

THE SATIRE OF JULES FEIFFER: CHANGING  
FORM AND IDEOLOGY

by

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A Thesis Submitted To  
The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.  
In Partial Fulfilment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts of English

McGill University

March 1975

## ABSTRACT

Jules Feiffer's satire is both personal and social. In an extraordinary collection of cartoon anthologies and plays that range from 1959 to 1970 the transformation from what can be called "emotional" content to political content can be ascertained. At first, primarily concerned with Freudian inspired relationships, Feiffer then moves into an area of anti-Americanism that represents a shift in his satirical ideology as well as a divergence in his form from cartoon to play.

Significantly, one can see a variety of influences on Feiffer's satire, which makes for a tremendous wealth of theoretical approaches to his art. Among them in this thesis are historical, behavioural, psychoanalytical and literary theories, all of which lead to a definitive and evaluative assessment of Jules Feiffer as a satirist.

## SOMMAIRE

La satire de Jules Feiffer est à la fois personnelle et sociale. En étudiant sa collection extraordinaire d'anthologies de dessins satiriques et de pièces de théâtre, allant de 1959 à 1970, nous nous rendons compte de l'évolution de ce que nous pouvons appeler contenu "émotif" au contenu politique. Feiffer s'intéressa tout d'abord aux types de relations d'inspiration freudienne, puis se dirigea vers un secteur anti-américain, qui représente autant un changement de son idéologie satirique qu'une divergence de forme allant du dessin satirique à la pièce de théâtre.

Nous pouvons percevoir d'une manière fort significative de nombreuses influences dans l'évolution de la satire de Feiffer qui permettent une très grande richesse d'approches théoriques menant à son art. Dans cette thèse nous analyserons certaines de ces approches, à savoir les théories historiques, du comportement, psychoanalytiques et littéraires qui mènent toutes à une estimation définitive et évaluable du satiriste Jules Feiffer.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank my adviser Dr. Marianne Stenbeck Lafon for her continuing positive reinforcement, and for her insight into formulating the focus of this thesis. Thanks are also due Dr. Stenbeck for allowing me the freedom of exploring an artist who is virtually untouched critically and categorically and for trusting my categorical conclusions.

Special thanks are due Dr. Peter Ohlin, chairman of the English Department, for several critical discussions on the subject of the visual aspect of satire in Feiffer's cartoons.

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## INTRODUCTION

### "Satire"

Satire, like irony, is one of the continually discussed literary genres that keeps scholars and critics as protean as they are. It is a genre, or at least a literary device or element, that is broached from every conceivable literary angle making it rich, if not uncomplicated, in definition and broad in its application. As Robert Elliott in The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art states: "We shy from using the category 'a satire' today at least when we are trying to speak precisely, because the term has lost for us any sense of formal specification."<sup>1</sup> To call Jules Feiffer a satirist, then, is not to pigeonhole him formally by any means; on the contrary, it is to allow for an eclectic schema by which the artistic forms of cartooning and playwrighting can be examined.

It would be helpful first, however, to make some qualitative and definitive conclusions about satire that are universally agreed upon before isolating the unique definition of satire employed by Feiffer.

Elliott traces the inception of the satiric form

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<sup>1</sup> Robert C. Elliott, The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 185.

in Greek, Irish and Arab peoples as an actual curse cast in the form of a diatribe on one's enemy. The sheer power of words, very much like the power of witchcraft, was expected to enforce change. Consistent with this ancient aspect of satire, is one of the concerns of satire that persist through all literary history: "There is one general quality which, although it has been given various names, seems most readily and widely recognized. This is the quality which we shall describe as 'attack'."<sup>2</sup>

Admittedly, "attack" is one of the essential elements of satire, but this is not sufficient for deciding if a work is satire. Immediately springing to mind are the muck-racking novels of the early Twenties in American literature and the social realist plays of the Thirties in America called 'agit-prop' plays, (agitation-propaganda). By and large, both these literary modes made it clear that something, usually government or social injustice, was under "attack". The "attack" of satire and social realism are both intended to make the reader aware of social evils and to elicit change within the social structure. By examining method, the purpose of attack in satire is made distinguishable from the purpose of attack in social realism or any other literary

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<sup>2</sup>Edward Rosenheim, "The Satiric Spectrum," in Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. R. Paulson (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1971), p. 306.

or dramatic mode.

The method of "attack" in satire is to employ a humour that is ironic in structure and is at once recognizable by the reader. Irony is the element of satire that allows the many levels of satire to be created and interpreted. Irony is the most complex, albeit clearly and cautiously defined, tool of the satirist. There is a stipulation, however; the irony must be comic in order to be satire. As Northrop Frye states: "Satire is irony which is structurally close to the comic. The comic struggle of two societies, one normal and the other absurd, is reflected in its double focus of morality and fantasy."<sup>3</sup> Unique and compulsory to satire, ironic humour is built on a logical structure that substitutes falsehood for truth; however, the audience must be tacitly in "cahoots" with the satirist and recognize this as the form of humour. "In order to denigrate his object, the satirist concerns himself with falsehood rather than truth, a concern that distinguishes the satiric presentation . . . this paradox of literal truth as the basis of the poet's falsehood is a sine qua non of satire."<sup>4</sup> In other words, the satirist lies methodically

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<sup>3</sup> Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 224.

<sup>4</sup> W. O. S. Sutherland, The Art of the Satirist (AUSTIN) (Humanities Research Center, 1965), p. 12.

for effect, not pathologically. It is ostensibly pathological to eat babies to solve a famine in Ireland, but once the reader understands the irony of the humour, which oftentimes requires a subtle sophistication on the part of the audience, the nature of satire is understood.

Attack, object of attack and methods of attack are three confirmed elements of a satire. The artist's motivation for attack is something else and is subject to a wide variety of opinions. The chief end of attack is to denigrate the values the satirist is examining, but why the satirist chooses to do this is a field of study that has lent itself to psychological and behavioural as well as literary theories. It becomes increasingly interesting to understand the motivation of the satirist when one realizes the shift from the social content of satire in the eighteenth century to the personal content of the type of satire that Jules Feiffer writes. Ronald Knox in an essay called "On Humor and Satire" in Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism touches a fringe of motivation when he connects the use of humour with an expression of the half-angel half-beast in man: "In all humor there is a loss of dignity. Somewhere virtue has gone out of somebody. For there is no inherent humor in things; wherever there is a joke it is man, the half-angel half-beast, who is somehow at the bottom of it." The half-angel

half-beast quality of man that Knox refers to as the human source of humour taps the inherent paradox of the satirist. Half-humanitarian, half-misanthrope; half-presumptuous, half-petrified; half-dog-catcher, half-dog seem to be the characteristics of the satirist's nature. As satire is a half-way sort of diatribe, a built-in protection provided by its humour, the satirist appears to be the artist whose personality has captured the interest of theoreticians who study the motivation of humour.

The subjective themes of Feiffer's cartoons make the "formal specification" of modern satire that Elliott speaks of conceivable today only in the broadest sense of definition: satire is an attack with a clearly established object of the attack, understood by both the satirist and audience and the method of attack is highly rhetorical and formulaic in its use of literary tropes such as irony and parody. To "speak precisely" of satire today is conceivable also, but in a very special context: "In trying to define the terms and to explain the special literary experience that satire gives, it may be best to abandon the traditional methods of literary classification and instead to consider the satirist's attitude to life and the special strategies by which he communicates this attitude in literary form."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Matthew Hodgart, Satire (Toronto: World University Library, 1969), p. 13.

Hence, in this thesis Jules Feiffer, cartoonist and playwright, is examined as a satirist with special attention directed toward his "attitude to life." Freudian psychological theory, behavioural theory and literary theory are used to root out the unique, personal motivation of Jules Feiffer as a satirist. This is done by close examination of the themes in Feiffer's cartoons from 1959 to 1966 (approximately 300 cartoons). The themes in Feiffer's plays are then examined to show the divergent nature of Feiffer as a satirist; that is, his ideology tends to shift from emotional to political concerns as he moves into playwriting.

Feiffer's form can be traced as a steady mixture of elements, wherein the form of the cartoon and the play can be seen as interchangeable. Essentially, Feiffer was writing play-cartoons and cartoon-plays.

Given that personal motivation of satire is the optimum rationale for this thesis, Feiffer's own definition of satire in literary and social context will be used.

#### Feiffer's Satire

The personal attitude to life that affects Feiffer's satire in his cartoons and plays must be made distinct from the formal properties of Feiffer's satire. To distinguish the formal properties of satire from the emotional motivations of satire is to separate the craft from the content. It is

perfectly realistic to set up a Freudian model of motivation to decipher the content and to set up a rhetorical model of formal properties to decipher the craft in the case of Jules Feiffer's satire.

There is an incredibly close connection between what Feiffer says in interviews and what appears in his cartoons and his plays.<sup>6</sup> The basic issues he deals with in art form are the same issues that preoccupy him. He is profoundly and intelligently, one might say prophetically, aware of the American political scene. He is concerned with sexual attitudes to a great degree. And, he is always trying to assess the nature and importance of his satire.

Feiffer's definition of satire is consistent with his employment of it as a socially minded political satirist. When he was what will be called a Freudian satirist, most evident in his cartoons, his work falls slightly short of his definitions.

"Satire is creating a logical argument that, followed to its end, is absurd. All humor is basically about one kind of outrage against logic, but satire concerns itself with logically extending a premise to its totally insane conclusion, thus forcing onto an audience certain unwelcome awareness. If it's going to be true satire, it has to be subversive to the system it's operating within. It can't

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<sup>6</sup> A personal interview with Feiffer in June of 1974 revealed the first biographical link between the man and his art, which inspired the focus of this thesis.

be what used to be called satire a few years ago, which was jokes on suburbia and crab grass and commuters."

In the plays logical argument stretched to insane and absurd conclusions is strictly adhered to. The degeneration in plot or dissimulation of character is created by starting with apparently conventional stage comedies and transforming them into the absurdity of farce. In Little Murders, a traditional boy-meets-girl, girl-brings-boy-home-for approval theme, the plot is transformed into murder and then the commercial enterprise of selling photographs of the victim. In God Bless, an interview with a famous statesman by a Catholic priest turns into a roundtable discussion with the President of the United States as to which American cities will be bombed by the radical insurrectionists who have just abolished the Constitution and toppled the Washington Monument. In The White House Murder Case, an emergency presidential meeting with cabinet officials over the pressing issue of a military disaster in Brazil (the wind changed direction after the American Army released nerve gas on its enemy) turns into the mysterious murder of the President's wife by one of the cabinet officials. This changes the subject from how to cover-up the military mistake to how to cover-up the domestic murder.

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<sup>7</sup> Larry Dubois, "Playboy Interview: Jules Feiffer," Playboy Magazine, Sept. 1971, pp. 81-86, 206-207. / Hereinafter quotes from the Playboy article will be footnoted immediately following the quote by: (pb., p. 7)

Rhetorically speaking, the plays readily fit Feiffer's definition of satire. In an article on Feiffer in Up Against The Fourth Wall: Essays on Modern Drama John Lahr says of Feiffer's satire:

"Feiffer makes his point with words, logic that spirals smoothly until, without knowing why, the audience confronts something menacing and true . . . by turning the conventional stage environment into a surreal geography, Feiffer consciously betrays the lie of bourgeois naturalism . . . he can develop philosophical positions as logical and febrile as Swift's Aeolists, who disdaining matter, walk with their eyes shut bouncing into objects whose existence they deny."<sup>8</sup>

The plays are overwhelmingly political in content and the intention to make the American political structure look insane and inept is done with unsurpassable rhetorical precision and comical vehemence. In the cartoons, however, "logically extending a premise to its totally insane conclusion" is not as easily discernible as it is in the plays. The cartoons can be examined through a logical structure, but the idea of extending logic beyond logic into "insane conclusion" was something Feiffer discovered as he became more interested in playwriting: "Satire is the discovery of relationships in society, it's always society you're looking at," Feiffer said to John Lahr in Transatlantic

<sup>8</sup> John Lahr, "Satire as Subversion," in Up Against The Fourth Wall: Essays on Modern Drama (New York: Grove Press, 1968), p. 82.

Review, Winter 1969. Such a statement is better suited to the cartoons because of the subtle, gradual and poignant development of the logic of peoples' psychology in contrast to the crude psychology of institutions that is presented in the plays.

The formal characteristics of the satire in the cartoons are twofold: rhetorical and visual. The visual aspect of the cartoons create the tone much in the same way gesture creates character in drama. This is the first link in the chain that allows one to examine the cartoons as plays and later to examine the plays as cartoons. The visual aspect of the cartoons concentrates on facial expressions and body stature. The emphasis on the "look" of the character in the cartoon is indistinguishable from a "look" on an actor's face. The sympathy-evoking prowess of Feiffer's pen captures an utterly human aspect comparable to the dramatic effect of characterization through gesture on the stage. "His drawings admirably serve his literary, sardonic, and humanitarian purposes . . . his drawings work quietly with his captions so unobtrusively in most cases that one is scarcely aware of them."<sup>9</sup> Like a good actor, the expressions are there naturally.

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<sup>9</sup> Russell Lynes, "Jules Feiffer's Wicked Eye and Ear," Horizon Magazine, November 1961, pp. 48, 57.

The cartoons range from six to twelve frames; their average is eight or nine frames. The drawings tend to be outlined and expression is suggested "sketchily" rather than by detailed line. The facial expression is extremely important in tracing the development of the psychic growth or disintegration of the characters. There is rarely extraneous environment or paraphenalia; sometimes two characters sit at a table or on a couch, but the primary emphasis is on the individual, his body posture and facial expression. The animation tends to be static rather than kinetic which focuses the reader's attention on the reading material instead of the pictorial element in the cartoons. Of course the visual element of the cartoons cannot be ignored, but the modern reader tends to overlook the significant meaning of the visual element. This, by comparison with the plasticity of drama, is the major difference between the cartoons and plays. "He is not a gag cartoonist whose drawings are intended to explain a caption . . . his drawings help to establish and maintain the mood he wants and they make it possible for him to express place and time and character without having to define them further."<sup>10</sup>

The wordless frame, often preceding the last frame, is the turning point of the "theme" in the cartoon. When

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<sup>10</sup> Lynes, "Jules Feiffer's Wicked Eye and Ear," p. 48.

Feiffer does extend his logic into insanity, or perhaps better called the "unexpected" in the cartoons, the wordless frame serves as a preparatory frame for the "punch-line" or "double take" (see the first cartoon included in text).

Bold type is used for words Feiffer intends to emphasize tonally making the "script" in the ~~cartoons~~ highly theatrical.<sup>11</sup> When the visual aspect of the word moderates the sentiment there is a joining of the rhetorical and the visual elements of the satire. "Feiffer is a cartoonist by profession and a writer by temperament, and talent . . . it is said that he draws easily and writes painstakingly; in other words he puts the effort where it is worth it."<sup>12</sup> Kenneth Tynan in an introduction to Sick, Sick, Sick, Feiffer's first cartoon anthology, said Feiffer was one of the best cartoonists now writing.<sup>13</sup>

The special effect of a Feiffer cartoon is that it is short, entertaining and complete:

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<sup>11</sup> Note the excessive use of bold type in the cartoons representing the female castrator. The visual aspect of word becomes an indication of strength or force in the character. The reader also can assume the words are spoken at a deafening volume, making the visual experience also an auditory one. When Feiffer creates visual inflection he combines artistic form with the dramatic form.

<sup>12</sup> Lynes, p. 57.

<sup>13</sup> Jules Feiffer, Feiffer's Album (New York: Random House, 1963), inside jacket flap.

"The effect of Feiffer's strips with their ten or a dozen drawings on a page or a single spread, is at its best that of the short story. He does not deal in anecdote, as so many cartoon strips do; he deals in vignettes or segments of life; suggesting with the economy of the short story writer what has come before and must inevitably come after."<sup>14</sup>

Essentially, the art of total vision in the cartoons is the precursor to Feiffer's playwriting career. As it turned out, presenting a vignette of life in the cartoons was the mark of recognizable genius in Feiffer's visual art yet according to most critics this was the shortcoming of his dramatic talent. Irony, parody and paradox work in the cartoons to create satire by presenting the mental processes of man, not as insane or absurd, but as universal modes of behaviour that the audience identifies with. One major difference between the cartoons and plays is the personal and sympathetic response evoked by the cartoon compared with the objective response of condemnation in the plays.

Feiffer's definition of satire includes subversion as a necessary attitude. In the Lahr interview in Transatlantic, Feiffer said:

"Satire basically has to be antagonistic to the system within which it operates. Otherwise it has nothing to satirize. I don't think of Noel Coward as satire, they're pastiches, parodies. I don't mean that pejoratively. It's just that they don't fit into the basic meaning of

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<sup>14</sup> Lynes, p. 57.

satire which is more subversive . . . this subversion is simply a by-product of one's art."<sup>15</sup>

Here too, subversion is reserved for the political plays when Feiffer expresses anti-American attitudes; but the cartoons primarily indulge in sentimental, albeit antagonistic, themes.

Subversion for Feiffer is the art of audacity and is modeled after his esteem for Lenny Bruce.

"I guess Lenny Bruce came closest to what I'm doing, although I want to do it theatrically. Bruce would create little situations. There would be marvels of discovery. The audience would just hold its breath and laugh in a way which indicated that they were giving themselves away. That it had hit hard. It was marvelous to be there and be hit yourself. To have the air clarified. Lenny would say something that no-one had ever said and suddenly the ghosts were laid and there was nothing to be afraid of. At least at the moment. It was a marvelous feeling."<sup>16</sup>

Lenny Bruce was more brutal than Feiffer has been to date, but the effect of "hitting hard with marvels of discovery" that have already been known to some part of the consciousness is the sort of antagonism towards or subversion to the system which both Feiffer and Bruce were after, be it the psychological or social system.

The plays are successful at subversion and are clear

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<sup>15</sup> John Lahr, "Interview with Jules Feiffer," Transatlantic Review, 32, Winter 1969, p. 44.

<sup>16</sup> Lahr, Interview, p. 47.

attacks against the American social and political system. The cartoons that have political themes are also subversive and blatantly at that (see blanket statement cartoons, pp. 172-174, Appendix 4). When the cartoons that satirize the sentimental relationships in society are subversive, it is because Feiffer dares make private neurosis a public phenomenon. This need to expose and exploit the private concerns of the individual is the source for discussing the personal motivation of Feiffer as a satirist.

There is an introduction in Feiffer's Album (1963) in the form of a dialogue which adds significantly to a working knowledge of Feiffer's definition of satire. The dialogue is also an important touchstone in the transition of Feiffer's form from cartooning to playwriting. When Feiffer writes a dialogue there is a movement away from the visual support of his cartoons and a movement towards the development of the play form. The dialogue on satire supplies both a formal definition of and an attitude about satire which are two essential elements for understanding the mode and motivation of the satirist.

The dialogue takes place on a stage on which spot-lights come up on five satirists who are seated on stools (except for the right wing satirist who has to be prepared for quick getaways.) The second satirist serves as an

instigator and provokes the others to define their art.

The first satirist is a Liberal, the third is a Conservative, the fourth is a Jew and the fifth is a Black. Nowhere, in any of Feiffer's cartoons or plays, has he so clearly utilized his own objects of attack as in his selection of the "types" of satirists that appear in this dialogue.

The first definition, suggested by the black satirist, agreed upon by all the satirists is that satire is communication. The second satirist, as the instigator, denounces the idea of communication and replaces it with "hate" as the major concern of satire. They agree that "hate is the satirist's bridge to communication." Hate is probably the most crucial motive in much of Feiffer's work; Feiffer admits to hating his parents, women and the army (discussed in Chapter I). After admitting that hate is a device of the satirist's art, there is a barrage of aggressive remarks by the satirists which defines satire's vehemence: "satire outrages, satire strips bare, satire exposes our inner corruption, satire destroys."<sup>17</sup> They admit that the destructive nature of satire is to be constructive in the long run: "to build on the ashes. . . a better society . . . a saner tomorrow . . . an improved image of man . . . (a happy people with a natural sense of rhythm").<sup>18</sup> The moral and

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<sup>17</sup> Jules Feiffer, Feiffer's Album (New York: Random House, 1963), p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> Album, p. 4.

humanitarian nature of the satirist is apparently the motivating force, but ironically, sadistically and theatrically, the satirists set the stage on fire so they can have "ashes" on which to build.

Allowing for a possible autobiographical fallacy, the fourth satirist, the Jew, is probably indicative of Feiffer's own attitude and approach to satire.

"I offend them. They love it. I make fun of their wives. They love it. I tell them I hate them. They love it. I use words like schmuck. You should hear them applaud."<sup>19</sup>

"The kind of satire I prefer to do is the take-off on the little man . . . his trouble, pet peeves . . . the little unnoticed bedevilements of life that may not give the audience a belly laugh, mind you, but will give them a smile of recognition. 'Yes - I'm like that,' they'll say. 'There I am. There you are. There we all are. Little Man. Peering off into the middle distance.'"<sup>20</sup>

Psychological exposure is the "stuff" the cartoons are constructed from. This is in contrast to the plays which attack social institutions in a more conventional satiric mode. The intensely personalized tendentious content of the cartoons leads one to conclude that the formal aspects of satire in the cartoons are at times just that: form. For Feiffer the satiric form is a vehicle for a personal expulsion

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<sup>19</sup> Album, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> Album, p. 4.

of sentiment. The desire to satirize the "little man", "pet peeves", "bedevilments of life" in Feiffer's satire is possibly equivalent to self-exposure of Feiffer. The personal and tendentious quality of the cartoons are agreeable to the audience because "the author affords the audience vicarious satisfaction as he attacks . . . momentarily, perhaps unconsciously, we identify with him and so gain release of frustrated aggressive feelings with which we are charged. He represents our own (and presumably the author's) suppressed aggressive impulses."<sup>21</sup>

Statements about audience affiliation with author, vicarious satisfaction and suppressed aggressive tendencies lend themselves, almost compulsively, to the method of connecting the satirist's personal impulses to his artistic content. The overwhelming preoccupation with neurosis in the cartoons makes Freud the automatic starting place for exploring the cartoons.

While the motivation of the satirist is of great importance in examining Feiffer, the motivational aspect is more or less a syndrome, a personal syndrome that can only be hypothesized about. A conclusion that Feiffer, the man, possibly has a castration complex is an assumption as to why Feiffer satirizes a stereotyped version of the female

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<sup>21</sup> Elliott, Power of Satire, p. 140.

castrator. But, such conclusions must be remembered as being conclusions based on assumptions. The process of sifting the work to make conclusions about the author, which in turn are thrust back onto the work has two shortcomings. First, there is a de-emphasis of the work on a structural level and second, autobiographical assumptions can be fallacious; they are not bound to be, but unless the author confirms the conclusions, one can never be certain as to the validity of interpretations. The use of interviews which reveal the personal motivations and character of Feiffer does help to validate assumptions.

The necessity, consequence, even interest in understanding the "man behind the art" remains to be argued. The interest in the argument is directly linked with the form. Satire is what might be called a "crucial art" in that it is inherently propagandistic; it is built upon argument with the positive and negative clearly in view. The virtue of its existence lies in its power to present a realistic point of view in a fantastic, absurd and what is finally a comic way. It is the comic element that obviates the necessity of knowing the artist as part of the art; but it is the realistic point of view that makes the artist and the form inseparable. The point of view in satire is never self-contained; a persona must always be identified. The interest

in discovering the real biographical link between Feiffer and his art is the same as an interest in post-Freudian, post-World War II existential America in the 1960's. The persona of Feiffer's satire is Feiffer.

### Gratuitous Violence

Gratuitous violence is the environmental, historical motivation from which Feiffer's satire develops. One can see a growth from the personal content in the cartoons motivated by a reaction to a Freudian permeated culture to the political content in the plays motivated by a reaction to a violent environment (the only Freudian hangover from the cartoons found in the plays is the female castrator, a type Feiffer cannot seem to get away from.)

Gratuitous violence is a condition of paranoia that breeds random and unwarranted violence in a society. Feiffer had felt the paranoia of a catastrophic environment since he was a youth. In speaking about theme hunting for his first play Feiffer says:

"Floundering helplessly for a theme, I sought refuge in the first piece of advice given to all young writers by all old writers: write about what you know. I chose random violence. Since I am city bred, it has always been an issue with me, and I cannot remember a time since childhood, when I did not expect to be struck down momentarily by Nazis, Japs, bigger kids, smaller kids, teachers or parents . . . what a relief, then, to see what I often suspected to be private

paranoia has today been institutionalized as public paranoia."<sup>22</sup>

A fear of exploitation that breeds distrust is basic to gratuitous violence; the "little man" abandons his ethics for the sake of survival in a violent society. In The Great Comic Book Heroes, an anthology that reprints all the original versions of the comic book heroes, compiled and introduced by Feiffer, Feiffer reveals some autobiographical aversions to the world in which he was growing up:

"Villains, whatever fate befell them in the obligatory last panel were infinitely better equipped than those silly hapless heroes. Not only comics, but life taught us that. Those of us raised in ghetto neighborhoods were being asked to believe that crime didn't pay? Tell that to the butcher! Nice guys finished last; landlords first. Villains, by their simple appointment to the role were miles ahead. It was not to be believed that any ordinary human being could combat them. More was required. Someone with a call. When Superman at last appeared, he brought with him the deep satisfaction of all underground truths: our reaction was less 'How original' than 'But, of course'!"<sup>23</sup>

The paranoia and defensiveness that characterize the cartoons have their origin in the environment Feiffer speaks of. A personal insecurity was augmented by watching evil triumph over good: "My own observations led me to believe that the

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<sup>22</sup> James Ethridge, Barbara Kopala, Carol Riley (eds.), Contemporary Authors: Jules Feiffer (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1970), p. 118.

<sup>23</sup> Jules Feiffer, The Great Comic Book Heroes (New York: Bonanza Books, 1965), p. 17.

only triumph most people eked out of adversity was to manage to stay alive as it swept by."<sup>24</sup>

The overly pessimistic tone of the previous statements is the same tone that emerges from the cartoons. Mistrust, deceit, failing relationship, withdrawal, and a despondent introversion pervades Feiffer's cartoons. There is an overt concern with self-reflection and self-realization measured against a hostile society. After Feiffer works out the emotional insecurities that are bred into him by such an environment, the urge to retaliate as a satirist against the system that instilled this paranoia can be seen in the gradual shift in the themes of the cartoons over the years. When Feiffer moves away from the personal conundrum of relationships into the more socially stultifying themes about government he is reacting to a form of gratuitous violence that was highlighted by the Kennedy assassination:

"After a number of years, if the convictions of opinions you hold seem to be borne out by events, you simply trust them, and beginning with John Kennedy's assassination, I have developed the view of society that's written into Little Murders. His assassination highlighted for me the age of gratuitous violence that grew out of the frustrations of the American dream as measured against the American reality, out of a previously isolationist nation having to go internationalist very suddenly in a big way. And despite, or as a consequence of, what it

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<sup>24</sup> Feiffer, Comic Book Heroes, p. 27.

thought of as its good works, feeling increasingly isolated, unappreciated and finally unwanted. So, in reaction, it turns narcissistically violent toward the outside world- Cuba, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam- and paranoically violent toward its own internal world: race violence, random violence, motiveless mass murders (pb., p. 94)."

The dream (as measured against the reality) in the Sixties was for growth, national purpose and a participation in national affairs that would be in direct opposition to the dormant political administration of Eisenhower. The reality, however, was the increasing rift in black-white relations and an involvement in war, a typical phenomenon of Democratic administrations of the Twentieth century.<sup>25</sup>

The Sixties in America was characterized by growing paranoia and violence; whether or not this was a national reaction to rejection is debatable. The artistic result was a preoccupation with violence in many art forms. As Laurence Kitchin comments (in referring to the exhibition in 1964 of "Violence in Society, Nature and Art" at the Institute of Contemporary Art, England): "The artist in any medium is using subject matter parallel with human actions, their causes and results."<sup>26</sup> Artistically, Feiffer

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<sup>25</sup> Henry Farilie, The Kennedy Promise: The Politics of Expectation (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1973), p. 10.

<sup>26</sup> Laurence Kitchin, Drama in the Sixties: Form and Interpretation (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1966), p. 34.

uses violence in a relatively innocuous way in comparison to much of the theatre in the Sixties, but that violence suddenly and finally obsesses him is seen in his plays. His dramatic satire is more compassionate than brutal; perhaps this is a hangover from his Freudian struggles with love and hate in the cartoons. "Feiffer is a compassionate satirist and he uses his needle with a bedside manner (I'm sorry, but this is going to hurt a little), though he hopes to expose the basic ills of society and do what he can to cure them."<sup>27</sup>

But, decidedly, gratuitous violence, the label of society gone mad from internal threat is the historical environment which sparked Feiffer's critical transformation from an emotionally, psychologically oriented cartoonist to a politically indignant playwright. As Feiffer readily admits, once rage becomes part of your tool kit, it stays with you for life. "I've discovered that rage can't be bought off. If you have it, you have it for life (pb., p. 206)."

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<sup>27</sup> Lynes, Feiffer's Wicked Eye and Ear, p. 48.

## CHAPTER I

### CARTOON THEMES

Before a sense of public rage, sparked by the increase of gratuitous violence, motivated Feiffer, one discernible motivation was Freudian psychology:

"In the segment of society to which Feiffer addresses his subtly wicked pen, the language of Freud is sort of equivalent of the Victorian language of the flowers. Repressions, aggressions, guilts, Oedipal urges and a profusion of other linguistic underbrush clutter the landscape in which his characters have their shadowed being."<sup>1</sup>

After examining the cartoons, it becomes quite obvious that for many years Feiffer's sole preoccupation, with only occasional forays indicative of his political awareness, was that of defining, defending and diffusing types of real relationships; this was clearly inspired by the sheer numbers of Freudian psychoanalytic couches in America in the Fifties and the Sixties. The notion of humour at the expense of the individual and very often at Feiffer's personal expense ("like most good satirists, and Feiffer is a good satirist, Feiffer is sharpest when he is dealing with his own shortcomings")<sup>2</sup> is the basis for the label "emotional content."

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<sup>1</sup> Lynes, Feiffer's Wicked Eye and Ear, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

The wit and sarcasm of the cartoons is a veneer of bitter commentary beneath which an ethos of disillusionment and disappointment operate. Satire in his cartoons is belied by a sentimental edge: "Meaning well and putting their trust in Freud, Feiffer's cartoon characters are forever trying to find themselves and at the same time break through to others."<sup>3</sup>

Various levels of 'self-hood,' defined through relationships, is the primary object of attack in the cartoons. Honesty is the key to interpreting the content as well as being one of the hidden ingredients of Feiffer's art. Very often in the cartoons, honesty is tantamount to confession, especially in the cartoons that interpret the relationship between men and women.

#### The Relationship of Man to Woman

The relationship between men and women is a major theme in all of the cartoon anthologies. In every anthology, at least ten cartoons can be classified categorically as representing the relationship between men and women. Percentage wise, these cartoons constitute approximately twenty-five percent of the contents and, in The Unexpurgated Memoirs of Bernard Morgendeiler, approximately half (20) of the cartoons

<sup>3</sup> "Seek, Seek, Seek," rev. of "Harry the Rat with Women," Time Magazine, June 28, 1963, p. 66.

are concerned with men and women. Out of the 300 cartoons that have been examined, 65 belong to this category. It is in the cartoons that Feiffer most readily satirizes himself.

Feiffer stereotypes two types of males and one type of female. Bernard and Huey are well developed stereotypes. The stereotyped woman, the castrator, is only nominally developed.

Bernard is a self-effacing "do-gooder" who never has a lasting relationship with a woman. His prototype, Huey, is a broad, dark, handsome male egotist who always "makes out" with women. Insecurity, intimidation and inadequacy are the characteristic symptoms of Bernard's meek personality. Bernard is always rejected because he is too kind and too understanding. His women get bored with him; he is a "pushover". Huey, on the other hand, is mean, flippant, casual and aloof. His women are infatuated with him; he is a "hipster".<sup>4</sup>

Bernard, because of his human sensibility and compassion is always rejected. Huey, because of his callousness and indifference, is always accepted.

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<sup>4</sup>Feiffer's dichotomy of male stereotypes holds true in form even in Carnal Knowledge, a movie script written in 1971, in which two college roommates center their college careers around sexual exploits. One has the sentiment of Bernard, the other the cynicism of Huey.

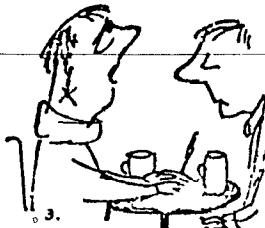
DID YOU SEE  
BERNARD?  
IT'S NO GOOD.

