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# THE IMAGE OF THE JEW ON THE BROADWAY STAGE FROM THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK (1955) TO FIDDLER ON THE ROOF (1964)

Gerald M. Kane

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters and
Ordination

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Heligion

1970

Referee, Dr. Stanley F. Chyet

Digest of Thesis:

THE IMAGE OF THE JEW ON THE BROADWAY STAGE

FROM THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK (1955)

TO FIDDLER ON THE ROOF (1964)

by Gerald M. Kane

This thesis is an attempt to present and analyze recent plays which appeared on Broadway and which dealt with Jewish characters and themes. The period of time under investigation is set within a nine-year period, between the appearance of The Diary of Anne Frank, which opened on October 5, 1955, and Fiddler on the Roof, which opened on September 23, 1964. Both of these plays are explicitly Jewish in content and character, and both received high critical acclaim.

The methodology and limitations of the thesis are contained in a statement of purpose at the beginning of the work.

In chapters one through nine there are season-by-season analyses of those plays of Jewish content and character which, with rare exception, ran for fifty or more performances on Broadway from the 1955-56 season to the 1963-64 season. At the beginning of each chapter each particular Broadway season is summarized, thus placing those Jewish plays discussed in that chapter in their proper context.

Chapter ten contains an analysis of Fiddler on the Roof. Since Fiddler on the Roof appeared at the very beginning of the 1964-65 season, it was felt that it was not necessary to discuss the entire 1964-65 season.

Following this chronological presentation, several conclusions are drawn in the last section of the thesis. In the period under investigation, Jews were portrayed on Broadway and plays of Jewish content and interest were presented. The fidelity of the portrayals and the influence, if any, which these portrayals had on the American cultural scene are points about which one can simply hypothesize. No patterns are perceptible in the Jewish plays produced on Broadway during this period. It is noted, however, that apparently the comic and/or flattering, and/or sentimental

Jewish portraits were the only ones which attracted large numbers of Jewish theatregoers. However, it also was found that a play had to have more than Jewish ethnocentricity if it was to succeed on Broadway.

To my parents

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I hereby wish to acknowledge my deep appreciation to my adviser, Dr. Stanley F. Chyet, for his suggestions and direction in the preparation of this study, and above all for his patience and kind indulgence; also, my gratitude to Dr. Jacob R. Marcus for his interest and encouragement.

CONTENTS

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The importance of Jews on the American cultural scene would be hard to exaggerate. William Goldman, in his recent work, The Season: A Candid Look at Broadway, has observed that when the 1967-68 theatrical season began officially in September, 1967, at least one third of the top twenty books on the best-seller list in the Sunday Times book review section were either by or about Jews. The top novel was Chaim Potok's The Chosen, while the nonfiction leader was Stephen Birmingham's Our Crowd: The Great Jewish Families of New York.[1] According to Goldman, the influence of Jews on the Broadway stage is even greater than their influence in literary circles. Of the two dozen American plays to open during the legitimate theatre season of 1967-68, at least half were written by Jews. In sharp contrast to the activities of Jews in London's theatrical circles, Jews have played active parts on the Broadway scene. Of the thirty members on the council of the Dramatists' Guild, Goldman notes, at least two thirds are Jews.[2]

The prominence of Jewish playwrights and actors on the Broadway stage is reflected logically enough in the appearance of Jewish characters and themes on the Great White Way, on Broadway. This work will attempt to present and analyze recent plays dealing with Jewish characters and themes.

Every season a number of works appear--and often soon disappear--which deal with aspects of the Jewish experience in this or other countries, or whose characters are clearly identified as Jews. To my knowledge, little research has been done in order to explain this phenomenon. This is a preliminary study of the Jewish "image" on the Broadway stage. While articles have on occasion appeared in periodicals of Jewish interest, I am aware of no other study of this scope. It is an attempt to place the image of the Jew in America within the framework of a dramatic perspective and to view it from that perspective.

Since I find myself treading on "virgin soil," so to speak, I had to set down some limitations for this study. My first task was to decide on a terminus a quo and a terminus ad quem, the time limits which, of necessity, must be set in any study of this nature. My first impulse was to cover the entire period from 1940 up to the present; that period of time catalogued in the New York Theatre Critics' Reviews, a weekly publication containing critical reactions to every production opening on Broadway. After a good deal of deliberation, I settled upon a set of termini, which, while fully arbitrary on my part, seems to fit well within the schema of my intent. More specifically, this work will treat plays which appeared on the Broadway stage from the time of the appearance of The Diary of Anne Frank on October 5, 1955, up to and including the opening of Fiddler on the Roof, a little less than nine years later on September 23, 1964. The logic

behind the selection of these two plays as termini is simple. Both plays are explicitly Jewish in content and character, and both received high critical acclaim. Both works received the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award and the Antoinette Perry (Tony) Award for Best Play and Best Musical of the season, respectively. Both plays were selected for inclusion in the Burns Mantle Yearbook as representative best plays for the season in which they appeared. Furthermore, the period encompassed by these two plays appeared at first to be one in which there was a "blossoming" of what might be called American Jewish theatre: a theatre which, while often containing elements of Jewish history and culture remote from the American experience, was nonetheless the product of a uniquely American environment--a theatre comprised of dramas, comedies, and musicals about Jews--a theatre created for the most part by American Jews for the American theatre-going public in general.

Having established the termini of my study, I found it necessary to further limit the material which I would investigate. With rare exception, every play having a Jewish setting, theme, or characters discussed in this work ran for a minimum of fifty performances, approximately six weeks, on Broadway. Plays having less than fifty performances generally have little or no effect upon the American theatre-going public or the history of the American stage in general. Another more practical reason for imposing this limitation is that the scripts of plays which were performed on Broadway

for only a short time are infrequently published, and are not readily available for analysis.

The sources for the body of the present study are limited primarily to the scripts of the plays themselves, when they are available. In cases where scripts are unavailable, I have made use of plot outlines found in works such as the Burns Mantle Yearbook.

This work is organized in the following manner. At the beginning of each chapter, each particular Broadway season will be summarized. After this summary, we shall go on to a presentation of the plays performed in that particular season dealing with Jewish characters and/or themes. The plot of each play will be outlined, and when available relevant portions of dialogue will be included. I shall attempt to treat only those themes and ideas which emerge from the plays themselves and not engage in critical discussion of the relative literary or dramatic merit of each play. Once all of the plays have been presented by season, conclusions will be drawn with regard to their appearance and their success or failure.

NOTES

[1]William Goldman, The Season: A Candid Look at Broadway (New York, 1969), p. 148.

[2]Ibid.

## I. THE 1955-1956 SEASON ON BROADWAY

When The Diary of Anne Frank opened at the Cort Theatre on the evening of October 5, 1955, it was met with great acclaim. In addition to rave reviews, it was selected as deserving of the Antoinette Perry AWard, the Critics' Circle Award, and the Pulitzer Prize for the best play of the 1955-1956 season. Of course this does bespeak a great deal for Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett (Mr. and Mrs. Hackett), who wrote the dramatization, but according to Brooks Atkinson, the distinguished critic of the New York Times, the prizes and public veneration for the play were a tribute to the spirit of the adolescent Jewish girl who, at the age of fifteen, died in the Nazi concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen in March, 1945.[1] It seems to me that what Mr. Atkinson was really saying is that the play was produced at a time when the American theatre-going public was ready to pay tribute to this girl in particular and all Jews in general.

By all standards, the 1955-56 legitimate Broadway theatre season was quite successful. Louis Kronenberger has observed that part of this season's distinction lay in its notable superiority to the run of seasons past.[2] Mr. Kronenberger may have been more of a prophet than he thought when he made the claim that in a world, and a theatre world, bursting with pain and error, this season might make a

happy mark at which one might shoot,[3] for this was a season which brought forth comedies such as No Time for Sergeants, by Ira Levin, and The Matchmaker, by Thornton Wilder, musicals such as My Fair Lady, by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe and The Most Happy Fella by Frank Loesser, and dramas such as A View from the Bridge, by Arthur Miller, The Lark, by Jean Anouilh, adapted by Lillian Hellman, and of course The Diary of Anne Frank, by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett.

According to the tabulation of Variety, the weekly show business newspaper, fifteen out of the season's forty-seven productions were financially successful. Of these fifteen, only two plays dealt with Jews and/or Jewish themes in any direct way. Both of these productions were dramas, namely, The Diary of Anne Frank and Middle of the Night by Paddy Chayefsky. While the title character of Thornton Wilder's hit comedy, The Matchmaker, bore the name of Dolly Gallagher Levi, no mention is ever made of her religion, or her late husband's religion. The same may be said of the characters Michael Freeman and Irving LaSalle in George Axelrod's successful comedy about life in Hollywood, Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter? These characters, played by Walter Matthau and Martin Gabel respectively, are "loud Hollywood producer" types, who in other plays and movies dealing with this theme, have been portrayed as Jews. While both characters were given many of the comic lines in the play, none of the laughs are derived from any mention of the

fact that perhaps they are Jewish. Such is not the case in The Diary of Anne Frank and Middle of the Night, which we shall now proceed to analyze in some detail.

The Diary of Anne Frank is cleverly constructed as an extended flashback. The play begins on a late November afternoon in 1945 in the "Secret Annex" of an Amsterdam warehouse and office building. Within the confines of this attic, eight Jews stayed in hiding during the German occupation. As the curtain rises, Otto Frank climbs the small stairs leading to these dark, empty, dusty rooms. With a supreme effort at self-control he looks about him, at the upturned table and chair, at the window curtain in shreds. Unable to control his emotions, he buries his head in his hands. He is immediately joined by Miep Gies, his former Dutch stenographer who pleads with him not to stay in the rooms. Not knowing where he will go, Mr. Frank does plan to leave; he hopes to break all past ties. As he starts to leave Miep presents him with a bundle of papers which he tells her to burn. "Burn this?" she asks as she hands him a paper notebook. He immediately recognizes his daughter Anne's diary. He begins reading, hardly able to believe that it was written three short years ago. As he reads aloud, another voice joins his. Anne and her father tell in unison of his starting an importing business and how things went well until the Dutch capitulation in 1940, followed by the arrival of the Germans. With the line, "Then things got bad for the Jews," Anne's voice continues alone, as the

lights dim and the stage is reset for the flashback.

It is early morning on Monday, July 6, 1942. In the now bare hiding place the Van Daan family awaits the arrival of the Franks. Big, portly Mr. Van Daan paces and puffs away at a cigarette while a fur-coated Mrs. Van Daan frets, and quiet, sixteen-year-old Peter Van Daan, his cat in a box at his feet, keeps watch at the bedroom window. The Frank family soon arrives with Miep and Mr. Kraler, explaining that the reason for their delay was due to the presence of the Green Police; they had to take the long way around.

The authors of The Diary of Anne Frank continually emphasize the sense of mission which is so much a part of the personalities of Mr. Kraler and Miep. The Franks continually express their thanks and appreciation to these gentiles throughout the play.

After Mr. Kraler departs, Mr. Frank lays down the rules which are to be followed during the day while the workers are in the factory. Absolute quiet must be kept through the day. No water may be run, no trash may be thrown out.

Through various bits of dialogue, the audience is given an opportunity to learn what it was like to be a Jew in occupied Amsterdam. Jewish priorities such as the high value of education are also expressed. While Anne may never go outside the door of her new home, her father tells her, "...There are no walls, there are no bolts, no locks that anyone can put on your mind... We will read history, poetry, mythology..."[4]

The third scene takes place two months later, and gives an idea of a "normal" night in the Frank household. It is easy to see how the tension has built up. The family lives in constant fear, suspicious of every sound. The evening's routine is interrupted by the appearance of Mr. Kraler, who asks permission to allow Jan Dussel, a dentist, to live with them. Mr. Frank accepts him without any hesitation. Through the character of Mr. Dussel the audience is exposed to a different type of Jew found in Amsterdam. Mr. Dussel, who never practiced his Judaism, cannot believe that this could ever happen to him. He tells of worsening conditions in Holland, relating how every day hundreds of Jews disappear; children come home from school to find their parents gone. He further relates how Anne's closest friend was taken by the police.

The fourth scene demonstrates a further deterioration of the character and morale of the members of the Frank household. It is night, and we can barely distinguish the figure of Mr. Van Daan who, with much care, steals some food, unnoticed by the others. Anne has a nightmare and begins screaming wildly. She imagines herself being dragged away by the Green Police. When her mother comes to comfort her, she coldly rebuffs her, sending her into a severe fit of depression. Only Anne's father is able to give her some comfort. This tense scene ends with the darkened theatre audience listening to an excerpt from Anne's diary in which she speaks of those things she longs for once again.

The fifth and final scene of the first act is perhaps the most moving in the entire play. It is the first night of Chanukah and the "family", all dressed in their finest clothes, is assembled around the menorah where Mr. Frank lights the menorah. Mr. Dussel, who was never much of a Jew in practice, observes that this celebration is "like our St. Nicholas' Day."[5] There are the remembrances of past Chanukahs, coupled with the wish that next year they would be able to celebrate this holiday in peace and freedom. Margot bemoans that this year there will be no presents. Mrs. Frank observes that "We are all here, alive. That is present enough."[6] However, Anne has a surprise. She has made presents to give to everyone; for Margot there is a crossword puzzle book which Anne has erased to make like new; for Mrs. Van Daan there is hair shampoo made from odds and ends of soap and the last of Anne's toilet water; for Mr. Van Daan there are cigarettes made from some old pipe tobacco in the pocket lining of one of her father's coats; for her mother there is an I.O.U. for ten hours of doing whatever she is told; for her father she has made a muffler--the one found by Mr. Frank at the beginning of the play; for Mouchi, Peter's cat, there is a ball of paper on a string. Peter is given a used safety razor, and Mr. Dussel, ear plugs. Despite this happy atmosphere, tension still exists. Mr. Van Daan threatens to get rid of Mouchi. He begrudges the cat the milk which he drinks. They try to regain the festive atmosphere by singing a song, but the happiness is suddenly shattered by a crash which comes

from inside the warehouse. The tension builds as Mr. Frank decides to go inside the warehouse and investigate. He finds that a thief broke into the warehouse and took money from the safe and stole a radio. Mr. Dussel and Mr. Van Daan express a fear that perhaps now they will be discovered, to which Mr. Frank responds:

> Have we lost all faith? All courage? A moment ago we thought that they'd come for us. We were sure it was the end. But it wasn't the end. We're alive, safe.[7]

He then offers a prayer, and encourages everyone to sing a Chanukah song which takes on a special new significance:

> Oh Chanukah! Oh Chanukah!
> The sweet celebration
> Around the feast we gather
> In complete jubilation
> Happiest of seasons
> Now is here.
> Many are the reasons for good cheer.
>
> Together
> We'll weather
> Whatever tomorrow may bring
> So hear us rejoicing
> And merrily voicing
> The Chanukah song that we sing.[8]

They sing on with growing courage as the lights dim and the curtain falls on the first act.

The second act takes place on New Year's Day of 1944--one year, five months, and twenty-five days since the Franks began their life in hiding. Miep and Mr. Kraler have brought the family some flowers and a cake in honor of the new year. Everyone expresses their appreciation to their two benefactors, yet the appearance of the cake leads to a disagreement between Mr. Dussel and the Van Daans concerning

the size of the portions which Mrs. Van Daan would distribute. Mr. Kraler then relates how a worker in the warehouse appears to be blackmailing him. The family keeps living in constant fear, yet out of the tension within the apartment there develops a romantic relationship between Anne and Peter.

The second scene contains a "date" between Peter and Anne. This is indeed a touching moment in the play. The third scene is set at night a few weeks later. As Mr. Van Daan once again steals food, he is caught by Mrs. Frank, who can no longer control herself. She lashes out at both of the Van Daans, ordering them to leave the apartment, at which time Mr. Frank caustically observes, "We don't need the Nazis to destroy us. We're destroying ourselves."[9] The fourth scene takes place a few weeks later. There is a sense of great tension. Under this pressure, the Van Daans once again are fighting. Anne goes to Peter's room to try to console him, telling him that she still believes in spite of everything that people are really good at heart. Their discussion is brought to a sudden halt as cars screech up to the warehouse. The time has come. As the Green Police begin to break down the door, Mr. Frank observes, "For the past two years we have lived in fear. Now we can live in hope."[10] On this note, the flashback ends. Mr. Frank tells Miep and Mr. Kraler how he searched for news of Anne after the war, and finally learned of her death. As he rereads a passage from Anne's diary about how in spite of everything

she still believes that people are good at heart, Mr. Frank observes, "She puts me to shame," as the curtain falls.[11]

From a purely dramatic point of view, the play is flawless. The tension was maintained throughout the production. The acting, according to the critics, was superb. Yet The Diary of Anne Frank was more than just a good show. It was a sensitive and accurate treatment of history which was so necessary in America at this time. The play offered no easy sentimentalization to the audience, yet it was a vehicle through which Jews and Gentiles could gain a better awareness of the inhumanity which had taken place one short decade ago.

