musical. So, juxtaposed against each other are two different kinds of movies, And I've only mentioned a couple of examples. As you watch the film, you'll see dozens and dozens of instances in which the film capaciously reaches back to older forms of performance, and tries to incorporate them in some sense into its own structure, into its own energies.

And there are many older performance forms in the film. There are forms of slapstick, and Keaton-like comedy-- especially in Donald O'Connor's wonderful dance and song sequence "Make 'em Laugh." There are allusions and references and dramatized scenes from vaudeville, from jazz, from what we might call forms of love melodrama, all the way through the film.

And I haven't really cataloged even remotely all the kinds of performance spaces and performance types that the film incorporates and utilizes in the course of its length. Nor have I even begun to list the number of musical styles-- particular songs and particular dance styles-- that are also incorporated into the film. But I've said enough to suggest that *Singin' in the Rain* has what might be called a structural or a formal exuberance, a kind of excitement, as if every time it turns it wants to make an allusion to another kind of text, as if it feels itself in some sense with a kind of excitement and exuberant energy constantly in touch with its ancestry, and within ancestry that it tries to define very generously and broadly.

And so what we're saying is that formally, structurally, the film is expressing a special kind of intellectual energy, excitement, exuberance. And of course what's interesting and fundamental about that is that those energies are also replicated, centrally reenacted in the actual dance sequences that we see in the film.

It's a profoundly rich example of what I called a moment ago organic form. The structure or the shape of the film contributes to our sense not only that it has a kind of encyclopedic, self-reflexive interest in its own history, and that it's recapitulating its own history for us as it proceeds. We also have a deep sense of the extent to which the film understands that many of

the older forms it dramatizes are now simply being archived, as if the film understands itself not only as a dramatic entertainment, but also as a kind of history book, or a kind of encyclopedia-- literally a kind of archive of all the forms of performance and song and dance that lie behind the making of such a film. And of course that this formal exuberance, as I said, is repeated again and again in an actualized and concrete way in the story, in the plot, every time the characters start singing or dancing. And as you'll see, there's a particular kind of exuberance and energy in many of the dances.

Key themes. Well I've already implicitly been talking about some of the themes. But let me mention just two that seem to me especially significant. One I've mentioned much earlier. And I simply want to remind you again that this tension between what might be called high art, and the pretentious expectations of a cultural establishment, are set up for parody and mockery in this film repeatedly. The film is on the side of the popular and the energetic, and the unpretentious. And one can feel that tension again and again in many, many of the sequences in the movie in the film.

Let me give you just two obvious examples. In the very opening sequence of the film, one of the classic moments in the history of American movies replayed again and again in compilation anthologies of great moments in Hollywood, great moments of Hollywood film, is the introduction to the film. And the introduction to *Singin' in the Rain* recreates an historical actuality that I need to remind today's audiences of.

Shows you how old this course is. Because when I first began to teach this course, these practices were still going on, and the students still understood, and in fact had their own experience of exhibition movies, and of going to theaters that were very lavish and, in many ways, even pretentious. And what they were especially aware of is something I have to remind you of now, which is that very often Hollywood had a strategy of rolling out its great blockbuster, what it hoped would be great blockbuster films, with very elaborate inaugural events. The debut of a film was often a major event. And it would be covered by newspapers. And many Hollywood stars would come and attend. And they would turn the event into a publicity event partly in order to get publicity for the release of the film.

And *Singin' in the Rain* opens with such a moment, in which a film is opening. And it dramatizes the comic hypocrisies that attend such publicity gestures. And as the film opens then, we see a sequence in which the stars of the film we're about to see, Gene Kelly, is

interviewed. The star of the film is interviewed by a reporter.

And he then tells sort of the story of his career. But the story that he tells is fake-- is a lie. It's very pretentious. Oh, we went to the best conservatories. We were trained by classical musicians and classical actors-- "ac-TORS." And he acts very pretentious.