- 28 -



YOU'RE A DOLL AND  
I'M INSANE ABOUT  
YOU - BUT IT REALLY  
WOULDN'T JELL,  
BERNARD

WERE DIFFERENT!  
I'M JUST MANIC  
FOR PARTIES FOR  
FUN PEOPLE FOR  
HAVING A BALL



AND YOU  
DIG  
TELEVISION

I WANT TO DANCE AND  
FEEL FREE - TO GO  
BACK TO MAJORCA AND  
GAMBLE AND MAKE  
LOVE



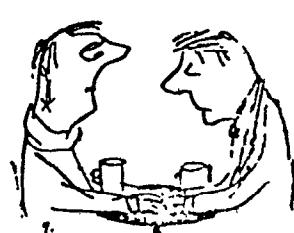
AND YOU WANT TO  
GO TO QUEENS  
AND LIVE WITH  
YOUR MOTHER



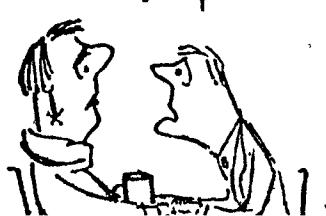
YOU'RE A DEAR,  
BERNARD, BUT I'M  
WRONG FOR YOU.  
IN TIME YOU'LL  
REALIZE.



YOU DO  
UNDERSTAND  
DON'T  
YOU?



YOU HAVE ANY  
NICE FRIENDS?



PUT ON YOUR  
SHOES - I'LL  
WALK YOU TO  
THE SUBWAY.

YOU  
NEEDN'T  
BOther  
I'VE NEVER  
MET  
ANYONE  
SO CRUDE  
IN MY  
LIFE.

- 29 -



... CRUDE  
... PUT ON  
... YOUR SHOES  
... WALK YOU  
... TO THE SUBWAY

YOU  
WANT  
EVERYTHING  
YOUR  
OWN  
WAY!  
YOU'RE  
SPOILED!



YEH, SPOILED-  
NOW PUT ON  
YOUR SHOES -  
I'LL WALK YOU  
TO THE SUBWAY



I DON'T  
LIKE  
BEING  
PUSHED  
INTO  
THINGS  
I NEED A  
LITTLE  
TIME YOU  
KNOW!

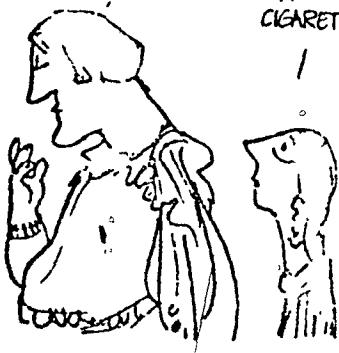


YEH, TIME - NOW  
PUT ON YOUR  
SHOES - I'LL  
WALK YOU TO  
THE SUBWAY

I MEAN -  
WE'VE  
HARDLY  
EVEN  
TALKED



I'M HIP-NOW  
PUT ON YOUR  
SHOES-I'LL WALK  
YOU TO THE  
SUBWAY



ISN'T  
THERE  
TIME  
FOR  
A  
CIGARETTE?

SURE-NOW JUST  
PUT ON YOUR  
SHOES-I'LL WALK  
YOU TO THE-



YOU'RE  
A  
VERY  
STRANGE  
BOY,  
HUEY

YEH, TALK-NOW  
PUT ON YOUR  
SHOES-I'LL  
WALK YOU TO  
THE SUBWAY.

YOU'RE  
CERTAINLY  
ANXIOUS  
TO GET  
RID OF  
ME.

I  
KNOW  
I'D  
FEEL  
MORE  
RELAXED  
AFTER  
A FEW  
BEERS



I  
THINK  
I'M  
OUT



I  
HAVE  
MONEY

YOU  
TAKE  
ME  
SO  
SERIOUSLY



WE DONT KNOW WHAT WE ARE  
TRYING TO SAY, WE  
ARE IN THE AGE  
OF THE URBAN  
CHICK. YOU  
CAN'T TELL  
THEM THEY ARE  
HIP! THEY AREN'T  
IN A SHIRT  
OR PANTS.

SHES A LITTLE  
BOY, HUH!  
WHAT CAN I  
DO?

NOT  
DIRTY

TALK  
DIRTY?

TALK DIRTY?  
YOU REALLY  
MEAN TALK  
DIRTY?

NOT SELF-CONSCIOUS DIRTY  
LIFE IT'S A CURRENT W-THINIC  
SHE DOES THAT HERSELF  
I MEAN ANIMAL DIRTY  
LIFE YOU GOT TO MAKE  
HER BELIEVE SHES IN  
A JUNGLE AND THE  
LAWES SHE LEARNED  
IN SCHOOL DONT  
WORK!

THIS  
WORKS?

MADE AN URBAN CHICK  
FEEL OFFENSIVE AND  
SHELL CONFUSE IT  
WITH LOVE  
WITH ALL THAT  
MEMOR WHERE  
CAND SHE  
GET THE  
EXPERIENCE TO  
KNOW THE  
DIFERENCE?

THERE'S ONLY  
ONE WAY  
TO KNOW  
TO  
CRUSH  
HER.  
HOW? FOR  
GOD SAKEs,  
HOW?

SO-IF ALL YOU GOT IS  
ARMOR - BABY! YOU  
NEED TO USE IT!  
YOU HAVE THE  
URBAN  
CHICK ON  
HER TEETH,  
HAW, VOICE  
DEAD!

HOW OFTEN CAN  
I LIE WITHOUT  
FEELING LIKE  
A LOSER?

MAN TALK DIRTY, NEVER PAY  
A CHECK AND TAKE HER  
TO TENNESSEE WILLIAMS  
PLAYS - IT HAS TO  
BECK. TO THE  
URBAN CHICK  
BRUTALITY  
IS A  
STATUS  
SYMBOL.

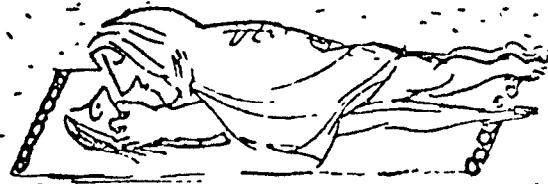
THE URBAN CHICK IS TRAINED FOR  
DESTRUCTION VERY EASY  
HER CLOTHES THEY  
TAKE AWAY HER  
PERSONALITY AND  
GIVE HER A SHIRT  
OF ARMOR.

MY TROUBLE  
IS I'M NOT  
MUSICALLY  
Talented.

THEY AREN'T  
TALKING  
TO ME  
AT SHOT  
OR RACCIFFE.

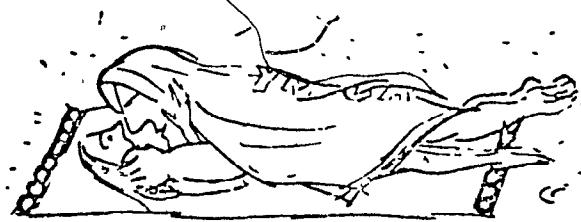
I DON'T  
KNOW IF  
I SHOULD  
HUEY

SURE YOU DO  
SURE YOU DO  
TEN TONIGHT-  
DOWN ON THE  
BEACH



I WANT TO  
AND I DON'T  
WANT TO  
YOU MUST  
THINK I'M  
VERY SILLY.

YOU'LL SEE, IT'LL BE  
JUST WHAT YOU WANT,  
TEN TONIGHT - DOWN  
ON THE BEACH.



PROMISE YOU  
WON'T DO  
ANYTHING  
UNLESS I  
TELL YOU.

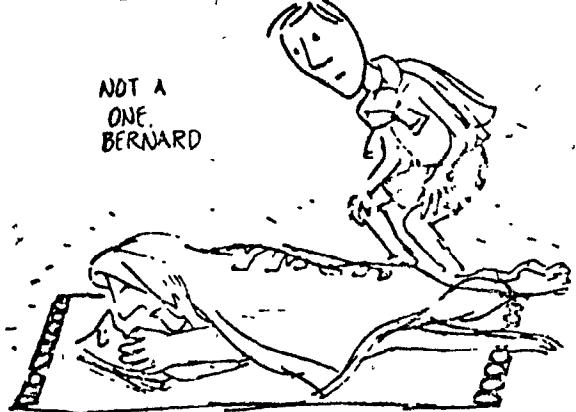
I'LL ONLY DO WHAT  
WE BOTH WANT  
TEN TONIGHT DOWN  
ON THE BEACH.



HI HUEY! YOU  
KNOW ANY  
PARTIES TONIGHT?



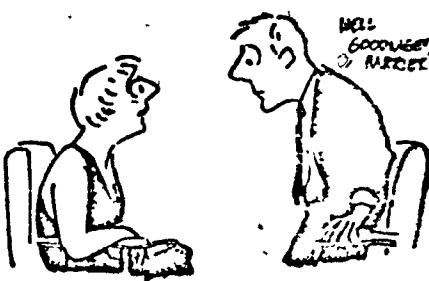
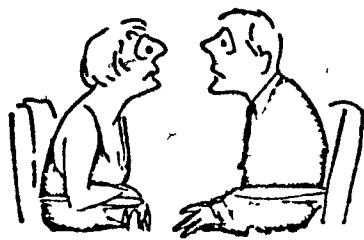
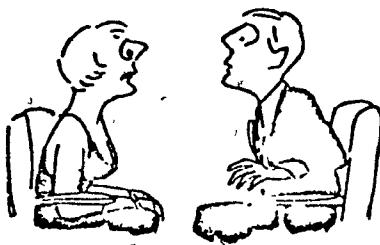
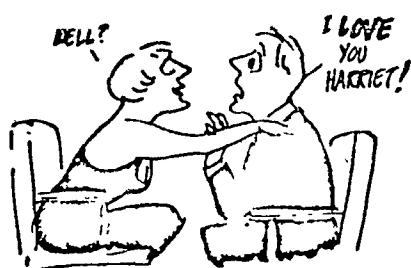
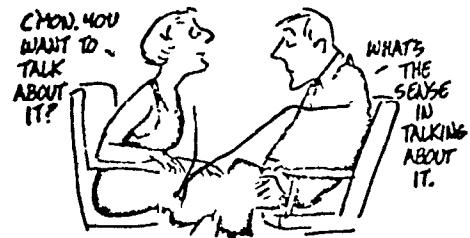
NOT A  
ONE  
BERNARD



ANOTHER  
NIGHT  
AND  
NO  
PARTIES.

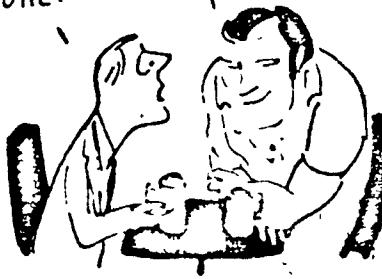
I CAN'T  
DECIDE  
WHETHER  
I SHOULD  
READ  
ANOTHER  
NOVEL OR  
GO TO  
ANOTHER  
MOVIE





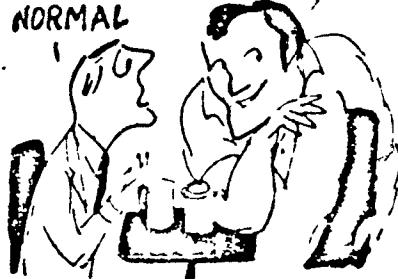
WHY DO I  
ALWAYS  
WIND UP  
WITH GIRLS  
WHO ARE  
NEUROTIC?

HEY, DIG THAT  
CHICK IN THE  
BOOTH HUH?  
SOMETHING, HUH?  
SOMETHING



I NEVER KNOW  
THEY'RE NEUROTIC  
IN THE BEGINNING  
IN THE BEGINNING  
THEY SEEM SO  
NORMAL

SHE'S ON A  
LITTLE MAG-  
AZINE KICK  
I LOVE IT  
KILLS ME



IN THE BEGINNING THEY  
TELL ME HOW KIND I  
AM HOW I'M NOT  
CRUDE AND DEMAND-  
ING LIKE ALL THE OTHER  
MEN THEY'VE  
MET

SHE'S  
LOOKING  
UP! WILD  
EYES!  
WILD!  
LOOK  
THIS  
WAY,  
BABY!



IN THE BEGINNING  
WE SEEM TO BE  
ALMOST THE SAME  
PEOPLE WE LOVE  
THE SAME SONGS  
THE SAME MOVIES

SMILE,  
YOU  
PHONEY  
LITTLE  
MAGA-  
ZINE  
CHICK  
SMILE!



THEN ALL OF A  
SUDDEN SHE BEGINS  
TO HICE YAWNS  
WHILE I'M TALKING.  
WHEN WE'RE ALONE  
SHE MAKES  
LONG PHONE  
CALLS

GO AHEAD! PRETEND  
TO READ. DON'T  
PRETEND WITH ME,  
SUGAR LOOK UP!  
LOOK AT  
ME.



SOON IT'S ALL OVER  
WE HAVE A LONG CRY  
ABOUT IT SHE SAYS  
IT'S ALL HER FAULT  
AND I'M THE ONLY  
MAN WHO  
EVER RE-  
PECTED  
HER I'VE  
LOST A  
GIRL  
AND  
WON A  
FRIEND

YEAH THAT'S MY BABY  
LOOK AT THAT NO  
GOOD LITTLE DOLL  
SMILE HEY, LOAN  
ME A FEW  
BUCKS,  
BERNARD



DO YOU  
EVER  
RESPECT  
GIRLS,  
HUEY?



It is implicit that the women who make out with Huey feel used, but the women whom Bernard honestly loves feel used too, according to Feiffer: hence, the impossibility of a good relationship between men and women.

Feiffer, in stereotyping males, establishes two modes of relationships: the superficial and the ineffectual. The superficial relationship is calculated; the ineffectual is absolutely demoralizing. Apparently, Feiffer oscillates between the extremes of cynicism and sentimentalism in his depiction of male stereotypes. One he envies, the other he sympathizes with. From several articles on Feiffer and interviews with Feiffer, one can assume that Feiffer is the sentimental 'schnook,' Bernard, but would prefer to be the cynical chauvinist, Huey. An hypothesis suggests that Feiffer is his character, Bernard Morgendeiler, and that Feiffer's satire of the relationship between men and women is often built around the theme of failure because of Feiffer's desire to express a frustration of his own 'personhood.'

"With Feiffer and Silverstein the humor is so often implacably cruel and pessimistic that one must look outside of it to explain its popularity entirely. Both men seem to provide a masochistic pleasure that derives from seeing one's private estimate of oneself and one's world printed for all the rest of the world to see. Their audience conditioned by the methods of psychoanalysis, does not miss the lack of personal compassion in Feiffer and Silverstein, but finds the most dour

interpretation of personal and social behavior to be the most congenial."<sup>5</sup>

David Segal's statement carefully lays a solid basis for both the essence and appeal of Feiffer's satirical form. The essence of Feiffer's satire within the relationship of men and women is self-exposure; the appeal is through recognition. That self-exposure provides a "masochistic pleasure" for the audience, as well as for Feiffer, is the hallmark of Twentieth century satire. When contrasted to the Swiftian definition of satire, an essential difference becomes apparent:

"Satyr /sic 7 is like a glass, wherein Beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own; which is the chief Reason for the kind reception it meets in the World, and that so very few are offended with it."<sup>6</sup>

In the Eighteenth century the only commonly understood psychological phenomenon was Reason, a Christian Reason which understood that depravity was a condition suffered by man. But, such depravity was recognized as sent by God not as a blessing but in man ways as a necessary incongruity of man's goodness:

"Swift's Satire arises from a sense of sin, and from the painful awareness of human existence.

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<sup>5</sup>David Segal, "Feiffer, Skinberg and Others," Commentary Magazine, 32 (July 1961), p. 432.

<sup>6</sup>Jonathan Swift, A Selection of His Works, ed. Philip Pinkus (British Columbia: Macmillan of Canada, 1965), p. 448.

It does not cure many vices, or mend many worlds, but by presenting the image of man's depravity it protests the ways of God to man with all the passion of his faith."

The possible distinction between an Eighteenth century satire and a Twentieth century satire is not the representation of the depravity of man, but the understanding of and reaction to this depravity. Feiffer brings two things to satire that the Eighteenth century would find incomprehensible. The first is the metaphorical death of God and the second is the knowledge of the Freudian divisions of the mind.

The Twentieth century makes depravity absolutely human and psychologically comprehensible. In one sense this makes the physical brutalities of Eighteenth century satire somewhat innocuous when measured against the mental destructiveness of Twentieth century satire.

Feiffer's satire is built upon psychological self-flagellation. This is recognizable and comprehensible to the "Beholders" of the Swiftian satiric looking-glass because the knowledge of the "working of the mind" is the Twentieth century mode of comprehension. The "Beholders" look into the glass and see the image of themselves reflected. Now, according to Swift, this should evoke an unkind reception,

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<sup>7</sup> Philip Pinkus, Jonathan Swift: A Selection of His Works, p. xxxiv.

but it does not. The modern reader is not offended even when he sees himself reflected because of what Segal labels the "masochistic pleasure" the audience receives in the "most dour interpretation of personal and social behavior."

Satire has always made fun, mocked, parodied man's behaviour. But, historically, the laughter provoked was a class-conscious laughter. Feiffer moves the laughter from class-consciousness into self-consciousness. The reaction has shifted from an awareness of the exploitation of social role to the awareness of the exploitation of self-image.

The marvel of the Twentieth century response is the knowledge of the exploitation of self-image coupled with the enjoyment of it. Feiffer's cartoon satire thrives on the representation of psychological neuroses, a unique element only applicable to the content and reception of modern satire. The temptation to include the author as part and parcel of his diatribe in studying satire in Feiffer's case is unquestionably provoking, but must be examined cautiously.

One always has to be careful not to presume too much about an author from his work, but understanding the personal motivation of the satirist is a vehicle through which the art of satire is understood. It makes sense that the satirist's temperament has been of interest because satire is a public screaming of disgust, a temper-tantrum at times, that

exposes the hostilities and antagonisms of the satirist, not just his anger at social evils. The interest that Feiffer is Bernard, or at the very least, that Bernard's travails most resemble the actual life (sexual) experiences of Feiffer is important in a broader literary sense. There is a mini-genre of Jewish castration-complex literature in American literature that Feiffer belongs to along with writers like Saul Bellow and Philip Roth who use their personal biographies successfully in their art.

Throughout the cartoons and plays there exists a tension between men and women that is never resolved; the tension is made obvious and clearly represents the domination of men by women. When Feiffer reveals his personal sexual experiences in interviews the connection between the man and his cartoon world is too great to pass up as a possible explanation for why he creates the stereotypes of men and women that he does.

In three hundred cartoons there is only one that is pictorially autobiographical and this cartoon is enormously significant in aligning Feiffer in a real way with his projected image in his art. When Feiffer is willing to lay his own image on the confessional line he combines his boyhood fantasies with his delusions of marriage. The biographical content of the cartoon on the next page is supported by statements made in essays and interviews.

MY WIFE ALWAYS  
USED TO SAY TO  
ME, "BILLY BATSON,  
YOU'RE SMALL,  
WEAK, INEPT, AND  
UTTERLY CON-  
TEMPTIBLE! WHY  
COULDNT I  
MARRY A  
REAL MAN?"



SO, ONE DAY,  
WHILE SHE  
WAS IN THE  
MIDDLE OF  
A TIPADE  
I LOST MY  
TEM 'ER AND  
DECIDED TO  
REVEAL MY  
SECRET  
IDENTITY!



- 40 -

AND  
I  
SAID  
SHAZAM!



AND MY WIFE  
SAID TO ME,  
"OH, BILLY  
BATSON, YOU'RE  
HUGE, VIRILE,  
DOMINEERING  
AND  
UTTERLY  
HEROIC!"



AND SHE  
YAWNED.

SHE YAWNED  
FOR THREE  
WEEKS STRAIGHT.  
THEN ONE  
DAY I  
CAUGHT HER  
PACKING  
HER SUIT  
CASE -



SO I  
UN-  
SHAZAMED  
MYSELF.



NOW MY WIFE  
SAYS TO ME,  
"BILLY BATSON,  
YOU'RE SMALL,  
WEAK, INEPT  
AND UTTERLY  
CONTEMPTIBLE!  
WHY COULDNT  
I MARRY A  
REAL MAN?"

ONCE MORE  
WERE HAPPY!



Feiffer's choice of super heroes is Captain Marvel, alias Billy Bateson. Feiffer says this of Captain Marvel:

"The captain himself came out dumber than average superheroes, or perhaps less was expected of him. A friendly full back of a fellow with apple cheeks and dimples, he could be imagined being a buddy rather than a hero, an overgrown boy who chased villains as if they were squirrels. A perfect fantasy figure for, say, Charlie Brown."<sup>8</sup>

There is an absolute honesty in this statement that absorbs the demeaning content. And this is the superhero Feiffer identifies with. In short, the honesty of self-effacement in this cartoon is the same honesty that is representative of Feiffer in all his cartoons. The special significance here is that the man in this cartoon is really Feiffer.

As for the notion of a transformation of the meek and inept Feiffer into the strong and virile Feiffer by conjuring up the magical 'Shazam':

"Then too there was great disappointment in the word 'shazam!' As it turned out it didn't work for readers. Other magic words were tried. They didn't work either. There are just so many magic words until one feels he's been made a fool of. How easy it became to hate 'Shazam! Shazam! Shazam!' that taunting cry that worked fine for Captain Marvel but didn't do a damn thing for the rest of us."<sup>9</sup>

A study of the satirist's temperament, motivation and influence by Leonard Feinberg in a book called The

<sup>8</sup> Feiffer, Comic Book Heroes, p. 24.

<sup>9</sup> Feiffer, Comic Book Heroes, p. 25.

Satirists's Art defines the level of personal intrusions of the satirist on his art. According to Feinberg, there are several categories of satirical motivation. Aesthetic drive and morality are two, a third is compensation. Compensation breaks down into several subcategories: rage and rebellion, protective laughter, perverted self-criticism and perverted frustration. Not to deny that aesthetic drive and morality are partial components in Feiffer's art, perverted frustration is the category in which Feiffer's satire predominantly falls. A tenet of the principle of compensation is that "all the variations on this theory assume that the satirist is striking back at society because it has either neglected him for being inadequate or punishing him for being obstreperous."<sup>10</sup>

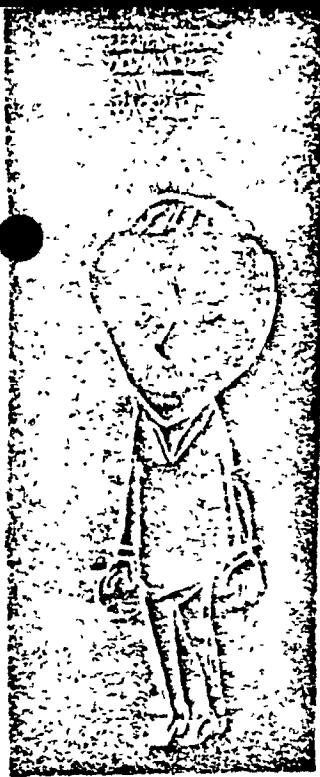
Feiffer falls into the former part of the category of frustrated perversions which means society has neglected him for being inadequate. Feiffer readily admits to social and sexual inadequacy. As a youth he was a misfit; he could not play ball. He preferred to stay in the house and read all day.

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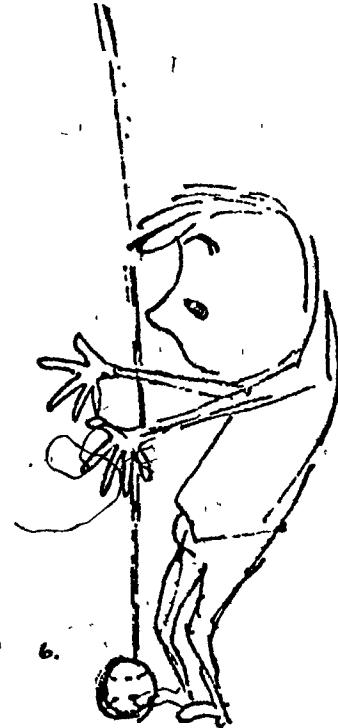
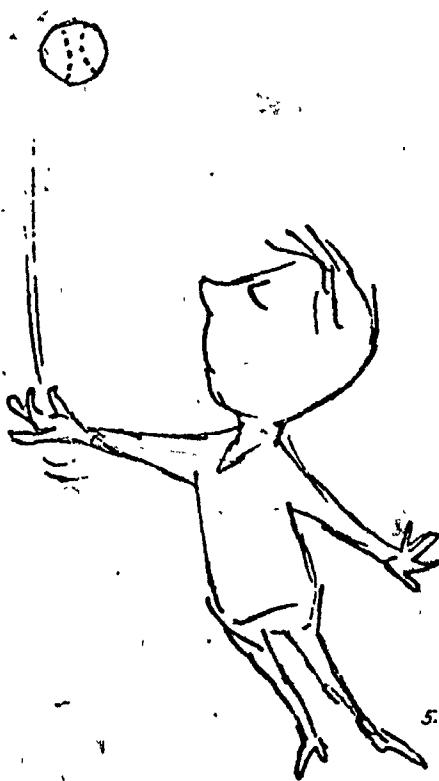
<sup>10</sup> Leonard Feinberg, The Satirist: his Temperament, Motivation and Influence (Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1963), p. 43.

WHERE DID THE - 43 -  
TIME GO?  
WHAT HAVE  
I DONE WITH  
IT?

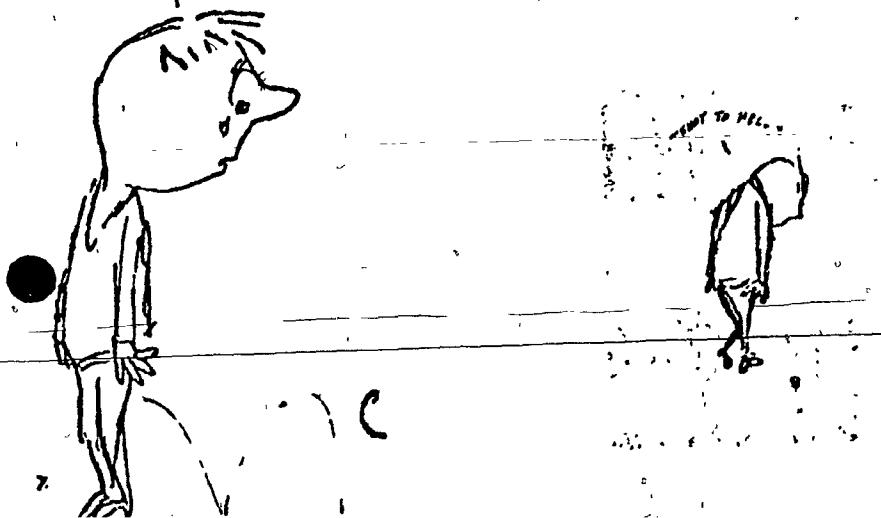
ELEVEN YEARS - HUH -  
THAT'S STILL NOT  
VERY OLD. IT'S NOT  
LIKE I WAS THIRTEEN.  
I STILL CAN LEARN.



I CAN PRACTICE!  
LEARN ALL THE  
ANGLES! MAYBE  
TAKE A FEW EVENING  
COURSES. WHY I'VE  
GOT A WHOLE  
LIFETIME AHEAD  
OF ME!



ELEVEN  
YEARS...  
ELEVEN  
YEARS



"Echoes of my childhood keep creeping into my work. I'm sneaky - I hide behind my pictures."

Time Magazine, February 9, 1959  
p. 52.

"I guess it was a formidable shyness. The best kids are the biggest and most athletic-affable. Outgoing kids. And I was a shrimp I was skinny: I didn't eat, which my mother never forgot to tell the neighbors. I didn't play ball! I didn't even learn how to catch a ball till I was fifteen, and to this day I still can't throw one. The only person I was at all capable of talking to was myself and even there I had severe lags in communication. I understood with complete objectivity that I was a total failure, so if I was going to make a comeback I know it had to be as a grownup. Grownups didn't have to take gym." (pb., p. 84)

"Grownups wielded all the power, still could not be talked back to, still were always right however many times they contradicted themselves. By eight I had become a politician of the grownup, indexing his mysterious ways and hiding underground my lust for getting even until I was old enough, big enough and important enough to make a bid for it. That bid was to come my way of a career - (I knew I'd never grow big enough to beat up everybody; my hope was to, somehow, get to own everything and fire everybody)."<sup>11</sup>

As a youth he felt an incredible urgency to revenge anything that controlled him. His objects of revenge in his art move from parents to women to government. The immensity of his need for revenge is expressed by his current need to confess these hostilities<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Jules Feiffer, Comic Book Heroes, p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> Admittedly, one has to be careful as to how seriously Feiffer makes these statements. After all he has a sharp wit and probably can't help his witticisms which tend a bit toward exaggeration. His statements seem like a flamboyant honesty that Feiffer is free to express having achieved that "career" he speaks of. The grain of salt that might be necessary at times to decipher fact from exaggeration is more often included precisely because of the added saline quality of hostility that overruns Feiffer's remarks.

As an adolescent he was sexually unknowledgeable:

"I didn't even know about sex. When I was in high school, I was much less interested in getting laid than getting out. I had a 24-hour a day hard-on, but I never quite connected it with sex. I was terribly retarded in that area and never ever knew what to do with this thing in my pocket and never dreamed it could be used with girls. Or how you were supposed to use it. A fascination with breasts was the closest I came. To me sex was something you had with a woman's breast. I didn't know there was anything else. I was so unpracticed in the dark, scary world of carnality that I did not even know you could go blind, I didn't know you could get warts and pimples or that it would fall off. I didn't even know the folklore (pb., p. 84)."

As a bachelor: "Most bachelors I suspect, aren't the miserable failures at bachelorhood I was (pb., p. 86)." As for marrying something Feiffer finally did when he was thirty-two, Feiffer has this to say:

"Most of the married men I know get married because their wives made it impossible for them to stay unmarried. Not necessarily by ultimatum, but by making pressures and guilt so intense that it simply became easier to get married than stay shacked up . . . I hated and feared marriage . . . it meant I had to be a grownup (pb., p. 96)."

That his inadequacies no longer shame him personally is made very clear from his boldness, but that his inadequacies are the very stuff his life is made up of is evident as well. Bernard suffers from many of the same inadequacies Feiffer speaks of as his own. David Segal says:

"Ultimately Feiffer may do more to popularize neurosis than Norman Vincent Peale has done to popularize tranquility. These and other facts of

contemporary life are seen under two great shadows: individual anxiety caused by a sense of deeply felt inferiority and public anxiety caused by the bomb."<sup>13</sup>

From the above quotes, one can see that Feiffer's wit during interviews is an aggressive one. Feinberg classifies the type of wit used by the satirist who is motivated by perverted frustration in order to compensate for inadequacy. Freud is his source: "Satirists motivated by tendency wit are persons having a powerful sadistical component in their sexuality, which is more or less inhibited in life, are most successful with the tendency-wit of aggression."<sup>14</sup>

This is not to imply that the witty remarks from Bernard are going to express this sadistic sentiment, but that the very creation of Bernard by Feiffer was necessitated by Feiffer's need to express his contempt for and apprehension of women. It does imply that Feiffer has a "powerful sadistical component in his sexuality."

In an article "Men really don't like women" written by Feiffer which appeared in Look Magazine in January of 1966, Feiffer admits that most of the statements he makes are in some way, an "emotional autobiography . . . all that I am really giving away is some veiled secrets about myself." His

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<sup>13</sup> Segal, p. 432.

<sup>14</sup> Feinberg, p. 152.

most blatant admission is that men dislike women.

"Only in religion is it not a perversion to love one's enemy. In the real world we hate and fear and despise and protect ourselves from our enemies . . . man has always seen woman as his enemy. How in the world can he be expected to love her? He cannot . . . the term "relationship", as we have come to know it, is the artless blending of what man needs with what he dislikes."

This statement is ill founded and left completely unsupported factually in the article. Such a statement is not intended to be satirical though; a confessional tone is more applicable:

"We are all familiar with the fact that little boys don't like little girls. We pretend to think they outgrow it. They do not. They merely learn to hide it. What they really fear for is their own potency (not always sexual, in fact in our times less and less so)."

The combination of hate and fear expressed by Feiffer in these statements invites a Freudian analysis of the castration complex which is also constructed around hate stemming from fear. The assumption here is that Feiffer's personal dislike for women is the source of his stereotype of the female castrator.

In explaining the original reaction of young boys to the absence of a penis in girls, Freud notes that a natural antipathy toward women develops along with the fear of a lost penis.

"A young boy's first reaction is to assume the little girl will grow a penis like his own. Then he thinks that they had one once, but it was cut off and in its place is left an open wound. This

theoretical advance already makes use of personal experiences of a distressing kind. The boy in the meantime has heard the threat that the organ which is so dear to him will be taken away from him if he shows his interest too plainly. Under the influence of this threat of castration he now sees the notion he has gained of the female genitals in a new light; henceforth he will tremble for his masculinity, but at the same time despise the unhappy creatures on whom the cruel punishment has, as he supposes, already fallen."<sup>15</sup>

Despising women at an early age is Feiffer's adamant confession. In fact, when he makes confessionary statements about hating women, they are often expressed in such an aggressive way as to assume that Feiffer has a "powerful, sadistical component in his sexuality." When Feiffer wrote Carnal Knowledge (screenscript 1971), he originally had a speech in it that he cut out because ". . . it seemed too on the nose (pb., p. 84)." The speech epitomizes a basic contempt for women.

