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Barbra's "Funny Girl" Body

By

Stacy Wolf

Barbra Streisand is Barbra Streisand. There is no other way of describing her or explaining her.

– Sidney Skolsky, *New York Post*

Following queer desire turns us into readers who make strange, who render queer the relations between images and bodies.

– Elspeth Probyn, "Queer Belongings"

Since Barbra Streisand made her spectacular film debut as Fanny Brice in *Funny Girl* in 1968, she has been an object of fascination, vilification, and admiration.¹ The diva of divas with a well-publicized terror of live performance, Streisand is gossiped about equally as an egomaniacal, control-freak perfectionist on the set (particularly when directing) and as a frail, anxious slip of a girl who solicits opinions from anyone and everyone and still longs for conventional beauty and the approval of the father who died when she was a small child.

On the one hand, the contradictions that mark Streisand's star persona echo those of any star. As Richard Dyer has written, the star identity, by its very definition, enunciates a constant tension between normalcy and extraordinariness, between authenticity and fabrication.² Stars must display vulnerability as well as charisma. And that Streisand does. Furthermore, if a star functions on one level as a coexistent representation of the everyday and the exceptional, then she works on another level as symbolic signifier. Simultaneously, then, Streisand "the person" can be psychoanalyzed, chastised, and respected, while Streisand "the symbol" can represent gay men's love of American musicals, post-*Feminine Mystique* ambition, and, above all, late twentieth-century Jewish American femininity.

On the other hand, Streisand is not only or simply or definitively a star. The particularities of Streisand's stardom—or perhaps, more accurately, the peculiarities of Streisand's stardom—exceed the typical habits of the star self that invite easy identification.³ Her marked portrayal of Jewishness in body (her nose), voice (frequent yiddishisms), and behavior (aggressiveness) run counter to the ideal of “The Feminine” in American culture. The Jewess, notes Amy-Jill Levine, is “more and less than ‘woman,’” or as Carol Ockman describes her, “Womanhood gone awry.”⁴ Streisand, as a singer, stage actor, film actor, director, and “person” redefines the very meaning of celebrity and produces a new category of representation of Jewish women that is, simply, complexly, tautologically “Barbra.”

This contradiction—Streisand-as-every-Jewish-woman versus Streisand-as-only-herself—is evident at the site of Streisand's body. When *Funny Girl* opened on Broadway in 1964, one reviewer called Streisand both “an ancient Hittite princess” and “a rag doll.” Another described her (in a single review) as a “cyclone,” a “fascinating creature,” a “freak” whose hands and fingers are “a sort of art form in themselves, but more frightening than amusing.” Director and choreographer Jerome Robbins said, “Her movements are wildly bizarre and completely elegant.” After the release of the film, Judith Christ proclaimed her “a combination of waif and nice-Jewish girl, of gamine and galumph; she is that contemporary enigma, the beautiful ugly who defies classic form.”⁵ Not only does she occupy the place of both singularity and typicality, but both sides of the equation have positive and negative valences.

In this essay I want to explore the consolidation of Streisand's star persona in *Funny Girl*, in the role of the famous, early twentieth-century Jewish comedian and singer of vaudeville and radio, Fanny Brice. As I hope to show, Streisand's performance in the popular musical knits together queerness and Jewishness to create a “woman” who, in body, gesture, voice, and character, is indeed a “funny girl.”⁶

The strategies by which *Funny Girl* demonstrates its queerness—performativity, irony, parody, deconstruction, disavowal—differentiate its representational project from a more mimetic, “positive-images” depiction fueled by identity politics. “Queer,” writes Alexander Doty, can “mark a flexible space for passion of all aspects of non (anti-, contra-) straight cultural production and reception.”⁷ There are no visible queers or homofolk in *Funny Girl*, yet Streisand's performance opens up numerous opportunities for queer visual and aural pleasures. First, Streisand's method of playing Fanny Brice frequently undercuts the mimetic expectations of acting (even in the broad style of a musical) creating gaps between actor and character; second, Fanny's trajectory of fame/fortune/marriage/separation undermines the assumptive heteronarrative of musicals; and third, her characterization draws on other, historical representations of Jewish women but dislodges the heterosexuality on which these representations are based. The star persona configured through the film, reviews, and biographies of and gossip about Streisand at once refers to and troubles historical depictions of Jewish women. The denaturalization of heterosexuality as a “negative” representational strategy confirms Cherry Smyth's claim that “the advent of a queer movement... acknowledges the fracturing boundaries of sexual identification.”⁸

“She Looks a Bit Off Balance”