Middle of the Night was the first Broadway play by Paddy Chayefsky, who had made his name in the world of television and film writing. The author termed this work "a love story in three acts." The play, produced by Joshua Logan, opened on February 8, 1956 at the ANTA Theatre and ran for 477 performances, and was later made into a movie. The time is the present. The place is New York City. The play opens in a lower middle class apartment "not much above shabby", according to the stage directions.[12] As the curtain rises, we find twenty-five year old Betty Preiss calling her office to tell them that she will not be coming in. We learn that this attractive blonde is a secretary for a clothing manufacturing firm. She is in her mother's apartment because she has left her husband on the previous evening. She expresses a desire to get a divorce, to which her mother

objects. Betty realizes that she has taken some receipts from the office which her boss, Mr. Kingsley, might need. She makes arrangements to have the slips picked up at her mother's apartment.

The second scene takes place in the elegant West End Avenue apartment of Jerry Kingsley, a widower in his early fifties. He calls his office and arranges to personally pick up the receipts from Betty Preiss. While he is on the phone, his sister enters with one of her friends. Chayefsky describes the two as "West End Avenue women--well-dressed, but somehow vaguely New Rich..." Rosilind Nieman, who has come over to play canasta with Jerry's sister and two more friends, we learn, is a widow with a "very successful twenty-eight year old son." From Jerry's sister we also learn that Mrs. Nieman's late husband "left her quite an estate." Jerry is not interested in Mrs. Nieman, and instructs his sister not to "matchmake."[13]

Jerry's daughter, Lillian, from New Rochelle, has come to visit, along with her baby, and tries to encourage her father to come to her home for dinner. While no explicit mention has been made to the fact that all of the people in this scene are Jewish, one might very well guess this from the names of the characters and from the speech patterns of the dialogue.

We further learn that Jerry has been interested in a buyer in a New York department store. He has, in fact, asked her to marry him, but she refused. Alone on the stage, Jerry

calls this woman, who informs him that she is planning to marry another man. Dejected, he decides to take his daughter up on her invitation to dinner, and leaves to pick up the receipts from Betty Preiss.

In the next scene, Kingsley meets Betty and talks with her through the entire afternoon. She tells him of all her problems, and he listens sympathetically. He has completely forgotten about his daughter's invitation. When he realizes what time it is, he calls her and offers his apologies, deciding to take Betty out to dinner, aware that perhaps he is falling in love with this girl who is half his age.

The second act takes place three months later. The relationship between Jerry and Betty has grown. The scene is in Betty's mother's apartment. Mr. Kingsley is coming over. When Mrs. Mueller, Betty's mother, sees Jerry, she confronts Betty and says, "Is he a Jewish man, for God's sake?" to which Betty angrily shouts, "So what?!" Her composure has been completely shattered. Mrs. Mueller, taken aback, replies, "Well, I just asked, that's all."[14] When Jerry and Betty leave, Mrs. Mueller turns to her neighbor, who is also in the apartment, and says in a heavy whisper, "He's a Jewish man, you know--" to which the neighbor replies, "Oh sure, what the hell!"[15] Through the character of Mrs. Mueller, Chayefsky is able to make a statement about the narrow views pervading lower middle class America.

The second scene of this act is set on that same evening in Jerry's apartment immediately following their first

experience in bed. Jerry, in complete ecstacy, proposes marriage to Betty and she, completely captivated by the deep concern which Jerry has shown her, accepts.

Jerry's daughter and son-in-law, who is described by Chayefsky as "a tall, lean fellow in his early thirties...an amiable, good-natured nebbisch sort of fellow,"[16] have been invited to the apartment by Evelyn, Jerry's sister. Both have a tenseness about them. Jack calls the baby sitter to tell her they will be late. He and Lillian discuss the possibility of going to Florida for a short vacation to "unwind." Eventually Jerry enters the room, and confronts them with his intentions to marry Betty. His sister expresses her anger with him. In typical "Jewish mother-like" fashion, she states:

> My whole life I gave up for my brothers and sisters. My whole life... Mama died... who brought up the family? My whole life I gave up...[17]

In an attempt to dissuade Jerry, his sister asks, knowing the answer full well, "Is she Jewish?" to which Jerry answers, "Does that matter in this day and age?" The question goes unanswered, but Evelyn then states that she plans on moving out. The scene is tense. Everyone flares up, with nothing really coming of this conversation. Throughout the scene Betty is referred to as a "little tramp," in testimony to the fact that Betty is not Jewish, and therefore inferior in the eyes of Evelyn, Jack and Lillian.

The first scene of the final act of Middle of the Night is set in Mrs. Mueller's apartment. George, Betty's

husband, has come back from Las Vegas where he was playing in a band. He has come back to help straighten things out between himself and Betty. When Betty enters she is surprised and upset to see George. She does not want to even discuss the divorce; she simply wants to get it over with in order to marry Jerry. Her mother, who as we knew from the first act, is strongly opposed to divorce on religious grounds, cries out:

> I'm not going to let you marry a man old enough to be your father. A Jewish man like that... You're always telling me I never took an interest in you! In your school, and things like that! Well, all right! All right! I'm taking an interest in you now! I'm not going to let you throw away the rest of your life! I'm your mother! You listen to what I tell you![18]

Betty will have none of this. George tries to convince her not to leave him, as the scene ends.

The second scene of this act is set in Jerry's apartment. His sister, at first, convinces him that this marriage should not take place. She constantly "mothers" Jerry throughout this scene. He calls Betty and asks her to come over. Upon her arrival, they both decide that "Even a few years of happiness, you don't throw away," and as the play ends they decide to get married.

The Jewish elements of this play were of a marginal nature. Jerry's Jewishness was more fuel for Mrs. Mueller's fire, so to speak. Technically speaking, it was yet another variation in the January-May relationship. By creating a Jewish hero for his love story, Chayefsky was able to add more color to his script by building around Jerry a family

with whom a percentage of New York's theatre-going public could identify. It is my opinion that the Jewish elements of Middle of the Night contributed significantly to the show's success.

NOTES

[1]Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, The Diary of Anne Frank (New York, 1956), foreword by Brooks Atkinson, p. vii.

[2]The Best Plays of 1955-1956: The Burns Mantle Yearbook, ed. Louis Kronenberger (New York-Toronto, 1956), p. 3.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Goodrich and Hackett, p. 26.

[5]Ibid., p. 86.

[6]Ibid., p. 87.

[7]Ibid., P. 107.

[8]Ibid., pp. 107-108.

[9]Ibid., p. 154.

[10]Ibid., p. 171.

[11]Ibid., p. 174.

[12]Paddy Chayefsky, Middle of the Night (New York, 1957), p. 3.

[13]Ibid., p. 20.

[14]Ibid., p. 72.

[15]Ibid., p. 74.

[16]Ibid., p. 85.

[17]Ibid., p. 115.

[18]Ibid., p. 127.

## II. THE 1956-1957 SEASON ON BROADWAY

"Depressingly bad" was the way Louis Kronenberger described the 1956-57 season on Broadway.[1] Artistically speaking, the 1956-57 season could boast only one production of great merit, Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night. One reason why the season was so noticeably bad was because it came on the heels of the uncommonly good season we have just seen. Neither the older established playwrights nor any new authors produced anything of note during this season. What was worse, according to Kronenberger, was the spread or growth of a "lack of aspiration" on the part of playwrights and producers,[2] who were content simply to remodel novels and other works of literature in lieu of expressing their own creativity.

Of the fifty-one productions which opened on Broadway during this season, ten shows were regarded as financial hits by Variety. Two of these hits dealt with Jews in some way--Auntie Mame, the Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee adaptation of Patrick Dennis' successful novel, and A Hole in the Head, an original comedy by Arnold Shulman.

There are no Jewish characters portrayed on stage in Auntie Mame. There is, however, one important and pointed reference to Jews toward the end of the play when Patrick Dennis, the young boy Mame has raised from the time he was

ten, decides to marry Gloria Upson, a debutante from Mountebank, "the most restricted community in Connecticut."[3] During one of the funniest scenes in the play, set in the Upson home, Mr. Upson, whom the authors describe as "loud and square as the basement of a Masonic temple" and "who thinks Walter Lippmann is a Socialist,"[4] suggests to Mame that they purchase the lot right next door to the Upson home as a wedding present for Gloria and Patrick. They have to move fast, he warns Mame, because "the wrong kind" of people are already bidding on the property. "Fella named Epstein. A-bra-ham Epstein."[5] When Mame enthusiastically identifies Abraham Epstein as a famous cellist, Mrs. Upson confidentially says to Mame:

> I guess maybe you don't understand quite how it is up here, Mamie. But this section is restricted only up to our property line. So we feel we have an obligation to make sure that--well--you know.[6]

At this point, the stage directions tell us that Auntie Mame plants her glass on the bar with an irritated precision that is only a hint of the emotion repressed within her.[7]

To reciprocate the hospitality of the Upsons, Mame arranges an "intimate" party for the Upsons and some of her friends. During the course of this hilarious scene we learn that Mame, obviously for spite, has purchased the lot adjoining the Upson home to set up the Epstein Home for Refugee Jewish Children. It is at this point that the Upsons decide to call off the wedding.[8] Thus, while the Epsteins made no appearance on the stage, they played a key role in Auntie Mame, which ran for 639 performances on Broadway.

It is quite difficult to say exactly what elements in Arnold Shulman's hit comedy A Hole in the Head make the play a Jewish one. We cannot point to one particular line in which there is any specific mention of any character's being Jewish. All of the reviews of the play, however, do make mention of the fact that the leading character is indeed Jewish.

The one feature which is most certainly Jewish about the comedy is its locale. The play is set at the Carabia, a small, but ultramodern, hotel on Ocean Drive, in Miami Beach, Florida. Kronenberger calls A Hole in the Head a fairly straightforward problem play. It is a study of a "roughneck Jewish rolling stone" who owns a hotel which is on the skids, and who is left to bring up his twelve-year-old motherless son.[9] Around this central situation, Shulman introduces much Miami hotel atmosphere in addition to what Kronenberger calls "Jewish family antics." That is to say, Shulman writes into the plot the characters of a brother and sister-in-law from New York who come to see that everything is fine with Sidney, portrayed in the original production by Paul Douglas, and his son Ally. The bulk of the action of this rather flimsy play concerns the attempt of the brother and sister-in-law, Max and Sophie, portrayed in the original production by David Burns and Kay Medford, to take care of Ally, and to marry off Sidney to a stable widow.

It has been impossible to isolate any singularly Jewish elements in this play. Indeed, one must say that the charac-

ters of Mr. Goldblatt, Mrs. Kessler, and Mr. Diamond, the patrons of Sidney's hotel are Jewish by name, yet they really do not contribute significantly to the development of the plot. Sophie does represent a stereotype of the "Jewish mother," and Shulman does give her lines about the overprotection of her own son and her constant concern for food; yet I feel this in itself cannot be considered "Jewish" as such. Kronenberger has observed that perhaps Shulman wrote the play in order to capitalize on the Jewish element of the New York theatre audience. He claims that A Hole in the Head studied human reactions far too little and audience responses for too much, and in the very act of milking the comic side of Jewish life Shulman sadly watered it down.[10]

Despite the negative critical reaction to this play, it was financially successful, running for 156 performances. The play was later made into a movie starring Frank Sinatra in which all Jewish references as such were removed.

There was one other play in the 1956-57 Broadway season which appealed to a particularly Jewish element of the New York theatre-going audience. This play was considered a financial failure according to Variety, although it ran for 142 performances, only 14 less than A Hole in the Head. This play was Uncle Willie, a comedy in three acts by Julie Berns and Irving Elman. No doubt a great deal of the play's success was due to the fact that it was written as a vehicle for Menasha Skulnik, a veteran of the Yiddish stage. In brief, the play concerns the activities of Uncle Willie, a general

salesman in the Bronx in the first decade of this century. He brings his niece, Esther, over from Europe at the request of her rabbi, arranges for her to marry a friend of his, and finances a boarding house for them in the "new frontier" of the Bronx. Esther only wants to rent her house to Jews, but Uncle Willie proceeds to rent the rooms to an Irish Catholic policeman, his wife, and their three children. Animosities develop between Mrs.Donnegan and Esther, and the commotion which takes place upon the arrival of the Donnegan family results in Mrs. Donnegan's being rushed to the hospital to deliver her fourth child as the first-act curtain falls.

Esther, who can have no children of her own, cares for the Donnegan children in Mrs. Donnegan's absence, and soon develops a close relationship with them. Upon Mrs. Donnegan's return, the animosities flare up once again. However, when Mr. Donnegan is killed in a gun battle, the family finds their haven in the Jewish house.

In the third act, Mrs. Donnegan decides to take her family to Ireland. Uncle Willie enters upon the scene and arranges a subsequent remarriage for the Irish widow--to a widower with five children of his own. The play ends happily with Esther informing everyone that now she is pregnant, and with Uncle Willie now searching for a larger home to accommodate everyone.

Built around this rather trite Abie's Irish Rose type of story, there are a number of characterizations aimed at appealing to the Jewish element of the New York theatre-going

audience. For example, the authors continually seek admiration for the character of Uncle Willie. It is he who brings his niece over to this country; it is he who arranges for her marriage; it is he who arranges for the down payment for their boarding house. Despite Esther's antipathy toward gentiles which, by the way, is never explained during the course of the play, Uncle Willie arranges to rent the rooms to the Donnegans, and when Leo, Esther's husband, expresses his anger for this action, Willie addresses him--and no doubt the audience--with the following message:

> Look, Leo. Don't be a little person, don't like only half of the world. This is America. This is a melting pot--everybody has to melt, including Esther.[11]

The authors give Uncle Willie a number of comic monologues, which is just what the audience wanted to hear, for Menasha Skulnik was a master at interpreting the comic monologue. An example of this type of insert is found in the middle of the second act. Uncle Willie enters upon the scene dressed in a top hat and tails. This must have been quite funny to see, since Menasha Skulnik is a diminutive individual. When asked by Esther how he got the formal apparel, he stops in the middle of the stage and says:

> I'll tell you. I didn't intend to buy a suit. It was lunch time and I had only ten cents in my pocket. So, I went into a bakershop and bought two little cakes. And really--the cakes were delicious. Maybe because I was so hungry. So I said to the man, "You know, your cakes are very good." He said: "I haven't any more. But if you like them so much, you can make an order and I'll have them for you in half an hour." So I figured I have no money anyway, let's order fifty. So I ordered fifty cakes and left. Next door was a clothing store, and two strong-armed

> guys grabbed me by my arms and they dragged me into the store and they put this suit on me. They wanted twenty-five dollars, including the hat. I said, "I'll take it. But I have no money." He said, "You have not money? So why did you come in to buy a suit?" I said, "I didn't come in. You carried me in. But give me the suit and next week I'll bring you in the money." He said, "I don't know you from Adam, if you have someone who will say good for you I'll give you the suit." I said, "How about the baker next door?" He said, "Oh, if the baker will guarantee for you I'll give you two suits." So I called him out and I opened the door from the bakershop and I asked the baker, "How about my fifty?" He said, "In five minutes." I said, "You'll give him twenty-five from the fifty." And I left.[12]

This monologue contributed nothing to the development of the plot of the comedy yet, in some way, it contributed to the success of the play, for the audience got the opportunity to hear a fine comedian deliver this humorous speech.

The play also attempted in its own small way to point out the need for better intergroup relations between Jew and Gentile. This is perhaps best shown in the last scene of the play. It is Christmas Eve and the first night of Chanukah. Uncle Willie is given a monologue explaining to one of the Donnegan children the similarities between Chanukah and Christmas. He tells about the Maccabees, saying "they did the same thing George Washington did." He further states,

> And we give presents. For the same reason you give presents on Christmas. But they're not just presents, they have a meaning. They say something. They say: Be good, don't quarrel, be nice. Good will to all men, women and little children.....Merry Christmas and Happy Chanukah![13]

The final touch of sentimentality is added right before the curtain falls. All problems resolved, the Donnegans go

up to their Christmas tree, the Frankels go to their menorah. The Donnegans begin singing "Joy to the World," and Uncle Willie approaches the foot of the stage and says:

> Joy to the world--What more could you ask for? And if you should happen to need something from a paper of pins to a wedding dress--don't forget to see Uncle Willie. Ta-ta.[14]

NOTES

[1]The Best Plays of 1956-1957: The Burns Mantle Yearbook, ed. Louis Kronenberger (New York - Toronto; 1957), p. 3.