But that's what he says. But what we see, what is shown to us is the actual history of how Don Lockwood and his partner, his sidekick, played by the brilliant performer Donald O'Connor, really got their start. And so while he says, we were trained in the best conservatories, what we see are Donald O'Connor and Gene Kelly dancing in a burlesque show. And so that there's this very obvious, even in some ways crude mockery or laughter at the hypocrisies of Hollywood. And part of what's being celebrated there is the exuberance and energy, of unsanctioned forms of performance, like the dances that people do in burlesque shows, as against what you do when you go to the museum, or when you come to the university and have your professor declaim ancient Greek to you in syllables you have no understanding of.

So there's one example of how that theme plays out. But you can find it in dozens and dozens of other places in the film. And I hope you'll watch for such moments.

So I won't give you my second example. I'm running out of time. Let me turn to the next large theme I want you to be aware of. I call it the theme of outer versus inner. It's really a variation on or an extension of the theme of high versus popular art, in the sense that it's also about the difference between a kind of pretentious and constraining and old-fashioned view of things, and a more spontaneous and we might even say a more spontaneous and popular or democratic view of things. And the term I give it is the difference between outer and inner, or the difference between appearance and reality.

And in fact the example I just gave you, in which we have Don Lockwood telling the reporter that he was educated in the best conservatories while we see that he's dancing in a burlesque show, is an example of that kind of thing as well. But there are many other very dramatic examples. And I want to mention one of them now.

When the Debbie Reynolds character-- the love interest of our protagonist-- first meets the Don Lockwood character-- the character played by Gene Kelly-- she pretends not to recognize him, even though he's a famous movie star. And she says, oh, she spends her time watching Shakespeare, but she doesn't spend much time watching the movies. And Don Lockwood is kind of offended by this.

It later turns out-- not even that much later-- that of course the Debbie Reynolds character herself is deeply immersed in the popular culture. Right after she makes this comment to Don Lockwood, or a few minutes after that, we find her jumping out of the cake as a dancer at a party. And then as more information emerges later, we come to recognize, of course, that she knows a great deal about Don Lockwood. She's always been a tremendous fan of the movies. But she's been covering it up.

And again and again in the film we see this kind of tension playing itself out, this tension between a kind of outer facade. And the notion is that what is shown on the outside, the exterior of things is often fake, a mere cover for what is authentic and within, And you can understand this in a number of ways.

One of the ways it plays out in the movie is the question of the person who is in front of the audience and singing, but it's not really her voice. It's the voice of Debbie Reynolds, who's behind the curtain. And so that again, this theme of the artificial versus the authentic, or the outer versus the inner, plays itself out in many, many ways in the film. That's part of what makes the film so coherent, so dramatically effective and energetic.

And so another way of thinking about this sequence, this idea of the outer person versus the inner, authentic person; the outer appearance, the illusion that film makes, but what really goes on behind the scenes. And as you'll discover, *Singin' in the Rain* constantly takes us behind the scenes to show us how the illusion of movies is put together. And that's a part of this same theme. So one of the things I'm trying to call your attention to again is the way in which the central ideas of the film permeate both its form and its content in ways that make it very difficult to separate.

Finally, one last fundamental issue connected to what I've been saying before, the way the film meditates on or dramatizes an idea about the place of song and dance in human life. You will have noticed, of course, that I myself feel-- and if you've seen any of the performances in this film, you'll know yourselves-- that a principle of energy, vitality, playfulness, exuberance is almost always present in the dances in *Singin' in the Rain*. Song and dance is seen in *Singin' in the Rain* as a morally and psychologically revolutionary experience, I think.

And I use the word "revolution" in a dangerous way. I don't mean a politically revolutionary way, but I mean in a morally, a psychologically revolutionary way. And so what's going on in some sense is the sense that constraint and convention are constantly threatened by the

exuberance, spontaneity, energy, excitement, vitality of the dance.