Funny Girl is the musical comedy version of the life story of Fanny Brice, the famous vaudeville singer and comedian who starred in the Ziegfeld Follies in the early 1920s.⁹ The play and the quite similar film (from which my performance examples are drawn) follow Fanny's career from an unsuccessful chorus girl to a star, and her personal life from her courtship and marriage to charmer and gambler Nick Arnstein to his financial demise and their eventual breakup. The play saw a successful run of 1,348 performances, and the film was a financial and critical success and won Streisand an Oscar for Best Actress (she tied with Katherine Hepburn). The soundtrack was a big hit as well, and even competing with late 1960s rock 'n' roll music was on the top of the pop charts for weeks.¹⁰ *Funny Girl* is considered the last of the "golden age" or "classic" musicals, after which rock musicals like *Hair* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* and the "concept" musicals of Stephen Sondheim, such as *Sweeney Todd* and *Sunday in the Park with George* prevailed. The musical, in spite of its mainstream popularity and the attendant conservative gender, sexual, and racial politics of its content, offers queer spectatorial interventions. If its synecdochic relationship to gay masculinity is not enough to "prove" the queerness of musicals, then the formal conventions of the genre do.¹¹ The musical is structured by way of song and dance, by overt displays of vocal aptitude and physical prowess, that is, by its own pleasure in its own performativity. Musicals, in spite of composers', lyricists', and librettists' historically articulated effort to "integrate" the book and the musical numbers, are figured around Brechtian pauses, gaps, absences, and "Alienation-effects." The musical invites extravagant identifications, aggressive reappropriations, and elaborate forays into fantasy—in short, a queer use of them.

The pleasures of musicals have been productively articulated in conjunction with gay male culture. Alexander Doty, for example, writing about Hollywood musicals, is interested in their

"feminine" or "effeminized" aesthetic, camp, and emotive genre characteristics (spectacularized decor and costuming, intricate choreography, and singing about romantic yearning and fulfillment), with reference to the more hidden cultural history of gay erotics centered around men in musicals.¹²

In *Place for Us [Essay on the Musical]*, D. A. Miller poetically evokes a personal history of a gay man as it intersects with his desirous fascination for the "somehow gay genre," the Broadway musical. Like Doty (but in a completely different rhetoric), Miller sees the musical as feminine and feminizing. He argues that part of the musical's magnetism is its seductive ability to make (gay) men want to be (to perform as) women. Describing it as "the Utopia of female preeminence on the musical stage," Miller argues that it is "a form whose unpublicizable work is to indulge men in the thrills of femininity *become their own*."¹³ I agree with Doty and Miller that musicals are striking in their dependence on women as performers and their locating a woman as the strong center of the show. Also, women in musicals are active and athletic, and musicals often contain numbers with groups of women dancing together, creating a homosocial dynamic.

I intend my project to complement Doty's and Miller's, to use "queerness" and queer theory interlaced with feminist interpretive strategies.¹⁴ While I privilege the flexible, shifting, multiple significations of representation vis-a-vis sexuality, I also want to favor (savor?) the bodies and voices of women as women. Even so, my "lesbian" reading of Streisand in *Funny Girl* is one, I hope, easily taken up by queers of all sorts. As Doty and Corey K. Creekmur argue, queerness is "at the core of mainstream culture even though

that culture tirelessly insists that its images, ideologies, and readings were always only about heterosexuality.”¹⁵

The film, *Funny Girl*, conforms to the musical’s genre distinctions but goes even farther to value women over men. Except for the first verse of a Ziegfeld number sung by “the boys,” only women sing in the film.¹⁶ The majority of the film space is occupied by Streisand, followed by groups of women – the Ziegfeld girls and Fanny’s mother and her friends – thus women visually and vocally dominate the film. Nick Arnstein only appears in relation to Fanny: in the first part of the film, as an object of her desire, and, in the second, as self-destructive and “emasculated” (and all the more desirable for it). Nick and the other men in the film – Eddie the stage manager, sweet and ineffectual, and Ziegfeld, authoritative and ineffectual – are feminized throughout. As Mrs. Straikosh, Fanny’s mother’s friend, says, “What kind of name is Florenz for a boy?” And, as I will later discuss, *Funny Girl* asserts heterosexuality’s importance weakly.

The musical is, by “nature,” a very Jewish genre as well. From the beginning, Jewish men (with the notable exception of the gay Cole Porter) created the most American of cultural forms.¹⁷ From *Annie Get Your Gun* to *Girl Crazy*, from *South Pacific* to *My Fair Lady*, from *Gypsy* to *Mame*, Jewish men, including Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, George and Ira Gershwin, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Lerner and Loewe, and Jule Styne, and late Stephen Sondheim and Jerry Herman, wrote the songs of Broadway (many of which, like *Funny Girl*, were adapted for film).¹⁸ Assimilation of American Jews was evident among the second-generation Jewish men who were the makers of the Broadway musical as elsewhere in the New York business and art worlds.¹⁹ Not surprisingly, perhaps, no roles were for Jewish women. If the men enacted their assimilationist dreams through thoroughly American melodies and poems, they elided the existence of Jewish women altogether. Like Molly Picon in Herman’s *Milk and Honey* (1961), Barbra Streisand was one of the first Jewish women to play a Jewish woman on the Broadway musical theater stage.²⁰ Streisand’s Jewish-woman-stardom foregrounds the assimilationist masculinity of mid-century musicals.

“Hello, Gorgeous?”