[2]Ibid., p. 4.

[3]Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, Auntie Mame (New York, 1957), p. 143.

[4]Ibid., p. 147.

[5]Ibid., p. 154.

[6]Ibid..

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., p. 176.

[9]Kronenberger, p. 22.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Julie Berns and Irving Elman, Uncle Willie (New York, 1956), p. 23.

[12]Ibid., pp. 50-51.

[13]Ibid., pp. 80-81.

[14]Ibid., pp. 87-88.

## III. THE 1957-1958 SEASON ON BROADWAY

The 1957-58 Broadway season was exciting in many ways. There was a sense of variety and activity which had been absent from the season which preceded it. At a first glance, according to Kronenberger, the season was outstandingly good. Upon a closer examination, however, he felt that "if there were hallelujahs to be blown, it need be with muted trumpets."[1] Kronenberger concluded that, while it was hardly a season of notable achievement, it was certainly one of continual interest, of conspicuous variety, and in a certain sense of progress. The variety included in addition to assorted dramas and melodramas, comedies and farces, verse plays, real-life documentaries, real-life chronicles, Molnaresque fantasy, Saroyanesque folderol, a two-character play, a sociological musical, a Beat Generation comic in Mort Sahl, a Sean O'Casey reading, and adaptations from novels as dissimilar as Jane Eyre, Miss Lonelyhearts, and Say, Darling.

Of the fifty plays which made their appearance during this theatrical season, thirteen were considered financial hits according to Variety. While only two of these hits dealt with Jews in any direct way, one can observe an increase in the total number of plays in which Jews were involved as characters either directly or indirectly. In all, there were five plays produced on Broadway during the 1957-58 season

involving Jews. The two hits were The Dark at the Top of the Stairs, by William Inge, and Two for the Seesaw, by William Gibson. The plays which were not as successful were Compulsion, Meyer Levin's dramatization of his own successful novel about the Leopold-Loeb murder case, Fair Game, a dress business comedy starring Sam Levene, written by Sam Locke, and The Rope Dancers, a stirring original work by Morton Wishengrad.

In The Dark at the Top of the Stairs, Inge went back to the small-town world of his childhood. The setting for the play is the home of Rubin Flood, a harness salesman, his wife Cora, their sixteen-year-old daughter Reenie, and their ten-year-old son Sonny, in a small Oklahoma town close to Oklahoma City. The time is the early 1920's, during an oil boom in the area. Into the midst of this trouble-filled home Inge inserts the character of Sammy Goldenbaum, a young boy from a nearby military academy with whom Reenie has been fixed up for a dance at the country club. Throughout the play Inge presents us with the way in which uninformed Christians thought about Jews. In the first act, Reenie expresses fear at the prospect of going out with a Jew. She doesn't know whether it is "all right." Cora doesn't see why not, "if he's a nice boy." Flirt, Reenie's friend, informs her that Sammy comes from Hollywood, California, and that his mother is a moving-picture actress who plays bit parts. Still disturbed, Reenie wonders what a Jew is like. This leads to the following rather interesting dialogue:

Reenie: Mom, what's a Jewish person like?
Cora: Well, I never knew many Jewish people, Reenie, but...
Flirt: I've heard that some of them can be awful fast with girls.
Cora: I'm sure they're just like any other people.
Flirt: (dances around room) They don't believe in Christianity.
Cora: Most of them don't.
Reenie: But do they act different?
Cora: (not really knowing) Well...
Flirt: My daddy says they always try to get the best of you in business.
Cora: There are lots of very nice Jewish people, Reenie.
Flirt: Oh, sure! Gee whiz, of course.
Reenie: I don't know what to expect.
Flirt: Kid, he's a boy. That's all you have to know.
Cora: There are Jewish families over in Oklahoma City, but I guess there aren't any here in town.
Flirt: Oh, yes there are, Mrs. Flood. The Lewises are Jewish, only they changed their name from Levin so no one would know.
Cora: I guess I did hear that some place.
Reenie: Mom, I feel sort of scared to go out with someone so different.
Flirt: (she never seems aware of her casual offensiveness) Oh, you're crazy, Reenie. Gee whiz, I'd never go steady with a Jewish boy, but I'd sure take a date with one--if I didn't have any other way of going.
Cora: Now, Reenie, I'm sure that any friend of the Givens boy is nice, whether he's Jewish or not. And besides, his mother's a movie actress.....[2]

This scene ends with Cora explaining Reenie's fear about Sammy as a manifestation of Reenie's own feelings of inferiority.

The second act of the play is set on the evening of the party. Cora's loud sister, Lottie, and her dentist-husband, Morris, have come to visit from Oklahoma City. The Flood household is in a turmoil. Rubin has struck Cora, and has left home. Reenie still does not want to go to the party with Sammy.

From a scene between Morris, Sonny and Lottie we are able to learn that Jews are not necessarily the brunt of all prejudice in this part of the country. The mention of Norma Talmadge launches Lottie on an attack on Catholics.

Sammy Goldenbaum enters and makes a rather favorable impression. In contrast to Punky Givens, Flirt's escort, Sammy introduces himself properly to the Floods. With regard to Sammy's looks, Inge tells us that he is a "darkly beautiful young man of seventeen, with lustrous black hair, black eyes, and a captivating smile. Yet, something about him seems a little foreign, at least in comparison with the mid-western company in which he now finds himself. He could be a Persian prince, strayed from his native kingdom, but he has become adept over the years in adapting himself, and shows an eagerness to make friends and to be liked...He is brisk and alert, even though his speech betrays a slight stammer."[3]

Through his conversation with Lottie and Morris, we learn that Sammy really does not have a home. His mother wants very little to do with him. He has spent time in "every military academy in the whole country... Well, I take that back. There's some I didn't go to. I mean...there's some that wouldn't take me."

At this point, Sonny innocently states, "My mother says you're a Jew." This upsets Lottie terribly and she apologizes profusely. "We don't think a thing about a person's being Jewish," she states. This leads into a discussion of

Sammy's background. His father was Jewish, but his mother is not. "It doesn't bother me that I'm Jewish. Not any more. I guess it used to a little... Yes, it did used to a little," he stammers. Lottie suggests that he might find a "remedy" to his problem by joining the Christian Science Church, just like a "Jewish woman" she knew in Oklahoma City.[4]

Sammy strikes up a friendly relationship with Sonny. Eventually Reenie does come downstairs, and has a pleasant conversation with Sammy, at which time he confesses his own fears of meeting strange people...the same fears which Reenie herself feels.

The third act takes place on the following afternoon. We learn that at the party Sammy "went off and left" Reenie, who is thoroughly humiliated. Flirt suddenly enters with the horrifying news that Sammy Goldenbaum has killed himself. He took the midnight train, went to a hotel in Oklahoma City and jumped from a fourteenth-floor window. It seems that at the country club he was publicly humiliated by the mother of the girl who was giving the party. "She said she wasn't giving the party for Jews, and she didn't intend for her daughter to dance with a Jew, and besides, Jews weren't allowed in the Country Club." Reenie was in the powder room when this incident occurred, and thus knew nothing about it.

Flirt has all the details, although she doesn't understand them. Sammy's mother cried when she was notified, but asked them to have the funeral in Oklahoma City. She would

pay for everything, but she wouldn't come herself because she was working. Through her tears Sammy's mother had also asked that it be kept out of the papers because it wasn't generally known that she had a son.

After saying that the Givens would drive them all to the funeral, Flirt runs home. The minute she has gone, Cora turns on Reenie. Why did she run off? Reenie confesses that when she had no one with whom to dance, she went to the powder room to nurse her embarrassment. "You ran off and hid," Cora accuses her, "when an ounce of thoughtfulness, one or two kind words might have saved him." Cora observes that Mrs. Ralston, the woman who embarrassed Sammy "sounded like the voice of the world" to him.

Sonny's reaction to this situation is to "hate people." At this point Inge gives us the "message" of the play. Cora says to Sonny, "There are all kinds of people in the world. And you have to live with them all... God never promised us any different. The bad people you don't hate. You're only sorry they have to be."[5] Sammy's death thus brings the entire Flood family closer together. Rubin returns at this point, and Cora welcomes him eagerly. Reenie and Sonny are closer and the play ends on a hopeful note. Sammy Goldenbaum thus served Inge as a vehicle for achieving a happy resolution to his play. Sammy was, in a way, the "kaparah" of the work.

William Gibson's Two for the Seesaw ran for 750 performances on Broadway. It presented New York theatre-goers with

Henry Fonda as an about-to-be-divorced Omaha lawyer, Jerry Ryan, who is downhearted and adrift in New York, and Anne Bancroft as the Jew, Gittel Mosca, a warm-hearted, racy-tongued would-be actress whom Jerry meets at a party. Shuttling between each other's apartments, the play depicts their love affair in sickness and in health, in banter and in woe, showing how they can bridge a cultural and temperamental divide better than they can blot out the memory of Jerry's marriage. Other than a few casual references there is nothing in the play which can specifically be called "Jewish." Jerry says that "Gittel" has an "exotic" ring to it. In a deadpan tone of voice, he states that he thought she was Italian. She explains that "Mosca" is her "stage name," "Moscowitz" being too long for the marquees.[6]

In a later scene we find out that Gittel visits her mother on Friday evenings. When Jerry asks her what is so special about Friday, her answer is Gefullte fish."[7] No doubt this was inserted to enforce Gittel's Jewishness. However, throughout the play there is no mention made of the difference in the religions of Jerry and Gittel. Neither is motivated to terminate the relationship because of religious differences. Yet the play concludes with Gittel and Jerry terminating their relationship. It was not meant to be. The Jewish element in Two for the Seesaw is the character of Gittel Mosca, yet her Jewishness is not overtly expressed. It is integrated very well into her loud, Bohemian personality.

Compulsion, as dramatized from Meyer Levin's novel about

the Loeb-Leopold murder case, re-enacted the grisly tale in twenty explicit scenes. The play is conceived as a flashback. Judd Steiner is interviewed in his prison cell by Sid Silver, a reporter. During the course of this interview Judd relives his past. The play proceeds to portray two young Jewish self-styled supermen who had dreamed of committing a perfect crime, and then to indicate how very imperfect a crime they had actually committed. It shows their dissensions as danger loomed, their behavior as defection narrowed; it describes the fantasy worlds they inhabited and, at length, the trial itself, with the prosecution stressing the atrocious nature of the crime, and the defense the compulsive pathology of the criminals.

There are a number of attempts on the part of the playwright to make note of the fact that the criminals were Jewish. In depicting the family life of the two boys, for example, Levin depicts an engagement party at the Steiner home for Judd's oldest brother. When Aunt Bertha is told that Judd is picking up his girlfriend, she asks, "Who's his girl? At least, I hope, not a shiksa."[8]

The girl, Ruth Slimovitsky, makes her appearance later in the scene, at which time we are made aware of her Russian ancestry. In some way this offends Judd's father, who says in a patronizing manner, "Today, we have Russian Jews on our board at the temple. I am glad you found Miss Slimovitsky for a friend."[9]

Under a psychiatric examination before the trial, Judd confesses that he generally idealized women, and thought of

his mother as "the Madonna." He explains that he first began thinking of his mother in this light when an Irish nursemaid took him into a church and pointed out a picture of the Madonna in a stained-glass window. This surprises the psychiatrist, who knew that Judd came from a Jewish home.[10]

At the trial itself, Ruth Slimovitsky takes the stand and is used by Judd's lawyer to help establish Judd's insanity. The following excerpt of dialogue is of note in understanding how the image of the Jew as criminal was employed in this play:

Ruth: ...it's hard to explain. We're Jewish--oh, it's so hard to explain. Some are proud, and some--it torments them, twists them. It's called self-hatred. They hate themselves for being somehow ashamed of being Jews. Judd had this trouble.

Wilk: What makes you think that?

Ruth: Being called a sheenie and other dirty names. It affected him deeply. When he was small the neighborhood boys--not Jewish--tormented him, even tore down his trousers. He hated them. He hated himself. He wanted to be like Artie, a tall blond type who doesn't look Jewish. That was one reason he idolized him.

Wilk: In speaking of this Jewish trouble here, this self-hatred, it's not a religious matter?

Ruth: No. But maybe religion is mixed up in it. Because of the social troubles about being a Jew, children get to hate their religion. Judd told me he dreamed of his mother as the Christian Madonna. It's another way of not wanting to be Jewish, of running away from it...Judd calls himself an atheist. But anyone who is so absorbed in the wonder of nature...in the mysteries of the universe, as he was...anyone like that has reverence. My father once showed me a prayer, the deepest prayer of the whole year. Atonement, And there is a line. We ask for forgiveness for

the sins of free will and the sins of compulsion.

Wilk: Both?

Ruth: I've listened to it all here. But in our prayer from way back--in their wisdom they saw it--if it was free will, or even if he was compelled, there must be forgiveness to strive for--all his life. The executed cannot atone.[11]

Thus Ruth, in her testimony, brings to the audience Levin's true feelings about the Loeb-Leopold case--and that feeling is derived from Jewish tradition. Compulsion only ran for 140 performances. Levin was then unable to effectively communicate his message to the New York audience through this medium.

Fair Game by Sam Locke concerned a young, attractive divorcee who came to New York to study at City College, and who modeled in the garment center to help pay her bills, and soon had half of the garment trade making improper proposals. Kronenberger called Fair Game one of Broadway's "recurrently breezy, mass-aimed, gag-and-garter comedies."[12] By "mass-aimed" he seems to be saying that the show was written to attract the Jewish element of New York's theatre-going audience. The show, according to Kronenberger, had its quota of lively situations and bright broad lines, but "bad hobbled after good, and the crude latched onto the clever in a never-change-the-subject exploitation of the girl-who-cried-wolf theme."[13] Sam Levene starred in this comedy which ran for 217 performances.

The Rope Dancers by Morton Wishengrad was considered by

the critics to be one of the best plays of the season. Yet the play only ran for 189 performances. Set in a turn-of-the-century Manhattan tenement, the play was a stubbornly harsh tale of a lacerated family, of a rigid, arrogant, unappeasably bitter Irish woman portrayed by Siobhan McKenna, with a lazy, feckless, would-be writer of a husband, portrayed by Art Carney, and an eleven-year-old daughter born with six fingers on one hand. The mother, beyond having brought up the daughter to feel like someone with two heads, does not know how to convey her own love to the child. According to Kronenberger, Wishengrad meant for this play to be a grandiose tragedy, yet the more he tried to universalize his story the more special it appeared to be. Into this Irish Catholic family Wishengrad inserts the character of Dr. Jacobson, the neighborhood physician who is sought when the young girl is siezed with convulsions. Dr. Jacobson, played in the Broadway production by Theodore Bikel, is a stable, strong individual who brings an air of calmness on the tense scene in the shabby apartment. He is able to comfort the child. Unable to determine exactly what is wrong with Lizzie, he suggests that it might be St. Vitus' Dance. He speaks of an epidemic of this sickness during the Middle Ages, in Swabia--not many miles from where he was born. He feels compelled to tell them that the Jews were blamed for this epidemic. One senses a note of irony in the fact that Jacobson, a Jew, is healing this sick child.[14]

In the second scene of the second act, Dr. Jacobson returns, and through his concern he is able to bring Lizzie

out of her shell of inferiority. He makes her admit to the fact that she has six fingers. When she tells him this, Dr. Jacobson answers, "My name is Isaac Jacobson. I am a Jew,"[15] as if this is his peculiarity. Keeping this same comparison, Jacobson proceeds to lecture the Hyland family on the necessity of facing up to life...that having six fingers is nothing of which to be ashamed. He convinces the Hylands to arrange for an operation to remove Lizzie's extra finger.

The third act takes place two hours later, after the operation. Despite the hope which is in the family, Lizzie dies, at which time Jacobson says, "Boruch dayan emes." The stage directions note that this line is "unbidden from his lips, unsummoned."[16] Unable to explain the child's death, Jacobson, and Wishengrad, turn to their Judaism for an answer.

NOTES

[1]The Best Plays of 1957-1958: The Burns Mantle Yearbook, ed. Louis Kronenberger (New York - Toronto, 1958), p.3.

[2]William Inge, The Dark at the Top of the Stairs in Best American Plays: Fifth Series, 1957-1963, ed. John Gassner, p. 113.

[3]Ibid., pp. 123-124.

[4]Ibid., p. 125.

[5]Ibid., p. 138.

[6]William Gibson, The Seesaw Log with the Text of Two for the Seesaw (New York, 1959), pp. 166-167.

[7]Ibid., pp. 218-219.

[8]Meyer Levin, Compulsion (New York, 1959), p. 46.

[9]Ibid., p. 48.

[10]Ibid., p. 83.

[11]Ibid., pp. 121-122.