And this expresses itself in all kinds of ways in the film. Let me just mention a couple to call your attention to. You'll discover many, many other examples. One is the wonderful sequence, the Moses supposes sequence. This is a sequence in which Don Lockwood and his partner Donald O'Connor have to be trained, because they're making the transition to sound. And the studio calls in an elocution expert, who's dressed up like a very pretentious old-line professor. And he's going to teach them how to pronounce things correctly.

So he comes in, and he says, I want you to repeat after me-- "Moses supposes his toes are roses. But Moses supposes erroneously." He's also ugly. His teeth are disgusting. So you're already offended by the guy before Don and his comrade begin to respond.

And also, of course, what's ridiculous about this? It's meaningless talk. He's so interested in making them pronounce the "O" vowel properly that he creates meaningless sentences. But their meaninglessness amuses Don Lockwood and his partner. And essentially what they do is they take the Moses supposes lines, and they begin to sort of make fun of them. And they begin to make fun of their interlocutor, their teacher. They end up taking a garbage can and emptying it out just has paper in it-- putting it on his head. They end up dancing in a ridiculous way. So they end up dancing on top of desks, or up the side of walls.

Again, what are they doing? Their dances are violating the normal spaces in which we expect people to be walking or standing upright. The very way in which the dance violates normal boundaries creates this sense of exuberance and of freedom. So what they're doing is they're rebelling against the pretentiousness, the constraints of this kind of high-culture expectation. And the song and dance in the Moses supposes sequence create a kind of exuberant chaos in which they dance on the tables and make fun of the very elements that they're supposed to be learning.

The "Good Morning" sequence-- one of the great sequences in the history of movies, I think-- shows the same thing. It takes place at breakfast in an ordinary domestic space, which is transfigured or transformed, including the props, in something we might imagine Chaplin doing such imaginative things, in which the ordinary props of the kitchen become partners in the dance, become elements in the dance-- what we feel is the imaginative power of love and of performance transforming an ordinary space.

And we can see this principle operating with an even greater force in the title sequence of the film-- probably the most famous sequence of dance in the history of Hollywood, the *Singin' in the Rain* sequence itself. We see the rain itself. What a funny place to be dancing, There's a contradiction. But your exuberance, your energy, your sense of love is so great that even rain doesn't matter. And watch what happens. He has an umbrella, but he doesn't use the umbrella to protect him from the rain, violating our expectation. There's one wonderful moment in the film where he hands the umbrella in the midst of pouring rain to someone else, to a pedestrian who goes by,

There's a moment when he's dancing in the rain. He puts the umbrella down. The rain's coming. But he doesn't have enough rain pouring on him. He steps under a downspout to have even more rain come down on him. And when we experience this, one of the reasons we experience this as joyful, and as assertive, and as individualizing, is the sense we have that these are exactly not things that people normally do. He's over-going or violating certain conventions or literal boundaries.

And there's one moment in the dance, very dramatic. And I know this incidentally, not because I've discovered it myself, but because 20 years ago or 15 years ago in this course a student who later went on to work in Hollywood-- and he still works there. He's a sound genius. He was an MIT engineer who loved this course, and was a musician as well. He wrote a paper for me about that sequence. And he showed me this. And I'm sure that some smart critics also saw it, but I learned this from an MIT student in this course about 15 years ago.

He analyzed the dance sequence very closely. And one of the things he showed was that the decisive moment in the dance occurs-- or a decisive moment in the dance occurs-- when the Kelly character suddenly-- he's dancing on the sidewalk-- jumps off the sidewalk across the curb into the street. And psychologically it has a tremendously profound effect, because you don't walk in the street, much less dance in the street. The street is for cars. But that violation of the boundary expresses the sense of exuberance, of freedom that is the essential meaning of what these dances represent.