Although she was already a well-known singer, Streisand’s first starring role in a Broadway musical invited a different kind of media scrutiny. As the leading lady, a role dominated by blond ingénues, Streisand’s differentness was constantly remarked upon. She was invariably compared to the real Fanny Brice in style and talent; both were seen as the ugly Jewish girl who makes good in her own special way. Many reviewers went so far as to say that she was Fanny Brice. Virtually every reviewer agreed on her immense talent (even if they found the show itself lacking), but many spent much of their word count in minute, almost horrified descriptions of Streisand’s body and face. Rather than specifically point to her all-too-obvious “Jewishness,” though, journalists focused on her inappropriate femininity. One describes “the Nefertiti nose... the face of an urchin, the nose too big for it... her eyes hell-bent on joining forces in a Cyclopedian manner. Her hair, piled up mountainously, gives her the pathetic look of a chicken trapped under a tea-cosy.”²¹ The writer’s distaste for Streisand’s appearance is palpable, as he categorizes her physicality through metaphors that mark her distance—whether geographic, economic, mythical or animalistic—from accepted ideals of feminine appearance, but he never mentions that she looks Jewish. Another reviewer said, “Whether she is up there

staggering around in blue bloomers or sagging-kneed and spindly-legged or sliding seductively on a vermillion chaise lounge, she looks as edible and as enticing as a plate of hot pastrami.”²² He finds her deliciously appealing, but, in a peculiar turn of phrase, she is as attractive as Jewish food.

Like the reviewers, the film seldom “speaks” Fanny’s Jewishness in words, yet it registers the presence of Jewishness early and repeatedly. Barbra speaks Fanny’s first line as the camera moves around from behind her to pick up her reflection in a mirror.²³ She pulls down the enormous collar of her leopard coat, half-smiles at herself in the mirror, and says, “Hello, Gorgeous?” The ironic half-question, half-greeting, which later comes to signify Barbra as surely as her nose, shows Fanny as a character who performs “in private” and sets up the spectator as her most intimate intimate. Simultaneously revealed are what Sander Gilman has documented as two key markers of Jewishness: the nose (thus far hidden by her collar and by the camera’s position behind her) and the voice.²⁴ Her first characterological gesture reminds us of what we already know (that she’s Jewish) and stresses that this Jewishness is foundational and significant.²⁵ It also links the visual and the aural (modes that are extraordinarily mutually dependent in musicals) and locates both in the realm of the performative. Barbra’s Jewishness is revealed through profile and voice, but her face is visible only after the three long shots of Fanny’s back as she enters the theater, moves down a long hallway, and down another hallway into the backstage area, the only sound the clicking of her heels against the floor. The film explicitly teases our desire to see her face, to hear her voice. The performance of Jewishness satisfies desire. From that moment, Jewishness is what Barbra does.

By way of her nose and her speaking voice, though, Barbra does Jewishness with a difference. In the mid-1960s the media made much of Streisand’s refusal to get her nose fixed, of her determination to maintain the mark of difference. “The desire for invisibility, the desire to become ‘white,’ lies at the center of the Jew’s flight from his or her own body,” writes Gilman.²⁶ Streisand’s tactic was exactly the opposite. Alan Spiegel writes (in an otherwise disparaging account of Streisand), “Her struggle becomes to make audiences see that what might first appear too irregular, too coarse, or yes, to precociously Jewish is actually just right, radiantly necessary.”²⁷ Her insistent “mark of difference” connotes contradictory meanings, both charisma, an independent style, and even unconventional beauty, as well as shrewdness and audacity.²⁸

If Barbra’s spoken voice, as in “Hello, gorgeous?” continually re-performs Jewishness (conflated with New York, Brooklyn, working-class, urban, and East Coast), her singing voice takes her elsewhere, to the blues of African American women singers, to the belting of Ethel Merman, to the crooning of the developing rock ‘n’ roll.²⁹ Streisand’s singing voice does not allow her to pass; what would she pass for? Rather her voice evokes what Levine describes as “the exotic, the primitive, and the atavistic” —again, but differently, the Jewess.³⁰ The passionate expressiveness and intimacy of her singing voice makes it seem natural and untrained. Streisand’s singing voice is completely of her body and it also separates from her body, from her self, to take on, almost literally, a life of its own. It was described endlessly as “blood-tingling,” “seductive,” “like a wound-up meadowlark.”³¹ Her extraordinary, perverse, monstrous voice spans the common break in women’s voices between chest and head voice. When Streisand belts, which she does below, above, and through her (virtually inaudible) break, her voice works with and against Jule Styne’s brassy, percussive, syncopated score. She often shouts, draws a line

out, her volume and tone fluctuate in extremes. She tends to sing in the middle of her range, but with a vengeance, almost speaking, almost singing, her voice sculptural. Musicologist Elizabeth Wood theorizes what she calls a “Sapphonic voice,” which “traverse[s] a range of sonic possibilities and overthrow[s] sonic boundaries.”³² A woman with such a voice, she writes, “may vocalize inadmissible sexuality and thrilling readiness to go beyond so-called natural limits, an erotics of risk and defiance, as desire for desire itself.”³³

“Greatest Star”

Funny Girl is propelled by two competing narratives—one of stardom, which depends on Fanny’s uniqueness and singularity, and one other heterosexualization, which emphasizes her sameness (to other women, to the social order, to narrative tendencies). Ultimately, the heterosexual narrative fails and the narrative of stardom dominates the film; stardom is achieved at the expense of marriage. The final image consists of Barbra-as-Fanny in a dark dress spot lit against a dark background, singing “My Man” as if in a concert, an image that lifts Streisand out of the diegesis and privileges Streisand herself over her portrayal of Fanny Brice.