[12]Kronenberger, p. 28.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Morton Wishengrad, The Rope Dancers (New York, 1958), p. 81.

[15]Ibid., p. 103.

[16]Ibid., p. 133.

## IV. THE 1958-1959 SEASON ON BROADWAY

"Great Expectations," would have been a good way to describe the 1958-59 season on Broadway, for it was during this time that works by Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Elmer Rice, S. N. Behrman, Noel Coward, John Osborne, Samuel Taylor, Sean O'Casey, Archibald MacLiesh, Pearl Buck, and William Faulkner were offered on the Broadway stage. With a list such as this, one would expect the season to have been a historic one. When one goes through the statistics, however, this season was not very exciting at all. According to Kronenberger, "rarely had there been the theatrical shock, the dramatic high voltage of something new, fresh, vibrant... Not really often, for that matter, was there the sense of sustained talent moving along a straight track, or even of something powerful and exciting if not quite well-ordered and controlled."[1]

Of the fifty productions which opened on Broadway during the 1958-59 season, sixteen were considered financial hits according to Variety. It is worth noting that out of these sixteen productions, ten fall into the categories of musical and/or comedy. This tends to reflect what Kronenberger calls "the ever more derivative nature of show business," and "the showy nature of the theatre which too often regards theatricality as the end in itself rather than a

means to something larger."[2] With the soaring of production costs, we begin to find an interest on the part of producers to present audience-geared shows. Holding fast to the philosophy that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," playwrights and producers abandoned creativity for what Kronenberger describes as "catch-as-catch-can-cannibal methods," which means that any sort of last gasp or last-minute rewrite is had at the cost of probity, significance, or good sense.[3]

There was only one successful play during this season which dealt directly with a Jewish character, and indeed it was typical of the season as a whole. The play, A Majority of One, by Leonard Spigelgass, is a popular comedy about a kindhearted Brooklyn Jewish widow who lost a son in World War II, and her encounter with a Japanese Buddhist widower who lost a son during the war and a daughter at Hiroshima. Gradually the hostility each feels toward the other's country is dissolved in their feelings for each other. At the same time, the widow's diplomatic corps son-in-law, by opposing the friendship, dangerously offends the powerful Japanese millionaire, and only through the efforts of his mother-in-law can the play come to a happy ending.

Gertrude Berg, who won the hearts of the critics as early as the 1947-48 season when she brought her famous character of Molly Goldberg to the Broadway stage in Mex and Molly, captured rave reviews as Mrs. Jacoby, the Yiddishe Mamme metamorphosed into a Madame Butterfly. One might very well guess that her appearance in this comedy contributed

significantly to the play's 556-performance run.

Let us brifely analyze the play in order to see a few of the elements which were specifically geared to entertain a Jewish audience. The play begins in Mrs. Jacoby's apartment. While preparing dinner for her daughter and son-in-law, who are visiting her from Washington, she is having a conversation with her neighbor, Essie Rubin. The jokes in this conversation, while not specifically Jewish in content deal with such "Jewish" topics as food, family, and matchmaking. When Jerry and Alice Black finally arrive, the conversation shifts. Mrs. Rubin plans to move from Brooklyn into a "decent neighborhood," free from "that element." Jerry reminds her that "in this very neighborhood, years ago, they didn't allow Jews."[4] Mrs. Rubin doesn't see what one has to do with the other. Through this conversation we see an attitude which is, in fact, reflected by demographic trends in suburbia. By the end of the scene, Jerry and Alice persuade Mrs. Jacoby to travel to Japan with them.

The second scene is set on board the ship to Japan. Mrs. Jacoby, visibly seasick,refuses food from her daughter. "Rabbi Brodsky told you when it's a question of health, you've a right to eat anything." Alice warns her, but Mrs. Jacoby still refuses. When Jerry tells her that there is a movie on board ship that evening, "The Law and Jake Wade," Mrs. Jacoby reminds him that she saw the movie, starring Robert Taylor. Furthermore, she inserts, "I think Robert Taylor is Jewish."[5]

The third scene takes place on board ship the next day. Mrs. Jacoby and Mr. Asano, having gotten over their initial hostilities, begin to speak about Japan. He tells her that there are many Westerners in Tokyo. "There's a most attractive Jewish Community Center behind the Red Cross Building."[6] Mrs. Jacoby tells Mr. Asano how she came to America from Kovno in Russia. When Mr. Asano inquires as to how old she was when she came to America, she answers:

> Who carries around a birth certificate? But like my mother used to figure it out, I was born the fifth candle of Chanukah, in the year after mother's father died...[7]

She begins to take a concern for Mr. Asano, who has a cold. When she begins mothering him, Mrs. Jacoby turns to her son-in-law and says, "the way he looks at me, I'm sure he thinks I'm meshugeh." When Mr. Asano inquires as to the meaning of "my-sugah," and is told, he replies, "Well, Mr. Black, if your mother-in-law is 'my-sugah,' it is clearly a very delightful thing to be."[8]

In the fourth scene, also on board ship, Jerry and Alice discuss the effect of the trip on Mrs. Jacoby. Jerry observes, "She treats the entire passenger list as though they were her nephews, or nieces or cousins."[9] While this is not a "Jewish" line, it certainly lives up to the expectations of the audience of Molly Goldberg. When Mr. Asano joins Mrs. Jacoby on the deck later in the scene, they discuss differences and similarities between their two religions. They discuss the seasonal festivals. When Mr. Asano asks to be invited to a Jewish festivity, Mrs. Jacoby responds,

> If we have a festival in Tokyo, you'll be invited, I assure you. But my children, I don't think they observe. You know how modern children are, Mr. Asano.[10]

Mr. Asano replies that his children lack the same type of observance. They also discuss the Yiddish words "tsurris" and "kwelling."

In the first scene of the second act, set in the Black home in Tokyo, Mrs. Jacoby, while speaking with Eddie, the Japanese houseboy, discovers that in Japan they have the institution of the "shadchan."

The second scene of the second act is the comic high point of the show. Mrs. Jacoby comes to Mr. Asano's house to make amends for her son's conduct at a recent meeting. She is welcomed royally into the Japanese home. As each food is served, she compares it to food from home. Green tea tastes like "hot parsley," and bean-jam-buns like "halvah." As they drink Sake, "l'chayim" is exchanged with "kompai." When Mrs. Jacoby at first refuses to stay for dinner, Mr. Asano assures her that he has made arrangements that she be served kosher food on a new set of dishes.[12]

The first scene of the third act is set once again in the Black home. When Mrs. Jacoby returns, she announces that she and Mr. Asano will "keep company" throughout the winter. When her children express amazement and concern, she states, "Genug! I said genug! I mean genug! And if you forgot your Yiddish, that means enough!"[13] She proceeds to lecture her children about their bigoted views. When Mr. Asano arrives upon the scene, Mrs. Jacoby has decided that she cannot go

through with his proposal, and realizes that she must return home.

The last scene of the comedy is set in Mrs. Jacoby's apartment in Brooklyn. She is getting ready to entertain Mr. Asano for dinner. When he arrives, realizing that it is Friday evening, she lights candles. When she serves him chopped liver, he remarks that it tastes like bean-jam-buns. The play ends with an exchange of "l'chayim" and "kompai" over Shabbat wine. While these specific elements mentioned were a part of the entire character of Mrs. Jacoby, they contributed to giving the New York theatre audience a good feeling and--to the Jewish element of that audience at least--a sense of identity.

While The Cold Wind and the Warm, by S. N. Behrman, ran for only 120 performances, it was selected as one of the ten best plays of the season according to the Burns Mantle Yearbook. This more-or-less biographical drama tells of Jewish neighborhood life in Worcester, Massachusetts. Kronenberger felt that the characters in this play were not so much human beings as they were pieces on a racial chessboard.[14] The plot concerns the friendship between Tobey, a teenager, and Willie, a twenty-year-old friend. The play is set as a flashback with Tobey recalling their early friendship and wondering why Willie killed himself. The Jewish elements of the play are communicated mainly through the characters of Ida, the town matchmaker, Rappaport, a matchmaker from Boston, and Mr. Sacher, Tobey's scholarly father. While all the characters in the play are Jewish, only through these older charac-

ters that the play's Jewish element comes through clearly. For example, at the beginning of the play we learn that one of Ida's matchmaking efforts has not succeeded, thanks to the intervention of Mr. Rappaport. The conversation, replete with the usual curses and turns of language, represents the more or less typically Jewish aspects of the play. Another Jewish element is brought in in the second scene of the second act which depicts a siyyum at the Sacher home. During this scene the audience is informed through a conversation between Tobey and Willie of the role which the Talmud has played in Jewish tradition.[15] While the entire play itself deals primarily with the relationship between Tobey and Willie, the Jewish aspects of the play are highlighted through the matchmaking activities of Ida and the infrequent appearances of Mr. Sacher. It is primarily through the appearance of these older Jewish characters, however, that the play receives what color it has. As Kronenberger rightly states,"his older fold holds Behrman's looseleaf memorybook together."[16]

Make a Million, a comedy by Norman Barasch and Carroll Moore, ran for 308 performances. Variety, however, did not consider the show to be a financial hit. The play seems to have been designed as a response to the quiz-show fad which was sweeping America at this time. The plot concerned a Southern girl who wins $100,000.00 on a quiz show. This girl also happens to be pregnant by an unknown soldier. To save the girl's honor, the girl must be married at once.

While this in itself does not constitute a Jewish theme, the show starred Sam Levene, a favorite with Jewish audiences, portraying the producer of the television show. By casting Sam Levene in the key role of this show I feel the producers intended to give Make a Million a Jewish dimension.

The same conclusion might be drawn from the name of a character in The Girls in 509, a comedy about two old women who, for the twenty-five years since FDR went to the White House, hid under assumed names in a decaying family hotel. When the press discover the women, we find that the New York Post, a newspaper which for years has been associated with Jews, sends a reporter named Rosenthal to cover the story.

NOTES

[1]The Best Plays of 1958-1959: The Burns Mantle Yearbook, ed. Louis Kronenberger (New York-Toronto, 1959), p. 3.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., p. 4.

[4]Leonard Spiegelgass, A Majority of One, (New York, 1959), pp. 8-9.

[5]Ibid., p. 26.

[6]Ibid., p. 36.

[7]Ibid., p. 37.

[8]Ibid., p. 43.

[9]Ibid., p. 46.

[10]Ibid., p. 52.

[11]Ibid., p. 65.

[12]Ibid., p. 99.

[13]Ibid., p. 123.

[14]S. N. Behrman, The Cold Wind and the Warm, (New York, 1959), pp. 23-24.

[15]Ibid., p. 85.

[16]Kronenberger, p. 24.

## V. THE 1959-1960 SEASON ON BROADWAY

If statistics are any indication of what type of a season it was on Broadway in 1959-60, of the fifty-six plays which opened between September 1, 1959 and August 31, 1960, one fifth of the plays closed within a week of opening, and a good third within two weeks. According to Louis Kronenberger, the 1959-60 season did not produce, even at a popular level, a single really good comedy. He modifies this statement by saying that the successful plays that boasted comic qualities, such as Paddy Chayefsky's The Tenth Man and Gore Vidal's The Best Man, were strongly compounded of other qualities as well.[1] This phenomenon was due to the fact that Broadway had entered a new era. We made some note of this in our discussion of the 1958-59 season. This new era is characterized by very high production costs which made for a theatre of hits or flops, with little room for what lies between, and with part of its attitude shaped by the belief that anything avant-garde or highbrow or special should seek success Off-Broadway.

Kronenberger vents his anger on a "new breed" of "ignorant and ill-qualified" producers who were crashing the Broadway scene during this season. These men had "standards as low as their tastes were loutish." He feels that these people were helping to create a third kind of theatre that can

only be called Sub-Broadway.[2]

Thirteen of the fifty-six shows which opened during this depressing season were classified as financial hits by Variety. Only one of these hits, The Tenth Man, by Paddy Chayefsky, whose Middle of the Night was discussed earlier in this work, dealt with Jews in a central way.

In The Tenth Man Chayefsky made use of the lore concerning dybbuks in Jewish literature. He was particularly influenced by Ansky's classic work. Chayefsky set out to present the classic tale as a modern one, and to rationalize it with psychiatry. Chayefsky's aim was not to recreate a lofty mystical tragedy, but rather to tell a human story. By all standards Chayefsky was successful in this undertaking. The play ran for 623 performances on Broadway, and was selected as one of the Ten Best of the season for inclusion in the Burns Mantle Yearbook. The title character of the play is a young lawyer with no faith in religion or in life itself, who is yanked off the streets into a makeshift Orthodox synagogue to complete a minyan for the Shacharit service on a cold winter morning. It is not an ordinary morning in this house of worship, however. Foreman, a regular member of the morning minyan has brought his eighteen-year-old granddaughter, who is a schizophrenic, before the men because he believes the girl is possessed by a dybbuk. When asked its identity, the dybbuk claims to be a Hannah Luchinsky, "the whore of Kiev." Within this quasi-mysterious context, the young lawyer becomes attracted to the girl. Amid prayer and prattle, amid the girl's infatuation with the lawyer, the lawyer's involvement

with his analyst, and the prayers of a devout Jew whom Chayefsky refers to as "The Cabalist," the men of the synagogue prepare for the exorcism of the dybbuk. In the confusing midst of these ceremonies, it is the young lawyer himself who keels over, exorcised of an inability to love, after which he and the girl leave the synagogue to face life together.

The Tenth Man is indeed a powerful piece of theatre. According to Kronenberger, it juxtaposes and contrasts surrealism and photography, insanity and farce, demonology and Freud.[3]

The Jewish elements of the play are self-explanatory. The setting, the theme on which the plot is based, and most important of all, the characterizations bespeak our rich and colorful Jewish tradition. As we saw in Middle of the Night Chayefsky has an excellent ear for the colloquial speech of his characters and for what Kronenberger calls "their dialectical pomposities."[4] For example, at the beginning of the play, one of the members of the minyan bemoans the fact that one of the "regulars" will not be there. The message was given to him by the man's daughter-in-law. This precipitates a series of curses about daughters-in-law. "My daughter-in-law, may she grow rich and buy a hotel with a thousand rooms and be found dead in every one of them," shouts Mr. Zitorsky. Not to be outdone, Schlissel the shammes states, "My daughter-in-law, may she invest heavily in General Motors, and the whole thing should go bankrupt."[5] In a more serious vein, Chayefsky inserts into the midst of the play more or less of a soliloquy given to the rabbi of this run-down synagogue. In

this insightful piece of theatre, he puts into the rabbi's mouth perhaps his own views concerning the future of the American rabbinate. The rabbi calls a friend on the phone:

> Harry, how are you, this is Bernard here,I'm sorry I wasn't in last night, my wife Sylvia said it was wonderful to hear your voice after all these years, how are you, Shirley, and the kids, oh, that's wonderful, I'm glad to hear it. Harry, my wife tells me you have just gotten your first congregation and you wanted some advice since I have already been fired several times...Good, how much are you getting?...Well, five thousand isn't bad for a first congregation although I always thought out-of-town paid better. And what is it, a one-year contract? ...Well, what kind of advice can I give you? Especially you, Harry. You are a saintly, scholarly and truly pious man, and you have no business being a rabbi. You've got to be a go-getter, Harry, unfortunately. The synagogue I am in now is in an unbelievable state of neglect and I expect to see us in prouder premises within a year. But I've got things moving now. I've started a Youth Group, a Young Married People's Club, a Theatre Club which is putting on its first production next month, "The Man Who Came to Dinner," I'd like you to come, Harry, bring the wife, I'm sure you'll have an entertaining evening. And let me recommend that you organize a little-league baseball team. It's a marvelous gimmick. I have sixteen boys in my Sunday School now...Harry, listen, what do I know about baseball?...Harry, let me interrupt you. How in heaven's name are you going to convey an awe of God to boys who will race out of your Hebrew classes to fly model rocket ships five hundred feet in the air exploding in three stages? To my boys, God is a retired mechanic...Well, I'm organizing a bazaar right now. When I hang up on you, I have to rush to the printer's to get some raffle tickets printed, and from there I go to the Town Hall for a permit to conduct bingo games. In fact, I was so busy this morning I almost forgot to come to the synagogue... (He says gently) Harry, with my first congregation, I also thought I was bringing the word of God. I stood up in my pulpit every Sabbath and carped at them for violating the rituals of their own religion. My congregations dwindled, and one synagogue given to my charge disappeared into a morass of mortgages. Harry, I'm afraid there are times when I don't care if they believe in God as long as they come to the synagogue...Of course, it's sad...Harry, it's been my pleasure. Have I depressed you?...Come and see us, Harry...Good luck...Of course. Good-bye.[6]

There are other instances where Chayefsky places into the mouths of his characters the "traditional" arguments and jibes against Reform Judaism. He also very effectively was able to convey the Shacharit service in English.