"Remember when you were a kid and the boys didn't like the girls? Only sissies liked girls? What I'm trying to tell you is that nothing's changed. You think boys grow out of not liking girls, but we don't grow out of it. We just grow horny. That's the problem. We mix up liking pussy for liking girls. Believe me, one couldn't have less to do with the other (pb., p. 84)."

Assuming that a real castration complex is one of

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<sup>15</sup> Sigmund Freud, The Complete Works of Sigmund Freud, trans. J. Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1948) Vol. xl, p. 195.

the roots of Feiffer's satire, the failing relationship between men and women, and the development of the female castrator allows Feiffer to display this aggressive wit. Ultimately, the failure of relationships is the final satirical statement Feiffer makes about relationships.

Freud says:

"Psychoanalysis believes that it has discovered a large part of what underlies the narcissistic rejection of women by men, which is so mixed up with despising them in drawing attention to the castration complex and its influence on the opinion in which women are held."<sup>16</sup>

In "Men really don't like Women", Feiffer claims that women are a "projected narcissism of man's psyche." By this Feiffer means men create types of women. "When moral attitudes inhibit his drives he invents women, the most damnable of women. The seductress, the shrew, the harlot, the nag, the tease, the castrator. They are instruments by which different men reap different (carefully contained) satisfaction."

To assess the stereotype of the castrating female as presented by Feiffer, is to realize that the females, although loud, domineering, emasculating and apparently controlling, are actually fulfilling the requirements of the relationship which are established by the male. Bernard wants/needs/ loves in a narcissistic way to be castrated or rejected.

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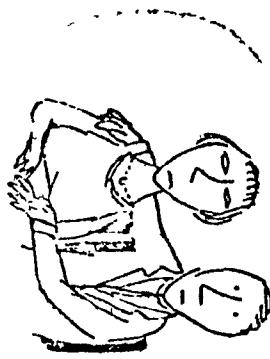
<sup>16</sup> Freud, Vol. x1, p. 199.



I DON'T KNOW WHY  
YOU THINK YOU BROUGHT  
ME HERE BUT I CAME  
TO SEE A MOVIE!



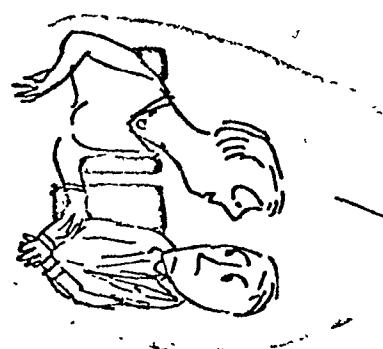
YOU DISGUST ME!



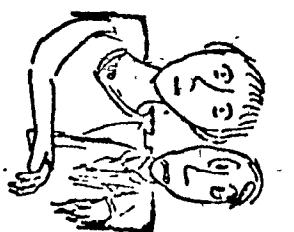
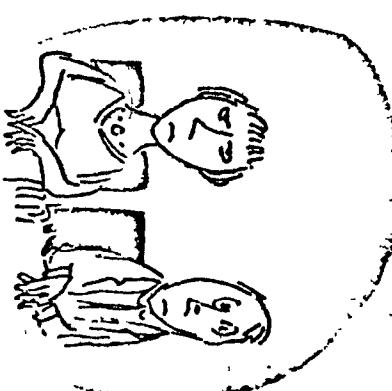
CAN'T YOU KEEP YOUR  
HANDS TO YOURSELF  
FOR ONE MINUTE?

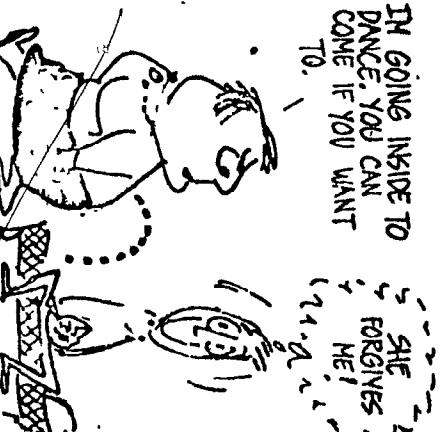
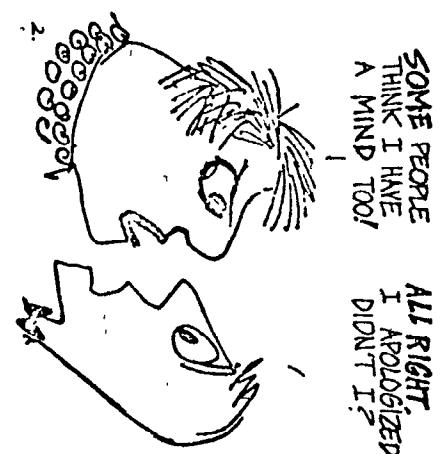
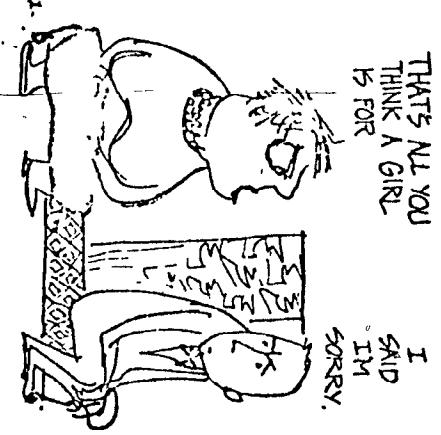
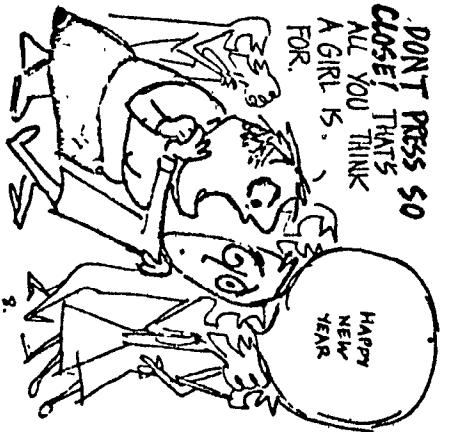
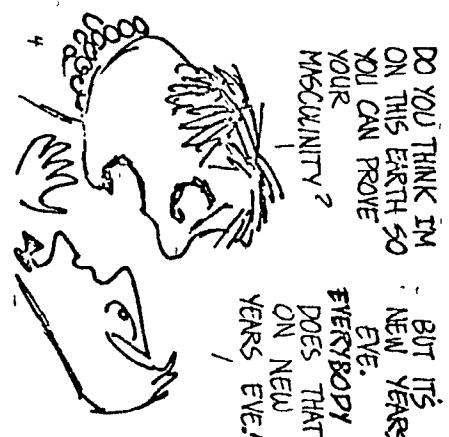
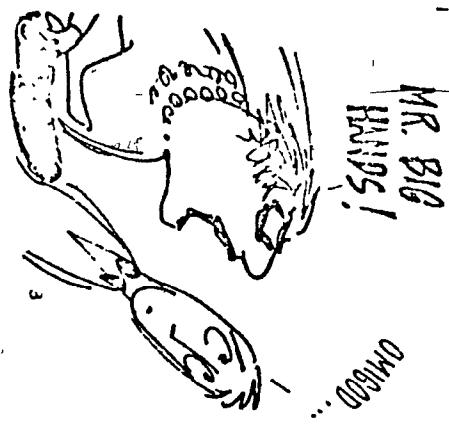


IF THAT'S WHAT A  
DATE WITH YOU IS  
GOT TO BE LIKE  
WE KIN' AS WELL  
PUT A STOP TO IT  
RIGHT NOW!



YOU POOR DEAR. I FRIGHTENED  
YOU HALF TO DEATH, DIDN'T I?





WHAT DID I DO THAT  
WAS SO TERRIBLE?  
ELL ME! ILL  
DMIT IT IF  
T WAS  
ERRIBLE.  
TELL ME!

FORGET IT.  
WILL YOU  
PLEASE  
JUST  
FORGET  
IT!

WHAT DO I DO? IS IT THAT  
YOU CAN'T SCORE ANY POINTS  
IN TENNIS?  
IS THAT  
WHAT'S  
BOthering  
YOU?

006

SWEETHEART, I LIKE  
THE FACT YOU'RE  
SO EASY TO  
BEAT IN TENNIS.  
WITH ALL THE  
THINGS YOU DO  
BETTER THAN  
ME, ISN'T IT  
ALL RIGHT  
FOR ME TO  
DO ONE  
THING BETTER?

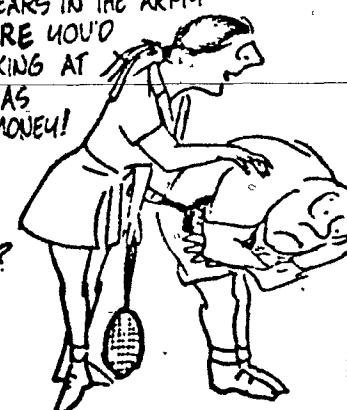
FOR INSTANCE, YOU TYPE  
MARVELLOUSLY!  
I WISH I  
COULD  
TYPE HALF  
AS WELL!



AND YOU'RE TERRIBLY  
NEAT! YOU'RE MUCH  
NEATER THAN  
I EVER CAN  
BE! AND YOU'RE  
A VERY STRONG  
WALKER!



AND IF IT WASN'T FOR THOSE  
TWO YEARS IN THE ARMY  
I'M SURE YOU'D  
BE MAKING AT  
LEAST AS  
MUCH MONEY!  
HONEY,  
WHY  
GET  
UPSET?



LARRY!  
WHAT DO  
YOU THINK  
YOU'RE  
DOING?

HEMORRHAGING.



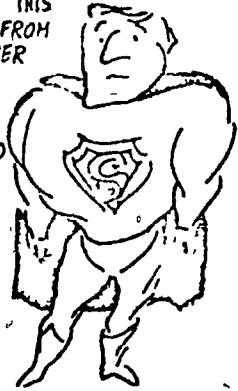
I USED TO BE  
SUPERMAN



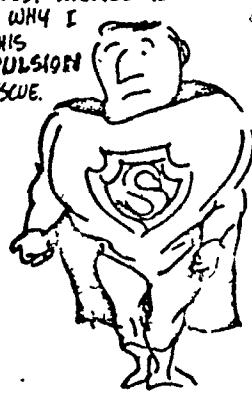
I USED TO GO RESCUING  
PEOPLE ALL THE  
HELL OVER THE  
PLACE WHERE  
EVER YOU  
LOOKED  
I WAS  
SAVING  
SOME-  
BODY



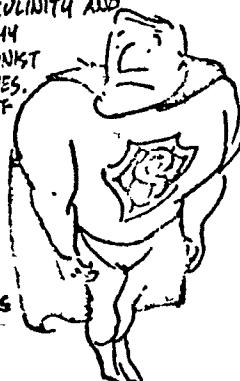
THEN ONE DAY I  
PULLED THIS  
CHICK FROM  
THE RIVER  
DO YOU  
THINK  
SHE  
THANKED  
ME?  
NO!



SHE JUST WANTED TO  
KNOW WHY I  
HAD THIS  
COMPULSION  
TO RESCUE.



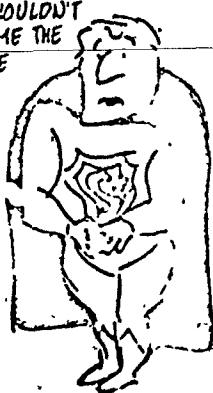
SHE ACCUSED ME OF DOUBTING  
MY MASCULINITY AND  
HENCE MY  
EXHIBITIONIST  
TENDENCIES.  
SHE WANT-  
ED TO  
KNOW  
WHY I  
DON'T  
SPEND  
MORE  
TIME  
READING



SHE TOOK ONE LOOK AT MY  
CAPE AND SAID I WAS A  
LATENT TRANS-  
VESTITE AND  
WHY WAS  
MY COST-  
UME SO  
SKIN  
TIGHT  
AND  
DID I  
RESUE  
MORE  
MEN  
THAN WOMEN.



I TRIED TO TELL HER  
SHE SHOULDN'T  
JUDGE ME THE  
WAY SHE  
JUDGES  
EARTH  
PEOPLE.  
SHE JUST  
PATTED  
MY HEAD  
AND  
SMILED.



SO AFTER A LOT OF  
ARGUMENT BACK AND  
FORTH I FINALLY  
GOT HER TO ADMIT  
THAT ALTHOUGH I  
MIGHT NOT BE  
SUPER, I  
WAS A LOT  
BETTER  
THAN  
AVERAGE.



NOW I HAVE A  
REGULAR OFFICE  
JOB IN THE CITY  
AND A HOUSE  
IN THE  
SUBURBS.  
WE'RE  
BOTH  
VERY  
HAPPY.



Another conclusion is that masochism is the source of the relationship between men and women. Feiffer, according to Feinberg's theory, in some perverted self-critical way wants to satirize his own irritation and disgust at his inadequacy.

Ronald A. Knox said: "It is seldom that the impetus to write satire comes to man except as the result of a disappointment. Since disappointment so often springs from love, it is not to be wondered that satirists have dealt unkindly with women."<sup>17</sup> This is true to a certain extent for Feiffer. He has created a loathesome, satirical female type: the castrator. The theme of sexual failure and insecurity on the part of the male dominates the cartoons through the characterization of Bernard. Huey, on the other hand, is an absolutely necessary creation by Feiffer to compensate for Bernard's ineffectuality. But Huey's sexual prowess only serves to denigrate Bernard.

Establishing a real psycho-sexual link between Feiffer and his satire of the relationship between men and women emphasizes the biographical nature of Satire. In the same mode, Swift's scatological references have been scrutinized for personal parallels. And then conclusions like this are

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<sup>17</sup> Ronald A. Knox, "On Humour and Satire," in Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. R. Paulson (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1971), p. 62.

reached:

"According to psychiatrists, Swift seems to have suffered from an impressive variety of neuroses brought on, perhaps, by being deprived of mother love at an early age, and giving rise to symptoms of emotional immaturity and psychosexual infantilism."<sup>18</sup>

It is not unreasonable to assume that Feiffer's admitted misogyny is the key to understanding his satiric statements about the relationship of men and women. Basically, his central motifs concerning the relationship of men and women are failure, mistrust, hate, insecurity and deception.

Conclusion: Relationship of Man to Woman

Feiffer has created three stereotypes of men and women in his cartoons: Bernard the sexual failure, Huey the sexual success and the female castrator. Bernard and Huey are carefully and fully developed characterizations of a type, while the female castrator is stereotyped only to the extent that she defines the stereotype of Bernard. Feiffer's limited development of the female as a type is carried over into his plays as well.

An assumption has been made that Feiffer is his character Bernard. The correlation has been based on two theories:

(1) Leonard Feinberg's theory of motivation of the satirist

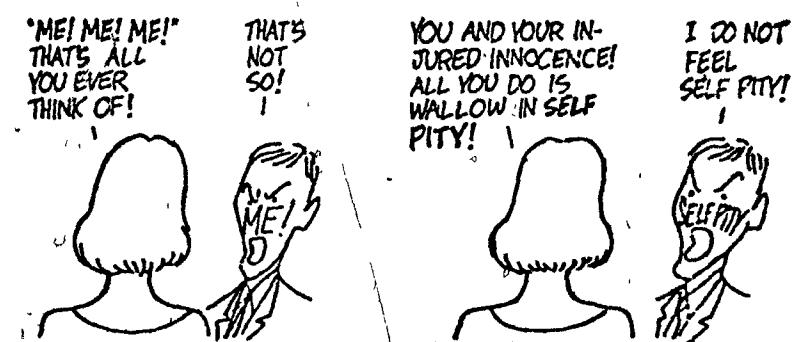
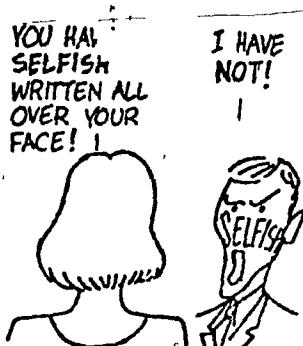
<sup>18</sup> Philip Pinkus, Jonathan Swift: A Selection of his Works (Toronto: Macmillan Co. Ltd., 1965), p. viii.

in which Feiffer belongs to the special category of perverted self-criticism which is a portion of the larger classification of compensation. The use of a 'tendency wit' of aggression is a result of the insecurity felt by the satirist. (2) Freud's theory of the castration complex, which identifies the origin of man's psychological hatred and fear of women.

The creation of the female castrator is the means by which Feiffer satirizes himself while satisfying a masochistic tendency: the desire to be rejected which, according to Freud and Feiffer, is really a "narcissistic rejection" of women.

The major theme of the satire of the relationship between men and women is failure. This is due to Feiffer's personal failure, perhaps. When the plays are examined, the conclusion that the relationship of men to women ultimately fails is supported. From the clear lack of authentic female character development in the plays and the propensity toward the stereotype of the female castrator, Feiffer exhibits a limited artistic conception of women in the plays and the cartoons.

It is interesting to note that while the relationship of man to woman is of great importance in the cartoons (65/350), in his plays Feiffer only allows the relationship of man to woman to dominate in one; but even then (Little Murders) the relationship is actually a disguise for a harsher treatment of national violence.

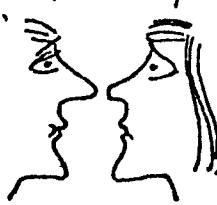


LIFE  
IS A  
GAME.

NO, LIFE IS  
THE WEARING  
OF MASKS.  
EVERYBODY  
KNOWS THAT.

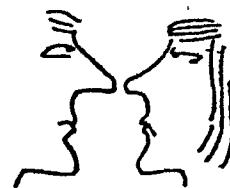
FOR EXAMPLE, UP TILL  
A MINUTE AGO WE  
WERE PLAYING THE  
LOVE GAME. NOW  
WE'RE PLAYING THE  
ARGUMENT GAME.

THAT'S ALL A MASK.  
THE ARGUMENT  
MASK IS A COVER-  
UP FOR OUR DIS-  
APPOINTMENT IN  
THE LOVE MASK.



IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE  
THE TOO-COOL ATTI-  
TUDE THAT LOVE IS  
A MASK I MIGHT  
NOT HAVE BEEN  
DISAPPOINTED IN  
THE LOVE GAME.

AND IF YOU THINK  
THAT BEING  
TREATED LIKE A  
TEAM PLAYER  
IS MY IDEA OF A  
GOOD MASK  
YOU'RE OUT OF  
YOUR MIND.

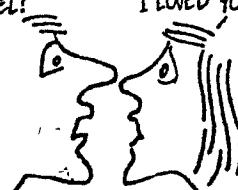
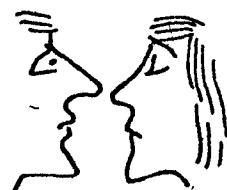


THIS IS  
ALL SORT  
OF SILLY  
ISN'T IT?

I-I  
SUPPOSE  
SO.

WHAT DOES IT MAT-  
TER-MASKS OR  
GAMES? IF ANYTHING  
ON THIS UNREAL  
EARTH IS NOT A  
GAME IT'S MY LOVE  
FOR YOU, ISABEL!

AND IF FOR EVEN A  
MOMENT IN THIS AGE  
OF DISGUISES WE  
COULD DROP OUR  
MASKS, MY TRUE  
FACE WOULD SHOW  
I LOVED YOU BERNARD!



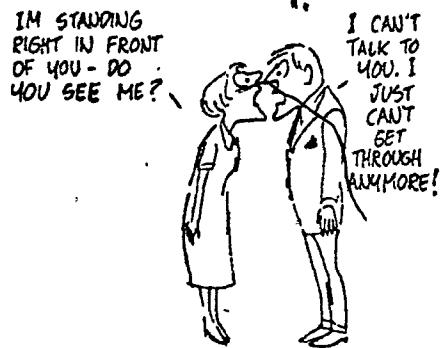
MY  
DARLING!  
MY  
HEART!



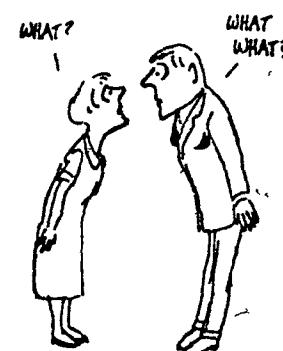
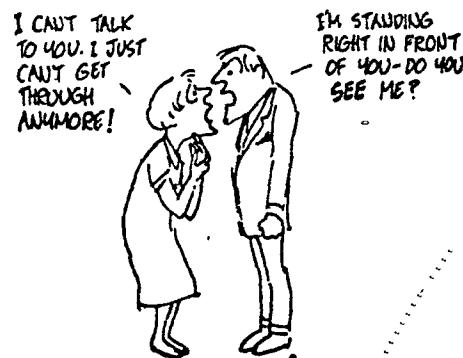
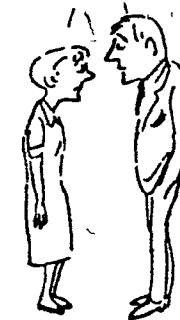
Russelian paradox - when a message  
in the message.

about the message is contained

"Gregory Bateson," Humor in Human Communication" in  
Motivation in Humor, ed. J. Levine, p. 163.



WHAT'S THE USE? YOU HAVEN'T  
HEARD A SINGLE WORD I'VE SAID.



"They are so self-absorbed that they are incapable of communication; they have parallel monologues, not conversations. Feiffer's strength is that in these characters he has caught quite precisely the distinctive verbal and physical gestures of their prototypes - the people who of course compose his audience."

Segal, Feiffer, Steinberg and Others - Commentary, July 1961, 32(1), p. 432.

### Relationship of Man to Himself

Out of 300 cartoons, 51 are concerned with the relationship of man to himself. It is difficult to isolate the satiric intention in these cartoons in contrast to the ease in which the theme of failure is established in the relationship of man to woman. More abstract and certainly more ironic and absurdist, the cartoons representing the relationship of man to himself present a conglomerate of themes: among them are the discrepancy between image and self-image, isolation and the art of rationalizing.

Feiffer was influenced by Dostoevsky's Notes from the Underground. He says of it that he "always hoped to get in terms of humour some of the feelings that Dostoevsky got about his man . . . to show within the space of a strip how man views himself and then show what the outside sees him as. And the two have absolutely no connection."<sup>19</sup>

Feiffer's fascination with the "sick man" of literature helps to define one of the structures presented in his cartoons. Feiffer has stated that there is a schism between man and the social structure, the basic implication being a failure of society to truly know the individual. This is because society sets up a structure in which "image" is the

<sup>19</sup> J. ETTRIDGE, IS. KOPALA, C. RICKY, eds., Contemporary Authors, II (MICHIGAN: GALE Research Company 1971): 712.

vehicle for self-definition, while the individual sets up a structure whereby "self-image" is the vehicle for self-definition.

According to The Art of the Satirist by W.O.S. Sutherland, a satiric mode is established when a moral discrepancy or contrast of values is represented. The dichotomy of image and self-image can be classified as satire according to this criteria. Image and self-image can be seen as a contrast of values, one emphasizing the individual value structure, the other emphasizing society's value structure. The discrepancy between image and self-image is that image is an imposition that forces man into an acceptable behaviour pattern that might not necessarily be compatible with his self-image, which functions independently of socially acceptable behaviour patterns. The imposition of behaviour on man by society as the means by which image is forced, makes the nature of self-image a measurement of the variation from that norm of behaviour. Distinctly 'Feifferesque,' and clearly understandable if Feiffer was truly influenced by Dostoevsky, self-image must be measured in terms of the sense of the inappropriateness of the self in the social milieu. Facade is the compensatory trademark of the isolated individual whose behaviour is prompted by self-image.

In the satire of the relationship of man to himself there is a

tension that Northrop Frye calls sophisticated pathos:

"A study of the isolated mind . . . how someone recognizably like ourselves is broken by a conflict between the inner and outer world, between imaginative reality and the sort of reality which is established by a social consensus."<sup>20</sup> The term sophisticated pathos is used by Frye in defining the mode of high and low mimetic tragedy, which essentially is unrelated to the satiric mode. But when one realizes that the characters are motivated by a "weakness which appeals to our sympathy because it is on our own level of experience"<sup>21</sup> the effect of Feiffer's satire takes on a more somber quality, one that resembles the struggles of a tragic hero.

Self-image becomes a weakness in the Feiffer character because it makes for a hostile, aggressive social response, an indication that self-image cannot cope with the image expected of it. It is interesting to note that those characters who are representatives of the self-image, must be hostile and aggressive in their behaviour. This reinforces the assumption that Feiffer is basically an angry man, who expresses human conflict through an aggressive satire.

It is assumed that Sutherland's latter reference to

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<sup>20</sup> Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 39.

<sup>21</sup> Frye, p. 38.

a contrast of values is more appropriate when considering Feiffer's attitude toward the individual and the system than a moral discrepancy, because the dichotomy of image and self-image in the cartoons is depicted in a behavioural fashion. A distinction between values and morals is necessitated here. Morals are a tradition of sentiment that affects the conscience. Morals are upheld through beliefs which then cause behaviour. Maintaining a moral standard is maintaining a behavioural pattern, but the purpose of the maintenance is to procure a good conscience. Values, on the other hand, are personalized volitional choices which cause behaviour to meet desired ends. The purpose is not to end up with a good conscience but to procure what one desires.

A contrast in morals then would be a contrast in the opinion of what is right and wrong which imposes a judgement on actions. A contrast in values simply admits to different means to procure ends. In the case of image and self-image, the desire for social approval is the end in effect. How one acts, socially or anti-socially, not rightly or wrongly, is the distinction between morality and values in this case. One might say that social or anti-social labels are judgements. They are not; they are measurements of the need for social approval.

The great disparity between self-image and image can be measured in terms of the need for social approval. Ayn Rand's philosophy in The Fountainhead is applicable to Feiffer's characters who must cope with the decision between self-image and image as their motivational source. What Rand calls the Altruists and the Egoists is essentially a measurement of the need for social approval. According to Rand, the Altruists are masochists, motivated by image (desire for social acceptance) to give of themselves completely, compulsively. The Egoists are sadists, motivated by self-image (a sense of inappropriateness about belonging to society) to ignore the demands of social protocol. In Rand's terms the Egoists possess what she calls a virtue of selfishness or dignity of the individual. It is interesting that Feiffer's egoistical characters who insist on breaking norms of behaviour patterns do so as misfits. Feiffer's Egoists contrast with Rand's on the basis of individual integrity. Feiffer's have none, instead they are pathetic examples of lost causes. Self-image appears self-defeating in the same manner that most of the cartoons about men and women are also destructive.

To compare Feiffer's vision of selflessness or self-fishness with Ayn Rand's Altruism and Egoism is extremely pertinent when one realizes that Rand allows for integrity, but only through sadism. Social self-alignment is unavoidably manifested through neurosis. This is the commonality of Feiffer and Rand. Certainly there is no intention to compare them artistically but the correlation has been made because Feiffer and Rand share two components of American modernism in their message: they are concerned with image as

manifested through behaviour (either forced behaviour or independent behaviour) and that image, no matter which way you slice it, is an expression of neurosis.

There is still a need to determine why the representation of image and self-image is a form of satire within the greater context of Feiffer's satire. According to Sutherland, a basic satiric requirement is met when a display of a contrast of values is present. Feiffer is contrasting obsequious behaviour or image with neurotic defensive behaviour or self-image. Where Feiffer is aligned must be made clear to the reader or else the satire is not satisfactory. Feiffer apparently favours the weak, neurotic, independent isolationist, which means the values of image are the object of attack. Through sophisticated pathos, a familiarity and identification with the weaknesses of the individual who is confronted with an inner and outer conflict of identity is established. Therefore the components of tragedy are also considerable. A satisfactory conclusion about the form of satire would be to call it tragi-comic. The comic element is a parody of individual behaviour. The tragic element is the realism of neurosis. The sum total is self-parody; an incredibly self-deprecating theme that makes one regard Feiffer as a terribly serious as well as hilariously funny satirist.

IT HASN'T ALWAYS  
BEEN EASY BECAUSE  
I WAS ROTTEN.



I LOOKED ROTTEN  
I THOUGHT ROTTEN  
I COULD TELL BY  
THE WAY PEOPLE  
STARED AWAY  
FROM ME THAT  
THEY WERE  
THINKING. THERE  
GOES A ROTTEN  
KID.



SO I DECIDED  
TO COME OUT  
I SAW IT  
TO BE NICE.



AT FIRST IT WAS PURE  
AFFECTION OUTSIDE  
I DID FAVORS, LENT  
MONEY, SMILED A  
LOT. BUT INSIDE, I  
STAYED ROTTEN.



BUT GIVE NICENESS  
AN INCH AND IT  
TAKES A MILE.  
NICENESS RAN  
AHEAD INSIDE OF  
ME. I BECAME  
A COMPULSIVE  
DOLL.



THEN I CAME  
INTO A ROUGH  
PEOPLE & I HAD  
I GOT LITTLE  
BUT ON IT  
I GOT NICER  
AND NICER!



EVEN WHEN IT  
WASN'T NECESSARY  
I WAS NICE. GUYS  
WOULDN'T CURSE  
IN MY COMPANY,  
GIRLS BEGAN  
TO THINK OF  
ME AS A  
FRIEND I  
GAVE MY  
MINISTER  
CULT  
FEELINGS



I TRIED TO CUT  
DOWN BUT I  
HAD LOST THE  
POWER OF  
CHOICE.  
WAS HOOKED.  
ON NICE!

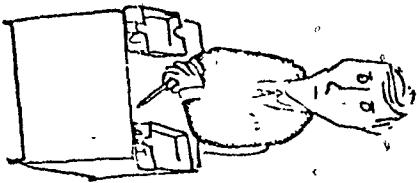


DO YOU  
KNEW WHAT  
IT'S LIKE  
TO HAVE  
A FORTY  
FOUND  
MONKEY  
ON  
YOUR  
BACK?



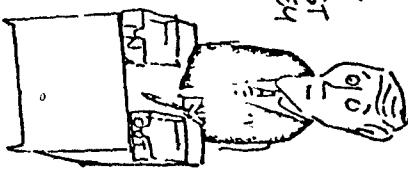
NOT THAT  
I'M COMPLAINING,  
MIND YOU

THE COMPANY'S  
BEEN VERY  
GOOD TO ME  
SINCE I  
GOT OUT OF  
SCHOOL

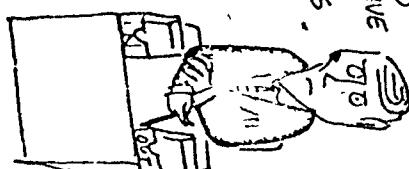


FIRST THEY ENROLLED  
ME IN THEIR EXECUTIVE  
TRAINING SQUAD  
LEARNING ALL PARTS  
OF THE FIELD AND  
GETTING PAID FOR  
IT AS WELL

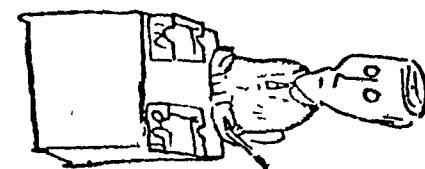
THEN THEY HELPED  
EVELYN AND ME  
FIND A HOUSE  
CONVENIENTLY  
LOCATED IN A  
SECTION WHERE  
OTHER YOUNG  
EXECUTIVES  
LIVE -



AND WHEN EVELYN  
BECAME ILL SMACK  
DAB IN THE MIDDLE  
OF HER TWENTY FIRST  
BIRTHDAY PARTY THEY  
ALLOWED US FULL  
BENEFIT OF THE  
COMPANY'S HOSP-  
ITALIZATION PLAN  
EVEN THOUGH I  
WAS A MONTH  
SHORT ON  
ELIGIBILITY -

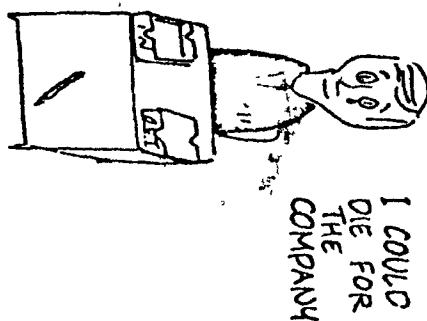


AND IN SPITE  
OF MY LOW SCORE  
ON THE MONTHLY  
PROMOTIONAL  
EMOTIONAL QUIZ  
AND SUBSEQUENT  
DAILY MAKE-UP  
SESSIONS WITH  
THE MORALE  
DEPARTMENTS  
PSYCHOANALYST



THEN WHEN, BECAUSE OF  
EVELYN'S DRINKING  
PROBLEM, IT LOOKED  
LIKE I MIGHT BE  
CASHIERED, THE EMER-  
GENCY AID COMMITTEE  
OF THE COMPANY'S  
FAMILY COUNSELING  
PLAN PLUS THE WIVES'  
AUXILIARY'S "BE A  
PAL" SERVICE HELPED  
PULL US THROUGH.