In both narratives Fanny’s Jewishness is always already there and virtually unremarked upon as well as fundamentally defining other character. Whereas many “lesbian” narratives privilege women’s friendship, women bonding, or the filmic potential of desire or eroticism between women, *Funny Girl* takes a different tack.³⁴ Desire and eroticism is impelled in the spectator by the seductive force of Barbra in the singular act of performing in a musical film. Streisand’s Jewishness parodies and subverts traditional femininity and forestalls the possibility of visual victimization or objectification.

In *Funny Girl* the “star” narrative is driven precisely by Fanny’s difference from other women. Fanny’s distinctiveness is first shown in relation to one of the most prevalent images of Jewish women after World War II, the Jewish mother.³⁵ Fanny’s mother and her mother’s cohorts, whether Irish or German, signify embodied ethnicity and typify the overbearing Jewish mother so predominant in American fiction and popular culture, from Michael Gold’s *Jews Without Money* to television’s *The Goldbergs*.³⁶ (Even when Fanny does become a mother in the film, she hardly cares for the child and is still primarily identified as a star.)³⁷ Mrs. Brice’s friends are preoccupied only with marriage and reproduction and find Fanny’s desire to perform absurd. They value beauty as means to an end, attaining a husband. They sing, in a song whose melody suggests a nursery rhyme, “If a girl isn’t pretty as a Miss Atlantic City/All she gets from life is pity and a pat.” Fanny’s mother plays on the national “threat” of her singularity when she sings, “Is a nose with deviation such a crime against the nation? Should I throw her into jail or drown the cat?” Fanny, crunching on a pickle held between two talonlike nails, is confident, playfully gawky, almost tomboyish.

Fanny is next defined in opposition to the “white” women who make up the chorus line, her otherness eventually launching her into stardom. As the vaudeville theater manager, Mr. Keeney, says in frustration when she, “the one with the skinny legs,” messes up the choreography: “You stick out, and you are out!” Undeterred, as this is, of course, the predictable, necessary opening of a star story, Streisand sings one of *Funny Girl*’s best-known songs, “I’m the Greatest Star.” She attempts to cajole and impress Mr. Keeney

with her “gifts,” alternating non-Jewish jokes and voices (mock operatically, “I’m a natural Camille / As Camille I just feel / I’ve so much to offer”) with easily identifiable references to things Jewish – a bagel, for example – spoken in a heavy New York accent and with a Yiddish intonation in which the last note of a line goes up in pitch. She speaks, “I got thirty-six expressions / Sweet as pie to tough as leather”; her talents transcend gender. Keeney carries on his business and then removes her physically from the theater, but Fanny turns right around and runs back into the theater. She careens onto the stage, now empty of the other women, Mr. Keeney, and Eddie, his assistant. She freezes, looks around and via a long shot that pans the theater, takes in the sight of its emptiness. (This is the same panning shot as in the earlier, opening scene; it thus links Fanny’s early and later life.) The music comes in softly at first, with deep strings in syncopation. As the orchestra builds, Barbra belts the last chorus of the song, made emphatic through a key change, several notes lowered by half-step intervals and other notes held longer in earnest, bluesy emotion. In her red sailor shirt, blue bloomers, black stockings and boots, Barbra throws her head back, flings her arms out, and sings, exclaiming, “In all of the world so far / I am the greatest, greatest star!” The performance is pure Streisand.

This early moment exposes the performative slippage of Streisand and Brice. Fanny, the character, claims, well in advance of her diegetic stardom, to be the “greatest star,” and Streisand makes the same claim at the same time in the same body in the same voice. As Fanny Brice, she sings, “I’m the greatest star / I am by far / But no one knows it,” but in spite of its ostensible expression of frustration, it is self-congratulatory, almost autoerotic, a self-coming out. She knows she is being watched, and we can’t resist watching. She seems to sing for herself, but it’s always for us. The long fingernails, the characteristic gestures, the fear-filled eye, the soft-focus shot: Fanny’s not-yet-star body is Barbra’s already-a-star body. “I’m the Greatest Star”—the simultaneous assertion and performance of greatest star-ness—is a performative utterance in J. L. Austin’s sense. As she – both Fanny and Barbra – claims her stardom, she—Fanny—becomes a star. Streisand’s performance and star persona simultaneously exceed and contain the character.