So energy, spontaneous feeling, performing and over-going limits is one of the things that's being expressed in the exuberance of the film's formal structure, in its encyclopedic reaching out to other forms which it was to incorporate into itself, and in its particular dance and song sequences. And this energy, this celebration of transformative energy, of the over-going of boundaries, strikes me as particularly American, as a uniquely interesting expression of what

people have sometimes called American optimism, and even of the democratic spirit, of the openness that we associate with our ideals-- not the reality, but our ideals-- of democratic society.

What these dances and songs tell us then about the place of dance and song in our lives, the idea that you would begin to dance in a space unused to dance, hostile to dance, transforms the space. So what this film then says about these things is that our speech can be nudged into song, our way of walking can be edged into a dance, and that the ordinary objects in our domestic and public spaces can become props in an improvised ballet.

When we turn to *Cabaret*, we're looking at a very different kind of object. And it's important to recognize what I mentioned earlier, and I will develop more fully in a couple of weeks, the fact that now we have gone almost beyond genre. There are people who would argue-- and there are purists, scholars of the musical film who want to argue that, well, *Cabaret* really isn't a musical for a variety of reasons. It seems to me a very strange and unhelpful argument. But I think if you watch the film closely, you'll understand why people who are partisans of the great Hollywood musical tradition, or even the older operatic tradition represented by value directors like Rouben Mamoulian would have problems fitting *Cabaret* into the category of musical. I think it's a misunderstanding of how we should think about musicals.

But for the moment, let me just encourage you to watch the film and think about how different it is from traditional musicals-- and especially its tone, its moral perspective. But also it's in its structure. Think about that, and you'll understand more fully why it's easy to see that this film would be very unlikely to have been made in the Hollywood era, that it required the kind of freedom that came to film after film was no longer constrained by the necessity to speak in a consensus voice. And as I said, these are matters I will try to clarify and conclude in two weeks when I return to this question, when we talk about film in the '70s, and the great '70s Western-- almost contemporary with *Cabaret*-- Robert Altman's *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*.

I had hoped to say a number of things about Fosse's career, but I don't have time. And I'm just going to encourage you-- look him up. He's a very, very remarkable figure. I call him "The Inheritor" because he was both a Broadway director and choreographer and a dancer both on Broadway and in films. And he performed and directed both on Broadway and in films. He was first a choreographer in films before he became a director.

And in this career as a performer and choreographer, he linked up with almost all the other

great names of the American musical stage-- both the Broadway stage and the Hollywood tradition. And in that sense, we can say that Bob Fosse is the inheritor of the great tradition of the American musical. And I wish I could go into detail about this and show you how many affiliations and specific connections he has with the great figures of the classical age of American movies, and especially the classical age of the American musical. But suffice it to say that it's a very rich set of connections. And his career is a very remarkable career, a very honored career.

Let me mention one fact about his career, perhaps the most remarkable one, easy to remember. Tells you something about his diversity as a director, his gifts, his ambition. In 1973, Bob Fosse I think became the only man in history to win an Oscar, a Tony, and an Emmy-- an Oscar for *Cabaret* as best director, and a Tony for-- or maybe he either he won as best director or the play that he directed on Broadway-- *Pippin* won as best play on Broadway. And he also won a television Emmy for a show starring Liza Minnelli, the star in *Cabaret*, called *Liza with a 'Z.'* So And I think he's the only man in history for whom those three awards came in the same year for three different texts.

He directed one, two, three, four, five films, of which *Cabaret* was the second. The last four are all very remarkable and interesting texts. I won't talk about them here, except to encourage you to look him up and think about them. The theme of performance and the idea of the characters who are themselves performers are always at the center of his films.

Not all of his films involve dance. He made a film about the life of Lenny Bruce called *Lenny* starring Dustin Hoffman, for example, that doesn't have musical numbers in it. But it has many performance numbers in it. And it's a very rich, complex, sophisticated film. So an interesting and profoundly serious director. I wish I could say more about his career.