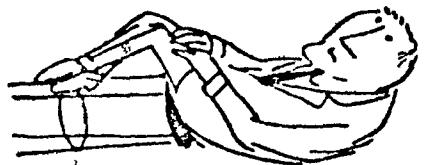
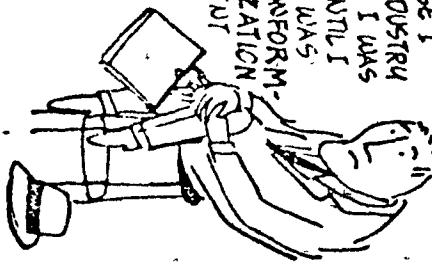
NOW THE LITTLE  
WOMAN AND I ARE  
BACK IN STEP HERE  
I AM ONLY TWENTY-  
FOUR AND ALREADY  
A SECOND CONSULT-  
ATION ASSISTANT.  
AND JUST YESTER-  
DAY EVELYN  
ENROLLED OUR THREE  
YEAR-OLD IN THE  
EXECUTIVE JUNIORS  
TRAINING SQUAD.



I COULD  
DIE FOR  
THE  
COMPANY

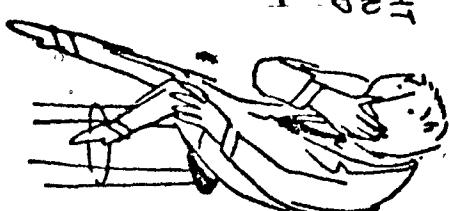
IT'S ALWAYS BEEN A STRUGGLE FOR ME TO FIND MY PLACE IN SOCIETY. THAT'S WHY I HAVE TO READ BOOKS.

AFTER COLLEGE I WENT INTO INDUSTRY AND THOUGHT I WAS DOING FINE UNTIL I READ THAT I WAS REALLY A CONFORMIST ORGANIZATION MAN SO I WENT OUT AND CONFORMED AND BECAME



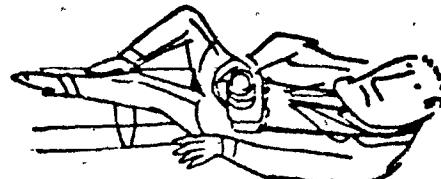
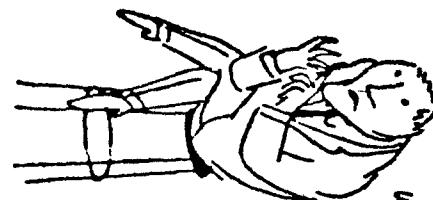
FOR INSTANCE, IN COLLEGE I THOUGHT I WAS GETTING ON FINE UNTIL I READ THAT MINE WAS A SILENT GENERATION SO I SHUT UP.

WELL, I BEGAN MAKING A LOT OF MONEY AND FELT THAT I WAS DOING FINE UNTIL I READ THAT, IN TRUTH, I WAS A MEMBER OF AN ACQUISITIVE SOCIETY, SO I BOUGHT THINGS.



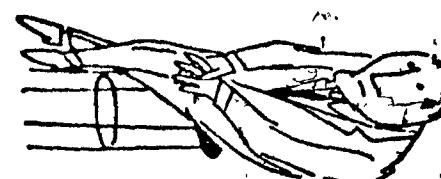
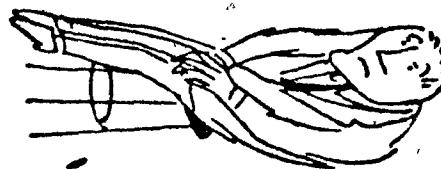
OF COURSE, I NOW HAD A LOT OF TIME ON MY HANDS, BUT I FELT FINE UNTIL I READ THAT MY INCOME GROUP HAD A LEISURE PROBLEM SO I LEARNED Hobbies.

WELL, IN BETWEEN BEING SILENT, CONFORMING, BELONGING, ACQUIRING, AND TAKING CARE OF MY LEISURE PROBLEM I HAVEN'T YET HAD A CHANCE TO SEEK STATUS.



NOW FOR A WHILE THERE I FELT FINE UNTIL I READ THAT THE ROOT PROBLEM OF MY AFFLUENT SOCIETY WAS STATUS SEEKING.

I GUESS I'LL FIT IT IN SOMEHOW.



ONE NIGHT AT A PARTY  
I WAS IN AN ARGUMENT  
WHEN SUDDENLY JUST  
WHEN I WAS ABOUT TO  
APPY THE CRICKET  
AND QUOTE STATISTICS  
FROM THE WALL STREET  
JOURNAL - I REALIZED  
I DONT BELIEVE A  
SINGLE WORD I  
WAS SAYING

AND THEN IT CAME  
TO ME THAT I  
DONT BELIEVE  
ANYTHING ANYBODY  
HAD TOLD ME IN  
YEARS. THAT DEEP  
THINGS I REALLY  
BELIEVED WAS THAT  
EVERYBODY WAS  
LYING!

AND I DONT BELIEVE  
A SINGLE WORD MY  
OPPONENT WAS SAYING.  
AND I THOUGHT FURTHER  
AND I REALIZED THAT  
I DONT BELIEVE A  
SINGLE ARGUMENT I  
HAD HEARD ALL EVENING  
OR A SINGLE NEWSPAPER  
EDITORIAL I HAD READ  
IN MONTHS

THAT IT WAS  
ALL SPECIAL  
PLEASING.  
GIRLS!  
JOBS!  
GOVERNMENTS!  
ME!  
EVERY  
THING!

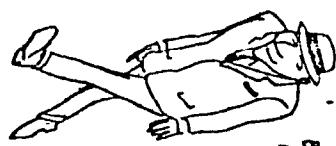
AND SO I GOT  
VERY DEPRESSED  
BECAUSE OF LIES  
WERE THE ONLY  
THINGS ANYONE  
COULD BELIEVE  
IN. HOW DOES  
ONE GO ABOUT  
SELECTING THE  
BEST LIE. THE  
ONE THAT MAKES  
YOU FEEL BETTER?

AND DONT MY BELIEF  
THAT EVERYTHING WAS A  
LIE ONLY A DEVICE TO  
ESCAPE RESPONSIBILITY  
REALIZING THIS I  
BECAME HUMBLE. I  
CAME TO A NEW  
BELIEF -

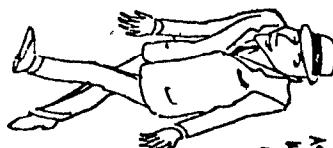
BUT THEN ANOTHER THOUGHT CAME TO  
MIND. WAS I SO WELL INFORMED  
THAT I COULD AFFORD TO HAVE  
SUCH STATEMENTS? WEREN'T  
THERE OTHERS IN POSITIONS OF  
AUTHORITY FAR BETTER TRAINED  
IN THE COMPLEXITY OF OUR TIMES  
WHOSE GUIDANCE I SHOULD ACCEPT  
ESPECIALLY WHEN MY OWN  
CONCLUSIONS WERE SO BADLY  
CONFUSED?

- TO ACCEPT  
MY LIE,  
RIGHT  
OR  
WRONG.  
) THAT IS  
) WHAT I  
) HAVE  
) TRUSTED  
) THE GOOD  
) SENSE OF  
) THE EXPERTS.  
) FINALLY ...  
) COME  
) TO  
) BELIEVE.

MY LIE,  
RIGHT  
OR  
WRONG.



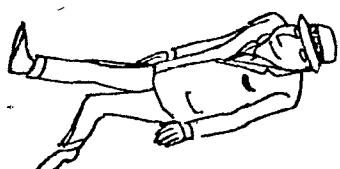
BUT NO  
MATTER  
HOW I  
ARGUE  
I KNOW  
IT'S ONLY  
AN ALIBI.



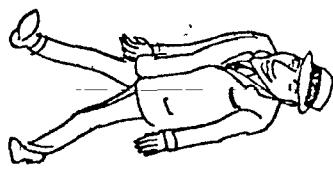
AS IF IT  
WERE MY  
IDEA IN THE  
FIRST PLACE.  
BUT THEN  
I TELL  
MYSELF  
THAT'S  
CRAZY!



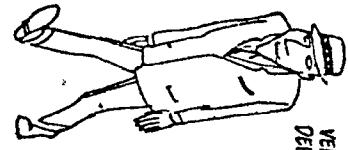
FOR INSTANCE  
IF THE WORLD  
BLOW UP  
TOMORROW  
AND I  
WAS THE  
ONLY SURVIVOR.  
YOU KNOW  
HOW I'D  
FEEL?



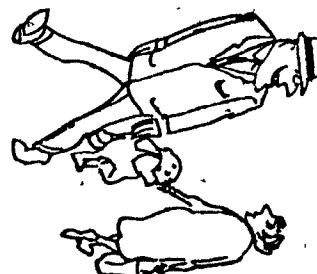
THAT'S  
WHY I  
SMILE A  
LOT AT  
PEOPLE.



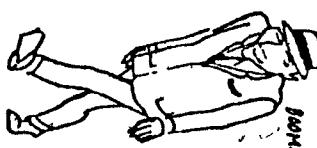
I DON'T  
BLOW UP  
THE WORLD  
I JUST  
THOUGHT  
ABOUT  
BLOWING UP  
THE WORLD.  
THE WORLD  
IS THINKING  
A CRIME?



VERY  
DEFENSIVE.



I DON'T  
ASK  
THAT  
THEY  
LIKE ME.



ALL I  
ASK IS  
THEY FIND  
ME NOT  
GUILTY.

I'M  
OUTRAGEOUS.



44 WIT IS  
B:TING.  
LA LA LA

STEVIE - IT'S THREE  
IN THE MORNING.  
PLEASE LET'S  
GO HOME.



COMPANIONS SHUN ME  
LA LA LA. BECAUSE  
THEY'RE JEALOUS  
LA LA LA. BECAUSE

LISTEN  
WHEN  
TALK  
STEVE

I'M  
BETTER.  
LA LA LA  
BECAUSE  
THEY'RE  
STUPID  
LA LA LA  
BECAUSE  
I KNOW  
IT LA  
LA LA.

BUT I DON'T NEED THEM  
LA LA LA THEY'RE ALL  
TOO SHALLOW. LA LA LA

C'MON,  
STEVIE  
PUT ON  
YOUR  
COAT

THEY'RE NOT WORTH  
HATING. THEY'RE  
DISGUSTING  
I SEE  
RIGHT  
THROUGH  
THEM  
LA LA  
LA

THAT'S RIGHT  
SWEETHEART  
NOW THE  
OTHER ARM

THEY'D JUST  
RENDER  
LA LA  
FOR  
IE  
SH  
LA  
A  
H  
ALLY  
ON  
A  
LA

THAT'S A GOOD  
BOY, STEVIE NOW  
LET ME  
BRUSH  
BACK  
YOUR  
HAIR

STEVIE - THE  
BOOZE IS  
ALL GONE  
AND THERE'S  
NO ONE LEFT  
TO IN-  
SULT  
PLEASE  
LET'S  
GO  
HOME.



THE WORLD IS SILLY,  
I THINK I'LL USE IT  
I'M OUTRAGEOUS. LA

TAXI!



### Isolation

In the second cartoon anthology, Passionella and Other Short Stories, Feiffer uses an extended form of the cartoon to create what could be called modern fables.

George's Moon is a perfect example of the tragic-comic mode of image and self-image described above. An analysis of George's Moon is included here because it genuinely represents Feiffer's closest contact with the absurd while remaining within the mode of the relationship of man to himself. George's Moon is also one of the first of Feiffer's cartoons to be dramatized. It was performed in Chicago at a playwrights cabaret theatre in 1961.

There has never been any serious critical debate about classifying Feiffer as an absurdist, such as there has been about Albee, for example. In the reviews of Feiffer's plays, only one critic mentions that Feiffer's style is midway between absurdist farce and social satire. As a cartoonist writing during the decade when Absurdism was at its peak (1955-1965), one would expect that more absurd themes might be identifiable in Feiffer's work, yet the term absurd rarely has been applied.

The term "sick", originating with the perverted exploits of Lenny Bruce, was slapped onto the cartoons much more readily than "absurd". One possible distinction between

absurdism and sick humour might be the level of psychological intention. Sick humour is exploitative, simplistic, vulgar, harsh, condemning and malicious. It is a psychopathological form of expression that realizes, through invective, a pernicious hostility of the individual toward society. Its source is deeply psychological but its intention is not really to effect, to a high degree, any real sympathy. Absurdism is rarely exploitative and never simple. It can be vulgar and demeaning but it does not employ invective. Its source, certainly stems more from a metaphysical point of view than from personal pathology. The psychological intention of absurdism is to instill in man a reasonable amount of doubt about the nature of his very existence. Absurdism confronts man's systems of self-justification, while sick humour only superficially condemns certain forms of behaviour.

Often, a component of absurdism is the environment within which man's systems of self-justification are confronted. The environments are often sterile, depleted, even void; there is a sense of omnipresent nullity; that nothing and no one is anywhere. Sick humour never creates such a universe.

George's Moon presents the void and the search for self-knowledge, self-justification and self-gratification. It is Feiffer's only cartoon story that builds themetically on man's relationship to himself within an absurdist environment.

One interpretation of absurdism implies that the

normal desires of man, such as self-knowledge, knowledge of God, honest relationship, and rewarding vocation are frustrated and must be compensated for. The compensation, in order to be absurdist, must border on the ridiculous or the surrealistic.<sup>22</sup> Beckett compensates through game, Genet through ritual, Albee and Ionesco through pretense and charade and Feiffer, in George's Moon, through apotheosis. The apotheosis of the self is ridiculous and the apotheosis of space is surreal. In George's Moon the combination of existential isolation with the search for human integrity presents a basic incongruity or frustration that must be compensated for.

George is the sole inhabitant of the moon. At first he is puzzled as to how he got on the moon, so he searches for a reason. His immediate desire to understand his environment is frustrated but his compensation is the knowledge of his name: "George". His name has no real meaning, but it temporarily serves his need to identify some element of his predicament. Trying to understand personal predicament through a confrontation with the environment is an absurdist motif easily recognizable in Genet's Deathwatch, Arrabel's And They Put Handcuffs on the Flowers and Satre's No Exit.

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<sup>22</sup> Brian Robinson, "Theatre of the Absurd," Graduate Seminar, McGill University, Fall 1963.

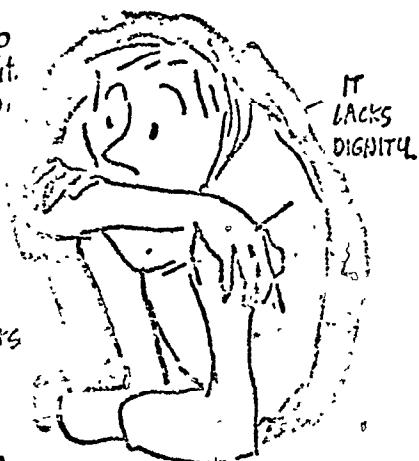
Laurence Kitchin in Modern Drama: Form and Interpretation speaks of two symbols of modern Drama. They are the cage and the scream. The cage implies environments that trap people like Pinter rooms and jail cells. George is as metaphorically trapped on his moon as any hero of modern drama is isolated in a limiting environment.

George's name serves as a beginning now that he knows himself within the immediate context of his environment, he extends his appetite for possession. He decides to own the moon; he claims it and feels quite smug about his possession. George's momentary exuberance is quelled, however, when he returns to his first dilemma. Not knowing how he got on the moon, and feeling essentially "non-moon", he wonders about his roots and his values. He becomes introspective, but is forced to submit to the impossibility of self-discovery when introspection is of no avail. He needs diversions, compensations. At first he plays games: rock collecting and drop kicking rocks into craters. He decides he hates rocks and he is bored with rock kicking.

George becomes subdued again with his basic instinctual question about his origin. He realizes he is passing time with no discovery of his true identity in sight. His search for self-awareness is more important than his initial compensation through hobbies.

He was just filling up  
time and he knew it.  
What good was it to  
collect rocks, to  
count craters, to  
fill the craters  
you've counted  
with the rocks  
you've collected,  
to empty the craters  
and collect the  
rocks all over  
again?

Was this a way for a man to spend a life?



George recognized  
he had no sense  
of himself. Also that  
he had no sense of  
others. How could he  
have any dignity  
without a context?  
He didn't know who  
he was or what  
or anything.



So since he was the only thing around, George decided to believe in himself.



He made up poems to himself.

GEORGE  
George  
GEORGE  
george  
GEORGE  
George  
GEORGE.



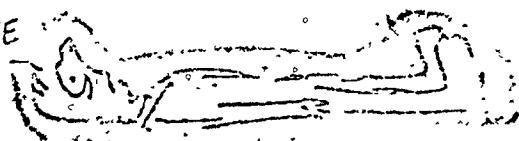
He made up stories to himself.

SO GEORGE  
CURED THE  
PLAQUE, ENDED  
THE FAMINE,  
TURNED BACK  
THE  
FLOOD.



And then he awoke one morning and found that he had forgotten his name.

THAT'S WHAT  
I GET  
SERVES ME  
RIGHT.



So he stopped believing in himself.

George decides that in order to have dignity he must have faith in something. He becomes disillusioned to such an extent that he believes that he himself can serve as his inspiration of faith. He idolizes himself in a ridiculous fashion:

George decides that he needs something greater than himself to idolize. He discovers space. Space has the perfect attributes for apotheosis. It is removed, unknown and non-disillusioning. The apotheosis of space symbolizes man's identity with emptiness; George however feels that he has discovered a mature belief.

As soon as George finds a sense of security through his relationship with space, he is confronted by rockets. His identification with his newly founded faith provider is quickly forsaken. The idea of being rescued by other people is a more tangible and desirable hope to George. The absurdist notion that man can be saved from his isolation and his predicament, but that he really does not want to be is one of the greatest moments in Waiting for Godot, when Vladimir and Estragon try to save Lucky, a slave, but Lucky attacks them. George, in a way, is the same slave to his predicament. His initial joy at the prospects of being saved is turned to malicious hostility, but admittedly, for very different reasons than Lucky's which are actually never revealed. Except that one might assume Lucky prefers the protection of a repressive environment to the multiple

and unknown possibilities of a free environment.

George suffers from a unique paranoia, possibly too human and too apparent to be called absurdist at this point. Upon the thought of rescue, paranoia sets in. At first George relies on his self-image as a paradigm of enviable knowledge: he is the only expert on the moon. This feeling of elation is transformed into an overwhelming sense of dread when he realizes he does not know a thing about the moon. He is a fraud; he panics. He hides from the onslaught of his rescuers. He is retreating into an insecurity that is manifested by self-persecution of his inadequacies, a typical Feiffer theme.

Abandoning his fears, he gathers all his courage and a lot of rocks and declares war. George feels confident that he will win because he knows the terrain. His isolated environment appeases him.

This cartoon expresses the need man has to be saved from isolation but at the same time expresses the fear of being exposed as a fraud. The search for self-knowledge, justification and gratification is stultified by a paranoid reaction which does not allow for self-integrity. It is despairing to realize that George is defending his universe of solitude, a self-image built on an empty relationship with space. His desire for isolation is based on a sense of alienation from the self. Such an expression of insecurity that metamorphosizes

into defensive hostility is a tragic paradox of the human predicament. George is a hero of the modern misshapen personality. George is Feiffer's only true courageous hero, prepared to defend even his insecurity.

When absurdity can evoke sympathy, when absurdity borders on personal tragedy, the basis of satire becomes more serious than pretentious. George's Moon is satire of the image/self-image motif. George becomes aggressively hostile to the environment that imposes certain behavioural expectations upon him. These expectations directly confront his self-image which is composed of a sense of inadequacy or fear of inappropriateness at being able to cope with society's demands.

#### Art of Rationalization

"The people in Feiffer's cartoons spend their time explaining and justifying themselves - not only to others but to themselves. One of their central principles - though they do not often recognize it - was articulated by Groucho Marx's famous line: 'I wouldn't join a club that would have me for a member.' Yet if these men and women are capable of being bugged by almost anything, they still have an inexhaustible ability to rationalize today's defeat for tomorrow's disaster."<sup>23</sup>

Segal recognizes Feiffer's predisposition towards defeat, but at the same time Feiffer includes an antithetical smugness in his characters that combines a sense of helplessness with complacency.

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<sup>23</sup> David Segal, "Feiffer, Steinberg and Others," p. 432.

I'VE BEEN LYING HERE  
A LONG TIME TRYING  
TO FIGURE OUT THE  
RIGHT ANSWERS

BUT I COULDN'T  
COME UP WITH  
ANY.



SO AFTER GIVING IT A  
LOT OF THOUGHT I  
CONCLUDED IT'S LESS  
IMPORTANT TO KNOW  
THE RIGHT ANSWERS  
THAN TO BE ABLE TO  
PHRASE THE RIGHT  
QUESTIONS.



BUT THE ONLY QUESTION  
I COULD COME UP WITH  
WAS "YOU BUM - WHY  
ARE YOU LYING HERE?"



SO I FINALLY SAW THAT THE  
ROOT OF MY PROBLEM LAY  
NEITHER IN FINDING THE RIGHT  
ANSWER NOR IN PHRASING  
THE RIGHT QUESTIONS.

THE ROOT OF MY PROBLEM  
LAY IN THE AWARENESS  
THAT IF THE RIGHT QUESTION  
COULD BE PHRASED, THEN  
A RIGHT ANSWER UNDOUBTEDLY  
MIGHT BE FOUND.



NOW KNOWING THIS HAS  
ALLOWED ME TO TRANSCEND  
THE SHALLOW DILEMMA OF  
SEEKING ANSWERS OR  
PHRASING QUESTIONS IN  
ORDER TO ASSUAGE MY  
GUILT. I KNOW AT LAST  
WHY IT'S INEVITABLE THAT  
I LIE HERE AS I NOW LIE!

IM  
GROWING.



"Irony characterizes the attitude of  
one who, when confronted with two  
things that are mutually exclusive  
chooses both, which is but another way  
of saying he chooses neither."\*

Haakon Chevalier in The Satirist:  
His Temperament, Motivation and  
Influence, by L. Feinberg, p. 8.

\*Which, if taken one step further in  
Feiffer's case is to say, ~~he~~ choose  
not to choose."

The use of inverted logic encapsulates the characters in a rhetorical debate that is essential in understanding Feiffer's style. A character poses a problematic question to himself; he transforms the issue into a dialectic, and then dissolves the issue completely by the process of rationalization. To understand the connection between the use of rationalization and the relationship of man to himself is to understand Feiffer's notion of self-deception. Feiffer is setting up the strongest relationship between his reading audience and his subject matter when he pictures man against himself in an attempt to resolve a conflict. This is because the object of the satire is none other than the individual and his pursuit of rationality. A polemical self-exploration is the result. This produces a polarity between intellect and emotions, both in the characters and in the readers. The standard form is a logical self-scrutiny; the debate always resembles, at least symbolically, the Hamletian query of "To be or not to be." Being Post-Cartesian, Feiffer's questions sound more like "To do or not to do," or "To understand or not to understand," or "To try or not to try." This is satire composed of controlled, rational self-deception; in short, a parody on man as the thinking animal.

PRETTY  
SOON  
ILL  
HAVE  
TO  
GET  
UP.

- 83 -

IT'S NOT HEALTHY TO LIE  
HERE! GOT TO AROUSE MYSELF!  
GOT TO GET IN 'OVED!  
NOW! RIGHT NOW!

BECAUSE WITHOUT FULLY  
UNDERSTANDING MY  
MOTIVATIONS, HOW CAN  
EITHER ACT HAVE ANY  
MEANING FOR ME?

OR AM I RATIONALIZING?

NOW I MUST QUESTION  
MYSELF PLENTLESSLY.  
MY PATH IS CLEAR

PERHAPS I DON'T...  
...GET UP. OR...  
...I DON'T  
FEEL MY RIBBLE

OR PERHAPS THOUGH LYING  
HERE ATTRACTS ME, GETTING  
UP ALSO ATTRACTS ME  
HENCE MY INDECISION

SO THE REAL ISSUE IS NOT  
GETTING UP OR LYING DOWN  
THE REAL ISSUE IS HOW DO I  
DO IT SO I FEEL ABOUT  
EITHER MOVE

PRETTY SOON I'LL HAVE  
TO START PROBING

ILL COUNT TO THREE.

Persiflage built by an artifice of logic is Feiffer's forte as a comic writer. What in fact is happening through the art of rationalization is the process of the subversion of order. In a sense, the logic is a derangement in contrast to an arrangement which easily allows for a disintegration-effect in character development. The art of rationalization is decomposition through the process of composition. Naturally, all writing is composition in the technical sense that it is a gradual development of idea or pure expression. The irony of rationalization is, however, that through the technicalities of writing, the opposite effect is achieved. The building of the writing is all thrust toward the disintegration of the subject. The age-old controversy over form and content as either inseparable or separable appears to be resolved here. The form is separable, in fact the opposite of the content. A logical form is the source of an illogical content. Herein lies the key to the dynamism of Feiffer as a playwright. The nature of his characters tend, first of all, to be representatives of the relationship of man to himself because technically when they are engaged in a dialogue, the effect appears to be a monologue. It could be attributed to a simple matter of bad communication, but there is something more subtle at hand: the implicit message of non-communication. Secondly, each rationalizes to some extent, in a blatant manner.

Thirdly, through rationalization, the characters are not formed, but rather unformed. One might say the characters are mystified rather than demystified. This serves Feiffer's ultimate satirical purpose: mockery. An illustration of rationalization as the subversion of order can be seen in Little Murders, Feiffer's first full length play. Lieutenant Practice is trying to demystify the facts of a recent crime wave:

"Every crime has its own pattern of logic. Everything has an order. If we can't find that order it's not because it doesn't exist, but only because we've incorrectly observed some vital piece of evidence. Let us examine the evidence. Number one. In the last six months three hundred and forty-five homicides have been committed in this city. The victims have ranged variously in sex, age, social status and color. Number two. In none of the three hundred and forty-five homicides have we been able to establish motive. Number three. All three hundred and forty-five homicides remain listed on our books as unsolved. So much for the evidence. A subtle pattern begins to emerge. What is this pattern? What is it that each of these three hundred and forty-five homicides have in common? They have in common three things; a) that they have nothing in common, b) that they have no motive, c) that, consequently, they remain unsolved. The pattern becomes clearer."<sup>24</sup>

Lieutenant Practice unravels things quite methodically, then unravels them just as methodically, bringing things into disorder, rather than order. The satire takes on a special irony.

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<sup>24</sup> Jules Feiffer, Little Murders (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1968), p. 95.

Literally, Lieutenant Practice admits to the non-conclusions of his conclusion, so the irony is not within the subtleties of meaning: something really meaning something else. The irony is in the honesty of disillusion, bringing the satire into the realm of self-parody, as was seen in George's Moon. The drollery is not projected at something so much as it is projected towards the person making the remarks. Inevitably, what becomes the most ironic is the association the reader makes with the character. The art of rationalization is, Feiffer's trapping of the reader into the process of identification with the rationalization. Such a process is quite different from the process Swift claimed as the satirist's: holding a glass that reflects every one else's face except the observer's. What Feiffer is doing by aligning the reader into an identification process with characters who parody logic structures through rationalization is to make the object of his satire everyone who understands at least the basics of social psychology. We all rationalize.

The art of rationalization is the means by which Feiffer establishes a universal target for his satire. He does this by making the reader aware of the process of self-deception on the part of his character. The self-deception is built on a logic structure that relegates order to disorder, a rhetorical device that marks one of Feiffer's comical distinctions. The reader becomes not only aware of the process

of self-deception on the part of the character, but also aware of the familiarity of the process, as rationalization is a commonly understood social psychological process. The self-deception of the character becomes parody of the reader, establishing an ironic satiric structure based on, not a deception of meaning, but on the level of personal confrontation of the art with the audience.

Conclusion: Relationship of Man to Himself

Feiffer's satire of the relationship of man to himself is built around three themes. They are the discrepancy between image and self-image, the predicament of isolation and the art of rationalization.

The discrepancy between self-image and image, inspired by Feiffer's hopes to construct the same dilemma of Dostoevsky's hero in Notes From the Underground, basically employs the notion that man views himself in one way and society views man in another way and that the two have no connection. Such a polarity produces a discrepancy between self-expectation and societal expectations of the individual. Feiffer's characters that represent the self-image/image theme do so in a distinctly behavioural fashion. The behavioural pattern of the characters has been examined in light of Ayn Rand's philosophy found in The Fountainhead. The basic motivational distinction in behaviour is in the varying degrees of the need

for social approval. The characters have been classed as Altruists, those having a high need for social approval who must integrate their behaviour according to society's expectations, or, they have been classed as Egoists, those having a low need for social approval, characters deliberately disobeying norms of behaviour. A label such as "behavioural satire" is based on a theory by W.O.S. Sutherland which states that an essential element in satire is the representation of either a value contrast or a moral discrepancy. Deciding that a value contrast was represented by unique behaviour patterns, in contrast to a moral discrepancy, a conclusion was made that satire of this type, distinctly Twentieth century, is based on neurosis.

The effect of both types of satirical personalities is to evoke pity, an unusual by-product of satire. Pity is felt, perhaps, because the characters of such cartoons may be classified as heroes in the ironic mode according to Frye. It is interesting to note that Frye classifies heroes in fiction specifically outside a moral context and within a behavioural context.

"... not morally, but by the heroes power of action . . . if inferior in power or intelligence to ourselves, so that we have the sense of looking down on a scene of bondage, frustration or absurdity, the hero belongs to the ironic mode. This is still true when the reader feels that he is or might be in the same situation, as the situation is being judged by the norms of a greater freedom."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Frye, p. 34.

Both types of behavioural patterns are situations in which the reader can realize the frustration involved in the character and at the same time recognize that he is also and always in the same predicament of choosing his alignment with image or self-image as his motivational impulse for behaviour. When satire causes a reaction of pity, a special bond is established between the object of satire and the reader. This special bond of emotional identification is most apparent when Feiffer depicts the relationship of man to himself. "Feiffer knows that he is writing to an audience of Georges, what is more remarkable, each George as he watches the fable, feels the futility of a crater counter, and is half convinced he is all alone on the moon."<sup>26</sup>

The theme of isolation also evokes pity. One full length cartoon, George's Moon, was examined to show Feiffer's affiliation with the absurd. In the relationship of man to himself, isolation, within the absurdist context, shows man's search for an identity with integrity while confined to a limited environment. The search is futile and therefore compensation is required. George compensated by ridiculous and surreal apotheosis of himself and of space. When absurdism is the vehicle of satire, there is a strong sense that tragedy is not too far afield. George's Moon combines all three:

<sup>26</sup>Anonymous, "Pied Feiffer," Time Magazine, May 26, 1961, p. 34.

absurdism, satire and tragedy to create Feiffer's only true tragic hero. The transition from a curious and innocent character to a hostile and aggressive paranoid is an indication of Feiffer's incessant need to evoke some form of psychological maladjustment in many of his characters.

The art of rationalization as a motif for the relationship of man to himself is the mode in which Feiffer's rhetorical style of logic and irony is examined. There is an artifice of logic constructed by a character that builds into an affirmation of non-conclusion. The rhetoric functions to deceive the character, but ironically at the same time it functions to arouse the reader into a process of identification based on the social, psychological awareness that rationalization is universal. The characters are left in a state of either dumbfoundedness or complacency while the reader realizes the self-deception experienced by the character is a parody of the reader.

#### Relationship of Man to Society

Eighty cartoons of the three hundred examine the theme of the relationship of man to society. The relationship of man to society can be broken down into two categories: emotive expression cartoons and blanket statement cartoons.

Emotive expression cartoons represent the relationship of man to society by depicting a human emotional response to the society.

WELCOME  
BACK FOR  
YOUR  
13<sup>th</sup>  
CONSECUTIVE  
WEEK,  
EVELYN.

THANK  
YOU,  
RED.



NOW, EVELYN, LAST WEEK YOU  
WENT UP TO \$40,000 BY PROPERLY  
CITING YOUR RIVALRY WITH  
YOUR SIBLING AS A COMPULSIVE  
SADO-MASOCHISTIC BEHAVIOR  
PATTERN WHICH DEVELOPED OUT OF  
AN EARLY POST-NATAL FEEDING  
PROBLEM.

YES,  
RED.



NOW AT \$300 PER  
RATIONALIZATION AND  
\$500 PER MENTAL  
BLOCK YOU LOST  
\$2,100 OFF YOUR  
\$40,000 LEAVING YOU  
WITH A TOTAL OF  
\$37,900!

\$300



EVELYN, WILL YOU GO INTO THE  
AUTO-SUGGESTION BOOTH AND  
TAKE YOUR REGULAR PLACE  
ON THE PSYCHO-PROMPTER  
COUCH?

THANK  
YOU,  
RED.



BUT- LATER, WHEN ASKED  
ABOUT PRE-ADOLESCENT  
OEDIPAL PHANTASY  
REPRESSIONS, YOU  
RATIONALIZED TWICE  
AND MENTAL BLOCKED  
THREE TIMES.



NOW, ANY COMBINATION OF TWO MORE  
MENTAL BLOCKS AND EITHER ONE  
RATIONALIZATION OR THREE DEFENSIVE  
PROJECTIONS WILL PUT YOU OUT OF  
THE GAME. ARE YOU WILLING  
TO GO AHEAD?