On film Streisand always plays Streisand. There are gaps in her acting style, those Brechtian moments where the actor splits from the character. For example, at the end of “I’d Rather Be Blue,” Fanny’s first solo appearance as a singer-rollerskater, Barbra pauses to pull up the fallen strap of her dress. The gesture conveys Fanny’s pleasure in her performance and her guilelessness on stage. But Streisand’s rendition of the movement is layered: we see her self-consciously reach for the strap, pull it up onto her shoulder, and then let the movement undulate down her torso and legs and into her skates. The gesture appears more choreographed than the dance that precedes it. In this gesture the expected, conventional blurring of actor-character-singer fractures into Barbra-playing-Fanny. Here and elsewhere Barbra is Fanny Brice, but she refuses to become or disappear into Fanny Brice.

The unusual star persona that emerges from the filmic conflation of Barbra and Fanny is supported by Streisand’s highlighting her difference from other actresses. Biographies and gossip tell us she was late, unpredictable, and difficult on the set. She argued with director William Wyler constantly. She was a perfectionist and insisted on doing

numerous takes of every shot. She did her own hair and makeup and only allowed herself to be filmed on the left side. In the sound studio she refused to settle on any one cut of a song. Soon after they began recording the music for *Funny Girl*, musical director Walter Scharf decided to prerecord the songs on tape instead of vinyl to save money, and to produce separate tracks for orchestra and vocals, to allow Streisand to make later changes.³⁸ And she insisted that “My Man” be recorded live—the first time for a movie musical.³⁹

Once Fanny’s rise to fame begins, each step in her success finds Jewishness undermining heteronormativity. Fanny’s stardom emerges from her otherness, which she reconstitutes through humor and through a parody of femininity and heterosexuality. Fanny’s first role in the *Ziegfeld Follies* is to star in a wedding extravaganza with numerous women dressed as brides. In typical *Follies* fashion they represent the seasons of the year—the summer bride, the winter bride, and so on. Their headpieces are decorated with emblems of the season, like corn husks and flowers, and the brides are engaged in activities like brushing their hair, taking bubble baths, and gazing at themselves in mirrors. In rehearsal, surrounded by tall, buxom blonds, Fanny, well aware of her markedly Jewish looks, tells Ziegfeld that she can’t sing “I am the beautiful reflection of my loves affection” “straight.” When he insists that she perform, she queers the song by stuffing a pillow under her dress. Looking eight months pregnant, she sings the correct lyrics, first in exaggerated British opera, “I am the walking illustration,” and then finishes the line in Yiddish inflection, “of his adoration?” Because the song positions women as objects of male desire and acquisition (although in the film the song itself can be seen as parodying the use of women’s bodies in the *Follies*), Fanny’s “pregnant” body takes that objectification to its logical extreme: she makes explicit the connection between heterosexual desire, sex, and reproduction. At the same time, her other “natural” physical differences from the other women—she is much shorter and almost bumps headlong into the breasts of a Ziegfeld girl—remove her entirely from the elaborate system of exchange the song expresses. When she dances with one of the men, her “body” interferes and prevents their embrace. When she sings, “His love makes me beautiful,” and performs mock horror at seeing herself in the mirror, the song derides heterosexual desire. She is a huge success, and Ziegfeld responds, “I ought to fire you, but I love talent.” Fanny’s talent is in her ability to ridicule heteronormativity by way of Jewishness and get rewarded for it. She later dances as a Yiddish chicken in “Schvan Lak,” sending up the heterosexual romance of ballet and mocking the ethnic normativity of a “white,” European, high-art form.

Streisand’s performance carries the historical memory of Brice’s own career, of her rubbery face and the gawky comedic style that took her from vaudeville to Paris to American radio as Baby Snooks. Brice herself created a new form of comedy; as Harley Erdman explains, Jewish women were invisible in vaudeville before Brice. He writes, “In these male-dominated industries, the female body was itself a significant enough sign of difference that to compound it with grotesque ethnicity was redundant or contradictory.”⁴⁰ Most of the diegetic songs, including “Second Hand Rose” and “I’d Rather Be Blue,” were of Brice’s repertoire, and she invented the pregnant ingenue bride and the “klutzy” ballerina. Brice was more a comic than a singer, and her famous

1921 rendition of “My Man” succeeded in part because she “shared her personal misery [of losing her husband] with her adoring public.” As Sochen writes, Brice “displayed her sure comic instinct for incongruity.” Streisand, like Brice, is “the consummate careerist.”⁴¹ Yet Streisand’s performance as a 1960s version of Brice is complexly comedic, necessarily inflected with post-Holocaust, ironic, Jewish mock self-deprecation.⁴² In her star turn, Streisand’s performance, as one reviewer put it, “turns gawkiness into grace.”⁴³

“You Are Woman”

Funny Girl’s story of stardom privileges talent over beauty, difference over conventionality, instincts over plans. But like most musicals. *Funny Girl* parallels the tale of Fanny’s becoming a star with a plot that is not only heterosexual but heterosexualizing, a narrative that works to revalue beauty, conventionality, and plans, and one that finally fails, or rather, is queered.

The Nick Arnstein plot is introduced by way of a repeated, freeze-frame shot in which Fanny, in voiceover, sings in a single-note chant, “Nicky Arnstein, what a beautiful name.” From the start he is feminized by name and description and is positioned as an object other gaze, her desire.