Fiorello! with its book by Jerome Weidman and George Abbott and music and lyrics by Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick told of the rise to fame of New York's colorful mayor, Fiorello H. La Guardia. In this award-winning musical, the authors played up the fact that La Guardia appealed to the minority elements of New York's populace. They placed noticeable emphasis on the Jewish element of the community. In fact, it is noted on occasion through the play that La Guardia himself was half-Jewish. La Guardia's office manager, Morris, is obviously Jewish as he was portrayed by Nathaniel Frey. He is shown constantly on the telephone with his wife Shirley, bemoaning his job "on the side of the angels."

The key Jewish scene in the play is found in a most impressive production number entitled "The Name's La Guardia," which shows how the "Little Flower" was able to whip up the enthusiasm of the street-corner crowds all over New York City. The scene begins on a street corner where members of La Guardia's staff campaign vigorously. When Fiorello himself mounts his soap box, he charms the crowd with a rousing and catchy tune. Soon he has the crowd with him. The lights go down quickly and come up again on another part of the stage and in another part of Greenwich Village. The audience is Italian this time; Fiorello repeats his campaign song but in Italian. The music tempo has changed to that of a tarantella. The

tempo builds, and the scene shifts to another street corner where Morris is warming up another crowd--an active Jewish crowd--for the arrival of Fiorello. When he gets up to speak, the following encounter takes place:

Fiorello: Friends, I've just come from Mulberry Street.

Heckler: Little Italy, huh? You're always talking about your Italian background. I hear you're half-Jewish. How come you never brag about your Jewish background?

Fiorello: I figure if a man is only half-Jewish it isn't enough to brag about.[7]

Fiorello sings the Yiddish version of the song, Ich bin La Guardia, and the meeting and the scene end in a stomping dancing finale. All of the critics made note of this number in their reviews of the show, and it contributed in an important way to the show's success--especially in pleasing the Jewish element of New York's theatre-going audience.

In Gore Vidal's successful political drama The Best Man, a character by the name of Sheldon Marcus plays a most important role. While no mention is ever made about Marcus' religion, one must ask exactly why Vidal chose to give this character what in mid-twentieth century America is such an obviously Jewish name. In an effort to discredit a candidate for the party presidential nomination, an opponent's campaign manager brings in Sheldon Marcus. Marcus, a rumpled and reluctantly talkative individual tells the following tale about Joe Cantwell, the opponent. He and Cantwell served in the Army together, in the Quartermaster Corps on the island of Adak in the Aleutians. They were both captains. It was very lonely

up there, what with no women, and Cantwell...Marcus hedges nervously until one of the poloticians asks bluntly, "Was Cantwell a 'de-generate?'" He was, says Marcus, and Army records will show a case involving a lieutenant named Bob Fenn.

When Cantwell gets wind of Marcus' appearance, he demands a meeting with Marcus. At this meeting, Cantwell announces that Marcus has come to the convention with his story in the hope of harming Cantwell, because on Adak, Cantwell turned him down for a promotion.[8] It is proven that Marcus is a jealous,incompetent, bumbling liar. Why, we must ask, did Vidal assign this role to a Jew?

While nothing specific is mentioned in the stage description of Albert Peterson's mother in Bye Bye Birdie, one is led to believe that Mae, the mother of Albert Peterson, the young talent agent-song writer, portrayed in the original production by Kay Medford, is Jewish. The stage directions describe her as "a present-day Mamma in every sense of the word."[9] In the Broadway production she is portrayed as loud, tough, blonde, sequinned, carrying a poodle, and wearing a mink coat. She constantly babies Albert. Once again, I feel that,as portrayed on Broadway, Mae Peterson's Jewishness is implied.

It must also be noted in passing that during this season an adaptation of Harry Golden's Only in America appeared on Broadway for twenty-eight brief performances. Its Jewish theme and content were not enough to make it into a success.

NOTES

[1]The Best Plays of 1959-1960: The Burns Mantle Yearbook, ed. Louis Kronenberger (New York, 1960), p. 4.

[2]Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[3]Ibid., p. 8.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Paddy Chayefsky, The Tenth Man (New York, 1960), p. 5.

[6]Ibid., pp. 81-82.

[7]Jerome Weidman and George Abbott, Fiorello! in Kronenberger, p. 259.

[8]Gore Vidal, The Best Man (New York, 1962), pp. 42-44, 64-68.

[9]Broadway's Best 1960, ed. John Chapman (Garden City, 1960), p. 76.

## VI. THE 1960-1961 SEASON ON BROADWAY

The Broadway season of 1960-1961 was bad. So bad, according to Louis Kronenberger, that there was a certain gaiety investing the gloom, a certain cheer pervading the bleakness, a sense of records being smashed, of new lows being set. It looked to be a season that would go down in the history books and become something as hard to duplicate as to forgive and forget.[1] Once again the "business of Broadway" interfered in the creative process, and the season presented "a grimly familiar pattern" of sure-fire shows which producers thought would easily bring in the money. The season specialized in gag comedies, and abounded in adaptations. It lacked creative original works. For example, of the six most commendable dramas of the season, three--All the Way Home, The Devil's Advocate, and Advise and Consent--were made over from novels, a fourth--A Far Country--was a biographical documentary dealing with the career of Freud, a fifth--Becket--was a biographical drama which was imported from France. Only A Taste of Honey, an import from England, had its origins in the playwright's self.

This was a season which, like the many which followed it, was geared to outright mass entertainment. This can be concluded from the many musicals which were presented. Thirteen of the forty-six shows which appeared during this season

were musicals. Five of these, Irma La Douce, Show Girl, Camelot, Carnival! and The Unsinkable Molly Brown were financial hits, a far greater proportion than the dramas which were presented. This in itself seems to lead one to the conclusion that quality, even at a popular level, was not the prime basis for a show's success. Musical comedies, thus, went hand-in-hand with gag comedies as the chief fare of the Broadway theatre, and they indicate, for better or worse, the theatre's growing identification with mass culture and overcommercialized aims.

Of the forty-six plays which were produced during the 1960-1961 legitimate Broadway season, twelve were financial hits, only two--The Wall by Millard Lampell and The Forty-Ninth Cousin by Florence Lowe and Caroline Francke--dealt with Jews and Jewish themes in a central way. Neither of these shows was financially successful.

Millard Lampell's adaptation of John Hersey's well-known novel of the Warsaw ghetto ran for 167 performances. From the reviews of the play, Lampell was successful in portraying the nightmare of the ghetto, yet his work lacked coherence in that it presented scattered incidents instead of focusing on one family's struggle. According to Kronenberger, Lampell's work proved neither personal in appeal nor panoramic in effect. It was too diffused for a proper narrative impact, and too restricted for sufficient scenic horror.[2] If the appeal to Jewish audiences and the preachment and propaganda against Nazis were valid reasons for box-office successes in New York, The Wall should have drawn

capacity houses as did The Diary of Anne Frank in 1955. Yet the play failed as a commercial venture, while some critics did feel it had artistic merit. This was perhaps due to the fact that it lacked the broad sympathetic appeal of The Diary of Anne Frank. According to Abe Laufe, some New Yorkers thought The Wall too disturbing and too shocking for an evening's entertainment. He notes that one college professor who had been in a concentration camp said, "I lived that play. It reminded me too vividly of the things I wanted to forget." When this same man was asked how he felt about The Diary of Anne Frank, he said, "During the play I kept calm because Mr. Frank tried to keep all the people in the attic calm, and I reacted the way they did."[3] The Diary of Anne Frank, by remaining the chronicle of a girl and confining its tragedy to a garret, could--whatever its limitations--expand a family's fate into that of a people. But in The Wall, according to Kronenberger, the mass and weight of the novel were lost, while a steady dramatic undertow was lacking.[4]

Even though it boasted a cast headed by none other than the Yiddish theatre's own favorite, Menasha Skulnik, The Forty-Ninth Cousin could run for only one-hundred performances. Kronenberger describes the play as a "wheezy period comedy." Skulnik played a testy, tyrannical, turn-of-the-century German Jew who lived with his family in Syracuse, New York. He hated Russian Jews most violently as suitors for his daughters. Skulnik himself was the only saving feature of this "padded and pallid" work.[5]

There were, during the 1960-61 Broadway season, a number

of plays in which Jews played important roles, while the Jewish element of the plays was not central to the development of the plot. For example, Henry Denker's A Far Country, dealing with Freud's early career and his first attempt at psychoanalysis, is set as a flashback taking place in Vienna of 1938 where Sigmund Freud, under pressure from the Nazis, is making plans to flee because he is a Jew. Freud, for many years the archetypal Jew of the twentieth century, in gathering his papers together, comes across his file containing information about the case of Elizabeth von Ritter, his most famous patient. As he reads the case, the scene shifts to 1893 and the story begins to unfold. Freud is portrayed as a troubled, rebellious young man. When he expresses his desire to fight the establishment of Viennese doctors, his mother states:

> Sigmund...a Jew is born with enough enemies! Why must you antagonize everyone?[6]

Once Freud begins the treatment of Elizabeth, the doctors who first treated her take up a campaign to stop him. In this campaign they make use of Freud's religion:

> That Jew Freud is using witchcraft to cure a girl the great Stegel couldn't help.[7]

Dr. Breuer, an eminent Jewish doctor in Vienna, relates that a Dr. Stegel continually bothers him, saying, "Jew, keep your Jews in line else there'll be trouble."[8] When Freud's mother tries to convince Freud to stop his treatment of Elizabeth, he tells her,

> Mama, your trouble is you were born with all the pretensions of a Hapsburg and all the restrictions of a Jew.[9]

These are the only mentions of Freud's Jewishness during the course of the extended flashback in the play. At the conclusion of the work, when the scene returns to 1938, as Freud, now crippled, prepares to leave his house to escape to England, he speaks of the Nazis:

> Are they out there? Waiting to see the sick old Jew carried out? Hmmm? Savages! Well, we shall have to teach them what is in here. (He holds up Elizabeth's file). The worst tyranny is within. A human being free within himself is free everywhere. They destroy whole peoples? We save individuals. And in the end we will outnumber them. We'll let them know that![10]

It thus appears that the fact that Freud is Jewish leads him to better understand man's struggles within himself. While Freud the psychoanalyst is the star of A Far Country, Freud the Jew brings the message of the play to the audience.

It is a Jewish doctor who is a key figure in The Devil's Advocate, Dore Schary's adaptation from a novel by Morris West. The play deals with a cancer-ridden English monsignor sent from the Vatican to a Calabrian village to serve as devil's advocate in the matter of a possible canonization. He is to probe the qualifications for sainthood of an English World War II deserter who, before being executed by the Communists, had performed many great services, and possible miracles for the townspeople. In turning into a detective about the dead, the monsignor runs the full gamut of emotions and actions of the living. One of the individuals who teaches the monsignor and the audience about life is Dr. Aldo Meyer, played in the New York production by Sam Levene. Meyer, exiled to Calabria during the war, has remained there for

nineteen years. His being a Jew is "reason enough for being unhappy," we are told at the beginning of the play.[11] A pragmatist, Meyer does not want to say that Nerone, the deserter, was a saint. "I know nothing about saints. I only know men," he says.[12] When another character attempts to make fun of Nerone, Meyer angrily states, "I'm a Jew. I have small taste for Catholicism--but even less for blasphemy."[13] In a later scene, Meyer is discussed by two clerics. "He's a man of extraordinary humanity but handicapped by being a Jew in a Catholic country--perhaps by other things."[14] Meyer is given the quality of being a bittersweet comedian. When he is asked about his acquaintance with Nerone, and is informed that in a cause for beatification even the evidence of non-Catholics is admitted if they are willing to give it, Meyer observes with a smile, "I know. Though we are denied entrance into your Heaven, we are allowed to aid the safe passage of others."[15] In a conversation with the monsignor, Meyer expresses his anger with the intolerance of the Calabrians:

> I lived alone because the Calabrese warned me not to touch their pure-blooded women--who, being Calabrese, were part Greek, part Phoenician, part French, Spanish, Italian--anything and everything but Jew.[16]

During a flashback later in the play, Meyer is shown fleeing from the town in fear that he will be discovered by the Germans. He makes arrangements to return upon Nerone's request.[17] As the monsignor is nearing death, it is Meyer who tells him the answer to what he has been looking for all his life. The monsignor asks Meyer, after he has heard the

entire story of Nerone, "What makes us learn to love?" To which Meyer answers, "Need--I suppose. People needing something."[18] The Jew, then, is responsible for relating the message of the play to the audience.

In Advise and Consent, Loring Mandel's adaptation based on the best-seller by Allen Drury, the character of Herbert Gelman is presented. While no specific reference is made to the fact that Gelman is Jewish, one might conclude that, by using a Jewish-sounding name, the author intended to make some use of a Jewish stereotype. Appearing before the Senate committee holding hearings on a President's nominee for Secretary of State, Gelman testifies that he was a student of the candidate at the University of Chicago. He accuses the candidate of "probably Communist" associations at that time.[19] Gelman, according to the stage directions, is to be portrayed as a "nervous young man."[20] On the stand, Gelman accuses the candidate of taking him to a cell meeting. Upon cross examination, the candidate proves beyond a doubt that Gelman deliberately lied. He was never a student of the candidate at the University of Chicago, nor was he ever taken by the candidate to a cell meeting. The candidate brings evidence that Gelman has had two nervous breakdowns, and is not a stable individual. His reason for appearing before the committee is to take out revenge on the candidate who, after Gelman had a breakdown, refused to hire him for a job.[21] It is difficult to say exactly why a Jew was selected for this role.

Come Blow Your Horn, Neil Simon's first hit which ran

for 679 performances, dealt with a Jewish glass-fruit manufacturer whose two sons have rebelliously turned into playboys. His older son, Alan, has set up a bachelor apartment to avoid parental interference with his playboy activities. As the play opens, Alan's younger brother Buddy decides to move in with him. Instead of objecting to this invasion of his privacy, Alan welcomes Buddy and even gets him a date with one of the girls in the same building. By the third act, Alan has become a carbon copy of Alan, and his mother has threatened to leave her husband and move in with the boys. Alan has fallen in love with a nice girl, Connie Dayton (we really don't know whether or not she is Jewish), whom he wants to marry, and has become disgusted with Buddy's Bohemian adventures. Mr. Baker is ready to throw both boys out of the business but changes his mind when Alan gets two excellent orders for the firm and introduces his father to his fiancee, who knows how to manage both father and son.

The plot is secondary to the characterizations and dialogue filled with obvious jokes and repetitive gags. For example, Mr. Baker calls Alan a bum. When Alan asks, "Why am I a bum?" Mr. Baker says, "Are you married?" Alan says, "No," and his father says, "Then you're a bum."[22] From then on, the reference to bum becomes a running gag. There is no denying that the play is contrived.

Although the family name is Baker and the characters speak with no particular accent. the audience knows the story deals with a Jewish family blustering its way through arguments and confusion. Mr. Baker fancies himself to be an

abused man when he is, in reality, a domineering husband and father.He refuses to listen to arguments, delivers ultimatums which the audience knows will not be carried out, and plays most of his scenes in a mood of resigned anger. Mrs. Baker, the Jewish mother par excellence, makes continual references to the undernourishment of her children, and stands before them to protect them from their father.

Do Re Mi, a musical by Garson Kanin, dealt with the tale of Hubie Kramm, played on Broadway by Phil Silvers. Hubie, a dreamer and a schemer, always looking for the easy way out, induces some old slot-machine racketeers to muscle in on the juke-box business. His associations with gangsters such as Brains Berman and Wolfie ultimately end in failure. Once again there is no specific mention of Hubie's being Jewish, yet as he was portrayed by Phil Silvers, with his nagging wife played by Nancy Walker, one might infer from their speech patterns and inflections that they were Jewish characters.

NOTES

[1]The Best Plays of 1960-1961: The Burns Mantle Yearbook, ed. Louis Kronenberger (New York, 1961), p. 3.

[2]Ibid., p. 7.

[3]Abe Laufe, Anatomy of a Hit (New York, 1966), p.320.

[4]Kronenberger, p. 7.

[5]Ibid., p. 15.

[6]Henry Denker, A Far Country (New York, 1961), p. 22.

[7]Ibid., p. 83.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., p. 84.

[10]Ibid., p. 134.

[11]Dore Schary, The Devil's Advocate (New York, 1961), p. 15.

[12]Ibid., p. 16.

[13]Ibid., p. 38.

[14]Ibid., p. 42.

[15]Ibid., p. 56.

[16]Ibid., pp. 66-67.

[17]Ibid., p. 96.

[18]Ibid., p. 120.

[19]Loring Mandell, Advise and Consent (Garden City, New York, 1961), p. 41.