YES,  
RED.



I MIGHT SAY HERE THAT  
ALL OF EVELYN'S  
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS  
HAVE BEEN CHECKED FOR  
ACCURACY WITH HER  
ANALYST.



NOW EVELYN, FOR \$80,000  
EXPLAIN THE FAILURE OF  
YOUR THREE MARRIAGES.

BELL



WE'LL GET BACK TO  
EVELYN IN ONE  
MINUTE FIRST A  
WORD ABOUT OUR  
PRODUCT.



Unlike the relationship of man to woman and man to himself, the character's emotional response to society represents the role of citizen, not the role of the individual. Although occasionally seeming to represent a personal dilemma or private attitude, these cartoons have been classified as part of the relationship of man to society because the character is always responding to a situation defined by society, never by the character. The character is called "citizen" as opposed to "individual" because the context of the cartoon is structured around the society and not the psyche. The themes of the emotive expression cartoons are social conscience and apathy, both important themes in Feiffer's plays.

Not too distinct from the theme of image and self-image, social conscience implies that behaviour patterns are justified by a sense of obligation to society. Feiffer makes society's demands of social conscience on its citizens irreconcilable with a personal sense of righteousness. Society is made the beast and man beastly because he must comply. Then, to compound man's denigration, society stigmatizes man's behaviour, making him feel the need to confess. Feiffer uses confession in his cartoons to satirize two things: the notion that society can pose as priest and that man willingly confesses to an imposter. The theme of social conscience is very strong in Feiffer's play God Bless. In God Bless, Feiffer sets up a mock confession between a famous political statesman and a priest.

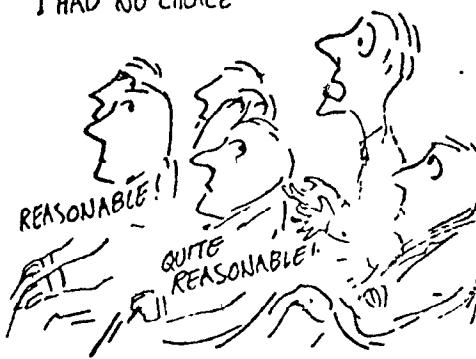
THE MEETING OF THE "I'M JUST DOING  
MY JOB CLUB" WILL COME TO ORDER  
WE WILL BEGIN WITH A REPORT FROM  
MEMBER ROCKWELL J

- 93 -

I BEGAN AS A MONITOR IN  
GRAMMAR SCHOOL. WHEN I  
WAS CALLED DOWN FOR  
REPORTING MY CLASS MATES,  
I UPHOLD ANSWERED.  
"DON'T BLAME ME I  
WAS TOLD TO DO IT"



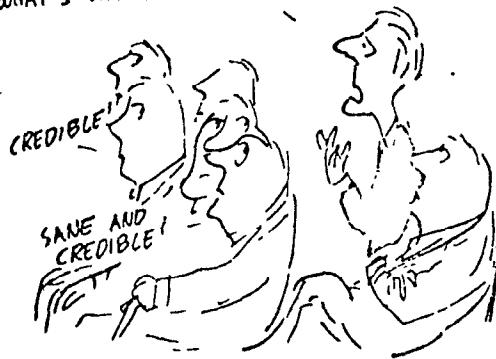
LATER ON I WAS IN THE MILITARY  
SERVICE. IT WAS MY JOB TO  
CLASSIFY PERSONNEL. I DIDN'T  
LIKE TO SEND MEN TO WAR.  
BUT THOSE WERE MY ORDERS.  
I HAD NO CHOICE



AFTER SERVICE I HAD TROUBLE  
FINDING MY NICHE FOR A WHILE  
I WAS REALLY ASKED FOR A SLOW  
THE TENANTS DIDN'T UNDERSTAND  
I WAS JUST DOING WHAT I WAS  
HIRED TO DO.



NEXT I WENT TO WORK AS A WITNESS  
I APPEARED BEFORE DOZENS OF  
CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES. I DIDN'T  
LIKE THE WORK BUT I HAD TO DO  
WHAT I WAS BEING PAID FOR.



AND NOW I'VE REACHED THE PINNACLE!  
I'VE GONE TO WORK IN A STATE PRISON  
I DON'T NECESSARILY BELIEVE IN  
CAPITAL PUNISHMENT BUT SOMEONE  
HAS TO PULL THE SWITCH



OF COURSE SOME PEOPLE  
DON'T UNDERSTAND THEY  
ASSOCIATE ME WITH THE  
WAY I MAKE A LIVING



NEXT WE HEAR FROM MEMBER  
ARNOLD K. HE WILL SPEAK ON  
INTERCONTINENTAL  
BALLISTIC MISSILES.



ALL MY LIFE PEOPLE  
DIDN'T TELL ME I  
HAD A MORAL OBLIGATION.

-94 -



BEFORE THE WAR I  
HAD A MORAL  
OBLIGATION TO  
FIGHT FASCISM.



DURING THE WAR I OWE IT  
TO MY COUNTRY TO JOIN  
THE ARMY



AFTER THE WAR IT WAS  
MY DUTY TO WORK  
FOR PEACE, INTE-  
GRATION, DECENT  
HOUSING AND  
BETTER TELE-  
VISION  
PROGRAMS.



SO I CAN'T PE  
FOR SOMETHING  
BECAUSE IT'S JUST  
RIGHT ANYMORE.  
I GOT TO BE  
FOR IT BECAUSE  
I OWE SOME-  
BODY IF I  
WASN'T.



I FEEL AS  
IF I'M  
LIVING IN  
A MORAL  
DEBTORS  
PRISON.



Apathy is the opposite of social conscience. Apathy allows the citizen to withdraw from the irritations of society.

"When there is apathy, there's a legitimate reason for it, and the reason is that people have realistically looked at the world around them and they find the alternatives so unrewarding that there's nothing better to do than turn off . . . I think it's more along the lines of an emotional and psychic process of natural selection. When it gets too dangerous out there, you move inside until you feel at one with yourself (pb., p. 96)."

To become apathetic is the choice of the individual and Feiffer does say that an emotional and psychic process of natural selection is the impetus. But to be apathetic is the means by which the individual defines himself as a citizen in regards to the society that he must relate to.

To find faith through apathy is supported by Feiffer in the above quote, but to call apathy faith is to satirize the idea that those who are not apathetic are acting-out exercises in futility. Feiffer incorporates the two opposing modes of behaviour, apathy and social conscience in Little Murders. Ironically, Patty, who symbolizes social conscience is murdered. The emotive expression cartoons make statements about man's emotional relationship with society: the society is parent, man is the child. The society demands that man has a social conscience and sense of obligation. As citizen man must accept social conscience, or else withdraw and ignore it.

I DON'T  
GET  
AROUSED  
ANYMORE

NOR DO I  
NOR DO I

- 96 -

YES, THAT'S A  
GOOD ONE. THAT  
CERTAINLY SHOULD  
HAVE AROUSED  
ME. BUT NO IT  
DOESN'T

ATOMIC  
HOLOCAUST!

SAY  
SOMETHING  
TO  
AROUSE  
ME.

MISSILE  
MADNESS!

AH, THAT USED  
TO BE A VERY  
EFFECTIVE ONE  
YEARS AGO I  
GOT AROUSED  
ALL THE TIME  
ON ATOMIC  
HOLOCAUST  
BUT NOW -

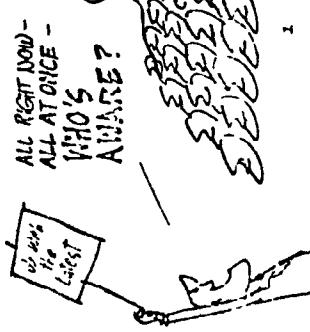
BRINKS-  
MANSFIELD!  
ROCKET  
DIPLOMACY!  
INDIA!  
BERLIN!

VERY GOOD. VERY GOOD.  
FOR A MOMENT THERE  
I ALMOST FELT AROUSED.  
I GUESS IT'S BECAUSE  
THEY'RE SO CURRENT.

APATHY IS SUCH A  
BAD WORD. I'D HATE  
TO THINK IT'S  
APATHY WE SUFFER  
FROM.

DO YOU THINK  
WE'VE TURNED  
APATHETIC?

LET'S JUST  
CALL IT  
FAITH.



THAT WAS ON LAST  
YEAR'S BOOK LIST.  
WHAT'S THE NEW  
PASSWORD?

WHAT'S THE  
PASSWORD?  
ORIGINATOR?  
CONFIDENTIAL?

WE'RE  
ALIVE  
/

WHAT'S THE  
PASSWORD?



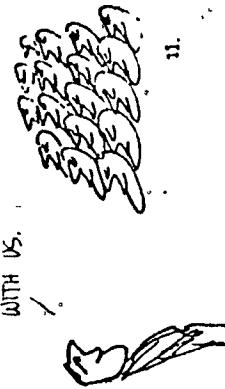
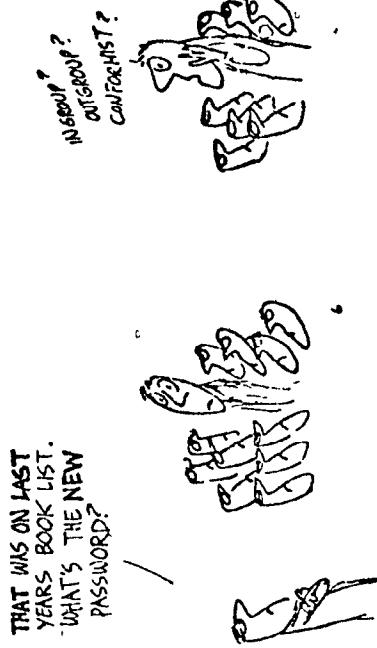
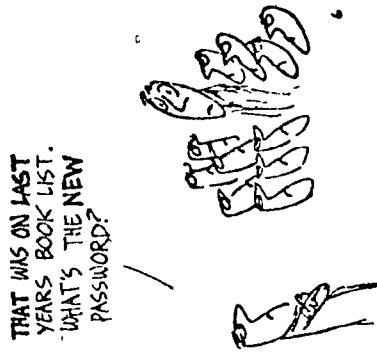
ORGANIZATION  
MAN!  
/

NOW THE  
PASSWORD?

MOTIVATIONAL  
RESEARCH  
/



GOOD - WITHOUT  
THE LATEST  
PASSWORD WE'D  
NEVER KNOW  
WHAT'S WRONG  
WITH US.



If he accepts it, he needs to justify it because social conscience obliges him to do things he cannot understand. He justifies his behaviour by pleading for social acceptance from the very structure that defines his actions. The society as confessor is a paradox analogous to the criminal as judge.

The blanket statement cartoons are Feiffer's most blatant form of satire. Always directed specifically at societal hypocrisy, these cartoons represent the relationship of the satirist, Feiffer, to society. In the introduction to the Feiffer Album, when the fourth satirist says "one should be for something. Then he can attack those things that are against what he is for. That's the responsible approach,"<sup>27</sup> Feiffer is stating the need for a point of view of the satirist and for a dedicated commitment by the satirist to expose the social malignancies that run contrary to the satirist's sense of what is right.

It is from blanket statement cartoons that the reader gets the greatest sense that Feiffer is speaking personally and artistically, while always seriously. In all the other relationships depicted by Feiffer in his cartoons, there is always a sense of railery or jest that allows the reader the option of denying the authenticity intended by Feiffer. These

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<sup>27</sup> Feiffer, Album, p. 3.

cartoons are appreciated first because they are funny and then because they strike a personal, but semi-uncomfortable note of truth. Feiffer is casting mild aspersions on the reader and the reader responds with a self-conscious nod of approval based on familiarity. The reader responds to the cartoon by saying, "look, this is what I am", not by saying, "look, this is what Feiffer thinks of me". The exact opposite response is experienced when a blanket statement cartoon is read. The attacks against society are Feiffer's attitudes about society projected at the reader in such a way that the reader responds by saying, "this is what Feiffer thinks". Projecting the attitude towards the reader is achieved most often by posing a single character in a monologue like so many of the cartoons that represent man with himself. But unlike the cartoons that represent man with himself, where a character exposes his neurosis, inadequacies and personal fears as though he were in a closet and the audience was a voyeur, the blanket statement single character is not lamenting to himself; he is speaking to the silent audience, the reader. These are the cartoons that most resemble essays, the most viable form of communication today according to Feiffer.

"The most interesting form today is probably the essay. It's what Godard puts on film, and it's in many ways what I try to do in the cartoon . . . it's what interests me in the theatre."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> John Lahr, Transatlantic Review, p. 40.

The importance of the blanket statement cartoons cannot be overstressed. An examination of Feiffer's plays reveals a strong critical anti-American attitude, the source of which can be found in the cartoons. In fact, the noble indignation often spoken of as the valuable ingredient of a satirist's art is most recognizable in these cartoons. In the cartoons the satire is of the most obvious type; a common understanding of satire as the form of art that ridicules something by representing it in some absurd, fantastic or grotesque way so as to misrepresent it in the actual sense, but by representing it in the ironic sense, is the basis with which the cartoons are examined. The satire of the blanket statement cartoon, then, is not based on any of the psychological or motivational theories of satire as the other cartoons were.

A cartoon has been classified as a blanket statement if it in some way makes a direct statement about American society. It is interesting to note that only in the blanket statement cartoons can the assumption be made that America is the target of the satire. In all the other cartoons, people are the object of satire. The people can be anyone and the fact that Feiffer's cartoon anthologies have been translated into German, Italian, Dutch, French and Japanese is an indication that the characters are universal. Up until now no attempt has been made to represent the satire as a reflection

of specifically American values but, an examination of the blanket statement cartoons allows for no other possible emphasis except on the American political structure. This is especially important in making the transition from the cartoons to the plays because the plays are very definitely statements about America, anti-America. The themes of the blanket statement cartoons are repeated not only in the plays but also in interviews Feiffer has given. There is at times no distinction among the attitudes actually stated by Feiffer, the cartoons and the plays. This makes the blanket statement cartoons an extension of Feiffer's personal social commentary. The themes of the blanket statement cartoons are so numerous that an appendix has been included which gives brief descriptions trying to capture the content of each of the blanket statements. The cartoons included in the text have been included because Feiffer has either made public comment on the subject or included the subject in the plays, in many cases both. The themes are the Kennedy assassination, the Cold War, the bomb, corruption, and the Army.

The Kennedy assassination has a tremendous implication in Feiffer's art. It is only the subject of one cartoon, but an innumerable amount of lip service is paid to Kennedy in Feiffer's interviews. Little Murders is a direct result of the change in American life due to the assassination, according to Feiffer. In the cartoon there is a poignant realization

about the influence Kennedy had on the American nation: he transformed a dormant sleeping apathy into a critical and active nationalism. The cartoon, however, stops short of Feiffer's full understanding of the Kennedy assassination. ". . . Beginning with John Kennedy's assassination I have developed the view of society that's written into Little Murders. His assassination highlighted for me, the age of gratuitous violence we'd come into (pb., p. 94)." It is the postulation of gratuitous violence that bears the full thrust of Feiffer's reaction to the Kennedy assassination. In the three plays that are examined in Chapter II, there is an obvious display of this gratuitous violence Feiffer speaks of.

Hand and hand with the political turmoil of the Kennedy assassination is the threat of the Cold War, and the bomb seen in Feiffer's cartoons. In the cartoons there is an attempt to win the Cold War through economic means or, in another absurd context, to use the threat of the bomb and the arms race to arouse economic activity. Hypocritical methods suggest the government is a con artist.

When Feiffer calls the Cold War a "Church" in the Playboy interview, he implies that there are precepts of permanency about the Cold War, like religious precepts of faith, that maintain the Cold War as a conviction in the American way of life.

ONCE THERE WAS  
A SLEEPING  
COUNTRY THAT  
HAD SPENT  
EIGHT YEARS  
UNDER A SPELL  
NOBODY TALKED  
NOBODY AR-  
GUED. EVERY-  
BODY SLEPT.



THEN ONE DAY INTO  
THIS COUNTRY RODE  
A HANDSOME YOUNG  
PRINCE. "IT'S TIME TO  
GET MOVING AGAIN."  
THE PRINCE DECLARED  
THE COUNTRY STIRRED  
IN ITS SLEEP.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS  
PEOPLE ACTUALLY BEGAN TO  
TALK. THEY ARGUED THEY  
TOOK SIDES. "STOP TALK-  
ING SO LOUD!" THE REST  
OF THE COUNTRY GRUM-  
BLED IN ITS SLEEP. "HAVE  
SOME CONSIDERATION  
FOR THE REST OF US."



BUT THE TALKING ONLY  
BECAME LOUDER MORE  
AND MORE PEOPLE  
AWAKE AND ANGRY  
THAT THEY HAD TO BE  
AWAKE, BEGAN TO  
TALK, BEGAN TO  
ARGUE, BEGAN TO  
TAKE SIDES.

THEN ONE DAY THE  
YOUNG PRINCE WAS  
KILLED. NO ONE  
COULD AGREE BY  
WHOM. EVERY  
SIDE ACCUSED  
EVERY OTHER  
SIDE. BUT  
CALMER HEADS  
PREVAILLED.

"SEE WHAT WE HAVE  
COME TO WITH THIS  
WICKED DISSEN-  
SION." CALMER  
HEADS ARGUED.  
"LET US  
CLEANSE OUR  
SOCIETY OF  
THIS DIVISIVE  
DEBATE!"



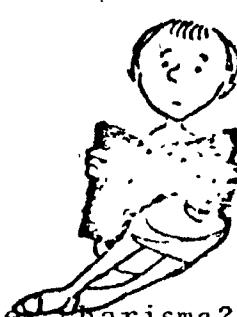
AND THE COUNTRY,  
SUFFERING FROM  
WOUNDS AND GUILT,  
CHEERED DEBATE  
HALTED. ARGUMENT  
DIED. AND THERE  
WAS NO MORE  
TALK IN THE  
LAND.



AND AS THE COUNTRY  
PREFARED FOR  
SLEEP IT HOPED  
NO ONE WOULD  
EVER ASK IT  
TO MOVE  
AGAIN.



FOR IT  
REALLY  
DID NOT  
WANT TO  
KILL ANY  
MORE  
PRINCES.



"What the theologians (a small band of government officials) pray for is a permanent state of stabilized hostility. That means you can enjoy the financial benefits of trade while also enjoying the spiritual and financial benefits of an arms race (pb., p. 88)."

The Cold War and the arms race can be seen as part of the gratuitous violence that shapes Feiffer's political point of view. There is an ironic parallel between Feiffer's satire at times and gratuitous violence. When Feiffer satirizes the duplicity of the American people, he is working on the notion that gratuitous violence is essentially unnoticed in American society, which means he can get away with it. "In a more organized society Feiffer would be prosecuted . . ." <sup>29</sup> In God Bless and The White House Murder Case the posture of the government tries to conceal violence or hypocrisy as the cartoons do by their subtlety and relative calmness.

The corruption of the American government is an overwhelming theme in Feiffer. Several cartoons imply that the American condition through evolution and values is one of corruption.

Feiffer's 12 Guy theory, a theory which implies that American Democracy is an elitist clique of twelve important men who make all the doctrines that govern America

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<sup>29</sup> Clive Barnes, Revision of Little Murders Revival, New York Times, January 6, 1969, p. 38, Column 1.

is perhaps the most innocuous way Feiffer can insinuate that the American government engages in corruption. In The White House Murder Case, Feiffer goes so far as to show the President and his ministers devising a plan to conceal the truth about military mistakes and the murder of the President's wife, a very prophecy of Watergate.

The disgust Feiffer has for the Army cannot be overstated. In fact his contempt for the impersonal brutality of military life produced his first satire, Munro, which was about a four year-old boy who is drafted into the Army by mistake. Munro was made into an animated cartoon by Rembrandt films in 1965. It won the Oscar for the best short subject cartoon. That the Army was intolerable was made very clear by Feiffer:

"I found myself, during basic training, shocked in a more profound way than I had ever been, at the brutality and impersonality that's built into the system . . . It was the first time in my life I had been exposed to pure naked fascism. . . The role playing in the Army was one of Hitler. That's who they all wanted to be when they grew up. So while I felt totally miserable, I felt more justified and more in the right than I have ever felt before. It was a period when I could really allow myself the luxury of hate--pure and blissful hate. It helped me grow (pb., p. 206)."

In an article in Life Magazine in September 1965 Feiffer says, "The Army taught me the value of hate." In The White House Murder Case the Army as the subject of attack is made out to be more stupid and burlesque than tyrannical,

but nevertheless, an authentic target for Feiffer's personal satirical revenge.

The blanket statement cartoons are the clearest lead into the substance of the satire in the plays. The basic move from an emotional (including sexual) satire to a political satire is the main distinction between the cartoons and the plays. Except for Little Murders the plays tend to avoid emotional relationships, concentrating instead on distinctly anti-American content.

DEAR MOTHER-

ARRIVED IN CAMP THIS A.M.  
RECEIVED SIX SHOTS AND AN  
INDOCTRINATION LECTURE  
ABOUT DEFENDING THE FREE  
WORLD. I  
WANT TO  
COME HOME-



- 107 -

DEAR SON-

BE A MAN YOU ARE  
ALWAYS WITH US IN  
OUR HEARTS. WE ARE  
SURE YOU'LL GET  
USED TO IT-



DEAR MOTHER-

THIS A.M THEY SHOWED US FILMS  
ABOUT THE ENEMIES OF THE FREE  
WORLD. THEY ARE ALL FROM THE  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA. ONE  
OF THE FELLOWS IN OUR  
BARRACKS COMES  
FROM THERE. WE  
ARE HIDING HIM.  
I WANT TO  
COME HOME-



3

DEAR MOTHER-

MARCHEO TO AND FROM THE CHURCH  
OF OUR CHOICE THIS A M AND GIVEN  
OUR 12<sup>TH</sup> INDOCTRINATION LECTURE.  
CAPTAIN TOLD US WE IN THE FREE  
WORLD MUST DEFEND  
OURSELVES AGAINST  
ENEMIES FROM WITHIN.  
EVERYONE WHO  
CHOSE WRONG  
CHURCH OF HIS  
CHOICE RECEIVED A  
STERN WARNING. I  
WANT TO COME HOME-



5

107

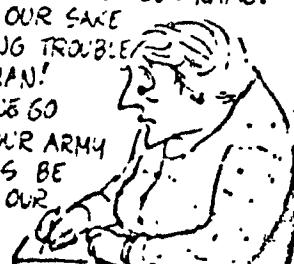
DEAR MOTHER-

RECEIVED OUR 25<sup>TH</sup> INDOCTRINATION LECTURE  
THIS A M FROM A NEW CAPTAIN HE SAID THE  
ARMY WAS LIBERALIZING IT'S INFORMATION  
PROGRAM AND ENCOURAGED US TO ASK QUEST-  
IONS. I ASKED HIM TO  
DEFINE "FREE WORLD" THE  
CAPTAIN CALLED ME A PINKO  
COLLEGE WISE GU, CROSSED  
ME ON EXTRA DETAIL,  
AND WANTED TO KNOW  
WHAT KIND OF FAMILY  
I CAME FROM. I WANT  
TO COME HOME-



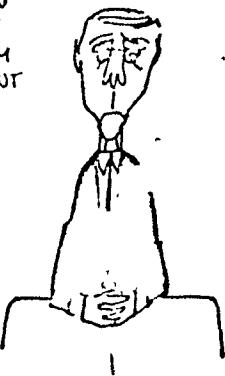
DEAR SON-

IF YOU CAME HOME NOW THEY'D ONLY  
FOLLOW YOU TO FIND US. DON'T TELL  
THEM A THING UNTIL WE'RE ABLE  
TO MOVE AND CHANGE OUR NAME.  
PLEASE FOR OUR SAKE  
STOP MAKING TROUBLE  
AND BE A MAN!  
WHEREVER WE GO  
YOU AND YOUR ARMY  
WILL ALWAYS BE  
WITH US IN OUR  
HEARTS.



THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS IN GOVERNMENT CONTINUES. WE HAVE PASSED FROM FEUDALISM TO CAPITALISM. OUR CURRENT STAGE, AS WE ALL KNOW, IS CORRUPTION.

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CORRUPTION AS A FORM OF GOVERNMENT IS, ITSELF, WITHIN VARIOUS STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT. IN THE SOVIET UNION, WHERE YOU HAVE THE "STATE" OR "TRICKLE DOWN" THEORY OF CORRUPTION, IT OPERATES WITH THE MOST EFFICIENCY.



IN OUR OWN COUNTRY WE ARE IN THE TRANSITIONAL, MORE DYNAMIC PHASE - FREE FORM CORRUPTION. IT IS AN UNPREDICTABLE PHASE BECAUSE IT CONTINUES, SELF CONSCIOUSLY, TO DENY ITS EXISTENCE IN FEAR THAT, WERE ITS TRUE NATURE MADE KNOWN, IT WOULD BE OVERTHROWN.



THEREFORE, IN LINE WITH THE CURRENT PRACTICES OF ENLIGHTENED LEADERSHIP, IT PUBLICLY DEPLORES WHAT IT PRIVATELY OWES ITS EXISTENCE TO.

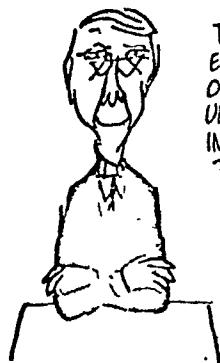


AS PART OF THIS PHILOSOPHY IT OFFERS A REGULAR PROGRAM OF PLANNED EXPOSURES TO SATISFY THE PUBLIC'S APPETITE - A BUILDING INSPECTOR ONE MONTH, A CITY OFFICIAL ANOTHER MONTH - ANYTHING WHICH WILL MISDIRECT THE GAZE OF AN ANTI-CORRUPT CITIZENRY.



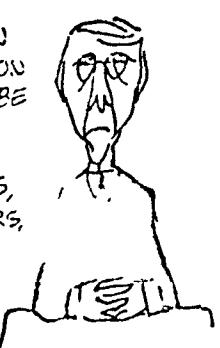
5

THUS THE PUBLIC IS ENCOURAGED TO THINK OF CORRUPTION AS AN UNWELCOME 'STRANGER' IN ITS HOUSE RATHER THAN AS THE HOST.



6

IN THE MEANTIME, TO SOFTEN THE PUBLIC'S ANTI CORRUPTION NEO-IDEALISM, THERE WILL BE A GROWING LIST OF PEER GROUP EXPOSURES - PROMINENT PRIVATE CITIZENS, IMPORTANT BUSINESS LEADERS, LEADING INTELLECTUALS -



7

WITH SO MUCH CORRUPTION MADE SO APPALLINGLY EVIDENT, PUBLIC RESPONSE WILL DEADEN AND WITHDRAW. ACCEPTANCE WILL SET IN. CORRUPTION'S TAKE OVER WILL BE COMPLETE.



8

IN EVERY SCHOOL IN THE LAND WILL BE ENGRAVED OUR NEW MORAL BANNER



"WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT? I'D DO IT MYSELF."



OK. YOU WANNA KNOW WHAT'S CAUSING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY? THAT'S WHAT'S CAUSING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY.



NOW WE GOT A SYSTEM OUR SYSTEM IS CORRUPTION. IT WAS LIKE THAT WHEN I WAS A KID. IT'S LIKE THAT TODAY. YOU UNDERMINE A KID'S FAITH IN CORRUPTION AND YOU'RE ASKING FOR TROUBLE.



ONLY THEY NEVER KNEW IT WAS WRONG.



O.K. SO YOU ARREST A FEW PEOPLE. WHADALA CHANGE? COPS AINT GONA TAKE PAYOFFS? LANDLORDS ARE GONA VOLUNTEER YOU REPAIRS?

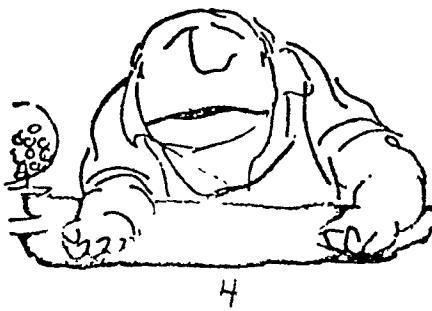


GIVE OUR CHILDREN BACK THEIR ROOTS.

LOOK, YOU'RE LIVING IN A WORLD WHERE U'GOTTA GO WITH THE SYSTEM. THAT'S CIVILIZATION! IF YOU GOT NO SYSTEM, YOU GOT NO RULES. IF YOU GOT NO RULES — WHAMMY! ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE.



SO MAKE A BIG STINK OUTA POLICE PAYOFFS AND BUTCHER'S FAT THUMBS. THAT'S NOTHING NEW. KIDS'VE KNOWN THAT STUFF FOR YEARS!



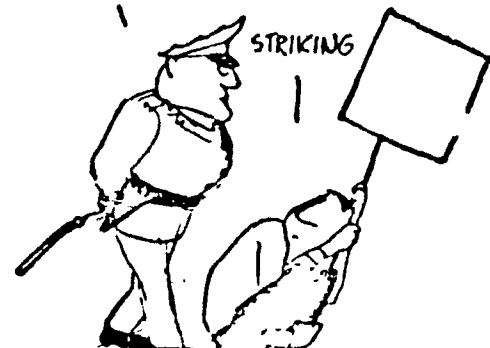
YOU TELL KIDS THE VALUES THEY GREW UP WITH ARE WRONG AND THEY LOSE RESPECT FOR THE SYSTEM. THEY GO OFF THEIR NUT.



LOOK. IT'S GUNNA GO ON ANYHOW! STOP ALL THE SCREAMING! LEGALIZE CORRUPTION!



WHAT ARE  
YOU DOING?



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STRIKING?  
WHAT IN  
THE WORLD  
FOR?

I HAVEN'T  
SELECTED AN  
ISSUE  
YET

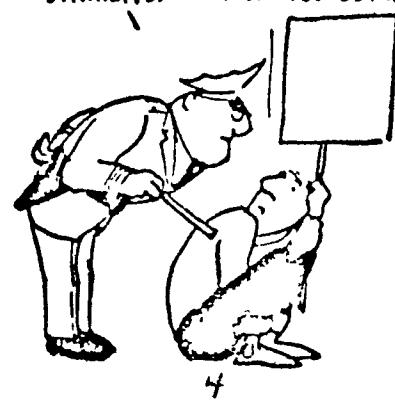


WELL,  
WHERE  
ARE THE  
OTHERS?

WHAT  
OTHERS?



THE OTHER  
STRIKERS.  
WHERE ARE THE  
OTHER POLICEMEN?



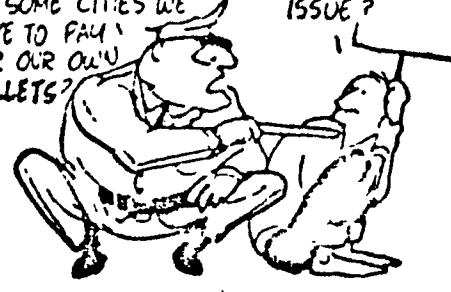
WHAT ARE YOU  
TALKING  
ABOUT? I'M  
THE ONLY  
POLICEMAN.

YOU GET OTHER  
POLICEMEN AND  
I'LL SEE WHAT I  
CAN DO ABOUT  
GETTING OTHER  
STRIKERS.



THAT STILL DOESN'T  
SETTLE THE ISSUE.  
HEY, WHY NOT STRIKE  
FOR HIGHER PAY  
FOR POLICEMEN?  
DO YOU KNOW THAT  
IN SOME CITIES WE  
HAVE TO PAY  
FOR OUR OWN  
BULLETS?

SHOCKING!  
WILL YOU  
DRAG US  
OFF TO  
JAIL IF WE  
USE YOUR  
ISSUE?



POLICEMEN DON'T  
MAKE DEALS - NOT  
ON YOUR LEVEL  
AT LEAST. WE  
HAVE TO  
MAINTAIN  
SOME  
STAND-  
ARDS.  
YOU  
KNOW!

WAIT!  
I'VE  
GO' AN  
ISSUE!



WHAT'S EVER  
BECOME OF  
YOUTHFUL  
IDEALISM?

BRING  
DEMOCRACY  
TO  
CORRUPTION



THE FIRST ONE  
WE BUILT WAS  
RELATIVELY  
THIS SMALL.

BUT IT  
HAD THIS  
MUCH  
FALLOUT-

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BUT IN THOSE  
DAYS FALLOUT  
WAS NOT YET  
A FAD, SO WE  
IGNORED IT

THE NEXT ONE  
WE BUILT WAS  
THIS BIG.



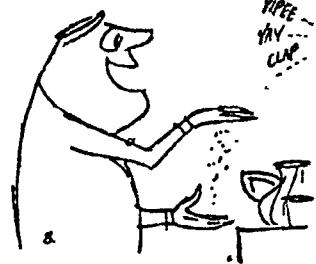
BUT IT HAD  
THIS MUCH  
FALLOUT

OF COURSE NONE OF  
US FELT GOOD ABOUT IT.  
MY WIFE AND I DOUBLED  
OUR DONATION TO OUR  
REGULAR CHARITIES.