The scene that begins their affair takes place in a private dining room that Nick reserves, uncertain if Fanny will show up. Fanny’s use of Jewish-oriented humor deflects his sexual “advances” and puts her in control of the scene. More than any other scene in the film this one deploys Jewish references. After he orders the meal in French, Fanny says, “I would have ordered roast beef and potatoes,” to which he answers, “I did.” She finds that pate (“I drink it all day”) is actually “just some dried up toast in a sliver / On the top a little chopped liver.” Later in the number, Barbra, dressed in a full-length, low-cut gown, lies draped across a red velvet chaise. Sharif nibbles at her neck, as she looks up from his caress and quips in her most Yiddish-inflected voice, “Would a convent take a Jewish girl?”⁴⁴ In a song more pedagogical than romantic (reminiscent of “Sixteen Going on Seventeen” in *The Sound of Music* with its too obvious—albeit campy—reminders of the gendered order of heterosexuality), Fanny learns the lessons of (hetero)sexuality, as Sharif sings, “You are woman, I am man. Let’s kiss.” Her Jewishness works as innocence, inexperience, and directness, all of which fade away as her desire overtakes her and Fanny is instantly heterosexualized.

In this number Streisand’s actions resonate with and against historical representations of the seductive “belle juive,” or the beautiful Jewess. A theatrical invention of the mid-nineteenth century, this character is typified by Rebecca in *Ivanhoe* or the title character in Augustin Daly’s wildly successful production of *Leah the Forsaken* in 1863.⁴⁵ The Jewess, as Erdman explains, “becomes the object of gentile male longing, an exotic and sometimes dangerous creature whose end is pathos and whose effect is frustrated desire.”⁴⁶

The film plays up Fanny’s desirability in the number. She wears a low-cut, richly textured gown, her hair in a glamorous twist, her arms and cleavage exposed.⁴⁷ The scene is also filmed in soft light and generous angles; Streisand looks as conventionally beautiful in this scene as anywhere in the film. The scene is only about his effort to sleep with her (or at least the musical’s version of sex, always alluded to, always sung about,

but never seen), and, for much of the number. Nick chases her around the room, tries to capture her in an embrace, or leans over to kiss her. Like the belle juive, her tempting him is less from her intentionally seductive ways and more from her natural allure and her own uncontrollable passion; she sings, “Oh the thrills and chills running through me.” As Tamar Garb writes, “The sexuality of the Jewess is both dangerous and desirable.”⁴⁸ At the same time, the scene repeatedly marks her otherness, her lack of knowledge of sex and food, her awkwardness. In the end, his desire is not frustrated but rather is queered. The seemingly self-evident, “You are smaller so I can be taller than,” once sung, necessarily invokes its opposite; it is ghosted by the possibility of queerness. Arnstein’s ruffled shirts, his polished nails, his love for blue marble eggs, and his lack of “manly” employment construct him as gay. Furthermore, Sharif’s “foreign” look, his ability to speak French, and his accent, which sounds vaguely European in the film, feminize him.⁴⁹ The “erotic fascination” of the Jewess is displaced onto the gentile, un-American man.⁵⁰

In this scene and in “His Love Makes Me Beautiful,” Fanny plays at being “Woman.” She self-consciously performs a femininity that foregrounds its own constructedness. And in both songs femininity is presented as only heterosexual. Fanny’s performance, then, simultaneously denaturalizes both. In addition, both songs undermine the men’s power. Just as she refuses to be positioned as The (heterosexually normative) Bride within Ziegfeld’s finale, she also refuses to let Nick seduce her on his terms. Ziegfeld gives her the opportunity, but Fanny produces herself as a star. Nick reserves the dining room and orders the food, but she uses the room like a stage set, and her comic response upstages him.⁵¹

The two songs that highlight Fanny’s desire for Nick are both filmed, against the grain of the love plot, to focus on her singularity. “People” (which takes place earlier than the seduction scene, above), like the finale “My Man,” virtually takes Streisand out of the diegesis, as the camera follows her walking down the street, looking into the distance, leaning on a stair rail. Only at the very end of the song does the camera provide a shot of Nick’s face, which would ordinarily be an early shot to establish point-of-view. The position of “the look” in this scene is the spectator’s, decidedly not coexistent with the heterosexual man’s.

Later, “Don’t Rain on My Parade” functions as the number which (theoretically) proves Fanny’s desire for Nick. In the plot the song reveals Fanny’s effort to get to Nick, who has left on a ship for Europe. But the song itself actually has nothing to do with him. Rather it is a scenic spectacle, both in its locale and in Streisand’s performance, as what matters is her bodily movement through space and across modes of transportation. Streisand runs through the train station in Baltimore, rides on a train to New York, takes a cab to the harbor, and chases Nick’s already departed ship via tugboat. The song typifies musical film’s convention of the pass-along number, moving the scene geographically and the character psychologically.⁵² She sings in the second person, but it’s not to Nick but rather to any “you” who gets in her way: “Don’t tell how to fly, I’ve simply got to / If someone take a spill, it’s me and not you!” Psychologically, she moves from wanting to be with him to wanting to be herself as herself. It is a celebration of self, independence, and power (not unlike Styne’s “Some People” sung by Merman in *Gypsy*). Ultimately, this song is a love song, but one for the spectator. The final phrases of the song, captured visually on a descending aerial shot, image the solitary Barbra standing on the boat’s

stern, dressed in a close-fitting, bright orange suit, still grasping a bedraggled bouquet of yellow roses. The shot of the Statue of Liberty in the background likens Fanny's quest for Nick to the immigrant's American dream, independence, and determination.⁵³