[20]Ibid., p. 45.

[21]Ibid., pp. 45-61.

[22]Neil Simon, Come Blow Your Horn (New York, 1961), p.20.

## VII. THE 1961-1962 SEASON ON BROADWAY

The New York climate for theatrical production continued to deteriorate during the 1969-1962 season. While at a first glance it appeared to be deceptively good, upon a closer examination, one half of all the plays brought to Broadway and favorably accepted by the critics were imported from abroad. This season demonstrated a serious lack of good American playwrights. Those who did make an appearance "were going fallow in a too well-plowed field of naturalism."[1]

According to Henry Hewes, the new editor of the Burns Mantle Yearbook, the public was tired of the conventional Broadway play. This was an audience in transition, an audience which came to recognize the romantic theatrical conventions as false and which, at the same time, yearned to escape into something a little larger and a little more splendid than naturalistic behavior.[2]

The box-office figures, however, do not agree with Mr. Hewes' idealistic description. The New York theatre-going audience was still paying to see the loud, the brassy, and the vulgar. Of the forty-nine works which appeared during the 1961-1962 season, ten were classified as financial hits by Variety. Of these ten shows, four were musicals, An Evening with Yves Montand, How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, and

No Strings; three were comedies, A Shot in the Dark, Take Her, She's Mine, and A Thousand Clowns, and one, Write Me a Murder, was a melodrama. Only Robert Bolt's A Man for All Seasons and Tennessee Williams' The Night of the Iguana could be termed successful new dramas of merit.

In terms of Jewish themes and characters, this season had a more than average number of entries. In the dramatic vein, one might wish to include Paddy Chayefsky's Gideon, although some might choose to place it in the same category as MacLeash's J.B. It is possible to make a case for Gideon as being Chayefsky's reaction to his Jewish tradition, in much the same way as Odets' The Flowering Peach arose out of his Jewish reaction to the Noah story. Chayefsky attempted to turn Gideon into history's common man, and "The Angel" into theology's Yahweh with the human qualities of egocentricity, jealousy, and capriciousness. Perhaps one could find a Jewish perspective in Chayefsky's interpretation of Gideon's ambivalent relations with The Lord and by the latter's troubles with Gideon. Chayefsky seems to be presenting in this work the attraction-repulsion relationship of God and Man in history. He also has succeeded in showing to his audience exactly how human a document the Bible is. If one looks at Gideon in this light, it may very well be considered a Jewish play.

The conversations which are carried on between Gideon and The Angel are in many ways suggestive of the conversations which Tevye carries on with his Deity in Fiddler on the

Roof. Yet while the Deity is not seen in Fiddler on the Roof, Chayefsky makes the Angel into a visible human figure. At the conclusion of the first act, for example, as Gideon's troops leave to battle the enemy with the cry, "For Gideon and for the Lord!" the Angel is made to tug pensively at his beard and mutter, "For Gideon and for the Lord," indeed. It used to be" "For the Lord and for Gideon." The stage directions are most interesting at this point:

> He shrugs in the ageless Hebrew fashion and strides offstage left. The curtain comes down quickly.[3]

The play concludes in a rather unconventional and unique way. Gideon, against the wishes of the Angel, turns himself into a God-like figure by donning an ephod. He turns his back on the Angel who, unable to contain himself, bursts into laughter and recites the following lines:

> God no more believes it odd,
> That man cannot believe in God.
> Man believes the best he can,
> Which means, it seems, belief in man.
> Then let him don my gold ephod
> And let him be a proper god.
> Well, let him try it anyway.
> With this conceit, we end the play.[4]

Gideon ran for 236 performances. While it was considered to be one of the best plays of the season by the critics, the audiences did not give the play the financial support which the critics felt that it merited.

Something about a Soldier, a comedy by Ernest Kinoy, was produced by Dore Schary and the Theatre Guild. It should be noted that Dore Schary, the chairman of the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League, has contributed to some extent to the

appearance of Jewish themes on Broadway. He was responsible for bringing A Majority of One and The Devil's Advocate to the stage. This season he was not as successful. The Kinoy play is about a World War II army training center and the relationship between an awkward recruit with a high I.Q. and a sensitive officer who unethically rescues him from having to go into combat. I feel that it is no coincidence that the name of the recruit, played by Sal Mineo, was Jacob Eppstein. The play only ran for twelve performances, thus showing that the Jewish element of the play could not save it from closing.

A character with the obviously Jewish name of Sandra Markowitz played a key role in A Thousand Clowns, a successful comedy by Herb Gardner. The play, which ran for 428 performances, deals with a comic-nonconformist who must come to terms with the Welfare Department of New York City as represented by a young Jewish social worker. As was the case in a good number of the comedies discussed thus far, one cannot point specifically to any of the dialogue of this play and say that it is particularly Jewish in nature. Yet one must ask why the author chose to give the heroine of his work--the girl who brings about a change in the nonconformist--the one who makes him into a responsible guardian for his twelve-year-old motherless son--a Jewish name. It is also difficult to determine if the author intended the nonconformist, given the ethnically indistinguishable name of Murray Burns, to be Jewish.

I have only been able to distinguish one line in the play which may have been geared to the Jewish element of the audience. At the beginning of the show, Murray asks his son, Nick,

Why he is not in school, to which Nick replies:

> It's a holiday. It's Irving R. Feldman's birthday, like you said.

Murray replies:

> Irving R. Feldman's birthday is my own personal national holiday. I did not open it up for the public.[5]

It turns out that Irving R. Feldman is the proprietor of the most distinguished kosher delicatessen in the neighborhood, and that Nick's real reason for staying home is that the Child Welfare Bureau is sending someone to investigate Nick's living quarters and his guardian. Other than this one line, there are no Jewish references in the play.

Such was not the case with the musicals which appeared during the course of the 1961-62 season. Three of the sixteen musicals which opened during the course of this season dealt specifically and primarily with Jews. This trend of sorts began early in the season with the appearance of Milk and Honey, with a book by Don Appell and music and lyrics by Jerry Herman. Surprisingly enough, even though the show ran for 543 performances, according to the figures in Variety, it was not financially successful, not having recovered its production costs. With a 543-performance record, however, the show must still be considered as a popular success. Before Milk and Honey opened on Broadway on October 10, 1961, many New Yorkers were certain it would be a hit. The cast included Robert Weede, whom audiences remembered in The Most Happy Fella, the very attractive Mimi Benzell, who had been a member of the Metropolitan Opera Company, and Molly Picon, the dar-

ling of the Yiddish theatre, making her first appearance in a Broadway musical. Commentators predicted that the Israeli setting, the folk dancing, and the score would appeal to the large Jewish population in the New York area.[6]

The libretto dealt with seven American women touring in Israel. Ruth, still young and attractive, meets Phil, a wealthy American contractor, whose daughter is married to an Israeli farmer. Phil and Ruth fall in love, but Ruth learns that Phil is married, although separated from his wife, who refuses to divorce him. They become involved in an affair that ends unhappily, with Ruth returning to America not very hopeful that Phil will ever be able to obtain his divorce. A second romance involving the widowed Clara Weiss, played beautifully by Molly Picon, ends much more happily. Clara, once devoted to her late husband Hymie, decides it is time to remarry. In one of the best numbers in the show, "A Hymn to Hymie," she says that a woman should have a husband who would get her a glass of water in the middle of the night if she wanted it. Later, in a restaurant scene, Clara asks the waiter for a glass of water and a man sitting at the next table offers her his glass. Romance blossoms, and the final episode shows the newly-married Clara wearing a huge diamond that must have dazzled even the people in the last row of the balcony.

Appell's book included two subplots that depicted the pride of the Israeli farmers and the rigorous hardships they endured to make their land productive. One of the subplots dealt with Barbara, Phil's daughter, and her decision to return

to America even if she had to go without David, her husband. David, aware of Barbara's discontent with the arduous life in Israel, promises that he will follow her, but he realizes how discontented he would be if he left his homeland. Phil's unhappy romance helps convince Barbara that she should stay with her husband. The second subplot concerned Adi, an Israeli farmer reluctant to marry Zipporah, the girl who would soon give birth to his child. They finally do marry, in an impressive, traditional wedding ceremony performed for three couples rather than one because the rabbi has to visit many communities and cannot come to a village each time his services are needed. This marriage ceremony made for a rousing first-act finale.

In addition to the many melodies and rhythms evoking the flavor of Israeli folk music, Jerry Herman also wrote several lovely ballads that became popular songs. The entire show, which opened to very favorable reviews, presented what many people considered a very authentic picture of Israeli life. Several critics, in fact, thought the musical was at its best when it ignored the principal stories and focused on the workers--their courage, their love for the land, and the hardships they endured.[7]

During the first few months of the run, Milk and Honey drew capacity houses. Pre-sold theatre parties, by limiting the availability of tickets to the general public, aroused great interest in that type of theatregoer who always wants to see a sell-out show.

In spite of its many attributes, however, Milk and Honey disappointed quite a few people who would have preferred a happier ending to the romance of Phil and Ruth. The show also offended some audiences by what they took to be an implication that morality and conventionality meant little in Israel. For example, Ruth and Phil were encouraged in their affair and were told that if they remained in Israel practically no one would object to their living together. Staunch supporters of Israel also objected to the story of Adi and Zipporah. The fact that the pregnant girl was allowed to wear the traditional ceremonial robes and take part in the solemn marriage ritual disturbed those who wanted Israel depicted as a land of milk and honey and not as a haven for common-law liaisons and hasty marriages. Abe Laufe reports that some non-Jewish theatregoers, particularly those who lived outside of New York, said that with the exception of Molly Picon, they did not enjoy the production because they were bewildered by some of the ethnic humor and the exotic rituals.[8]

Milk and Honey might nevertheless have drawn greater attendance for a longer period if Molly Picon had not left the cast, for several months, to play the role of the Jewish mother in the movie version of Come Blow Your Horn. Finding another actress who could so amiably portray a lady in search of a husband, and who could dance and sing with such style, was an impossibility. Miss Picon could not be imitated. Her replacement, Hermione Gingold, although an expert comedienne, was not the Semitic type which audiences expected

to see playing a lady named Clara Weiss, nor did the role that had been so obviously tailored to Miss Picon's talents permit Miss Gingold to demonstrate her flair for sophisticated comedy. Furthermore, there were a great many people who would have attended the show only to see Miss Picon, whom they remembered so well from her appearances on the Yiddish stage.

A Family Affair, an original musical by James Goldman, John Kander and William Goldman, only lasted on Broadway for sixty-five performances. Despite the fact that it boasted such box-office draws as Shelley Berman and Morris Carnovsky, the show just could not make it on Broadway. The plot dealt with the comic battle between the guardian of a prospective bride and the parents of the groom over the wedding preparations. The show was aimed at a Jewish audience, the families involved being the Nathans and the Siegels. The show boasted such tunes as "My Son, the Lawyer," and "Every Girl Wants to Get Married." With all of the bickering, with all of the catering, with all of the humor of an ethnic nature, the show still could not make it on Broadway.

I Can Get It for You Wholesale, by Jerome Weidman and Harold Rome, was in many ways a Jewish version of the season's biggest hit musical, How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying. It told the story of an unattractive cloak-and-suit man and the lives that he wrecked. Harry Bogen, the product of a nice Jewish home, displayed so well on the stage through his close relationship with his mother, played by Lillian Roth, turns into a vampire before the eyes of the audience when he enters the business world. His aggressiveness is made

clear at the very beginning of the show when he sings to the audience:

> You're either a pitcher, dishing it out,
> Giving the orders, having the say,
> Or a catcher, waiting around to handle what
> The other feller sends your way.
>
> From now on, I'm telling you
> My catching days are through!
>
> You're the catcher, or the pitcher.
> You're bamboozled, or you get richer.
> You get done to or you do it.
> That's the way things are![9]

The Jewish aspects of the show are found primarily in the scenes between Harry and his mother. One song, "Momma, Momma," shows how Harry is constantly bestowing gifts on his mother.

> Momma, momma, momma, momma,
> Why did you have to be
> Made so perfectly, mommaniu?
>
> Momma, momma, momma, momma,
> Who will I ever see
> Half so good for me, mommaniu?...[10]

The Jewish tempo of this song recurs in another number called "The Family Way," in which Harry introduces his new partner to his family and friends.

As portrayed on the stage, all of the members of the clothing business are Jews, from the young receptionist, Miss Marmelstein, portrayed by the then unknown Barbra Streisand, all the way up to the top executives. Another scene which was aimed to please the Jewish element of the audience was a Bar Mitzvah reception. The scene was filled with the elements of song, food, and memorized speeches with which the Jewish members of the audience could so well identify. The music, the characterizations, and the settings of

I Can Get It for You Wholesale all contributed significantly to the 300-performance run of this show. It should be noted that no attempt was made by the producers to set up a road company of this show. Perhaps they felt that outside of New York the show would attract little attention.

NOTES

[1]The Best Plays of 1961-1962: The Burns Mantle Yearbook, ed. Henry Hewes (New York - Toronto, 1962), p. 3.

[2]Ibid., p. 4.

[3]Paddy Chayefsky, Gideon (New York, 1961), p. 85.

[4]Ibid., pp. 137-138.

[5]Herb Gardner, A Thousand Clowns (New York, 1961), p. 13.

[6]Abe Laufe, Broadway's Greatest Musicals (New York, 1969), p. 373.

[7]Ibid., p. 374.

[8]Ibid., p. 375.

[9]Jerome Weidman and Harold Rome, I Can Get It for You Wholesale (New York, 1962), p. 13.

[10]Ibid., p. 22.

## VIII. THE 1962-1963 SEASON ON BROADWAY

The deterioration of the New York climate for theatrical production, that was vaguely discernible in a deceptively good 1961-62 season, became mercilessly apparent in a 1962-63 season generally regarded as the worst. Broadway investors lost more money in this season than ever before--$5,574,944.00 to be exact.[1] The season was hindered by the rising production and operating costs and by a 114-day newspaper strike which devastated New York from December 7, 1962, to March 31, 1963. Henry Hewes notes, however, that theatre attendance during the strike remained strangely unaffected.[2]

This was a season which boasted works by such established playwrights as Tennessee Williams, Lillian Hellman, William Inge, S. N. Behrman, Sidney Kingsley, S. J. Perelman, Irwin Shaw, and Garson Kanin, yet this was a season in which none of these playwrights lived up to their established reputations. This was a season in which the plays of note were, for the most part, either revivals of established hits such as O'Neill's Strange Interlude and Congreve's School for Scandal, or imports from England such as Oliver! This was a season in which the only American play of any note was Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? by Edward Albee.

Only nine of the fifty-one shows which opened during this season were considered financial hits by Variety. There

were, however, a good number of shows in which a Jewish element was noticeable. It must be noted that most of these productions were not successful, perhaps suggesting that a show which has appeal to a Jewish audience will not be successful at all times.

Seidman and Son, which opened on October 15, 1962 starring Sam Levene, and ran for 216 performances, is another of the Seventh-Avenue Jewish cloak-and-suit comedies. All of the expected elements are there. There is the constant bickering in the Seidman house, the anger with a daughter who wears a St. Christopher medal given her by her boy friend, the concern that both children should marry "nice" people, and the desire to give the boy in the family more responsibility. In the office there is the constant striving for success and the desire to be on good terms with the Gentile officer from the bank. Moll even goes so far as to introduce the stock character of the Jewish waiter known so well to New Yorkers and to those members of the audience who recall Sam Levene's classic portrayal of such a waiter in Cafe Crown many years ago, by including a restaurant scene. In general, the plot deals with Seidman who hires his idealistic son (who has quit medical school to save the world) and places him in a responsible position in his dress business. The son is no sooner in the office than he begins his social and political evangelizing. Morris not only loses one of his biggest buyers but also nearly loses some of his most valuable workers. Everything works out well in the end when Seidman realizes that every youthful generation has to learn from its own experiences.

He also manages to resolve the frustrations of a woman designer who works for him, to arrange an agreeable truce with a labor organizer, and to remain understanding, affectionate, and even cheerful in the face of the worst turmoil.

Oliver!, which had a most successful run of 774 performances, must be discussed in this study, if one realizes that the book, music, and lyrics of this work were "freely adapted" by Lionel Bart from Dickens' classic Oliver Twist, in which Fagin, the villain, was most definitely pictured as a Jew. In fact, Bart had not radically changed the basic plot. In the opening scene, Oliver, an orphan who lives in the workhouse, musters up enough courage to ask for more food. For this bold act he is taken to an undertaker's establishment. After being treated even more abusively there, the rebellious Oliver runs away, meets the Artful Dodger, a cheerful youngster about his own age, and goes with him to the hideout of Fagin and the boys whom he trains to be thieves. Fagin proceeds to instruct Oliver in the art of picking pockets, and the next morning Oliver is sent out with the boys. The play proceeds according to the novel until, at the end of the musical, Fagin, who has been forced to abandon both his hideout and the wealth he had accumulated, is unsure of his future. He wonders whether he can turn over a new leaf, and, if so, what changes he will have to make in his mode of living.