I want to say a word about the context of *Cabaret*, so you'll understand that aspect of the film more fully, too. It's set in Weimar Germany, that curious time in the 1920s during the rise of Nazism, but long before Hitler has come to power, in which the Weimar Republic, a vulnerable and unstable democracy, but a democracy in which an enormous amount of artistic and literary experimentation was taking place. It's the period of German expressionism. It's the period of the great German silent films that we talked about earlier.

And so our film *Cabaret* is set in that era, and in that driven era, in that divided era in which the rise of Nazism was coupled with or joined to and connected to the fact that German society

was under immense constraints, because it had lost the first World War. Conditions under which they had been forced to surrender were very onerous. There was very high levels of unemployment. It was a schizophrenically divided society, a society of great artistic energies, but of great political divisions and difficulties, and nightmare possibilities that were lurking in many of its practices.

And there's a link-- or at least a partial link-- between the instability and the excitement, but also the dividedness of Weimar Germany, and the actual condition of the United States in the era when the movie came out, Because this is the period at the end of the '60s, after the late '60s and early '70s, probably the most divided time in American history after the Second World War before our current moment.

And in fact, the divisions then were more legitimate. By more legitimate, I mean they had a more sensible cause. There were terrible wars going on. There were better reasons for the partisanship that occurred in the late '60s and early '70s than there are for the weird partisanship we're suffering in the United States today.

And in any case, there was a much greater sense in the late '60s and early '70s that the fabric of American society was under attack, that it was imperfect, not only because the Vietnam War had so divided the country against itself, but because of other matters as well, including the increasing militancy of the civil rights movement, which had gone from a sort of a Martin Luther King type commitment to nonviolent protest into much more disturbing and sometimes violent confrontations with authorities, and with some theorists and speakers actually calling for violence.

And this racial tension was then coupled by another kind of political tension coming from the people, from the young men and women-- who were mostly young men and women-- who were opposed to the Vietnam War. So it was a very driven and disturbed time. There were then parallels between the instability and the disturbance of the Weimar period and the period in which the film appeared. And the original audiences, I think, would have been highly aware of this connection, would have seen that although the film was set in the past, it spoke to the contemporary moment in a very powerful way.

I want also remind you that there are certain aspects of the style of *Cabaret* that are worth keeping in mind. And one way to think about this is to recognize that both mis en scene style and montage style are embodied in the film, and are carried to extremes in certain moments

of the film. That is to say, in many of the performance sequences in the film, the camera behaves in an unbelievably frenetic and frantic way-- changes your eye angle, jumps around a lot, disorients you sometimes-- almost disorients you in the style of a Hitchcock.

And yet in other sequences in the film, especially those outside the cabaret that take place in ordinary life, not in a performance space, the camera and the editing slow down and become more like a kind of *mise en scene* style. And the combination of the two is especially rich and interesting.

You might want to watch for the way these rhythms alter your sense of what's happening in the film, the way the film slows down, and speeds up at certain point. And I mean this literally in terms of the number of images that go by quickly, but also in terms of the way the physical bodies of the performers move across the screen. And of course the way in which the camera itself behaves, whether it's jittery, oriented toward constant movement; or whether it's more stable and gives you a chance to look at the environment this scene is set in.

One way I could give you a sense of the richness of the film is to remind you that there's a kind of texture or multiplicity in *Cabaret* in almost every moment, that if you watch for it, and you're attentive to it, you will always be rewarded. Let me just give you two very quick examples of what I mean by this.

Remember I suggested to you that this principle of multiplicity is one of the principles we turn to if we want to recognize a work of art. The difference between a work of art and an entertainment in my terms is that a work of art is just more intelligent. That is to say, it makes more complex use of its materials. So that in a entertainment, a particular event or gesture may have only one function. But in a work of art, you will have multiple functions. It will perform several jobs simultaneously.

I'll give you two examples of this. Think about what takes place on the periphery of what you're watching, and you'll begin to get some sense of one way in which the texture of this film brings the material alive.