Like any Jewish woman, once married, Fanny's identity changes, and again, the film takes on and deconstructs stereotypical representations. Fanny raises the specter of the J.A.P. (Jewish American Princess) in the song "Sadie, Sadie, Married Lady."⁵⁴

Anachronistically playing off a typical name for an immigrant girl, the song in the film perfects the J.A.P. image. As Riv-Ellen Prell writes, "She [the J.A.P.] attends to the needs of no one else, exerting no labor for others, and expending great energy on herself instead."⁵⁵ The number is introduced by a close-up shot other hand with a huge diamond ring on it, then is comprised of bits of scenes that portray her listening to records, eating chocolates, coming home exhausted after a day of shopping. The lyrics make fun of how she looks ("To tell the truth, it hurt my pride / The groom was prettier than the bride") and her laziness and unmarketability ("Do for me, buy for me, lift me, carry me / Finally got a guy to marry me"). As Prell notes, "Her body is a surface to decorate, its adornment financed by the sweat of others."⁵⁶ The song plays with the image of the J.A.P. as "narcissistic, sexually withholding, and manipulative," by showing how Fanny's sexual ecstasy is brought on only by elaborately wrapped packages and piles of silky clothes.⁵⁷ When Nick arrives home, he receives a cool peck on the cheek, and she glides off to indulge in her purchases.

"Sadie, Sadie" toes a fine line between sincerity and parody. The melody evokes the 1920s tunes of Brice's acts (in contrast to the much more contemporary sounds of "Don't Rain on My Parade" and "People"), which renders the song self-consciously, comically performative. Furthermore, as the film shows, Fanny is hardly an "inactive, deathlike body."⁵⁸ When she sings, "I swear I'll do my wifely job / Just sit at home / Become a slob," she conjures up the idea of the J.A.P. as her absolute counterimage. Not only is Fanny the breadwinner, but her occupation involves the physical, sweating, active body. However, there are elements of the J.A.P. persona that fit neatly with other aspects of Fanny's character; for example. Fanny does not cook or clean or engage in any domestic activities. Even though she does have a child, she never occupies of role of mother in any way. Also, there are no signs of sexual desire (or even really sensual affection) between Fanny and Nick after their marriage. Like the joined stereotypes of the sexually voracious, unmarried Jewess and the married, frigid one. Fanny is most interested in Nick before they marry. But *Funny Girl* turns this representation around once again. For it is Nick's effeminacy that makes him unattractive to Fanny, and he is clearly threatened by her and avoids contact with her. Prell writes, "Paradoxically, the Jewish woman is entirely dependent upon and indifferent to her male partner," but in the case of *Funny Girl* it is the (gentile) man who is dependent upon yet indifferent to the Jewish woman.⁵⁹ Their marriage reverses gender roles—she makes the money and the decisions, and she even contrives ways to reduce their expenses and make business connections for him without his knowledge.

The romance narrative undoes itself in the second part of the film. If most musicals chart developing love that ends in a marriage finale, *Funny Girl* follows the disintegration of a marriage through the male protagonist's corruption and emasculation. Nick's deterioration correlates to her rise to fame and fortune.⁶⁰ As Levine writes of "the Jewish woman" (more akin to the Jewess than the J.A.P.), "Beyond her sexuality; she is also

noted for her intellect, sophistication, and attempts at self-determination, which in turn contribute to her desirability even as they add to her threat.”⁶¹ Still, Fanny does love Nick until the bitter end, and she shifts into a motherly role with him, which the film portrays as protective but Nick clearly resents. He is always feminized in relation to her.⁶²

Scholars of Jewish culture cite Herman Wouk’s *Marjorie Morningstar* (novel 1955, film 1958, with Natalie Wood) and Philip Roth’s *Goodbye, Columbus* (short story 1959, film 1969, with Ali McGraw) as the first identifiable images of the J.A.P. in American culture, from which a small industry of J.A.P. jokes was spawned in the 1970s. What is fascinating about *Funny Girl* is that it anticipates, refers to, and revises the J.A.P. image. In this way the film is a precursor, which makes early use of a soon-to-be profligate stereotype but renders it infinitely more complex.