THE NEXT ONE  
WE BUILT WAS  
YEA BIG

BUT WE HAD REDUCED  
THE FALLOUT TO  
THIS MUCH.



WE FEEL OUR  
PROGRESS  
HAS BEEN  
AMAZING.



## CHAPTER II

### THE PLAYS

An anecdote about Feiffer's conflicting talents as cartoonist and as playwright appears in every interview with Feiffer:<sup>1</sup>

"What I find most amusing about the charge that my plays are really cartoons, is that for the first six or seven years of doing cartoons, people used to tell me these weren't cartoons at all. To be recognized as a cartoonist I had to start writing plays."

Unfortunately, the reputation of cartoonist stigmatized Feiffer's dramatic material from the start. Critics were excruciatingly ruthless with Little Murders, his first attempt at a full length play and a Broadway production. There are two sides to the story however; critics adequately pinpointed structural defects in thematic construction and character development, and rightly attributed the flaw to the cartoonist's pen, but at the same time they were subjectively responding to the open and aggressive attack Feiffer leveled overtly on Broadway stage convention and covertly on American (specifically New York) decay of human

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<sup>1</sup>John Lahr, Transatlantic Review, p. 38.

decency. "The Boston critics who didn't understand it understood it better than the New York critics who totally withdrew from it, followed immediately by the audience."<sup>2</sup>

While Feiffer transformed his cartoon world into a theatrical world he also transformed the intensity of his subversive attitude from a relatively firm and despondent one in the cartoons to an absolutely firm and outraged one in the plays. The themes in the cartoon anthologies, although they continue to concern Feiffer (this is readily discernible from interviews and letters), are no longer the substance of the artistic material. The contrast is indisputable, but did not come overnight. One can see the birth of the shift by examining all the anthologies. By 1965 and 1966 Feiffer was more adamant and abundant in his use of anti-American cartoons. "Feiffer on Civil Rights," his 1966 anthology, is the key touchstone. After "Feiffer on Civil Rights" there are no more anthologies, but there is a play each year from 1967 to 1970.

The movement from cartoon to drama is significant in exploring Feiffer's artistic form and his social intention.

"The two conscious reasons I had for branching out from the cartoon were that, first, the audience for the cartoon wasn't big enough and, second, the

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<sup>2</sup> Jules Feiffer, Little Murders (London: Jonathan Cape 1970), p. 107. Quotations from Little Murders will be indicated by (L.M., p. \_\_.).

cartoon was becoming so widely accepted that I figured I must be getting misunderstood, so I decided to move into forms in which I could be better understood (pb., p. 82)."

Amiable acceptance was disarming the power of social criticism in the cartoons. This was partially due to Feiffer's own transformation from cartoons centered on personal relationships one week and the war in VietNam the next week in the Village Voice, the New York newspaper that carried his weekly cartoon (which was syndicated in 56 newspapers in America and England). The cartoon had won him an international reputation but Feiffer needed even more space to express the anger that grew from the frustration that can be seen in the cartoons. "The reason I went into theatre was that I felt the cartoon didn't give me enough room."<sup>3</sup> An angry cartoon is easily forgotten; an angry play is controversial. "The cartoon-reading audience is passive and after the fact, the theatre audience is active, all too present and collaboratively inclined to interrupt. Another kind of hearing is involved," Walter Kerr said in the New York Times review of Little Murders in 1967 (June 3). That "other kind of hearing" which Kerr so aptly distinguished between the cartoon and theatre audience is based on a primary distinction between the

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<sup>3</sup> John Lahr, Transatlantic Review, p. 36.

cartoon form and the dramatic form. The cartoon is a static experience, while drama is kinetic. Inasmuch as the static nature of Feiffer's cartoons contain dramatic quality, this is recognizable in the fluidity and dialogue-likeness of the wording. The cartoons contain the completeness of dramatic episode, beginning, middle, end, but finally, they succumb to a momentary fragment of experience, thus, the static quality in regard to duration. This is not a defect or flaw of the cartoon but is rather a distinguishing characteristic of cartoons. The rapport Feiffer was able to create with his reading audience was instantaneous, but nevertheless fleeting, while drama has what Susanne Langer calls "form in Suspense" because it moves toward the future while one experiences it. Another distinguishing theory Langer puts forth is the notion of literary experiences as the "mode of Memory" as opposed to the theatrical experience as "the mode of Destiny".<sup>4</sup> A cartoon does not necessarily conform to the notion of a literary experience, but certainly the prospect of either summoning memory or the expectation of destiny is a valid distinction between a static art such as the cartoon and a kinetic art such as drama or dance or perhaps music under

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<sup>4</sup> Susanne Langer, Feeling and Form (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1953), p. 306-350.

special circumstances. The connection Feiffer's cartoon audience makes with the cartoon is one of memory. In drama there is decidedly a reaching out toward the audience and an invitation to pursue, for more than a moment, the artist's perception and projection of the world and its fate. In Feiffer's cartoons the audience receives a momentary perception, more often of the self, not the world. When Feiffer said he felt he was becoming misunderstood because he was so readily accepted he sensed, more than likely, that the audience was absorbing his social satire in the same manner they absorbed his personal satire. When he started to satirize government, the audience, so accustomed to seeing their personal lives satirized, still saw themselves in these political cartoons. For Feiffer the theatre could do more than satirize those "pet peeves" of the "little man" that he, as a cartoonist-satirist, wanted to bombard.

"When I go to the theatre I like to be forced to think, to be taken out of the position I'm in and be moved, if need be, involuntarily. This threatens me, yet if I follow through will lead to new perceptions and possibly even new truths."<sup>5</sup>

Feiffer's cartoons do just the opposite by reaffirming the position the audience is in by capturing a familiar moment most often automated by memory. Feiffer wanted to take the audience's reaction in the theatre much further than

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<sup>5</sup> John Lahr, Transatlantic Review, p. 45.

the personalized emotional message of the cartoons. He wanted social change:

"There's a hope in my plays . . . by showing certain things, you can institute insights which later can lead to action . . . if you're arguing or befuddled or angry in the theatre, it will go outside with you."<sup>6</sup>

While many of the cartoons over the years were satirizing social institutions they were not satisfying Feiffer's personal integrity of the satirist's social commitment:

"Friends warned that while I was skilled at my usual profession of writing one anti-American cartoon a week, if I ventured into the field of anti-American plays, I'd be in danger of spreading myself thin. My reply was that I'd be hardly an artist and less than a man if I didn't say, in whatever form necessary, what I felt had to be said."<sup>7</sup>

Practically speaking, Feiffer's friends were warning him not to 'dive off the deep end with his adamancy and, definitely, they were implicitly warning him not to jeopardize the success of his career as a cartoonist. It was, however, precisely this success as a cartoonist that gave Feiffer the courage to explore other forms:

"I'm not the least ambivalent about it. Success is good and failure isn't . . . you spend so much time and energy at the business

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>7</sup> J. Ethridge, I. B. Kopala, C. Riky. Contemporary Authors, p. 113.

of making it that there's very little time or energy left to pay attention to the craft itself. Finally, with the question of success taken care of, you can start paying attention to being an artist, and it's a hell of a lot more interesting, because until you're secure enough, and I don't mean financially, to be willing to risk failure, the hunger to make it keeps getting in the way (pb., p. 206)."

The cartoon anthology years (1959-1966) certainly paved the way for Feiffer to explore other forms. Writing plays was the next step and a predictable one at that. For several years Feiffer had been lecturing at college campuses against the war in VietNam; he spoke at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968; he was leading peace rallies in New York. All of these activities are inherently theatrical according to Robert Brustein in his book Revolution as Theatre. Langer's theoretical "mode of Destiny" is made viable in such highly charged experiences where destiny is shaping itself literally. The re-creation of this form of activity in art is best done on the stage. Feiffer's move into playwriting then, is as biographical as those cartoons that reflected the disheartening themes between men and women. Now ("grownup"), Feiffer was a political activist, a dove, a Eugene McGovern man. A political energy was imposed on his plays in the same way the cartoons embraced the notion of unresolved personal dilemma. That is, with an unprecedented honesty.

The effect of such honesty, the plays with a somewhat more controversial subject matter, was met with critical scrutiny. The major emphasis of the critic's attacks was on Feiffer's poorly developed notions of the continuity demanded in a play. The word "vignettes" was used frequently as an epithet. Feiffer's breach with dramatic form was isolated as a major flaw. The critics could not label his work Absurd because it fell too closely under the guise of living room comedy, but then dared to deny this form. The artistic innovation of presenting something under the guise of conventional comedy and then transforming the piece with a touch of the Theatre of Cruelty was simply not received by the critics as representative of Broadway etiquette. Critics unanimously disclaimed Feiffer's attempt at characterization, labelling his characters caricatures, in the same manner of his cartoons. Feiffer claims it is impossible to make such a mistake:

"They're my people but the forms are very very different. In one case I'm dealing with stereotyping and in the other I'm trying for people . . . because of the time that one is allowed in the theatre - I etch them more deeply; in terms of detail, relationships, in expressing ideas. They can't really be similar approaches."<sup>8</sup>

Unfortunately, however, the critics were correct and the statement made in the introduction, that Feiffer was writing cartoon-

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<sup>8</sup> John Lahr, Transatlantic Review, p. 36.

plays, proves itself by accepting this particular unanimous criticism of Feiffer's plays. The critics charged Feiffer with 'monologuing' his characters into confrontation.

Basically non-theatrical, this was an artistic problem that had its roots in the cartoons which were word-laden.

In sum, Feiffer's relative lack of success in American Broadway theatre had two reasons: first, the shift in content from the cartoon anthologies which were primarily Freudian to an open subversiveness in the plays which was primarily anti-American. Second, the dominance of Feiffer's skill as a cartoonist ultimately impeded his talent for creating a multi-dimensional dramatic character.

Little Murders, God Bless and The White House Murder Case are, to date, Feiffer's three major plays. Their case histories make a fascinating study of the transition in and representation of Feiffer's ideology and 'form.'

### Little Murders

The foreword to Little Murders reads: "Two four six eight who do we assassinate?" (New York Children's street chant, circa 1964.) Feiffer elaborately conceived an explanation of the political implications of Little Murders which he called a political allegory of the Cold War and VietNam. Conceived as a "post assassination" play,

according to Feiffer, Little Murders bears the sentiment of gratuitous violence that was highlighted by the Kennedy assassination in 1963.

"The play is a post assassination play . . . all of this the heritage of the Cold War that has taught us that power not only corrupts, it also disables, and that one American is no longer worth ten of the enemy (the previously accepted ratio), but rather that in guerilla war eight Americans are worth one Viet Cong. A trying time."<sup>9</sup>

In Little Murders the guerilla war-ground is the streets of New York and the Viet Cong and the Americans are indistinguishable in that everyone is potentially everyone else's enemy. That violence is rampant and that life is reduced to self-preservation is a bold and terrifying sub-text to a play that is ostensibly about middle class love and marriage.

Patsy Newquist brings Alfred home to meet her family and to announce their engagement. Alfred is a professional photographer and the family is representative of a Jewish household which automates stereotypical characterizations of a domineering mother, a useless, but always trying to

<sup>9</sup> Jules Feiffer, Little Murders, letter to Chris Morahan, p. 104. Compare the statement Feiffer makes to Chris Morahan in his letter and the statement Brackman makes in God Bless, Feiffer's next play one year later. "Into this desire for power, you're bound to be disappointed. It doesn't even corrupt anymore, it disables (p. 39)." This is a sample of how closely interwoven Feiffer's life is with his art. This was made readily obvious in the cartoons and is reconfirmed in the plays. Except now Feiffer is talking politics instead of defects.

be useful, balding, paunchy husband and a misfit college-age son wasting his parent's money on graduate education which gives him the unusual taste for reading paperback novels in the bathroom. All the trappings of Broadway comedy and Philistine delight are destroyed when a sniper's bullet kills Patsy immediately after she and Alfred are married. Patsy is the Newquist's second child to be shot down and the aftermath is in the spirit of revenge when Alfred and the rest of the family take to shooting at passersby from their window. Feiffer has stretched the limits of interpretation when he calls this madness the spirit of the "frontier faith".

". . . The family is shooting out of their windows at strangers in the street . . . this has nothing to do with apocalypse. It has to do with the frontier faith. It doesn't mean the world is ending; it means these particular people, while having gone mad, have gone mad in a very traditional, very American way. By their lights, they're protecting their home. They're taking action after remaining passive for too long. They're Tom Destry strapping on his guns to the cheers of the audience. They're doing what they see as right, and with exactly the self-justification as any B-52 pilot dropping blockbusters over VietNam. If the ending of Little Murders is apocalyptic, then what sort of vision do we get every day on NBC when they blandly give us the latest body count? All I was trying to do was show what we've become by putting together one sensibility with another--random murder out of windows with the sort of random murder we're playing around with in Southeast Asia (pb., p. 94)."

Such a huge conceptual interpretation does not apply to

the actual experience of Little Murders, and the critics' immediate response was far from the vast intercontinental interpretation Feiffer had. Certainly, this was not Broadway material.

Robert Brustein, the director of the Yale School of Drama in 1966, advised Feiffer not to produce his play on Broadway. Little Murders previewed at Yale, but when the theatre school discovered that Feiffer was using Yale as a pre-Broadway stint, the school became indignant. Brustein was trying to re-establish the reputation of Yale as experimental and avant-garde;<sup>10</sup> Little Murders was Brustein's first choice and Feiffer was considerably blind not to realize the nature of the material he had on his hands. It was subversive and completely unconventional.

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<sup>10</sup> Brustein gives an interesting account of establishing the new image of the drama school at Yale in his book called The Third Theatre. He met with reluctance from many noteworthy people whom he wanted to hire from Europe and interestingly enough one of the reasons of this reluctance is attributed to what Feiffer calls gratuitous violence: "My first responsibility at Yale was hiring new people . . . I ran into trouble getting people I wanted from England. Although they were attracted to the idea of a repertory company connected with a school they were reluctant to pick up and leave . . . After all we are engaged in a war of which they disapprove; we are still trying to recover from an assassination which along with all the other violence in this country, has scared the life out of this world." Robert Brustein, The Third Theatre (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1969), p. 282.

Perfect for Off-Broadway, Feiffer insisted On-Broadway and he got exactly seven days of it.

The unanimous criticism was that Feiffer did not adequately prepare his audience for the shift between acts One and Two, from before to after Patsy's death, from the ideal, but cooky family, to the cynically violent world. Although there were allusions to the type of society they were living in, the audience confused these for purely comical insinuations. Alfred's professional career went from photographing models to objects to "shit". This was brought up at the family dinner table but not much more was made of it than the use of language that was, and was not, permitted in the Newquist home at the dinner table. Walter Kerr in the New York Times (June 4, 1967) made the connection between Alfred's career and the quality of New York life but at the same time found the style of acting incompatible with the breath of the image:

"Naturalistically speaking, no one does thrive on selling the more glamorous magazines carefully backlit studies of excrement. Formally speaking, imaginistically speaking, the notion is valid and invites us all to supply our own overtones. But a formal conceit, an image that overleaps the boundaries of the literal needs a formalized stage shape, formalized scenery, formalized behavior on the part of the actors to go with it. We must know what kind of world we have invaded . . . Feiffer's director, actors, scene designer hadn't created an all of a piece landscape in which cocktails and sudden death could companionably share the same sofa."

Another of the surreal qualities of American life covered up through comic allusion is Alfred's bad fortune of attracting muggers. He stands perfectly still humming to himself while he is mugged, daily.

Carol (Mr. Newquist): But why don't you fight back?

Alfred: I don't want to.

Carol: Jesus Christ you're not a pacifist.

Patsy (warning): Daddy.

Alfred (slowly shakes his head): An apathist. I want to do what I want to do, not what they want me to do. (L.M., p. 23.)

The charged quality of wit makes jokes more important than the meaningful content.

"The single insight I have brought out of two months of production is that if the actors play the jokes (as they were too inclined to do here) and not the family relationships with all their underlying tensions, we have an audience so very happy at the end of Act One they are thrown into confusion by the rest of the play."<sup>11</sup>

Feiffer's insight of interpretation is shortsighted. It is not the underlying tension of family relationships that makes such a difference between Act One and Act Two. The characters have been too carefully stereotyped to dig for the "tension of relationships". There are Oedipal currents between mother and son, and father and daughter, open hostility between husband and wife and incestuous intimations between brother and sister, but this is exactly

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<sup>11</sup>Jules Feiffer, Letter to Chris Morahan, p. 108.

what the audience expects; it is obvious, not underlying.

Martin Esslin in The New York Times (July 10, 1967) said:

"Little Murders is what strikes me as essentially a three dimensional Feiffer strip cartoon. The characters are the traditional Feiffer types: the weak husband, the apathetic intellectual, the mannish girl, the fairy."

These stereotypes ring familiar from the cartoons and summon criticism as a result. Clive Barnes in The New York Times (January 5, 1969) said "Mr. Feiffer shows his immaturity by a wayward self-indulgence, a love of the prolonged sound of his own jokes and a certain failure to balance form with content."

The difference between Act One and Act Two was a matter of balancing form with content. Feiffer had potentially a perfect piece of absurd drama, but the superimposition of Broadway-type naturalistic staging obscured the production.

John Simon in The Hudson Review (Summer 1967, p. 302) said:

"Feiffer elected to write in a style midway between absurdist farce and social satire. It may be that there was too much farce in the first act, so that the shift in the second was too sudden. It is certain that Feiffer is best at comic set pieces that sometimes fall flat and usually run on too long, and that the play tended to break into a series of vignettes without a continuous line of plot or character development. Little Murders was a thoroughly uneven play."

The stereotypes in Feiffer's cartoons are appreciated for their predictability. But the stereotype of the stage characters, seemingly predictable, but then no longer

predictable are foiled by their apparent predictability at the outset. Had Feiffer stylized the production in a more absurd context from the start so as not to mislead his audience, he could have exploited his use of stereotypes.

In a letter to Christopher Morahan, the director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Jules Feiffer, wrote:

"Absolutely right on the style being naturalistic with the mutually understood reservation that, once having found the reality in their characters, the actors will be hilarious."

Feiffer adds a critical footnote to this letter which appears in the printed edition of Little Murders:

"Absolute nonsense. The play was given a considerably more stylized production in London, and played remarkably better than it did in New York. This has convinced me of nothing other than that the author, while always correct in his intention, is sometimes mistaken about the means to fulfill them."

One of the flaws in Little Murders is, in fact, the intentions of the author. One can easily see the elaborately worked out political interpretations by Feiffer are inconsistent with the content of the play. Little Murders is perhaps the bridge from the stereotypical emotionalism of the cartoons to the unique political burlesque of his next two plays. Unfortunately, the shift is impossible to do between acts in a single play.

When Feiffer insists on arguing the importance of the family relationships, he is forgetting about three

significant roles in the play that make complete intrusions, not only in continuity, but in relevance to the family structure which Feiffer is insisting is ultimately very important. On behalf of Patsy's father, an old friend of the family's, a judge, is invited to the house to speak to Patsy and Alfred about their not wanting God mentioned in the marriage ceremony. He gives a long-winded speech on the importance of God in America, starting from his family's immigration to the Land of the Free, embracing the years of his family's hardship and finally blessing his mother's retirement in Miami Beach. The judge amounts to a standup comedian monologuing his way through an absurdity that adds nothing truly relevant to the play. The same is true of Reverend Dupas, who marries Patsy and Alfred. He is a 'walk-on' with a fabulous retinue of jokes about the "existential all-rightness" of everything: masturbation, divorce, homosexuality. Finally, there is Lieutenant Practice, in the last scene, who tells the family, with the same undue amount of time allotted him as the judge and the minister, about the conspiracy all over America to disrupt law and order.

The saddest part of Little Murders is that these three characters deliver the best jokes in the most absurd context, with the most meaning, while the family delivers mediocre

jokes defined by their stereotypes in a typical family dilemma.

Three separate speeches in a play that reveal the strongest sense of the play is a separation of form from content. The significance of a single character in a cartoon is not the same in a play; but, Feiffer's most meaningful cartoons are usually ones that have a single character addressing the reading audience. The judge, the priest and the lieutenant are tantamount to a single character in a cartoon strip, but in the plays Feiffer lost some of the kinaesthetic experience of theatre when he wrote a long part to be delivered in a comic-sermonesque style in the middle of a play.

"Characters can stand on stage and argue from various fixed points, none of which is absolutely right. By listening, and you're forced to listen if the argument is interesting enough--we can get something out of it for ourselves . . . the action is in the language."<sup>12</sup>

Richard Gilman in Newsweek Magazine (May 8, 1967) found that "points of view" was precisely the problem with Little Murders:

" . . . The play disintegrates rapidly into a dozen warring motifs . . . and a nearly absolute inability on Feiffer's part to get his main points across. That they are "points" is in a sense just what is wrong; in Albee at his early best in Ionesco and Pinter, all of whom are clearly Feiffer's exemplars, the points of view are

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<sup>12</sup> John Lahr, Transatlantic Review, p. 42.

inseparable from the dramatic structure and its details."

Feiffer's specific design to jolt the audience is partly responsible for the break of form with content:

"What I was trying to do in Little Murders was take familiar devices and set them loose in the America of Viet-Nam. Set them loose in a country that's been living for a long time in a Cold War morality. It's fascinating because what you're dealing with is the audience. You're showing them something they know and they're familiar with and immediately relaxed with, and then showing them how it really is."<sup>13</sup>

Feiffer, in all his idealism to impress a vivid and horrifying truth on the audience, combined too many styles and came out with no style. The shot that kills Patsy is as horrific as any device of the Theatre of Cruelty. The vision of American society in the bloodstream of absurdism is meaningful but was never directly created in the context of the production. The monologue-quality is in the tradition of the cartoons or a stand-up comedy routine. In short, Feiffer's changing form and ideology is caught in Little Murders.

That Little Murders should close after seven performances On-Broadway but then be selected the best foreign play of the year in London where it opened only one month after closing in New York, is, besides being amazing, a statement

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<sup>13</sup> John Lahr, Interview, p. 43.

about satire and its effect on the audience. Little Murders worked in London as a Swiftian satire and closed in New York because it was a modern satire. In London the "Beholder" was not confronted with his own image. Martin Esslin in The New York Times (July 18, 1967) said:

"The principal reason for the difference in reactions of the New York and London audience of Little Murders is that in New York the play, with its suggestion that life in that city is becoming ever more noisy, mad and violent, must have been pretty disturbing. In London it is positively reassuring . . . this diagnosis of the sickness of America through sick humor is bound to please an English audience . . . as satire is so totally enjoyable when it is so clearly directed against vices of which one knows oneself to be totally free."

But if the satire of Feiffer's cartoons are so wholly appreciable because they expose man to himself, and this has been labelled the touchstone of the modern response to satire, how can the rejection of Little Murders On-Broadway be accounted for? The answer is primarily a matter of distinguishing the sensibilities of different audiences. It also raises the issue of private or public confrontation between the artistic material and the audience.

The London production was received more graciously because according to Esslin, "the audience at the Royal Shakespeare's London home, the Aldwych, have been conditioned by seven years of experience to demand more from a play than merely entertainment. Hence, the serious or disturbing

plays have a better chance of surviving here than on Broadway." The same can be said of Broadway and Off-Broadway in New York. The Off-Broadway audience is more prone to accept open confrontation than the Broadway audience. Two years later in 1969, Little Murders was revived Off-Broadway and had over two hundred performances. This successful Off-Broadway revival is linked to the level of defensiveness an audience brings to satiric art. The defensive refusal to "Behold" oneself in the 1967 Broadway production was mainly due to the lack of willingness to recognize gratuitous violence in America in 1967. The audience could not actually deny the experience in Little Murders as an untruthful representation of the quality of life in America but to admit openly that life had deteriorated was as shameful as admitting to sexual impotency before Freudian notions of impotency made the symptom a common one. By 1969 gratuitous violence was everywhere and many (admittedly not everyone and especially still, Broadway clientele) were willing to accept their condition as presented by Little Murders. There is a great likelihood that had Little Murders originally been produced Off-Broadway, it would have met with success. The Off-Broadway reputation (which was dying fast however by the late Sixties) was notorious for plays that confronted the audience with a

vital, life-threatening or life-revealing experience.

Little Murders was both, but On-Broadway it was an anachronism to an audience who defensively shied away from the mirror image of life that Feiffer was able, as a cartoonist, to hold up to everyone. Private affirmation of the cartoons became public disavowal when Feiffer dared denigrate man by showing him his depravity in public.

The satire of Feiffer's cartoon and the satire of Feiffer's theatre were met with distinctly different responses.

Admittedly, the lack of artistic proficiency of Little Murders evoked a critical response purely on an aesthetic basis. But the meaning of Little Murders attacked New York on a class consciousness level and the public denigration, the cattle-grouping, as it were, was not the mental or private experience of the cartoon.

Feiffer had been called prophetic for seeing in 1967 what the rest of America saw only in 1969, or was only willing to admit to seeing in 1969. Gratuitous violence was everywhere in the later Sixties in America. God Bless in 1968 and The White House Murder Case in 1970 make this very clear.

God Bless

Rx: Hate America! See how fast it frees you from analysis!<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Jules Feiffer, "God Bless," Plays and Players Magazine (London), October 1968. Quotations from God Bless will be indicated immediately after the quote by (G.B., p. \_\_\_\_).

The 1967 Broadway failure of Little Murders irritated Feiffer enough to do two things: to keep writing and to keep away from Broadway. The result was God Bless which previewed at Yale (where the critics were kept out) and then went, not unwisely, straight to London where the Royal Shakespeare Company performed, with pleasure, a perfectly nihilistic anti-American play. The unrecognizability of gratuitous violence in Little Murders which needed Feiffer's explanations in order to surface, was made monstrously apparent in God Bless which Feiffer admitted was a political cartoon: "God Bless is, in a sense deliberately a political cartoon. So the people there are archtypical figures."<sup>15</sup>

The archetypes are distinctly American however. William Brackman, aged one hundred and ten, is a statesman and trusted confidant of every president from Cleveland to Kennedy. He is a pragmatic liberal who, over the years, adopted a policy of flexibility so as to maintain "effectiveness". In short, he is perfectly corrupt.

"Betrayal was often the only way liberals of my time were able to prove they were serious. It eventually became recognized as a tribal rite: no one resents it anymore (G.B., p. 42)."

Brackman has a secretary/wife Eve, who Feiffer decided was a "power fucker"<sup>16</sup> after he wrote her role. She 'screws'

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<sup>15</sup> John Lahr, Interview, p. 38.

<sup>16</sup> John Lahr, Interview, p. 46.

everyone in the play except the priest.

There are two radicals, (one black, one white) who, under the tutelage of Brackman during their Harvard years, have now decided that power is their answer. They are fed up with the conservative liberalism of the president and fed up with the barbaric imperialism of the America engaged in wars with Southeast Asia, Latin America and Africa. They lead the American Liberation Front into a revolution against the system.

Father Whiting, a priest is a writer for the American Heretic: The Radical Catholic Weekly. He is a moralist who dies from "inflexibility".

Lawrence Sloane is the president of the United States. He is noted for paradoxical behaviour. He campaigned for peace in an armoured car. He actually hired the radicals to start the demonstration in Washington, where the play takes place, but is now helpless against their betrayal.

"In God Bless I was trying to show what our heritage of pragmatic liberalism has brought us in the last 20 years, using the framework of this century and before. The liberal mentality that chooses to be affective rather than woolly minded, moralistic and idealistic. And where that affectiveness has brought us. Viet-Nam is one of its major betrayals."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> John Lahr, Interview, p. 41.

The London performance of God Bless did not live up to the expectations Feiffer had hoped for. He certainly was moving toward expressing a point of view, but was getting no closer to good playwrighting than he was with Little Murders. Martin Esslin said in The New York Times (November 3, 1968):

"As a political tract, the piece is very interesting and contains many wise insights and witty remarks. As a piece of drama it is the deadest of dead ducks . . . It is the story of the continuous sellouts and betrayals of the American liberal who always somehow comes to terms with the powers that be and always consoles himself that even isolationism or the Cold War somehow contributed to social progress. Yes, the text is witty, but there is no play. As a topic of conversation developed by a witty pundit after a good dinner, this would be splendid, but it simply does not make a play. . . In America some of the sharp things that are being said might strike home. But only as political aphorisms, not as theatre. Feiffer is a great cartoonist; this, in a way, is a political cartoon strip. It just does not come to life."

"God Bless is overtly political. I wanted to write a play dealing with ideas in the air today."<sup>18</sup> God Bless is extremely cynical and perhaps even crude, but not in a vulgar sense. Despite the exaggerations, the depth of political insight and shocking representation of the condition of America are, in the final analysis, authentically conceived. The argumentative tone, the intellectual incongruities,

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<sup>18</sup> John Lahr, Interview, p. 43.

the frightening deceptions of every incident make God Bless Feiffer's most distinctly subversive play. "It's a work of fairly total criticism: making a round tour of every fashionable hope and attitude concerning America today."<sup>19</sup>

God Bless is a staged interview of William Brackman, America's greatest statesman, by a Catholic priest. During the interview two radicals show up at Brackman's home in Washington to inform him that the revolution has arrived. They intend to assassinate the president when he arrives at Brackman's for advice. The time is somewhere in the future and the Revolution looks despairingly grim for Americans. The Revolution has become as grotesque as what it purports to overthrow.

Norman: We're radical murders. You're liberal murders. The difference is we don't go overseas to do our killing . . . we plan to murder the eldest male white child in every family in America. We have extensive mutilation plans. Mutilation temples! Mutilation festivals! . . . We plan to bomb one city a week for a year (G.B., p. 45)."

This type of action is the stretching of logic to the insane conclusion that Feiffer defines as satire. If the radicals learned their tactics from American diplomacy, they learned their philosophy from Brackman, a noted intellectual and two-time recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize:

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<sup>19</sup> Ronald Bryden, "America on the Rocks," The Observer Review, October 24, 1968, p. 60, cols. 1-2.

Ames (reads from book): Once we take up the faith that a good society is not our inheritance but a corrupt society is we see signs of that faith everywhere. We insist on seeing them. We claim that Utopia at best would be corrupt (and there lies the American dream) and at worst would be totalitarian (and there lies the Communist dream). Any system men use to organise society must, in the end, be a bad system because men are bad. The best to be done is to choose the least bad men to govern the least bad system. Once chosen that system is forevermore known as the system, and is regarded as permanent and unchanging. The resultant despair is viewed with equanimity. Despair ceases to wound once it achieves tenure. We see that sin lies not in the system, but in man. Not in free enterprise, but in you and me. Change us, but, for heaven's sake, leave the system alone! Conc One of the New Holiness (G.B., p. 39)."

Feiffer is imposing the essay-sermon form here as he did in Little Murders, but it is in keeping with the play this time. Unfortunately, it is still not a theatrical play and long speeches by Brackman are the device around which the play revolves.

Brackman has the most extraordinary personal history. The interview with Father Whiting is broken by spells of senility, but Brackman manages to tell about his personal history and extensive political betrayals before the play is through. He was raised in Indiana. His father used to hide slaves; his mother used to turn them in. His father believed in morality, his mother law. His father published a newspaper and wrote editorials in support of the miner's strike,

but since he printed both sides of the story the miners hated him too. A lynch mob, composed of "friends and neighbors" broke into his office one night but he managed to escape to the mines, where the miners hanged him. The first three miners that were found were arrested on the spot, a Negro, an Italian and a Jew. Brackman's mother went to the jail and spoke out in favor of a fair trial for these miners, whereupon Brackman led a lynch mob which trampled his mother to death and hanged the three miners. It was at this time that he recognized his qualities of leadership and how to use them for the rest of his life.

The tone of God Bless is entirely different from Little Murders. There are no Freudian preoccupations and the representation of American political and moral thought is not obscured. It is a straightforward cutting thrust against America's archetypes to expose the maliciousness of hypocrisy. Feiffer remains consistent in the structure of plot throughout. The play is unified conceptually around two themes: betrayal and power. Everyone is seen as capable of betrayal and the motivation for this is power:

President: I know the name of the game. It's power. I got it. They want it. There are not other issues. There never have been any other issues. Power is not to do good with or to do bad with. Power is to keep (G.B., p. 45).

The play ends with the radicals negotiating with the president

about which American cities will be burned. When Feiffer has pushed the conservatism of logic beyond 'insane conclusion' and conceived the most cutting satire on American political ethics.

Ronald Bryden in The London Observer (October 24, 1968) again suggested the pleasure of the satirical experience that does not relegate oneself to a subhuman experience:

"At the end it leaves America burning; the inevitable end, it implies, of a civilization built on the will to win. It seems to be marvellous; as dazzling an extravaganza of pure ideas as any since Shaw's 'On the Rocks', which I take to be its model, and easily the funniest most literate and far sighted new play to reach London this year . . . the distinction and delight of this play is the way it nets all the fluttering ideas of a moment, pins them down and scrutinizes them with the cool critical intelligence of a historian writing a decade from now. Few contemporary plays give so passionate a sense of commitment. Every line breathes appalled love for the anguished nation it sacrifices."