There's one moment I think fairly early in the film. It's a street scene. We're not paying much attention to what's going on. We see, I think, the protagonist walking in the street. And around on the periphery-- certainly not in the center of the frame, nothing that is commented on by the characters-- a cripple slides by on one of those wheeled platforms that people without legs sometimes used in major cities before-- maybe they still happen. But they were very common

in the first half of the 20th century. And we see this guy. Obviously he's a wounded veteran, and he's an amputee. And he pushes himself along on this cart. And we just see him go by.

But what's interesting about that is that this cripple on the platform has a little flag on his platform. Guess what kind of a flag it is? It's a Nazi flag. And this is early in the film, before the Nazis have become a powerful force. The rise of Nazism is in the background of film, as you will see. The Nazis moved from the periphery to the center of the frame before the film is over. And that's the fundamental historical motion of the film.

But all of that's taking place in the background. The foreground are the central characters, and the comic and innocent-- and ultimately not so comic, disturbing love affairs and difficulties that they encounter in this environment. They're too naive or innocent to understand the historical forces that are surrounding them.

So that example of the Nazi flag and this crippled figure-- because the crippled figure is in fact an allusion to the onerous demands that were put upon Germany by France and the other allies at the end of the war. And he's crippled. So the assumption is he's probably a war veteran.

I don't remember if he's actually wearing a uniform, which would confirm this. And it would be helpful if he were. But I don't remember. Watch for it, and you'll see. But in any case, he refers to that. Anyone attentive to the film can recognize that the historical texture of the film is carried by such moments.

There's another such moment, also so minor that you might not notice it. The foreground is the love affair, or not yet a love affair, but the acquaintance, the deepening friendship between the two protagonists-- Sally Bowles and her boyfriend. And they go out for a walk in Berlin. And Sally pretends that she's this immensely sophisticated woman. Turns out that she's fooling herself and fooling us. She's not at all, even though she pretends to a great kind of sophistication. And she sings dirty songs in a cabaret, and she performs in a cabaret where they make jokes about everything, including all forms of sexual perversion.

Nonetheless, she's an innocent. She has no way of recognizing the depth and complexity of the moral evil and moral terror that's building around her. And she's not alone in this. Most of the other characters in the foreground of the film perform this same naive ballet, although Sally Bowles is the most powerful instance of it.

It is certainly Liza Minnelli's greatest role. Certainly the role that she'll be remembered for long after she's dead. Long after we're all in the ground, Liza Minnelli's performance in this film will still be treasured and savored, I think.

So another instance of the multiplicity. When we find the two characters are walking in the street, and Sally says, oh, I want to show you something I do. And she pulls this guy along. She leans up against the side of an elevated train stanchion. And she waits until the train comes by. And as the train comes by, she screams. And she says, see? Whenever you wait for the noise, nobody will hear you scream. And she's just expressing her exuberance. She's showing him how she commands this space, how she knows how to use this urban space.

But there's an irony she's unaware of. When she leans up against the wall behind her, what we see are political posters. And the political posters behind her are defaced. They're both Nazi and communist posters. And the communists and the Nazis are defacing one another's posters. And what is implicit then again in the background against the foreground of these two relatively naive characters carrying on is the historical reality that's building behind them. Another example of what I mean by the multiplicity, the texture of this film.

Next to finally, the musical numbers-- penultimately the musical numbers. Another kind of integration is going on in this film, when we talk about the integrated musical as Arthur Freed and his comrades during the studio era articulated this idea. We're not talking about the form of integration that we see in *Cabaret*. And this in fact is one of the reasons that some people argue that *Cabaret* is not a musical. Because with one exception, none of the musical performances in *Cabaret* take place out of a performance environment. They all take place in the cabaret. The film is about a cabaret performer, and we see many performances in the cabaret.

Now when we watch those performances, we see them from angles that no one in the audience could ever see, because Fosse is a genius with the camera, and creates visual effects drawing on the tradition of the Hollywood musical that could never be replicated in a theater. Nonetheless, the performances themselves are theatrical performances. They all are real performances.