Dickens enthusiasts were displeased with the adaptation of Oliver Twist, and accused Bart of treating the novel irreverently. The liberties he took with the story, however, made the difference between a production that became a hit and one

that would have aroused antagonism and kept New York audiences away from the theatre. Dickens' novel had emphasized the evils of workhouses and the ill-treatment of orphans; but in Oliver! Dickens' cries for social reform were minimized. The popular appeal would have been lessened considerably had Bart included all of Dickens' indictments, for very few plays or musical comedies dealing with social reform have ever become hits.

The greatest change, as had been anticipated, came in the depiction of Fagin. The script removed all of the anti-Semitic references and transformed Fagin from a character who would have aroused the protests of the Anti-Defamation League into a humorous rascal. In fact, Norman Nadel, in his review in the World Telegram and Sun, said that Fagin had been described "by a Jewish newspaper in California,..as the kind of lovable old codger you'd invite to a Hadassah tea." Moreover, the Habimah Theatre presented a Hebrew edition of Oliver! in Israel in 1966.

Abe Laufe notes that reports from critics who had seen the original production of Oliver! in London stated that the characterization of Fagin had been softened and toned down for the American version, but the London revival in 1967 appeared to be exactly the same as the New York production.[3]

While no references to Fagin's being Jewish were found in the dialogue, Fagin's Semitic origins are apparent in one piece of music in the play. Laced throughout the song, "Reviewing the Situation," in which Fagin examines the possibilities of turning over a new leaf, is a "kvetchy violin"

motif, quite typical of Jewish folk music.

Andorra, by Swiss playwright Max Frisch, was brought to Broadway after its widespread European success. While it was selected as one of the year's best plays for inclusion in the Burns Mantle Yearbook, it had a run of only nine performances. Henry Hewes attributed this strange discrepancy between the success of the show in Europe, and its dismal failure in this country, to a confusion in the collaboration of those involved in its production and partly because what seems like the mildest unconscious anti-Semitism in Europe, strikes Americans as villainous conscious behavior of a socially irresponsible kind.[4]

What Frisch was trying to show in this work, according to Hewes, was the process whereby we all project into others our own bad qualities, and how we support inhuman institutions to impersonalize forces for which we are responsible. In actuality, the story, as it appears in a translation by Michael Bullock,tells of the persecution of a presumably Jewish boy who was adopted by a Christian family after the Fascisti from the neighboring state slaughtered the Jews in their country. The play moves from the casual slur to the actual persecution of Andri, the young boy. Frisch points out how it is a part of human nature to make generalizations about people, and how one must have a scapegoat on whom one can take out his aggressions. Frisch shows how prejudice operates on all levels of society in the mythical country of Andorra--in doctors and priests. One speech of Andri will demonstrate the high calibre of this work, yet at the same time point out why the play

did not succeed in this country. The Priest of Andorra has arranged for a woman from another country to come to Andorra and say that she is Andri's mother, thus creating a fiction to make Andri a Christian. Andri is infuriated and states:

> Ever since I have been able to hear, people have told me I'm different,and I watched to see if what they said was true. And it is true, Reverend Father: I am different. People told me how my kind move, like this and like this, and I looked at myself in the mirror almost every evening. They are right: I do move like this and like this. I can't help it. And I watched to see whether it was true that I'm always thinking of money, when the Andorrans watch me and think, now he's thinking of money. And they were right again: I am always thinking of money. It's true. And I have no guts: I've tried, but it's no use: I have no guts, only fear. And people told me that my kind are cowards. I watched out for this too. Many of them are cowards, but I know when I'm being a coward. I didn't want to admit what they told me, but it's true. They kicked me with their boots, and it's true what they say: I don't feel like them. And I have no country. You told me, Reverend Father, that one must accept that, and I have accepted it. Now it's up to you, Reverend Father, to accept your Jew. I don't want to have a father and mother, so that their death shall not come over me with anguish and despair, nor my death over them. And no sister and no sweetheart. Soon everything will be torn to pieces, then neither our promises nor our fidelity will help. I want it to happen soon. I'm old. My trust has fallen out, one piece after the other, like teeth. I have exulted, the sun shone green in the trees. I threw my name in the air like a cap that belonged to nobody but me, and down fell a stone that killed me. I have been wrong, all the time, in a different way from what they thought. I wanted to be right and to rejoice. Those who were my enemies were right even if they had no right to be, because at the end of all one's understanding one still can't feel that one is right. I don't need enemies any more, the truth is sufficient. I take fright the moment I begin to hope. My affliction raises me above everyone, therefore I shall fall. My eyes are big with melancholy, my blood knows everything, and I wish I were dead. But I have a horror of dying. There is no grace--[5]

A play composed of speeches of this nature, profound and insightful though they may be, will not interest an audience enough to make it want to come to see the show. Americans generally go to the theatre to be entertained. If they go to see a drama, they don't like to identify with it too strongly. It should not make them feel too uncomfortable.

With comedy, however, it is a different matter. Audiences enjoy going to the theatre and seeing themselves on the stage so to speak. Such indeed was the case with Leonard Spiegelglass' comedy of the 1962-63 season, Dear Me, the Sky Is Falling. The play, based on a story by Gertrude Berg and James Yafee, ran for only 145 performances. It was produced as a vehicle for Gertrude Berg. The star's ill health, in fact, forced the closing of the play. Set in present-day New Rochelle, the play deals with an "astute, cheerful, perennially possessive" Jewish mother who drives her family into rebellion against her wise and well-intentioned interference in their lives. At her harassed daughter's suggestion, she gets involved in psychoanalysis, and from her not-so-Jewish psychiatrist (the stage directions call for him to be Anglo-Saxon) she finally learns to let her family live their own lives.

The play has the usual elements of bickering, concern for the welfare of the children, and some interest in food. As we first encounter Libby, the mother, she is on the telephone discussing the menu for her daughter's wedding. The conversation also includes a discussion of the gifts which her daughter has already received. Later in the scene we find

Libby playing canasta with her friends. The conversation is laden with gossip. Once again, while there is nothing particularly Jewish in the conversation, the topics of conversation and the manner in which they are spoken, no doubt brought many a smile to the faces of the Jewish members of the audience. As the first act ends, the psychiatrist is left alone in his office after his first encounter with Libby. He takes a dictaphone microphone from a drawer of his desk, and begins to dictate:

> Met today with mother of Patient Four-seven-four. The interview sheds a new light on the patient's basic conflict. It is obvious that she was over-loved, over-protected, and, I suspect, over-indulged. The mother, on the other hand, is classically possessive, extraordinarily imposing, and--well-she's a lulu.[6]

This "pre-Portnoyian" description was a clever way to bring down the first-act curtain on this comedy.

The only comedy of a Jewish nature which was financially successful during this season was Joseph Stein's Enter Laughing, which was adapted from a novel by Carl Reiner. The plot very simply tells the story of a Jewish delivery boy who decides to become an actor. There are a great number of lines in the play which are directed at a Jewish audience. For example, at the very beginning of the play, we find ourselves in Mr. Foreman's machine shop, where David Kolowitz is employed. When David's girl friend, Wanda, calls up, Mr. Foreman asks, when he hears her name, "I should tell him who's calling? Wanda? What kind name is Wanda? Are you a Jewish girl?...A nothing, fourteen dollars and fifty cents a week, mixed up with girls..She ain't Jewish!...Ah, why should

I worry, let his father worry...Everything's a mister! America!"[7]

As with the other comedies studied thus far, the real Jewish atmosphere comes forth in the relationship between parent and child. In David's home, his mother shows a concern for her child's welfare, and keeping up to the image, the concern is an over-concern. Even before we encounter David's mother in person we are introduced to her through the following conversation which we overhear when David calls her to say he will not be home for supper.

> Hello, Papa? Listen, Papa, I won't be home for supper. No, I'm all right. I'm going to a kind of night school. For acting. Acting...like in the movies... No, don't put Mama on, I'll tell you about it tomorrow... Papa, there's somebody waiting for the phone, so don't put Mama on... I'll tell you when I... Hello, Mama... I'll eat at a restaurant, Mama... Eggs. Okay, meat... No, don't wait up for me, Mama, I'll be home late... Goodbye, Mama... Okay, Ma, sure... all right... okay... all right...[8]

Despite his warning, the scene in the Kolowitz kitchen later that night shows David's parents up worrying about him, and at a later point in the scene expressing the desire to send their son to pharmacy college.[9]

David, who needs to borrow ten dollars with which to rent a tuxedo for his costume in the play, tries to get the money from Mr. Foreman, by telling him that he wants to buy a prayer shawl for his father. When Mr. Foreman offers to buy the prayer shawl for David wholesale, David realizes that this fiction will not get him the money. He has got himself into this difficulty, and must now have the prayer shawl. When David brings the prayer shawl and the tuxedo

home, his mother opens the boxes and says, "What's this? A full-dress suit, a top hat--and a prayer shawl. What kind of part is it? Maybe a reformed Rabbi?"[10] After many comic moments the play concludes with David performing at the theatre, his mother concluding that he is "a very nice young man."[11]

During this season there were also a number of plays in which Jewish characters played important roles, although the plays themselves were not successful. There was an attempt to produce a musical about the life of Sophie Tucker. The play only ran for eight performances. Lillian Hellman wrote a satire on contemporary urban middle-class Jewish life entitled, My Mother, My Father, and Me. The play starred Walter Matthau and Ruth Gordon, and only ran for seventeen performances. James Lipton and Sol Berkowitz wrote the musical, Nowhere to Go but Up. The plot concerned the actions of Izzy Einstein and Moe Smith, two Prohibition agents, and the unorthodox methods they employed. This show only ran for nine performances.

NOTES

[1]The Best Plays of 1962-1963: The Burns Mantle Yearbook, ed. Henry Hewes (New York - Toronto, 1963), p. 3.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Abe Laufe, Broadway's Greatest Musicals (New York, 1969), p. 306.

[4]Hewes, p. 12.

[5]Max Frisch, Andorra, Trans. Michael Bullock (New York, 1961), pp. 60-61.

[6]Leonard Spiegelgass, Dear Me, the Sky Is Falling (New York, 1963), p. 47.

[7]Joseph Stein, Enter Laughing (New York, 1963), p. 5.

[8]Ibid., p. 23.

[9]Ibid., pp. 28-33.

[10]Ibid., p. 64.

[11]Ibid., p. 83.

## IX. THE 1963-1964 SEASON ON BROADWAY

Never had there been as much controversy provoked by the American theatre as there was in the 1963-64 season. There was what Henry Hewes called "an air of stormy vitality" on Broadway which was quite necessary at this time, because the theatre, as we have seen, was drifting into the "doldrums of indeterminacy."[1] While all this did not make for more well-written plays, no play written during this season being found worthy enough to receive the New York Drama Critics Circle or Pulitzer prizes, it did seem to reflect both the theatregoers' increased need to be presented with issues about which they could react violently, and a desire by playwrights to deal boldly, even at the cost of being vilified for so doing. In general, this was a far more prolific season than in years past. In all, fifty-seven works made appearances during the season. Despite this large number of shows, only eleven were classified as financial hits by Variety, and of these eleven, Funny Girl, the musical biography of Fannie Brice, was the only hit with Jewish content.

The 1963-64 season did have a number of plays with Jewish elements which ran for over fifty performances. First there was Arnold Wesker's Chips with Everything, a drama imported from England, in which the author used the R.A.F. training camp to explore the question of whether an extremely

intelligent and esthetically sensitive member of the upper class can lead a group of lower-class men to win out in defiance of the Establishment's inhumanity. While the play demonstrated that the Establishment has too many weapons to be overthrown, it did show that it can be outwitted and be blackmailed into changing. Furthermore, it suggested that the indiscriminate masses (the people who order chips with everything), might with the proper leadership become more discerning, more sensitive, and more responsible.

Dramatically, Wesker's work was considered to be one of the highlights of the season. The critics gave the play glowing reviews. Why, one must ask, should a play so highly praised run for only 149 performances? While Hewes admits that this might be attributed to the fact that the play had neither a star name with which to draw an audience, nor an interesting enough subject matter to tempt New York theatre-goers, he notes that the play's producers estimated that the run was shortened by a more insidious factor. Mr. Wesker had given his tough sergeant a sadistic line in which he tells a recruit, "You're like an old Jew! You know what happens to Jews. They go to gas chambers."[2] While the playwright's intent was to show the monstrous callousness of the Establishment, the line bothered some American audience members because they had come to resent any reminder that discrimination exists.

Wesker inserted a Jewish character into the plot of Chips with Everything. One of the nine recruits whose car-

eers are traced throughout the course of the play is Dodger Cohen. One would expect to find a Jewish character in this work, since Wesker himself is Jewish. Dodger, as described in the stage directions, is one of the shortest men in the company. One of his functions is to add a bit of comic relief to tense situations in the play. For example, after the main character in the play is approached by an officer and a homosexual relationship is hinted at, Andrew, the young man, reports this incident and his apprehensions about it to his company. After the dialogue reaches a dramatic peak, Wesker inserts a bit of comedy by giving Dodger the following digression:

> You know, I've been looking at this hut, sizing it up. Make a good warehouse... Warehouse. It's my mania. My family owns a pram shop, see, and our one big problem is storage. Prams take up room, you know. Always on the lookout for storage space. Every place I look at I work out the cubic feet, and I say it will make a good warehouse or it won't. Can't help myself. One of the best warehouses I ever see was the Vatican in Rome. What you laughing at? You take a carpenter--what does he do when he enters a room, eh? Ever thought about that? He feels how the door swings open, looks straight across to the window to see if the frame is sitting straight and then sits in the chair to see if it's made good--then he can settle down to enjoy the evening. With me, it's pregnant women. Every time I see pregnant women... Can't help it--warehouses and pregnant women.[3]

The scene returns to a serious note, but before it ends, Wesker gives Dodger another bit of humorous business. At a later point in the play Wesker again chooses to insert an incident in which we are made aware of Dodger's Jewish ancestry. He distributes some candy which he has received from his uncle's sweet shop. As he distributes the candy, one of

the other men jokes that he enjoys these "Cadbury kosher snacks." Dodger's role in the second act is minimal. It should be noted that during the controversial drill scene in which the remark about Jews and gas chambers is found, the author does not have any of the men react to the slur.

Arthur Miller, absent from the Broadway scene for nine years, made an appearance this year with what he felt would be known as his greatest work, After the Fall. It is the feeling of some critics that this work is autobiographical. If this is the case, perhaps the work falls within the scope of this study, Miller being Jewish. If this is the case, then one must note the domineering nature of the central character's mother. Much like the other mother figures noted thus far, Quentin's mother is over-protective toward her children, yet nowhere in the play is there any definite statement that she is Jewish. The same must be said about Quentin. While there is a scene in which he visits a concentration camp, he does not identify as a Jew. After the Fall is thus noted in passing, and will not be studied at any length in this work.