Two things are put into perspective by this comment. That Feiffer expresses appalled love for the nation he sacrifices, is not a contradiction. For inexplicable reasons perhaps, an English critic is able to see this more readily than an American. The same sentimentality that lurks under the veneer of the cartoons is present in Feiffer's plays. Secondly, the prophetic oversight that Feiffer definitely had in Little Murders is also present in God Bless. Feiffer can extract from his immediate environment and project, with

great insight, into a situation whether it be the psycho-analytic insight in the cartoons or the political predictions in the plays. The White House Murder Case is the most amazing evidence of this cunning power.

#### The White House Murder Case

"The government deserves credit for making a satirist's life more challenging. This began for me some years ago when there was an Atomic Energy Commission committee set up to investigate the effects of radioactive fallout, and they called it 'Operation Sunshine'. How do you compete with that? In my play The White House Murder Case, the name of the disastrous military operation that back-fires and kills 750 GI's was 'Operation Total Win'. When Nixon went into Cambodia, three months later, they called it 'Operation Ultimate Victory'. A week after Cambodia, the play died. George S. Kaufman once said, 'Satire is what closes Saturday Night.' It's not true. It's reality that closes Saturday night (pb., p. 94)."

Feiffer's subversive tendencies in his art were inspired by the incongruities he saw in American politics. His attitude that satire pushed logic to the brink until it became absurd was born in his response to the American government. The result was a satire that was the same as reality if the meaning was not misrepresented by the production. However, this was a recurring problem in Feiffer's plays.

Clive Barnes in The New York Times (February 19, 1970) said: "The author's ingenuity has here outpaced his comic material . . . the idea of the play is a great deal more gripping than the play itself, and this is where it falls apart." The more

preoccupied Feiffer was with a vital political satire, the less concerned he became with theatrical form. The White House Murder Case had a considerably good run Off-Broadway, but still, the critics were depressingly frustrated by the relatively little growth of three years' work of Feiffer's dramatic style. Marya Mannes in The New York Times (March 1, 1970) wrote:

"The savage contempt of the ugliness and deception of our times has usually been coupled with a marvelous lunacy both in his drawings and his words. But somehow they don't work here . . . the funny lines are mostly unfunny because these are not people, good or despicable. Anger at betrayal, hatred for war, contempt for this government: all this may share. But the targets are too important for buckshot, too tragic for derision, too serious for caricature."

Clive Barnes said in The New York Times (February 19, 1970):

"There is a load of sick fun in the play but it never accounts up . . . the entire pattern of unfeeling bureaucracy in alignment with insensate masses is vividly pertinent. Yet Mr. Feiffer never brings his bird home to roost and to breed in the imagination. He is flippant where he should be flip, sloppy where he should be surgical. In short this is precisely the kind of engaged play we should be writing. Mr. Feiffer - and I love him - hasn't written it."

By 1970 the critics recognized the validity, exactness and relevance in Feiffer's plays, but they also recognized the lack of growth in his talent for stage writing. Why so many of the critics apparently wanted to praise Feiffer as a satirist and yet had to disclaim his dramatic form,

might be analyzed in regard to the extent of the subversive content of Feiffer's message. Feiffer was going too far and something had to curtail him. According to most critics Feiffer was still writing cartoons, still perfecting the caricature and getting nowhere in regard to creating an authentic, psychologically justifiable, understandable, exploratory character. Instead, situation predominated; this was the opposite extreme of the cartoons where no environment was ever necessitated and rarely created. The plays tended to create more environment and none of the omnipotent analytical interest so vital in the cartoons.

In White House, the environment is divided between a Brazilian jungle and the inner office of the president's council room in the White House. Like in God Bless, the president of the United States is one of the characters. In both plays, Feiffer is deliberately using political figureheads as symbols of betrayal. Ultimately, the message is stretched to mean America is betraying all its people.

America is involved in Brazil in a war that replicates America's involvement in VietNam. The Army releases a nerve gas on its enemy, but the wind shifts at precisely the wrong moment and 750 American soldiers are killed, 90 are paralyzed. In Washington the president is confronted with the problem of explaining a military catastrophe to the

American people. He calls a meeting of his executive council; the Attorney General, the Postmaster General, the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Research and Development. They are confronted with two issues. The first is a moral issue concerning the deployment of nerve gas, a weapon that was outlawed at the last Geneva Convention. There is also the issue of how to tell the American public of the incident. In short, the incident is "covered up" and packed with lies before the public is told:

Parson: In matters involving the national security ---

Cole: We have the right to withhold certain information ---

Sweeney: CB97 is a comparatively humane --

Stiles: We could say they used the gas on us.

Cole: The Brazilians? We couldn't make it stick.

Stiles: Why not? The Russians supplied them.

Cole shakes his head.

The Chinese?

President: One foreign crisis at a time, Tim, please.

Stiles: The Russians will understand. They know American politics.

Cole: I don't see any way out of conceding deployment.

Parson: If we concede deployment, there goes your ball game.

Cole: Not if intelligence reports led us to suspect the Brazilians were in the process of being supplied with nerve gas.

Stiles: Isn't that what I said?

Cole: I'm not finished. We could not risk the safety of our command by overlooking these reports, so strictly as a deterrent -- to keep them from using their gas on us -- deployment of CB97 was ordered.

Pratt: This could very well be the case.

Parson: I like that. Intelligence reports--

Cole: and captured enemy documents.

Stiles: But then what? Do they use it and we responded, or what?

Pratt: Colonel Dawn ordered it.

Stiles: He's dead, isn't he? We can't blame it on anybody dead.

Cole: I lean toward a mishap--an accident.

Parson: Everytime we report an accident the military is made to look like fools.

Cole: This won't be blamed on you. A gas leak.

Sweeney: Our gas doesn't leak!

Cole: Well, it's got to be something like a gas leak.

Stiles: An act of God.

Parson: Maybe it was hit by lightning.

Pratt: The rainy season is five months away.

Parson: Maybe one of the storage tanks gets hit by an enemy shell.

Pratt: That could happen.

Sweeney: What are CB97 storage tanks doing within the range of enemy shells?

Parson: All right, say a stray enemy shell.

Pratt: A guerilla patrol could have gotten behind our lines. That does happen.

Cole: That's very good, General Pratt.

Parson: Excellent, General Pratt. A suicide patrol. We don't know if they knew what those storage tanks contained and deliberately shelled them or--

Cole: It could have been an accident or deliberate.

Parson: We'll never know. No one will ever know.

Stiles: That's it! By Golly, that does it!

Sweeney: It does seem the simplest way.

President: Now that we know what happened, how do we release it? (WHMC, p. 34-35).

The scenes shift between the president's office and Brazil. The aftermath of the nerve gas is producing very strange decomposition effects on the American soldiers:

Weems: It sounds funny to say it--so all together.  
My leg is coming loose.

Cutler: Throw it over with my leg.

Weems: I can't see your leg. I can't really see too well anymore. And I'm having trouble talking.

Cutler: I don't have any trouble understanding.

Weems: Does my voice sound funny to you?

Cutler: It sounds more like what you're really about.

Weems: I'm getting down to roots.

Cutler: That's what I mean.

Weems: Look what just came off. (Holds object over his head.)

Cutler: I can't see too good either. What is it?

Weems: My pecker. I was scratching it and it came off.  
(WHMC., p. 82.)

Oddly, the nerve gas is semi-euphoric and the two soldiers, one of whom is a CIA agent looking for the real reasons behind the release of the gas, explore the potential for a utopia where all men would be brothers. Feiffer infuses these scenes with an immense compassion and at the same time makes them extraordinarily funny. They are, however, static dialogues and resemble the cartoons.

Cutler: Next stage of what?

Weems: Evolution. Everybody joined together. Maybe the way we've been all our lives isn't natural. The way we are now. You and me and whoever comes along--a rescue squad--they take our hands and their hands get locked into our hands, and a squad of Chicos

comes along and they see this squad and guys holding hands. You think they'll shoot? They won't be able to shoot. Because it's the wave of the future. They'll take our hands. And more and more guys come along--their side and our side--gooks and colored guys--they'll see this daisy chain--in the middle of a war zone. This beautiful, peace-loving daisy chain, and they'll drop their guns. It will sound like a very loud bomb, the sound of all those guns dropping at one time. And they'll join hands with our hands so that there's no reason to fight anymore because we're all one body with these millions of held hands. No more outsiders. Just one enormous insider. (WHMC., p. 65.)

In the meantime back at the White House the strangest murder has just taken place. The president's wife has been stabbed with a peace sign that says "Make Love Not War." The president's men despised the First Lady anyway as she was a leader of the peace movement. Their marriage reminds us of the relationships between the men and women in the cartoons.

President: You always mock me.

Mrs. Hale: ~~you~~ never listen to me!

President: Most of Washington thinks I listen too much to you.

Mrs. Hale: Washington!

President: Why do you hate Washington? Because I'm it's first citizen?

Mrs. Hale: I hate it because it's unreal. Stop feeling sorry for yourself.

President: Am I unreal?

Mrs. Hale: You don't exist. Nobody here exists. That's what scares me most about Washington. All these absent people making war.

The White House murder must be covered up; elections are only six weeks away and this strange incident is too close to the Brazilian catastrophe. The same 'shake-down' of ideas as to how to cover up the First Lady fiasco parallels the cover up of the Brazilian fiasco:

Cole: Why can't we make it be Communists? Or a peace group?

Stiles: I don't care who we have do it. But one thing I'm strong on. We can't have her killed in the White House.

Parson: Why not?

Stiles: Not six weeks before election. It makes us look ineffectual.

Cole: Stiles is right. She's got to be killed somewhere else.

Sweeney: But where?

Cole: Tim, where are we most in trouble?

Stiles: In the cities, according to Gallup.

Cole: So we're not risking very much if we have her killed in New York?

Stiles: New York, Chicago, San Francisco. Doesn't matter.

Coles: We may even pull a sympathy vote.

Stiles: For a sympathy vote, I'd scratch New York. Better make it Chicago.

Parson: There are lots of Communists in Chicago. Can't we do something with that?

Stiles: I'd like to help you out on this morale business, Biff, but the more I look at it, the less likely it seems.

Cole: Let's not forget the picket sign.

Sweeney: Make Love Not War."

Cole: I favor a peace group.

Pratt: Or students.

Parson: Why not make it the blacks?

Stiles: Chicago's full of them.

Sweeney: Why always look for left-wing villains?  
Why not pick on the Birch Society?

Parson: Come off it, Sweeney. The Birch Society?  
"Make Love Not War?"

Sweeney: I just don't see why everyone has to  
pick on the left. Anyhow, no one will believe  
they did it. She was anti-war, pro-Negro,  
and pro-student.

Stiles: No one will believe it.

Parson: I think they'll believe it.

Pratt: It could very easily be the Negroes.

Stiles: You're out of touch. It's out of the question.

Cole: So who did it?

Sweeney: Why does she have to have been murdered?

Stiles: That's very good, Sweeney.

Cole: An accident?

Parson: A plane crash?

Sweeney: A car crash?

Pratt: A hunting accident?

Parson: A fatal illness?

Pratt: Pneumonia?

Cole: Takes too long.

Pratt: Cancer.

Stiles: Bad image.

Cole: And it takes too long.

Parson: A heart attack!

Sweeney: I know, food poisoning!

Cole: Food poisoning!

Parson: Food poisoning!

Stiles: I like it!

Pratt: Food poisoning in Chicago. It could have  
happened.

Finally, the Postmaster General takes the president

aside and confesses that it was he who killed the First Lady, thinking she was the president. He was hoping that if the president was assassinated the present vice-president would be elected by a sympathy vote, because otherwise the incumbent would lose. Upon hearing all this the president decides that the guilty man is not going to be arrested, that the truth would be harmful to the rest of the country:

Stiles: You seemed pretty eager to spread the truth a little while ago.

President: Among ourselves, yes. Of course! We're equipped to deal with it. But the public--it wouldn't do them any good to hear this sort of thing. It would shake their faith badly. We wouldn't be able to carry on. We've made our share of mistakes, but good Lord, can you imagine those other fellows in power? No, it's vital that we carry on (WHMC., p. 104).

The Postmaster General has the president 'over a barrel' and blackmails him into obtaining the position of Secretary of State or else he will confess to the murder, which would indicate the instability of the Party. The president has rationalized his way through two enormous and complex crimes that convey the corruption of the Military and the Government. Henry Hewes in The Saturday Review (March 7, 1970) said:

"Feiffer's concern is not the murder of one character, but the murder of compassionate human response in all of us; murder that results from the kind of schizoid thinking that makes it possible for man to rationalize any act as long as it helps him do his job."

Feiffer for the first time manages a psychological composition

in character: the president is a mock hero posing as a martyr for the good of the country. Blindness in the guise of altruism is, however, a strongly deprecatory view of the leaders of America. White House had a successful run Off-Broadway because the play was staged as a comedy, and the socially demeaning content was relegated by the extremes of the zaniness and implausibility of the characters. The Review in the Nation (March 9, 1970, p. 285) stated: "There is always the danger in such high jinks that their very success diminishes their satiric impact."

In terms of form and content, White House echoes the mid-road of Little Murders and God Bless. The president's council are very like the family in Little Murders, but the message is made more blatant than in Little Murders. The political overtones are those of God Bless. Formally, the play is tightly constructed and the shift in geographical locations are constructed to play the harmlessness of the soldiers off the harmful and powerful branch of government that never suffers from their mistakes.

But as for reputation as a playwright, Feiffer was instead becoming appreciated for his cartoon style of playwriting by some critics and still condemned by others for the same reason. Walter Kerr said in The New York Times (March 5, 1970):

"The new wool gathering cartoon that is spinning its web all over the open floor of Circle in the square seems to me to represent a marked advance, theatrically speaking, for the always outraged and occasionally outrageous Mr. Feiffer."

Clive Barnes sums it up in The New York Times (February 19, 1970) when he remarks that "The White House Murder Case and its performance dazzlingly directed by Alan Arkin and acted by a cast that must be a cartoonist's dream. . . ." Paul D. Zimmerman in Newsweek (March 9, p. 78) said:

"The cartoonist's brilliant talent for etching character in a line or two deserts the playwright. His officials, like the cartoons they are, do not develop . . . What Feiffer needs is not clarity of vision or deftness of dialogue, but flesh and blood persona. Instead he has written a play in search of six characters."

Edith Oliver in The New Yorker (March 9, 1970, p. 200) concludes:

"The best of them, Paul Benedict, plays the Postmaster General, political manager of the president's party, as if the role were not a comic strip character at all, as for Mr. Feiffer, he clearly knows what he is doing, but what he is doing is just not good enough."

Conclusions about Feiffer as a dramatist are ambiguous. Stylistically, the critics attacked him for poor characterization and a non-dramatic form. Satirically, he was prophetic and this forced him to take some of his drama out of America, which was successful abroad. The plays that 'made it' in America, did so because the satire was adumbrated by comedy.

## CONCLUSION

Conclusions about Feiffer's movement from cartoonist to playwright are integrally related to the changing ideology of Feiffer's satire.

In studying the cartoons it was apparent that Feiffer's satire was self-reflexive, that it was motivated from Freudian inspired relationships, or in a more specific context from Feiffer's personal confrontations with and observances of life. This is not to exclude the existential cartoons whose themes are at times metaphysical, but is to say that the Freudian analytical mentality was significantly more pervasive; Feiffer satirized personally everything he was as a man and everything he was not, and hoped to be.

This, in essence, was the rationale for a thesis that linked an artist's personal history with his artistic material. In the Freudian cartoon years of Feiffer's satire, the emphasis was on a mental construction of cartoons that blatantly revealed psychological notions of inadequacy, persecution, apathy, rationalization and isolation. This allowed for a classification of the ideology in the cartoons as a personal and emotional one. Hence, the term 'emotion content.'

When Feiffer's satire shifted ideologically from Freud to anti-Americanism, the base of motivation shifted

from the personal internalization and expression of emotional experiences to the impersonal externalization and expression of political experiences. Hence, the term 'gratuitous violence' and the Cold War morphology Feiffer used to explain his plays. The transparent reason for shifting ideology was the Kennedy assassination. Feiffer responded to the assassination by becoming politically active and as a result, disappointed, disillusioned and angered by American politics.

Feiffer explained the transformation in his art form as being consonant with his need for a larger audience to participate with a more vital message than was afforded the cartoons. As a playwright, however, something of the artistic genius that was in the cartoons was qualitatively lost in the plays. This was explained by the critics as a matter of non-dimensionality in Feiffer's characters, conveniently labelling them caricatures, and finally cartoons. However, there was something more significant in the critics' refusal to appreciate the plays. The plays were overtly anti-American and daringly subversive. This complied with Feiffer's definition of a satire that was antagonistic to the system it satirized, but, unlike the cartoons, the satire in the plays was publicly denigrating an enormous structure: American society and government. A defensive reaction was the result.

Abroad, Feiffer's plays had quite the opposite

reaction; the satirization of America satisfied an English audience. This raised an interesting issue concerning the definition of Swiftian satire and the modern definition of satire proposed in this thesis. It was suggested that the difference between Swiftian and modern satire was in the response to the representation of human depravity and that the modern response was to receive a 'masochistic pleasure'. In the eighteenth century the response to satire was on the level of class consciousness; not on the level of the mental complexity that 'masochistic pleasure' implies. It could be expected that Americans would revel in the masochistic delight of Little Murders, but they did not; the English audience did not associate and identify with the object of the satire, but viewed the satire as a statement of class consciousness of Americans. Why Little Murders stands as an exception to the expected modern reaction to Feiffer's satire was related to a defensiveness that springs from open confrontation in the theatre when compared with the private confrontation of the cartoon. The silence of the cartoons was non-threatening while the public 'screaming' at America in the plays was intolerably antagonistic to the American audience.

That the critics dared not accept the brutal vision of America on such public terms was a dampening agent on the validity of their conclusions about the plays. It is suggested

here that the unanimous and collective disclaimings of Feiffer as a dramatist by the American critics was more than an aesthetic and critical appraisal of Feiffer's satire. That, in fact, the critics were responding in exactly the opposite manner to the cartoons specifically because they were susceptible to public criticism if they dared align themselves openly with the anti-American sentiment of Feiffer's satire. It is possible to stretch this point right into Feiffer's cartoon representation of the phenomenology of behaviour; the critics were altruistically obsequious to societal expectation. Where the cartoons tacitly and privately allowed for audience response, the plays demanded a social commitment from the audience.

Although the plays were decidedly distinct in content from the cartoons, the use of stereotypes prevailed. There was a very different employment of a 'type' in the plays in comparison to the cartoons. Feiffer's characters in the plays were functional only to the extent that they defined a situation. The 'mental' construction of the cartoon character was the contrapuntal to the environmental or situational employment of the characters in the plays. The stereotypes in the cartoons never explained an environment but instead explained the psychology, behaviour and reality of the stereotype. While in the plays the stereotype was never explored mentally but was used to construct something

altogether unrelated, a decaying American society. Feiffer's ideology changed, but not his employment of stereotyped characterization. Unfortunately the characterization in the cartoons appeared fuller and more developed than the characterization in the plays. This was related to the difference in perceiving the forms. The immediate and fleeting experience of the cartoon summoned the reader's emotional identification with the cartoon character while the prolonged dramatic experience summoned the expectation of growth, development, psychological complexity and resolution which was definitely lacking in the plays.

To define Feiffer as a satirist and evaluate him as a satirist is clearly, after examining the cartoons and the plays, a mixed and problematic appraisal.

The classic and then reworked definition of a subversive satire, by Feiffer, was accessible in both the cartoons and the plays. In fact, the broadest applicable spectrum of satire was exemplified by both these art forms. Satisfying a 'masochistic pleasure,' the personal post-Freudian internalization of the response to the satire in the cartoons was a significant representation of a new satire or a modern satire. The plays were leveled in a more traditional mode against the class consciousness of America as citizens of a violent and hypocritical country.

An evaluation of Feiffer as a satirist demands an

awareness of the personal integrity of the artist. This, in essence, has been the rationale behind the employment of biographical material. The substantiation of the shift in Feiffer's ideology and form is discerned by connecting these changes with a changing personality. Feiffer moved from a spokesman of himself in the cartoons to a spokesman of Americans in his plays. The cartoons spoke for themselves and spoke privately to a silent audience. The plays, on the contrary, spoke for America and spoke publicly to an active audience.

A benevolent appraisal would make allowances for structural defects in the plays that the critics justifiably condemned and classify Feiffer as a superior satirist of a truly prophetic and dedicated l'esprit d'invention. This, however, is based on a knowledge of the man behind the art; an argumentative position between theorists who deny the biographical implication behind any art form and those who account for the art through the life of the artist. This thesis presented the latter, making Feiffer's life integral with his art.

## APPENDIX I

## CHRONOLOGY

Staged Cartoons - Plays - Dialogues\* - Films

<u>Title</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Location</u>
The Explainers (a satirical review based on cartoons)	1961	Playwrights Cabaret Theatre, Chicago
Munro (animated film)	1961	Rembrandt Films (wins Oscar for the best short subject cartoon)
Crawling Arnold (play)	1961	Gian Carlo Menotti's Festival of Two Worlds, Italy
Introduction: Dialogue Superman: Dialogue	1963	Horizon Magazine, first American printing
Feiffer Film (film version of cartoons)	1965	Feiffer's Album
The Apple Tree (Passionel- la) A fable.	1966	Feiffer brought this film on tour when he lectured at universities.
Harry the Rat with Women (Feiffer's only novel: staged as a play)	1966	New York
Little Murders (play)	1966	Detroit Institute of the Arts
Little Murders	1967	Yale School of Drama
Little Murders	1967	Broadway
		London, England

\*Dialogues appear rarely throughout the anthologies. They are included here to indicate the movement away from cartoon into play form.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Location</u>
God Bless	1968	Yale School of Drama
God Bless	1968	London, England
Collision Course (Unexpurgated Memoirs of Bernard Morgendeiler)	1968	New York, Off-Broadway
Little Murders	1969	New York, Off-Broadway Revival
Oh! Calcutta! (Dick and Jane)	1969	New York, Off-Broadway
White House Murder Case (play)	1970	New York, Off-Broadway
Little Murders (screen script)	1970	Hollywood
Carnal Knowledge* (screen script)	1971	Hollywood
Feiffer skits (staged cartoons)	1974	McGill University**

\*Carnal Knowledge was conceived as a play but was produced as a movie because director Mike Nichols convinced Feiffer of its merits as a screen script. Considering the relative lack of success On Broadway of Feiffer's plays (see Appendix II) Feiffer was wise to heed the advice. Interestingly enough the movie was considered too controversial in its representation of sexual values and morals and was banned in several states in America, while Oh! Calcutta! was flourishing in the nude in New York.

\*\*Undoubtedly, skits of Feiffer cartoons have been performed a countless number of times in Universities and nightclubs all over North America.

## APPENDIX II

The New York Times:

Theater Reviews

Season's Statistics

# Closing The Record Book on 1966-67

Another theater season draws to an official close this Friday, June 30. That's the date when, according to Actors Equity, run-of-the-play

contracts expire. So, for theater buffs with a penchant for titles—and figures—here's a tally of the season's productions and their runs.

## BROADWAY

	1966	1965	
Plays	67	66	
Musicals	27	33	
Revues	12	13	
Revivals	2	2	
Miscellaneous	3	2	
	46	54	

### PLAYS

Shows listed in capital letters are still running.

DON'T DRINK THE WATER	251
THE STAR-SPANGLED GIRL	220
The Killing of Sister George	205
THE HOMECOMING	203
BLACK COMEDY	160
A Delicate Balance	133

### YOU KNOW I CAN'T HEAR YOU WHEN THE WATER'S RUNNING

The Investigation

How's the World Treating You?

My Sweet Charlie

Love in E-Flat

Help Stamp Out Mameget!

The Loves of Cass McGuire

The Alabamian Coat

Under the Weather

That Summer—That Fall

The Paisley Convertible

Of Love Remembered

We Have Always Lived in the Castle

Hail Scrawdyke!

Little Murders

Agatha Sue, I Love You

Those That Play the Clowns

Come Live With Me

The Girl in the Freudian Slip

The Natural Look

A Warm Body

### MUSICALS

THE APPLE TREE

CABARET

I DO! I DO!

Walking Happy

Let's Sing Yiddish

ELLYA DARLING

HALLELUJAH, BABY!

Sherry!

Sing Israel Sing

Gilbert Beauford on Broadway

A Joyful Noise

### REVUES

At the Drop of Another Hat

Hello, Solly!

### REVIVALS

Dinner at Eight

The Persuasion and Assassination of Jean Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis De Sade

### MISCELLANEOUS

A Hand Is on the Gate

The Apparition Theater of Prague

The Stockholm Marionette Theater of Fantasy in The Threepenny Opera

## REPERTORY THEATER LINCOLN CENTER

Golden ... 76

Yerma ... 60

The East Wind ... 60

The Alchemist ... 52

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# Closing The Record Book on 1967-68

Interrupted for three days, June 17-19, by the actors' strike on Broadway, the 1967-68 theater sea-

son draws to an official close today. For theaterbuffs, here are the season's productions and their runs.

## BROADWAY

	1967-	1968-
Plays	41	27
Musicals	11	12
Revues	4	2
	56	41

Shows listed in capital letters are still running

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILD-

ENSTERN ARE DEAD

293

THERE'S A GIRL IN MY

SOUP

290

Spofford

202

THE PRIME OF MISS JEAN

BRODIE

188

THE PRICE

162

Joe Egg

154

PLAZA SUITE

More Stately Mansions

141

The Birthday Party

126

I Never Sang For My Father

124

Something Different

103

Everything in the Garden

85

After the Rain

64

Halfway Up the Tree

64

Staircase

61

Portrait of a Queen

60

What Did We Do Wrong?

48

Daphne in Cottage D

41

Before You Go

29

The Seven Descents of Myrtle

28

Ninety-Day Mistress

24

The Promise

23

Weekend

22

Loot

22

Soldiers

22

How to Be a Jewish Mother

21

Avant!

21

The Only Game in Town

16

Brief Lives

16

By George

13

The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald

9

Dr Cook's Garden

8

Carry Me Back to Morningside

Heights

Keep It in the Family

5

The Guide

5

The Exercise

5

Song of the Grasshopper

4

Mile Downstairs

4

A Minor Adjustment

3

Johnny No-Trump

1

Happiress Is Just a Little

Thing Called a Rolls Royce

1

MUSICALS

How Now, Dow Jones

221

THE HAPPY TIME

182

GOLDEN RAINBOW

165

GEORGE M!

90

Henry, Sweet Henry

80

HAIR

68

The Grand Music Hall of Israel

54

Darling of the Day

33

The Education of H\*Y\*M\*A\*N

23

K\*A-P\*L\*A\*N

23

I'm Solomon  
Here's Where I Belong

1

## REVUES

Leonard Sillman's New Faces of 1968

52

Marlene Dietrich

46

Eddie Fisher-Buddy Hackett

47

Judy Garland

27

## REPERTORY THEATER LINCOLN CENTER

SummerTree

127

The Unknown Soldier and His

Wife

84

Moved to George Abbott

65

Theater for

65

Moved to Ethel Barrymore

40

Theater for

40

Cyrano De Bergerac

52

Saint Joan

44

Tiger at the Gates

44

Walking to Waldheim and

Happiness

43

The Indian Wants the Bronx

171

The Trials of Brother Jero and

The Strong Breed

115

TOM Paine

111

The Beard

100

THE BOYS IN THE BAND

89

Saturday Night

66

Ped Cross and Muscetea

65

THE CONCEPT

63

COLLISION COURSE

62

Stephen D

36

Highthawks

52

The Peddler and The Dodo

Bird

29

Goo

28

I Must Be Talking to My

Friends

27

The Niggerlovers

25

Fragments

24

Jonah

22

FJTZ!

22

Two Camps by Koutouzas

17

The Poker Session

16

Carving a Statue

16

The Hawk

15

Oh, Say You Can See L.A.

14

Beyond Desire

8

The Little Private World of Arthur Morton Ferwick and

No Exit

8

A Certain Young Man

8

The Victims

8

Carlet Lullaby

8

I Only Want an Answer

7

Where People Gather

7

The Four Seasons

6

The Bench

2

Rate of Exchange

1

Compiled by CLARA ROTTEN

## LONG RUNS

Seven of the current Broadway attractions have been on view for more than a year. They are listed below with the number of performances they have given through last night

HELLO, DOLLY! 1,858  
FIDDLER ON THE ROOF 1,572  
MAN OF LA MANCHA 1,084  
CACTUS FLOWER 1,066  
MAME 877  
CABARET 670  
YOU KNOW I CAN'T HEAR YOU WHEN THE WATER'S RUNNING 540

## REVUES

JACQUES BREL IS ALIVE AND WELL AND LIVING IN PARIS 180  
Fun City 11  
Now 23  
WALK DOWN MAH STREET! 23  
Take It from the Top 13  
The Musical World of Bertolt Brecht 2

## REVIVALS

House of Flowers 57  
A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN 23

Winter Journey 15

Private Lives 9

Jenova-Jim Crow 5

## LE TRETEAU DE PARIS

Le Tartuffe 28

En Attendant Godot 12

## ITUCH—The Theater of Latin America

La Remolienda 6

Ituch Anthology 2

## AMERICAN PLACE THEATER

Ceremony of Innocence 36

Endecott and the Red Cross 36

Father Usbridge Wants to Marry 27

The Electronic Nigger and Others 26

Moved to Martinique for 70

## THE NEGRO ENSEMBLE COMPANY

The Song of the Lusitanian 43

Boogey 40

Summer of the Seventeenth Doll 40

Kong's Harvest 39

DADDY GOODNESS 32

## NEW YORK SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL CENTRAL PARK

The Comedy of Errors 22

King John 19

Titus Andronicus 17

HENRY IV, PART I 9

HENRY IV, PART II 8

## NEW YORK SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL PUBLIC THEATER

HAIR 65

Moved to Chiechah for 45

Moved to Biltmore 68

Hamlet 64

The Memorandum 64

Ergo 63

## LONG RUNS

THE FANTASTICKS 3,414

YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, CHARLIE BROWN 556

1968 Je 30, II, 65

Note: Off-Broadway Collision Course. See Appendix III for a reprint of The Unexpurgated Memoirs of Bernard Morgendeiler.

# Closing The Record Book on 1968-69

The curtain rings down on the 1968-69 theater season tomorrow. Here is a summary of the season's productions and their runs.

## BROADWAY

	1968- 69	1967- 68
Plays	28	41
Musicals	13	11
Revues	1	4
	42	56

### BROADWAY PLAYS

Shows listed in capital letters are still running.

**THE GREAT WHITE HOPE** 310  
**The Man in the Glass Booth** 269  
**FORTY CARATS** 214  
**HADRIAN VII** 200  
**PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM** 159  
**Jimmy Shine** 154  
**Lovers** 148  
**We Bombed in New Haven** 86  
**Lovers and Other Strangers** 69  
**Morning, Noon and Night** 52  
**My Daughter, Your Son** 47  
**Does a Tiger Wear A Necktie?** 39  
**Cop-Out and Home Fires** 8  
**The Goodbye People** 7  
**The Wrong Way Light Bulb** 7  
**Fire!** 7  
**Woman Is Mydea** 6  
**The Sudden and Accidental Re-Education of Horse Johnson** 5  
**Zelda** 5  
**The Gingham Dog** 5  
**The Flip Side** 4  
**Rockefeller and the Red Indians** 4  
**But, Seriously** 4  
**The Dozens** 4  
**The Cuban Thing** 1  
**The Mother Lover** 1  
**The Watering Place** 1  
**A Teaspoon Every Four Hours** 1

### MUSICALS

**ZORBA** 259  
**PROMISES, PROMISES** 243  
**Dear World** 132  
**Canterbury Tales** 122  
**1776** 122  
**Celebration** 110  
**The Megilla of Stuk Manger** 78  
**Returned for Maggie Flynn** 12  
**Red, White and Maddox** 86  
**Her First Roman** 41  
**Come Summer** 17  
**The Fig Leaves Are Falling** 7  
**Billy** 1

### REVUE

**NOEL COWARD'S SWEET POTATO** 44  
**REPERTORY THEATER LINCOLN CENTER**  
**IN THE MATTRESS OF J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER** 60  
**King Lear** 57  
**A Cry of Playrights** 56  
**The Miser** 52  
**Bananas** 42  
**The Inner Journey** 36  
**The Year Boston Won** 36  
**The Pennant** 36  
**An Evening for Merlin Finch and A Great Career** 35  
**NEW YORK STATE THEATER LINCOLN CENTER**  
**West Side Story** 89

### OKLAHOMA

CITY CENTER	APA PHOENIX
Carnival	30
The Misanthrope	86
Hamlet	45
The Cocktail Party	44
Cock-A-Doodle Dandy	40
The Show-Off	19
Pantagruel	9

### THEATER 1969

Box and Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung  
**The Death of Bessie Smith and The American Dream**  
**Krapp's Last Tape and The Zoo Story** 6  
**Happy Days** 4

### THE MINNESOTA THEATER COMPANY

The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui 15  
**The House of Atreus** 11

### THE NATIONAL THEATER OF THE DEAF

Selection of Works from its Repertory 16

### THEATRE DE LA CITE

The Three Musketeers 12  
**Tartuffe** 7  
**George Dandin** 5

### ATELJE 212 OF BELGRADE

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? 7  
**Ubo Ros** 6  
**The Progress of Bora, the Tailor** 6  
**Victor or The Children Take Over** 4

### MISCELLANEOUS

**Marlene Dietrich** 88  
**Gilbert Bécaud Sings Love** 21  
**The Jimmy Roselli Show** 13  
**The World's a Stage** 6

### REVIVALS

**THE FRONT PAGE** 58  
**Hamlet** 50  
**Trumpets of the Lord** 7

### LONG RUNS

**HELLO DOLLY!** 2,243  
**FIDDLER ON THE ROOF** 1,989  
**MAN OF LA MANCHA** 1,501  
**MAME** 1,294  
**CABARET** 1,087  
**PLAZA SUITE** 571  
**HAIR** 495

### POSTSCRIPTS

**Cactus Flower** 1,234  
**You Know I Can't Hear You When the Water's Running** 756  
**George M!** 435  
**The Price** 428  
**Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead** 421  
**Golden Rainbow** 383  
**The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie** 380  
**There's a Girl in My Soup** 322  
**The Hepzby Time** 286

### OFF BROADWAY PLAYS

**TO BE YOUNG, GIFTED AND BLACK** 205  
**GEESE** 193

### REVIVALS

**LITTLE MURDERS** 223

### REVIVALS

**Of Thee I Sing** 21

Compiled by CLARA ROTTEN

The curtain rings down on the 1968-69 theater season tomorrow. Here is a summary of the season's productions and their runs.