And when we see the characters behaving like real characters, they don't suddenly burst into song and dance. Because there's something theoretically so implausible about that, that *Cabaret* refuses that convention. It refuses to embrace that basic convention of the American

musical, which is that one way that people express their exuberance-- I love you. I love you. Now let me sing a song telling you how much I love you-- whereas in real life we don't do that.

Now I don't think that this convention is a convention that undermines the musical. It's a convention, or a rule, or a habit, a protocol you need to embrace in order to experience these films appropriately. And it's no more implausible in one sense than the implausibility of opera singers bursting into song at moments of great passion. The convention requires it. It's as if we're in a form of artistic experience in which art is crystallizing experience for us.

So I don't mean to undermine this convention at all, or cast doubt on it. But *Cabaret* refuses that convention-- with one exception. And I'm calling attention to that exception. I'm not going to tell you what it is, but I want you to watch for it. There's one moment in the film when there is a song sung outside by ordinary people. It happens spontaneously. It may be the most morally and historically frightening moment in the whole of the film. And it's completely believable, totally plausible that it would happen. But that's the only moment in the film when there's any singing that doesn't take place inside a space intended for singing and dancing.

So one of the interesting things about *Cabaret* is that there is a kind of true integration of song and dance, because none of that happens except in spaces where it's appropriate-- realistically appropriate. And so you might watch for that. And the complexity that this decision on the part of Bob Fosse and the people making the film, the impact of that decision on your understanding of the movie as a whole.

Finally, the central themes of the film. I've already talked about them. The theme of innocence-- the way the central characters in the film are too innocent to understand the historical forces around them, underestimate them. This isn't just true of the central figures. It's true of the secondary characters as well, some of whom even more poignantly embody this theme. And then the theme of history. What history is. How the force of history can overwhelm individual desires, individual hopes, love itself.

And of course, also the limits of satire. The cabaret is a space of satire, a space of mockery, a space of exuberant intellectual distance and disdain. Much of the energy of the cabaret comes from an impulse of parody, mockery, satire.

And in the very beginning of the film, there's actually a moment where you can see the Joel Grey character, who plays this ominous, strange figure of the emcee, the interlocutor, in the cabaret. He sort of is the master of ceremonies. And there's one moment early in the film

when he, in a rather disgusting scene in which they replicate a scene of mud wrestling. And he's emceeing it. And he reaches down, and he picks up a piece of mud. And he rubs it on his upper lip. And he makes himself look like Hitler. And he's mocking Hitler in that.

Well if you compare that early moment in which Hitler and Nazism are objects of mockery, there's also an early scene in which we see a Nazi being pulled out of the audience of the cabaret and pushed outside, kicked out of the cabaret, because Nazis are thought to be unacceptable. They're thought to be vulgarians.

This is early in the film. By the time the film is over, by the time you come to the very end of the film, one of the very final images of the film shows us the audience of the cabaret filled with Nazi officers, filled with Nazi uniforms. The Nazis have moved from the periphery to the center of the movie. And that's part of the terror that the film dramatizes.

And it also therefore of course dramatizes the limits of satire, because the cabaret itself, like the characters, imagines itself to be exempted from or apart from history. It can maintain its mockery, its distance. Satire can protect me. And of course the cabaret is just as naive as the characters themselves. It's overwhelmed by the forces of history in a way that the characters themselves also are.

Both of these films in their own way have generated a tremendously interesting and serious volume of discourse, both in terms of their musical qualities and the qualities of their choreography, and in terms of their content. They're really such complex films that watching them together makes an immense intellectual demand on everyone. I know you're capable of that, but I hope that you'll take the time to let the implications of these films settle into your mind for days, and maybe even weeks after you've watched them. And I hope, of course, that this first viewing will only be the first of many. I wish you the joy of these wonderful movies.