The Deputy, by Rolf Hochhuth, was not a financial success on Broadway, but it did run for 316 performances. This controversial work investigated the guilt attached to sending Jews to the gas chambers and, more importantly, placed that guilt on Pope Pius XII. The fact that the theatre was picketed by American fascist organizations in Nazi storm-trooper uniforms and vehemently attacked by some American Roman Catholics, only served to increase everyone's determination

to see the show. Where portraying the Jewish victims of Nazi Germany on the stage is concerned, the play does so in a limited way. The Broadway version of The Deputy is a condensation of Hochhuth's five-act work. Several changes were made in the New York production, which was adapted by Jerome Rothenberg. The Broadway version attempted to arouse much more sympathy for the Jews. For example, it opened with a prologue at Auschwitz in which we see a mother comforting her child as they are herded into a line headed for the gas chamber. The first scene of the play, set in the Papal Nuncio's chambers in Berlin, is augmented by the inclusion of vivid details of the extermination of Jews reported by Gerstein, an S.S. officer. A scene in Gerstein's apartment, where he is hiding Jacobson, a Jew, is drawn differently in the New York production. The Broadway version presents Jacobson as a Jew whose navel is raw from fleas and whose incarceration has turned him into a bitter maniac who curses all Germans, including Gerstein who is trying to save him. Jacobson seems not the least bit grateful to Gerstein, and even after the young priest Ricardo, the central character in the play, has traded him his passport for the star of David, Jacobson taunts the priest, who may now learn what it is like to be a criminal and a Jew in Hitler's Germany. From the end of this scene on, Gerstein and Jacobson drop out of the Broadway version and the focus is placed on Ricardo, whose attempts to influence the vatican to take a more positive action about the exterminations are represen-

ted somewhat more angrily and resolutely than they were in the original script. The Broadway version of the play included a scene at the office of the Father-General in Rome, where Ricardo brings a Jewish family to this office to hide. The original script calls for Ricardo to bring Gerstein to this office, yet more sympathy could be elicited in displaying an entire family. Hewes notes that in a scene in Gestapo headquarters the character of the officer is portrayed somewhat more maliciously inhuman and anti-Semitic than in the original. In the most important confrontation scene between Ricardo and the Pope, the Broadway play made Ricardo's challenges to the Pope more vehement. The Broadway version of The Deputy ends with Ricardo going voluntarily to join those sent to the gas chamber and with the doctor in the concentration camp continuing his polite inhuman procedure of separating the deportees into those who will be put to slave labor and those who will be immediately gassed.[4]

In the case of What Makes Sammy Run? which ran for 540 performances on Broadway, nothing specific in the dialogue of the show alludes to the fact that any character is Jewish. However, this Budd and Stuart Schulberg adaptation of Budd Schulberg's highly successful story of Sammy Glick, a ruthless heel who rose to the top of the motion-picture industry, suggested by the names of the characters that the play is, in fact, Jewish. Coupled with the fact that Jews have dominated the motion-picture business, it was not difficult to come to the conclusion that What Makes Sammy Run? was a

Jewish show. While the show omits the first section of the novel, which told of Sammy's early life on the East Side of New York, the musical traced Sammy's rise to power from copy boy on a New York newspaper to chief of a large motion-picture studio. On the way up, Sammy crushes his opponents, steals ideas, betrays friends, and drives one of his benefactors to suicide. He by-passes an attractive writer, with the very Christian name of Kit Sargent, who has fallen in love with him, to marry the daughter of a prominent banker with the equally Christian name of Laurette Harrington, only to discover at the final curtain that Laurette has outstripped even him in ruthlessness and immorality. One of the climactic scenes in this musical occurs when Seymour, Sammy's brother, breaks in on one of Sammy's parties and begs him to come home on his father's yahrtzeit. Sammy refuses and Seymour slaps him in the face. It was not the story of What Makes Sammy Run? which contributed to the play's lengthy, albeit financially unsuccessful run, but rather the appearance of Steve Lawrence in the title role.

Funny Girl was based on the life of Fanny Brice, and traced her career from her girlhood on the lower East Side of New York to her appearance in the Ziegfeld Follies. The show, which ran for 1348 performances, glorified the talented Jewish performer in much the same way as Ziegfeld glorified the American girl. There are a number of lines about Fanny's "nose of deviation." The character of her mother, played in the original production by Kay Medford, who played

the Jewish mother in Bye Bye Birdie, falls into the stereotype of the over-protective mother. Fanny's actions, and lines, bear a marked Jewish quality. In the comic seduction scene between Fanny and Nicky Arnstein, Fanny asks to the delight of the audience, "Would a convent take a Jewish girl?" In the opening song of the second act, Fanny pictures herself as "Sadie, Sadie, married lady," who, when her husband comes home from work, greets him with "Oy, what a day I had today!" Perhaps the most Jewish number in the show is "Rat-a-tat-tat," a number for the Ziegfeld Follies, in which Fanny portrays "Private Schwartz from Rockaway," who is "true and true mit vite and bluish," and who talks "dis vay" because she's "British!" The show abounds with lines of particular interest and delight to the Jewish theatregoer.[5]

NOTES

[1]The Best Plays of 1963-1964: The Burns Mantle Yearbook, ed. Henry Hewes (New York - Toronto, 1964), p. 3.

[2]Ibid., p. 12.

[3]Arnold Wesker, Chips with Everything in Theatre Arts, October, 1963, p. 42.

[4]Hewes, pp. 249-250.

[5]Cf. Gerald M. Kane, "Phoney Fanny," in variant, Vol. VIII (Winter, 1969), pp. 34-37.

## X. FIDDLER ON THE ROOF

"Musicals come and go--often with an alarming frequency--but Fiddler on the Roof seems to play on forever." So wrote Clive Barnes, drama critic for the New York Times in a recent re-appraisal of the show.[1] Although Fiddler arrived on the Broadway scene on September 23, 1964, at the beginning of the 1964-65 season, it sets the terminus ad quem of this study, for in this show we find stated clearly and beautifully all of the Jewish ideas and values which were present in a more or less imperfect state from 1955.

Fiddler on the Roof certainly did not resemble a typical Broadway musical. There was no handsome hero or beautiful heroine, and the costumes, while authentic, were not spectacular. The story was amusing but ended almost tragically, with only the slightest hope that the characters exiled from their homeland would find a more peaceful existence in a foreign land. Joseph Stein based his book on Sholom Aleichem's stories about a milkman named Tevye in the Jewish peasant community of Anatevka in Russia in 1905.

These stories had been turned into an Off-Broadway production a number of years previous to Stein's work. In fact, Tevye and His Daughters was performed on nationwide television. Stein, however, did not simply readapt that play or the original stories to a musical form, although he did

include some of the important episodes and, of course, certain of the main characters. Instead, he created a fresh story that dealt with the gradual breakdown of traditions, partially illustrated through the marriages of three of Tevye's five daughters. Laufe notes that Stein did not use the original Yiddish dialogue created by Sholom Aleichem because some of it sounded too melodramatic in translation, and some of it, such as Tevye's habit of misquoting the Scriptures, meant little to people who did not know the original passages.[2] Stein did keep to the original idea, however, by inventing misquotations that had the same effect. Stein added a new dimension to Tevye's personality--a dimension not even suggested in Sholom Aleichem's conception of the dairyman. As described in The Old Country, Tevye is a mild man, oftentimes not very clever. Stein changed the characterization to give Tevye wit, leadership, and forcefulness. He also added new characters and included specific references to the oppression and violence done to the Jews which had not been emphasized so strongly in the original stories. Throughout his adaptation Stein maintained the colorful spirit of the Yiddish stories, and succeeded in paraphrasing the almost untranslatable Yiddish idioms into colloquial English. Laufe observes that many people who had read Sholom Aleichem found it difficult to determine where Aleichem's contributions ended and where Mr. Stein's new material began.[3]

The story, as Stein fashioned it, dealt with life in the village of Anatevka and with the traditions of its people. The play opened without an overture, another peculiarity for

Broadway audiences, to reveal a fiddler seated precariously on a roof, playing his music even though he was in danger of falling off and getting hurt. Tevye enters and explains to the audience that the Jews in Anatevka are similar to the fiddler; they also live precariously. In the first number, "Tradition," Tevye introduces the townspeople, including his family, Yente the matchmaker, the beggar, the rabbi, and the Russian constable. Most of the ensuing action develops the story of Tevye, his wife Golde, and his five daughters. Yente has arranged a wedding between Tevye's oldest daughter Tzeitel, and Lazar Wolf, the butcher, a widower old enough to be her father. Tzeitel pleads with Tevye not to force her to go through with the wedding. Although bound by tradition to honor his agreement, Tevye agrees to let Tzeitel marry the man she loves, Motel the tailor. Knowing that he will have trouble persuading Golde to agree to the change in grooms, Tevye pretends to have a dream in which Golde's grandmother appears and sanctions the marriage between Tzeitel and Motel. In addition, Tevye claims that in this dream Fruma-Sarah, Lazar Wolf's first wife, came to him and threatened harm to Tzeitel if she were to marry the butcher.

The second daughter Hodel also defies tradition by telling her father she intends to marry Perchik, the young radical whom Tevye took on as a tutor for his children. She asks for Tevye's blessing rather than his permission. Chava, the third daughter, marries a Russian soldier, a gentile. Although Tzeitel's marriage and Hodel's romance were not what Tevye and Golde had planned for their daughters, they had

accepted Motel as a son-in-law and hoped that Hodel would be happy married to Perchik when she joined him in Siberia. Chava, however, has married outside the faith. In keeping with tradition, Tevye cuts her off from the family as though she were dead.

The Czar orders that all Jews must evacuate their homes in Anatevka. The villagers pack their belongings. When Chava returns to bid her parents farewell, Golde wants to embrace her but knows she cannot defy tradition or Tevye, who has deliberately turned his back on his daughter and refused to speak to her. Yet when Tzeitel bids her sister farewell, Tevye prompts her to say, "God be with you." Golde's inability to caress her daughter, and Tevye's refusal to acknowledge the child he loved, had far greater emotional impact through underplaying, and the use of almost no dialogue than it might have had if it had been played more theatrically.

In the final moment of the play Tevye, Golde, and their two youngest daughters set out for America, hoping that Tzeitel and Motel will eventually join them. The unhappy ending was not a surprise to people who knew the stories of Sholom Aleichem. The sadness of the ending was sweetened somewhat by Stein, who has Tevye take the fiddler,whom we saw as the curtain rose on the first act, with him to America. Thus the traditions, the high ethical values, and the bitter-sweet experiences of the Jewish community of Anatevka were transported to the shores of this land where, in fact, they now appear on the Broadway stage in Fiddler on the Roof.

Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick maintained and enhanced the delightful flavor of Stein's book by the creation of songs which maintained the Jewish mood of the show. For example, several of the songs, particularly "If I Were a Rich Man," had a decided Chassidic touch, with Tevye embellishing the melody with cantorial flourishes that were musical sounds rather than lyrics. Keeping with the theme of the young breaking the traditions of the old, Bock and Harnick inserted a number of songs with a familiar Broadway ring to them--songs without any uniquely Jewish flavor in them, such as "Matchmaker, Matchmaker," "Miracle of Miracles," and "Now I Have Everything." Laufe notes that these songs may have been inserted to please theatregoers who might not have liked the show so well if the entire score had represented only traditional music.[4]

While Fiddler on the Roof gave Jewish audiences a great deal with which to identify, the show would not have been as successful if this was all that it aimed to do. Clearly the authors of this work attempted to arouse universal appeal for Tevye and his family. While certain customs and ceremonies unique to Judaism were portrayed on the stage, the authors always allowed for an explanation of what was going on. This was done in both the Sabbath and wedding scenes. At the beginning of the play Stein and Harnick have Tevye explain some of the traditional costumes and customs. The creation of Tevye is such that the gentile members of the audience could empathize with his character even in the scene in which he cuts off his daughter for marrying out of the faith.

Stein's adaptation clearly emphasized the universality of the plot. Laufe notes that a man from Dublin, after seeing the show in New York, said that the theme of Fiddler on the Roof was not merely Russian-Jewish in application, for the story of a poor but hard-working father trying to earn a living for his family and to uphold the traditions of his faith could just as well have taken place in Ireland.[5]

Fiddler on the Roof has enjoyed success all over this country, and all over the world wherever it has played. Audiences return to see the show over and over. Plans are being made to turn Fiddler on the Roof into a feature motion picture. Indeed, this masterpiece of American musical theatre has done a great deal in transmitting to audiences all over the world the high values of Judaism and, by its mere appearance, the high place to which Jews have come in our society today.

NOTES

[1]New York Times, February 28, 1970, p. 20.

[2]Abe Laufe, Broadway's Greatest Musicals (New York, 1969), p. 344.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., p. 337.

[5]Ibid., p. 340.

## CONCLUSION

Having completed this study, there are no simple conclusions to be drawn with respect to the development of the image of the Jew as it appeared on the Broadway stage from October 5, 1955 to September 23, 1964, between the openings of The Diary of Anne Frank and Fiddler on the Roof. Jews were portrayed; plays of Jewish content and interest were presented on Broadway; however, the fidelity of the portrayals and the influence, if any, which these portrayals had on the American cultural scene are points about which one can simply hypothesize.

After this examination one still has difficulty determining precisely which elements must be considered in stating that a play is "Jewish" or that any character in a play is Jewish. With works such as The Diary of Anne Frank, The Tenth Man, The Wall, and Fiddler on the Roof there is no problem. Each of these plays deals with characters who by their names, actions, own identification, and by the recognition by non-Jewish characters in the play are Jewish. The situations in which these characters are placed, and the complications arising in the plots are a result, to a great extent, of their Jewishness.

Difficulties arise when presented with works such as A Hole in the Head, Two for the Seesaw, and Bye Bye Birdie, in

which there are enough allusions to suggest the Jewishness of certain characters in the play; except for perhaps a casual reference, the Jewishness of the characters played little importance, if any, to the plots.

A further question which presented itself in this study is whether a playwright, in fact, need make an explicit statement as to the Jewishness of any character. Can a person's behavior alone determine his Jewishness? For example, can a mother's over-concern and over-protection for her child, as seen in Bye Bye Birdie and Come Blow Your Horn, serve to identify Mae and Mrs. Baker as Jewish mothers? It is difficult to conclude whether or not this is indeed the case. I feel that the identification relies to a great extent on the total context in which the characters are placed. That is to say, the manner in which the lines are delivered and the ways in which the "Jewish" characters are received by other characters in the play determines the audience's conception of the Jewishness of these characters, and in some cases the Jewishness of the play.

Does the playwright have an ulterior motive when characters who might be identified as Jews are inserted in the context of what would otherwise be a non-Jewish play? The answer to this question must be made in the affirmative. Plays are written in the hope that they will be performed and well-received by an audience. Up to the first part of the sixties, before the advent of Off-Broadway, a great many American playwrights wrote in hope that they would be received by a particular audience, namely those who patronized the Great White Way--the New York City audience.

It is an expensive thing to produce a play on Broadway. Producers are, in a sense, gamblers; they take great risks in financing shows which they hope will please the critics and attract large audiences. In New York City, a large percentage of the audience is Jewish. William Goldman has noted that Jews account in his conservative estimate for fifty per cent of the attendance on Broadway.[1] Each season, as we have seen, certain playwrights and producers make earnest attempts to appeal to that sizable Jewish element of the New York theatre-going public through the creation and production of plays in which Jews are portrayed and Jewish situations are presented. The Jewish members of the audience are thus given an opportunity either to sympathize with the action taking place on the stage or, in certain instances, noticeably in comedies, to identify strongly with the characters on the stage.

In the period of time under investigation, each Broadway season had its share of plays in which Jewish characters were portrayed and Jewish situations presented. In a season averaging fifty productions an average of four were produced which dealt with Jews in one way or another. While it cannot be said that there was a noticeable growth in the number of plays in which Jews were central, it is possible to observe a slight increase in the number of plays in which Jews played supporting roles ancillary to the plot.

Playwrights and producers seem to have become more sensitive to the fact that Jews comprise a sizable percentage of the New York Broadway audience. Yet, as seen from the failure of such plays as A Family Affair and I Can Get It for You

Wholesale, a show must offer more than Jewish ethnocentricity if it is to succeed on Broadway.

Are there any patterns apparent from the Jewish plays which were produced during this period? There appear to be none. Playwrights sought to present works in which Jews were present in every walk of life. Jews were portrayed at work and at play; in Jewish and Gentile environments--that is, as insiders and outsiders; as heroes and villains; in this country and abroad; in the past and in the present. The bitter, the sweet, and the bitter-sweet were all presented on the Great White Way with varying success. Apparently the comic and/or flattering, and/or sentimental Jewish portraits were the only ones which attracted large numbers of Jewish theatregoers. With rare exceptions such as The Diary of Anne Frank[2] and The Tenth Man, which themselves contain comic elements, serious dramatic presentations failed. The Wall and The Cold Wind and the Warm are examples of such failures.

The American-Jewish play presented on the Broadway stage during this period of time served as a metaphor for American Jewish life only in that it reflected honestly the very great extent to which Jews were a part of the American cultural scene in particular and the over-all American scene in general. The Broadway audience grew to accept and approve of certain stereotyped characters who might be interpreted as Jews, so long as they were not too offensive. In the same way as it is difficult, if not impossible, to define "Jewishness" from checking houses on any one street, so too one must conclude that it is impossible to arrive at such a definition from an

analysis of a representative body of plays. It would be wrong to conclude that the successful Jewish plays contained accurate and/or correct images of Jews. The most one can say is that as far as a character's Jewishness, or a play's Jewish content is concerned, so long as it was palatable without being offensive, it contributed to the play's success. A play had to have more than just Jewishness, however, if it was to succeed on Broadway.

NOTES

[1]William Goldman, The Season: A Candid Look at Broadway (New York, 1969), p. 149.

[2]Meyer Levin's adaptation of The Diary of Anne Frank was considered to be too serious for presentation on Broadway. The producers opted for the Goodrich and Hackett version of the play which contained some comic elements. The Fanatic is Levin's fictionalized account of his own struggle to have his adaptation produced, though he writes a rather lengthy disclaimer as a prelude to the novel itself. Documentary material is available in the Nearprint file on Meyer Levin in the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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