9 **Tea Party and The Basement** 176  
**ADAPTATION and NEXT** 150  
**Big Time Buck White** 129  
**THE MAN WITH THE FLOWER IN HIS MOUTH** 80  
**Sweet Eros and Witness** 78  
**Tonga** 75  
**CEREMONIES IN DARK OLD MEN** 72  
**DE SADE ILLUSTRATED** 55  
**Spitting Image** 49  
**The People vs. Ranchman** 41  
**Spare Who?** 41  
**Stop, You're Killing Me** 39  
**The Grod Bag** 37  
**Riot** 31  
**Lemonade and The Autograph Hound** 28  
**In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel** 25  
**An Ordinary Man** 24  
**Philosophy in the Boudoir** 24  
**Eccles** 23  
**TONIGHT IN LIVING COLOR** 23  
**Open 24 Hours**  
**and Satisfaction Guaranteed** 22  
**The Perfect Party** 22  
**War Games** 22  
**TIME FOR BED**  
**TAKE ME TO BED** 21  
**Before I Wake** 17  
**Trois Pièces** 17  
**Shoot Anything with Haw That Moves** 17  
**Frank Gaglione's City Scene** 16  
**Someone's Comin' Hungry** 16  
**The Triumph of Robert Emmet** 15  
**Pets** 15  
**Lime Green/Khaki Blue** 13  
**The Honest-to-God Schnozzole** 8  
**A Home Away From Another City, Another Land** 8  
**Make Me Disappear** 8  
**The World of Mrs. Solomon** 8  
**Americana Pastoral** 7  
**A Corner of the Bed** 7  
**God Bless You, Harold Fineberg** 7  
**The Empire Builders** 6  
**Exhibition** 6  
**Af and The Great Airplane Snatch** 5  
**Fireworks** 4  
**Papers** 2

**PEQUOD** 1  
**The Transgressor Rides Again** 1  
**Don't Shoot Mable**  
**It's Your Husband** 1  
**Possibilities** 1  
**The David Show** 1  
**Yes Yes, No No** 1  
**World War 2½** 1  
**THE GLORIOUS RULER** 1

**MUSICALS** 1  
**DAMES AT SEA** 217  
**PEACE** 176  
**How to Steal an Election** 80  
**Horsemen, Pass By** 39  
**PROHENADE** 31  
**Get There to Canterbury** 20  
**The Happy H'abrite** 17  
**Month of Sundays** 8  
**Up Eden** 8  
**Balled for a Fining Squad** 7  
**Just for Love** 6

**REVUES** 1  
**The Fourth Wall** 141  
**WHORES WARS AND T'N PAN ALLEY** 16  
**CHI CALCUTTA** 16

**REVIVALS** 1  
**LITTLE MURDERS** 223  
**Of Thee I Sing** 21

**POSTSCRIPTS** 1  
**Scuba Duba** 704  
**Tom Paine** 295  
**The Believers** 295  
**Futzi** 233  
**The Concept** 218  
**A Moon for the Misbegotten** 199  
**The Indian Wants The Bronx**  
**and It's Called the Sugar Plum** 177  
**Walk Down Main Street** 135  
**Collision Course** 78  
**In Circles** 56

**SOLO SHOWS** 1  
**An Evening with Max**  
**Morath at the Turn of the Century** 140  
**Vivian Burrows** 24  
**Chad Mitchell** 12

Note: Revues: **Oh! Calcutta!** opens. Feiffer, along with Leonard Melfi, John Lennon, Sam Sheppard and Samuel Beckett co-authored a sex-revue performed in the nude. It was originated and coordinated by Kenneth Tynan, a long-time respected London critic.

Revivals: **Little Murders** is the number one revival in 1969, after being chosen as the best foreign play of the year (1968) in London.

# Closing The Record Book on 1969-70

The curtain rings down on the 1969-70 theater season Tuesday.  
Here is a summary of the season's productions and their runs.

## BROADWAY

	1969- 70	1968- 69
Plays	20	28
Musicals	13	13
Revues	1	1
	24	42

### PLAYS

Shows listed in capital letters are still running.  
**BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE**... 290  
**LAST OF THE RED HOT LOVERS** ... 212  
**CHILD'S PLAY** ... 183  
**BORSTAL BOY** ... 105  
**Sheep on the Runway** ... 105  
**Paris Is Out!** ... 104  
**Indians** ... 96  
**A Patriot for Me** ... 49  
**Inquest** ... 28  
**Grin and Bear It!** and **Post-cards** ... 16  
**The Chinese and Dr. Fish** ... 15  
**Norman, Is That You?** ... 12  
**Love Is a Time of Day** ... 8  
**The Penny War** ... 4  
**Angela** ... 4  
**The Mundy Scheme** ... 4  
**The Engagement Baby** ... 4  
**Brightower** ... 1  
**Blood Red Roses** ... 1  
**A Place for Polly** ... 1

### MUSICALS

**COCO** ... 223  
**PURPLE** ... 122  
**APPLAUSE** ... 104  
**Jimmy** ... 84  
**Minnie's Boys** ... 76  
**COMPANY** ... 75  
**Look to the Lines** ... 26  
**Cry for Us All** ... 9  
**Buck White** ... 7  
**Park** ... 3  
**Gatsby** ... 4  
**George** ... 4  
**La Strada** ... 1

### REVUES

**The New Music Hall of Israel** ... 60

**REPERTORY THEATER OF LINCOLN CENTER**  
**In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer** ... 174  
**Landscape and Silence** ... 53  
**Beggar on Horseback** ... 52  
**Operation Sidewinder** ... 52  
**Comin' Real** ... 52  
**The Time of Your Life** ... 82  
**The Increased Difficulty of Concentration** ... 28  
**The Disintegration of James Cherry** ... 28  
**Amphitryon** ... 28

**NEW YORK STATE THEATER**

**Oklahoma!** ... 63

### CITY CENTER

**Marcel Marceau** ... 26  
**The Grand Kabub** ... 18  
**Robelots** ... 16  
**COMEDIE FRANCAISE**  
**Le Malade Imaginaire** ... 8  
**La Troupe Du Roi** and

<b>Amphitryon</b> ...	6
<b>Don Juan</b> ...	5
<b>Les Femmes Savantes</b> ...	5
<b>ANTA INVITATIONAL SERIES</b>	
<b>Horace</b> ...	80
<b>Our Town</b> ...	36
<b>Tony Alice</b> ...	26
<b>A Flea in Her Ear</b> ...	23
<b>The Three Sisters</b> ...	20
<b>Henry V</b> ...	16
<b>No Place to Be Somebody</b> ...	15
<b>Gloves and Espionages</b> ...	12
<b>The National Theater of the Deaf</b> ...	8
<b>Wilson in the Promised Land</b> ...	7
<b>Watercolor and Cross-Crossing</b> ...	5
<b>The Cherry Orchard</b> ...	5

### SOLD SHOW

<b>Charles Aznavour</b> ...	23
<b>REVIVALS</b>	
<b>Private Lives</b> ...	239
<b>The Front Page</b> ...	158
<b>Three Men on a Horse</b> ...	100
<b>THE BOY FRIEND</b> ...	89
<b>Canasta</b> ...	8

### ICE SHOWS

<b>Ice Capades</b> ...	20
<b>Holiday on Ice</b> ...	19
<b>Ice Follies of 1970</b> ...	18
<b>Extravaganza</b> ...	16

### LONG RUNS

<b>HELLO, DOLLY!</b> ...	2,639
<b>HODDLER ON THE ROOF</b> ...	2,405
<b>MAN OF LA MANCHA</b> ...	1,918
<b>PLAZA SUITE</b> ...	988
<b>HAIR</b> ...	903
<b>PROMISES, PROMISES</b> ...	660
<b>FOURTY CARATS</b> ...	621
<b>1776</b> ...	540

### POSTSCRIPTS

<b>Mame</b> ...	1,508
<b>Cabaret</b> ...	1,166
<b>The Great White Hope</b> ...	557
<b>Play It Again, Sam</b> ...	454
<b>Madam Vit</b> ...	359
<b>Terzo</b> ...	306

### OFF BROADWAY

	1969- 70	1968- 69
Plays	55	55
Musicals	22	11

	77	66
<b>PLAYS</b>		

<b>The Concept</b> ...	268
<b>And Puppy Dog Tails</b> ...	141
<b>The White House Murder Case</b> ...	119
<b>A Black Quartet</b> ...	511
<b>A Whistle in the Dark</b> ...	100
<b>THE EFFECT OF GAMMA RAYS ON MAN-IN-THE-MOON MARIGOLDS</b> ...	96
<b>The Reckoning</b> ...	94
<b>A Scant of Flower</b> ...	72

Compiled by CLERKE ROTTER

### WHAT THE BUTLER SAW

<b>COLETTE</b> ...	64
<b>Passing Through from Exotic Places</b> ...	60
<b>Seven Days of Mourning</b> ...	55
<b>The Trees Die Standing</b> ...	53
<b>Dear Janet Rosenberg, Dear Mr. Kooning</b> ...	48
<b>Hello and Goodbye</b> ...	34
<b>The Okey Watcher</b> ...	40
<b>Who's Happy Now?</b> ...	40
<b>Transfers</b> ...	36

<b>The Memory Bank</b> ...	25
<b>The Moon Dreamers</b> ...	24
<b>Nature of the Crime</b> ...	24
<b>How Much, How Much?</b> ...	24
<b>Chicago 70</b> ...	24
<b>The Uneen Hand and Forensic and the Navigators</b> ...	21
<b>The Persians</b> ...	21
<b>The Jumping Fool</b> ...	18
<b>Contributions</b> ...	16
<b>Lemon Sky</b> ...	16
<b>Calling in Crazy</b> ...	15

<b>Little Boxes</b> ...	15
<b>The Criminals</b> ...	15
<b>THE CAGE</b> ...	15
<b>Slave Ship</b> ...	13
<b>Arena Conto Zumbi</b> ...	13
<b>BOESMAN AND LENA</b> ...	10
<b>Crimes of Passion</b> ...	9
<b>Silhouettes</b> ...	8
<b>The Haunted Host</b> ...	8
<b>Rose</b> ...	8

<b>The Local Stigmatic</b> ...	8
<b>Love Your Crooked Neighbor</b> ...	8
<b>The Brownstone Urge</b> ...	7
<b>Instruction for the Running of Trains, Etc., on the Erie Railway, to Gor-Into Effect January 1, 1862</b> ...	7
<b>Nobody Hears a Broken Drum</b> ...	6
<b>The Nest</b> ...	6
<b>The End of All Things Natural</b> ...	5
<b>The Shepherd of Avenue B</b> ...	5
<b>and Steal the Old Man's Bundle</b> ...	5

<b>Slave Ship</b> ...	41
<b>The Brass Butterfly</b> ...	7
<b>The Unravel Nigger</b> ...	6
<b>And I Met a Man</b> ...	4
<b>Sourball</b> ...	4
<b>The American Hamburger League</b> ...	3
<b>The Nolts</b> ...	1
<b>The Nuns</b> ...	1
<b>STEAMBOAT</b> ...	1

<b>MUSICALS</b>	239
<b>Salvation</b> ...	177
<b>THE LAST SWEET DAYS OF ISAAC</b> ...	177
<b>JOY</b> ...	175
<b>This Was Burlesque</b> ...	106
<b>The Hoofers</b> ...	94
<b>Unfair to Goliath</b> ...	75
<b>Whores, War and Tin Pan Alley</b> ...	57
<b>THE ME NOBODY KNOWS</b> ...	47
<b>Billy Noname</b> ...	46
<b>The Drunkard</b> ...	42
<b>Gertude Stein's First Reader</b> ...	42
<b>Show Me Where the Good Times Are</b> ...	29
<b>From Israel with Laughter</b> ...	20
<b>Rondelay</b> ...	15

<b>NEGRO ENSEMBLE CO.</b>	64
<b>Brotherhood and Day of Absence</b> ...	64
<b>The Horsegirls</b> ...	56
<b>Alabamka</b> ...	44
<b>Man Better Man</b> ...	32

<b>NEW YORK SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL</b>	44
<b>PUBLIC THEATER</b>	44
<b>Stomp</b> ...	174
<b>Sambo</b> ...	46
<b>Mad Donna</b> ...	56

<b>NEW YORK SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL</b>	44
<b>CENTRAL PARK</b>	44
<b>Twelfth Night</b> ...	20
<b>Poor Gynt</b> ...	19

### God Is Back, Black and Singing Gospel

<b>Love and Maple Syrup</b> ...	15
<b>Whisper on the Wind</b> ...	9
<b>Mahogany</b> ...	8
<b>I Dreamt I Dwell in Bloomingdale's</b> ...	6
<b>Lyle</b> ...	3
<b>Exchange</b> ...	1
<b>The House of Laether</b> ...	1

### REVIVALS

<b>Fortune and Men's Eyes</b> ...	231
<b>Summertime</b> ...	184
<b>Dark of the Moon</b> ...	86
<b>Hedda Gabler</b> ...	81
<b>ROOM SERVICE</b> ...	56
<b>Awake and Sing</b> ...	40
<b>Slow Dance on the Killing Ground</b> ...	36
<b>From the Second City</b> ...	31
<b>Miracle Worker</b> ...	15
<b>The Madwoman of Chaillot</b> ...	7
<b>Lulu</b> ...	1

### LE TRETEAU DE PARIS

<b>La Mort/Architruve</b> ...	10
<b>Oh Les Beaux Jours</b> ...	10
<b>Le Grand Véni/Le Cosmonaute Agnole</b> ...	9
<b>Le Lacune/Le Jeune Fille A Marier/Les Chars</b> ...	8
<b>DIE SCHAUSSPIELTRUPPE</b>	8

### ZURICH

**The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi** ...	6



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# Closing The Record Book on 1970-71

The curtain rings down on the 1970-71 season Wednesday.  
Here is a summary of the season's productions and their runs.

## BROADWAY

	1970-	1969-
	71	70
Plays	33	52
Musicals	12	16
Revues	0	1
	45	69

### PLAYS

Shows listed in capital letters  
are still running.

SLEUTH	265
PAUL SILLS' STORY	
THEATER	240
The Gingerbread Lady	193
Bob And Ray—The Two And Only	158
Conduct Unbecoming	144
Home	111
And Miss Reardon Drinks A Little	108
How The Other Half Loves	104
The Philanthropist	72
Four On A Garden	57
Abelard And Heloise	53
All Over	42
LENNY	42
Les Blanes	40
METAMORPHOSES	33
Not Now, Darling	21
Scratch	4
Father's Day	

### MUSICALS

THE ROTHSCHILDS	292
TWO BY TWO	268
FOLLIES	101
Light, Lively And Yiddish	89
The President's Daughter	78
70, Girls, 70	36
Art	19
Lovely Ladies, Kind Gentlemen	
Earl of Ruston	5
Frank Menwell	1
REPERTORY THEATER,	
LINCOLN CENTER	
An Enemy Of The People	54
The Playboy Of The Western World	52
The Good Woman Of Setzuan	46
Antigone	46
The Birthday Party	39
PLAY STRINDBERG	32
Scenes From American Life	30
Pictures In The Hallway	20
Landscape & Silence	6
REVIVALS	
NO, NO, NANETTE	187
A Midsummer Night's Dream	77
You're A Good Man Charlie Brown	32
Hay Fever	24
Othello	16
Charley's Aunt	9
PHOENIX	
The Trial of the Catonsville Nine	159
The School For Wives	120
ICE SHOWS	
Moscow Circus On Ice	39
Ice Capades	20

Disney On Parade ..... 22  
Holiday On Ice Of 1971 ..... 9

### LONG RUNS

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF	2,823
HAIR	1,321
PROMISES, PROMISES	1,069
1776	956
OH! CALCUTTA!	847
BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE	708
LAST OF THE RED HOT LOVERS	630
PURPLE	541
APPLAUSE	525
COMPANY	494
THE ME NOBODY KNOWS	431

### POSTSCRIPTS

Hello, Dolly!	2,844
Man Of La Mancha	2,328
Plaza Suite	1,098
Forty Carats	781
Child's Play	343
Coco	333
Bonita Boy	143
The Boy Friend	111

## OFF BROADWAY

	1970-	1969-
	71	70
Plays	82	103
Musicals	16	22
Revues	3	1
	101	125

### PLAYS

THE HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES	162
Happy Birthday, Wanda June	143
Alice In Wonderland	122
A Dream Out Of Time	49
Farceplay	38
Acrobats & Lire	31
A Place Without Doors	30
Behold! Cometh The Vanderkellans	23
Score	23
Charlie Was Here And Now He's Gone	17
BLACK GIRL	17
In New England Winter	13
The Emerald Slippers	10
Any Resemblance To Persons Living Or Dead	9
THE LAST ANALYSIS	9
Three By Fethlingetti	8
The Justice Box	8
Istanbul	7
Opium	7
The Castro Complex	7
One Night Stands Of A Noisy Passenger	7
The Olaite Response	6
Things That Almost Happen	5
The Immaculate Misconception	2
Gandhi	1
The Shrinking Bride	1
The Candyapple	1
My House Is Your House	1
Children In The Rain	1
Johnny Johnson	1
And Those Little Boys Are You?	1

PHOENIX	
The Trial of the Catonsville Nine	159
The School For Wives	120
ICE SHOWS	
Moscow Circus On Ice	39
Ice Capades	20

## MUSICALS

TOUCH ..... 305

Golden Bat ..... 152

Stag Movie ..... 89

Earthlight ..... 56

GODSPELL ..... 50

The Survival Of St. Joan ..... 17

Sensations ..... 16

The Ballad Of Johnny Got ..... 14

Do It Again! ..... 14

Six ..... 8

A Day In The Life Of Just  
About Everyone ..... 7

Kiss Now ..... 3

Soon ..... 3

Look Where I'm At! ..... 1

The Red White And Black... 1

### REVUES

THE PROPOSITION ..... 127

To Be Or Not To Be—  
What Kind Of Question Is

That? ..... 40

Cooler Near The Lake ..... 22

### REVIVALS

Dames At Sea ..... 170

WAITING FOR GODOT ..... 170

Macbeth ..... 132

A Doll's House ..... 111

ONE FLEW OVER THE  
CUCKOO'S NEST ..... 114

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY  
INTO NIGHT ..... 41

Hedda Gabler ..... 56

The Homecoming ..... 34

Woyzeck ..... 5

Dance Of Death ..... 4

### LE TRETEAU DE PARIS

Amante Anglaise ..... 16

### DIE BRUCKE

Kraenburgerhochzeit & Die

Kurve ..... 10

Amphitryon ..... 8

### NEW YORK SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

### PUBLIC THEATER

Subject To Fit ..... 127

Trelawny Of The Wells' ... 67

Here Are Ladies ..... 67

Jack MacGowran In The

Works Of Samuel Beckett 54

THE BASIC TRAINING OF  
PAVLO HUMMEL ..... 53

The Happiness Cage ..... 40

Food ..... 40

Undergroud ..... 38

S'ag ..... 32

DANCE WI' ME ..... 31

Candide ..... 19

Bread And Puppet Theater ..... 11

### NEW YORK SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

### CENTRAL PARK

Richard III ..... 20

The Wars Of The Roses, Part I

The Wars Of The Roses, Part II

AMERICAN PLACE THEATER

The Carpenters ..... 44

Sunday Dinner ..... 42

### MISCELLANY

Orlando Furioso ..... 27

Jonathan Miller's Hamlet 7

Theater On The Balustrade

Of Prague

Emily Williams As Charles

Dickens ..... 5

Noh Kyogen ..... 3

Judith Anderson's Hamlet 2

Compiled by CLARA ROTTER

## APPENDIX III

### Collision Course

#### The Unexpurgated Memoirs of Bernard Morgendeiler

The Unexpurgated Memoirs of Bernard Morgendeiler is a dialogue that appeared in 1965 in a cartoon anthology of the same name. It later appeared in 1968 as a skit in a play called Collision Course and then it appeared again as a written play in an anthology of plays compiled by Edward Parone. (I have been told by Dr. Peter Ohlin, Chairman of the Graduate Department of English at McGill, that the same dialogue appeared in Playboy some years earlier than 1965, and that it was in the form of a cartoon.) The Unexpurgated Memoirs of Bernard Morgendeiler is a perfect example of the progression of Feiffer as a cartoonist to a playwright. That this brief play was selected for the Collision Course anthology is a clear indication of the type of satire Feiffer was writing in the 60's and what Feiffer hoped to do with his satire.

The introduction to Collision Course includes the famous question Thoreau asked of Emerson when he was in jail: "Waldo why are you not here?" The implication, of course,

is that society's hypocrisy cannot be faced with complicity, but must be challenged by some form of rebellion. Collision Course is composed of artists' work who have challenged the system by dissenting from aesthetic norms and exposing some of the basic hypocritical realities in America. Feiffer's piece in Collision Course is a sexual exploit. It epitomizes the absolute and genuine utter confusion that surrounds sexual attitudes in America in the 1960's. It exposes the hypocritical basis of sexual behaviour admitting desire, trying to abnegate guilt but at the same time suffering from it. The theme of castration is also included which is so often important in understanding Feiffer's notion of the relationship between men and women.

The purpose of Edward Parone's anthology links him closely with Feiffer in an uncanny way. Parone apparently had been effected by the Kennedy assassination and felt that public art should no longer be a Philistinean experience. ". . . the artist and the audience must confront each other."<sup>1</sup>

I am certain he felt the incoherence in the American (specifically New York) culture that Feiffer calls Gratuitous Violence, when he flings a remark like this to his readers:

"Maybe they (the audience) are waiting and hoping for paradise to be painted again; but maybe they are there to know the paradise they live in. Nothing is sure. Yes, maybe one thing is sure: the news of assassinations keeps arriving - as sure as shit."

Edward Parone.  
Introduction  
Collision Course, p. viii

<sup>1</sup>Edward Parone, ed. Collision Course (New York: Random House, 1968), p. vii.

First Printing

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All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright  
Conventions Published in New York by Random House, Inc., and  
simultaneously in Toronto, Canada, by Random House of Canada Limited.  
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 65-21252

"Passion," "A Faithful Friend," "The Student," "Telephone," "Homebody," "The Bunch,"  
and "Conversation" originally appeared in *Playboy Magazine*

Manufactured in the United States of America

Published in association with Hall Editions, Inc.

The Unexpurgated Memoirs of Bernard Morgendeiler.

INTRODUCTION

(The scene is a bedroom late at night. BERNARD and  
NAOMI sit disconsolately)

NAOMI Don't feel too bad.

BERNARD I'm sorry. You understand?

NAOMI What's there to be sorry about?

BERNARD I had too much to drink. You understand? I mean  
ordinarily I never have trouble like this.

NAOMI Will you please believe me? You don't owe me any  
explanation. It's not as if it's a test or anything.

BERNARD Well, it's when I have too much to drink you see—

NAOMI (Trying to placate) What do you think—I grade men?

BERNARD (Winces) It's the alcohol—I just can't (Gropes for right  
word) function—

NAOMI Please, you needn't be so much on the defensive

BERNARD (Freezes) Who's on the defensive?

NAOMI All I'm saying is it's not that much of a big—



BERNARD (*Tensely*) Don't tell me I'm on the defensive when I'm not on the defensive.

NAOMI Listen, I don't want to make a big thing out of—

BERNARD (*Bitterly*) Yeah? Yeah? Yeah, I bet you don't, don't you? Yeah!

NAOMI What's the matter with you?

BERNARD Saying that I'm on the defensive puts me on the defensive. Before you said I was on the defensive do you think I was on the defensive? I wasn't on the defensive.

NAOMI I'm sorry. O.K.? I'm sorry.

BERNARD (*Coldly*) That was a castrating remark.

NAOMI (*Amazed*) Saying I'm sorry?

BERNARD (*Nastily*) Don't take it out of context. I'm an authority on castrating remarks. Women always try to get away with them on me. They never do. I can recognize a castrating remark a hundred miles away!

(THEY stare at each other glumly)

NAOMI (*Softly*) Can I say something? (HE nods) You're not going to believe this but it's true.

BERNARD (*Impatiently*) Sure. Sure.

NAOMI I—I didn't mean to make a castrating remark.

BERNARD Sure. Sure.

NAOMI Sometimes they just come out.

BERNARD Yeah.

NAOMI It's like sometimes every word I say is exactly like my

mother! I could kill myself. Some things are a mistake. (SHE touches him) Not everything is deliberate. (HE looks at her with warmth. THEY touch hands) Want to try again?

BERNARD (*Withdraws*) The alcohol—you know—It wouldn't. I couldn't— The alcohol—(Pauses to collect himself) How about tomorrow?

NAOMI If I ask a question will it offend you?

BERNARD I don't know. Try.

NAOMI You want to go home now, don't you?

BERNARD Well, I wouldn't say— Well, we are sort of finished here, aren't we?

NAOMI You're very uncomfortable.

BERNARD (*Weakly*) Well, I've got a lot on my mind lately. South-east Asia and everything. (Pause as SHE stares at him unconvincing) Nuclear holocaust. (Pause) The depression.

NAOMI What depression?

BERNARD Mine.

NAOMI It's like you've already left. It's like you're out of the room right now.

BERNARD (*Giggles uncomfortably*) I guess I am. I often don't know until I'm told.

NAOMI Listen. This is a difficult question to ask. Do you—do you enjoy making love?

BERNARD (*Leaps up*) Listen! I just had a little too much to drink!

NAOMI Look, I know it's hard to talk about. Will you please listen

to me for a minute. I'm a difficult person, all right?

BERNARD Boy!

(HE sits down)

NAOMI But tell me—when it's over—do you feel *happy*? (No answer) Can't you talk to me? Then answer this. Do you feel *good*? (No answer) Listen. Do me a favor? This one favor? You don't have to talk about it, all right? We'll do it so you don't have to talk about it. I'll ask the question—and you blink once for yes and twice for no. (HE looks at her as if SHE's mad) When it's over do you feel *happy*? (Long pause) Once for yes—twice for no. (Long pause. HE blinks twice. SHE nods knowingly) Do you feel—*guilty*? (HE blinks once instantly) Everybody I know feels *guilty*! Why do you feel *guilty*? (No answer) Is it because we don't really know each other? You feel we're not really having a relationship? (No answer) Blink.

BERNARD (Explodes) I'm *tired* of blinking! Well, is there a relationship? Is there? Is there? We meet at a party, we talk maybe twenty minutes in all, we come up here and I can't do it. I admit it—you've broken me down! I don't like being in this position, I don't enjoy it—you're right there—I don't—and you're right again—I do feel *guilty*! And I want to thank you. I've gotten more sexual gratification out of this speech I just made than if I had gone to bed with you!

NAOMI Don't you understand what the trouble is?

BERNARD I'm that rare kind of person who can't have sex out of context. I want a relationship! I'm a *nut*!

NAOMI Crap! (HE winces) Why does every bourgeois male I meet have to put a value judgment on sex?

BERNARD (Frostily) You don't frighten me. I am not afraid of the term bourgeois!

NAOMI Everybody has to prove it's not *wrong*! Why for Godsakes? Why? You don't mind cheating on your income tax and that's wrong, you don't mind lying to girls who you're tired of and that's wrong, but the one thing that's super-wrong you can't admit is wrong!

BERNARD There is nothing wrong with the sexual act. Properly administered it can be beautiful. Where are you from? Out of the dark ages?

NAOMI Don't believe it for a minute.

BERNARD Psychologists tell us—

NAOMI Don't believe it.

BERNARD I do believe it. It's not wrong!

NAOMI Then it must be *right*.

BERNARD (Uncertainly) Well, just because it may not be right doesn't mean it's wrong. Sex is clean you know.

NAOMI Don't believe it!

BERNARD It is! Psychologists tell us—

NAOMI They're lying! Nobody really believes sex is clean.

BERNARD Psychologists tell us—

NAOMI Nobody believes it. Do you believe it?

BERNARD Mine is a unique case.

NAOMI They're lying! That's what confuses everybody. You can't turn sex into something pure like brushing your teeth! Sex is

exactly what you thought it was when you first learned about it!

BERNARD (With growing excitement) You mean on the streets? It's dirty?

NAOMI (Nods) Sex is dirty!

BERNARD (Alarmed) It's dirty! As soon as I said it I knew!

NAOMI Right!

BERNARD It is! It is! It always has been! It always will be! They were lying to me! It's dirty! It's evil! It's bad!

NAOMI Right!

BERNARD (Delighted) I can enjoy it now!

NAOMI My own!

(SHE opens her arms, BERNARD emits an ugly laugh. THEY embrace violently)

Blackout

## APPENDIX IV

### Blanket Statements

The following is a listing, by anthology, of the subject matter of the blanket statement cartoons not included in the text. This appendix will give the reader a survey of every different subject Feiffer examines in a socio-political way.

#### Sick, Sick, Sick (1958)

1. Fall-out, a push for a commercial campaign to popularize fallout.
2. Eisenhower says the law is to be obeyed. White law and colored law, so the world can respect America's moral stand.
3. Fall-out, bigger bombs, but less fallout.
4. Anger, make anger marketable, "loud but harmless, take the threat out of anger, make anger friendly."
5. Rebellion can be profitable.

#### Passionella (1959)

1. Boom! (a fable) The government dupes the Americans to buy fall-out. Fall-out is profitable.
2. Munro (a fable) The military inducts a four year-old.

#### The Explainers (1960)

1. Corruption causes juvenile delinquency; legalize corruption to give kids back their roots.

2. Television is mediocre; infiltrate quality slowly to get the public to think it is still mediocre.
3. Humor is dead.
4. America's stage of governmental development is labeled "free-form corruption."
5. Writers sacrifice their integrity for commercial success.
6. Eisenhower stands in the middle of the road and endorses everything.

Boy, Girl, Boy, Girl (1961)

1. Cold War: Instill middle class values in under-privileged nations to solve the Cold War.
2. Middle income housing is very expensive.
3. High-rise alienation.
4. The crime on television readies one for life.
5. The world is split into two classes: those afraid of cops and those who don't realize the issue is at stake.
6. Integrated cocktail parties; the next one will have two black people.
7. The family builds two fallout shelters: one for their "girl" and one for themselves.
8. WWIII pre-centennial celebration as there won't be an opportunity afterwards.
9. Commercial entertainments: blacklists on movies gives guilt to the movie makers; this leads to improvement of quality.
10. Conservatism in publishing.
11. "Take away crime from the white collar worker and you will rob him of his last vestige of job interest."
12. Newspapers are prejudice.
13. Deception in publishing; know the market, not the content.

14. "If suppression cannot disarm criticism, amiable acceptance can."

Hold Me (1963)

1. Youth are afraid of the responsibility of defending their country.
2. Government tries to control anti-American sentiment.
3. Military is tyrannical.
4. Television culture teaches the youth, not school.
5. News personalities, not content, control our reaction to the news.
6. Architecture is destroyed in the name of progress.
7. A mass migration to the suburbs after the bomb drops.
8. Black men incite integration by instilling fear.
9. Bring democracy to corruption!?
10. The Military's strategy is based on comic strips.
11. Radical Middle: "Bold times call for bold answers, within reason in a manner of speaking, more or less."
12. Neutron bomb does not harm machines; it only kills people. Then we're all safe.

Feiffer on Civil Rights (1966)

All cartoons express social themes concerning racism.

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