“Life’s Candy and the Sun’s a Ball of Butter”

While the character of Fanny Brice and Streisand’s embodiment of her reverberates with and against representations of the Jewish mother, the belle juive, and the JAP, Streisand’s offstage persona is strikingly similar to that of another famous Jewish actress, Sarah Bernhardt. For example, Bernhardt was criticized for sexual promiscuity and likely bisexuality. During *Funny Girl*’s filming the media had a field day when Streisand openly engaged in an affair with Omar Sharif, in spite of being recently married to actor Eliot Gould.⁶³

While scholars like Gilman, Erdman, Pellegrini, Ockman, and Solomon agree that Bernhardt epitomized the belle juive, they also note that Bernhardt was seen as all the more threatening because of her overt masculinity and open displays of power.⁶⁴ As Streisand’s career has moved on, past (but not beyond) *Funny Girl*, her star-self takes on increasingly more masculine signs. Like Bernhardt, Streisand is bossy, and as each acquired money and power she was seen as voraciously ambitious, egotistical, and acquisitive, the epitome of an avaricious Jew. Like Bernhardt, Streisand extended her range of power, soon moving into production aspects as well as performance. And, like Bernhardt, Streisand’s inappropriate femininity was seen not only to be a sign of her “Jewishness” but to be caused by it. For each, her body was evidence of that Jewishness: for Bernhardt, her hair, complexion, and thinness; for Streisand, a general lack of “feminine” appeal—while filming *Funny Girl*, cinematographer Harry Stradling used a sliding diffusion glass to “make her look more feminine.”⁶⁵ Finally, both Streisand and Bernhardt were perceived to dominate the roles they played. George Bernard Shaw wrote of Bernhardt, “She does not enter into the leading character: she substitutes herself for it.”⁶⁶ Alan Spiegel writes that Streisand’s “heroines” are “not really characters at all, but vehicles for the demonstration of their author’s self-rapture.”⁶⁷ In short, both women embody and enact the unresolvable but culturally useful contradictions of a queer, Jewish femininity. Considering that antisemitism and misogyny took quite different forms in 1890s France and 1960s U.S.A., the parallels in the media’s construction of these two women is remarkable. They are both funny girls.

Notes

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inquiry here, see my book, A PROBLEM LIKE MARIA: GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN THE AMERICAN MUSICAL (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002). The epigraph to this essay is from Elspeth Probyn, "Queer Belongings: The Politics of Departure," in *SEXY BODIES: THE STRANGE CARNALITIES OF FEMINISM*, ed. Elizabeth Gross and Elspeth Probyn (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 9.

1. This was her first film, but Streisand had already achieved notoriety as a singer in the New York club scene, as the Star of two acclaimed television variety shows (*My Name is Barbra* [1965] and *Color Me Barbra* [1966]) and in the Broadway production. Numerous biographies detail Streisand's early career. See, for example, Randall Riese, *Her Name Is Barbra*. (New York: St. Martin's, 1993); James Spada, *Streisand: Her Life* (New York; Crown, 1995); Ethlie Ann Vare, ed., *Diva: Barbra Streisand and the Making of a Superstar* (New York: Boulevard, 1996); Anne Edwards, *Streisand: A Biography* (New York: Berkley Boulevard, 1997). For scattered references to Streisand's early singing career, see James Gavin, *Intimate Nights: The Golden Age of New York Cabaret* (New York: Limelight, 1992).

2. Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (London; Macmillan, 1986).

3. On the history of U.S. production and reception of "celebrity," see Joshua Gamson, *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

4. Amy-Jill Levine, "A Jewess, More and/or Less," in *Judaism Since Gender*, ed. Miriam Peskowitz and Laura Levitt (New York; Roudedge, 1997), p. 151; Carol Ockman, "When Is a Jewish Star Just a Star? Interpreting Images of Sarah Bernhardt," in *The Jew in the Text: Modernity and the Construction of Identity*, ed. Linda Nochlin and Tamar Garb (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), p. 138.

5. Tom Prideaux, "Funny Girl with a Frantic History," *Life* (n.d.), p. 10; Gerald Fay, "Review of *Funny Girl*," *Guardian* (Spring 1966); Jerome Robbins, "Barbra Streisand," in *Double Exposure*, ed. Roddy McDowall, 2d ed. (New York: Morrow, 1990), p. 51; Judith Christ, press release (December 1977). Incomplete citations indicate articles from clippings files, Billy Rose Theatre Collection of the New York Public Library.

6. For analyses of some linkages between Jewishness and queerness, see, for example, Janet R Jakobsen, "Queer Is? Queer Does? Normativity and the Problem of Resistance," paper presented at American Academy of Religion, November 1997, reprinted *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* 4, ed. Carolyn Dinshaw and David M. Halperin (1998): 511-36; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the ' Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 75-82; Daniel Itzkovitz, "Secret Temples," in *Jews and Other Differences: The New Jewish Cultural Studies*, ed. Jonathan Boyarin and Daniel Boyarin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 176-202.

Historically, Jewish men have been characterized as effeminate. See, for example, Sander Gilman, "Freud, Race, and Gender," *Jewish Explorations of Sexuality*, ed. Jonathan Magonet (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1995), pp. 135-55; Daniel Boyarin, "Homotopia: The Feminized Jewish Man and the Lives of Women in Late Antiquity," *Differences* 7.2 (1995): 41-81. In *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), Gilman historicizes

representations of the Jewish male body—the nose, the feet, the uneven gait. Gilman reads the Jew’s body as “interchangeable with the body of the gay” (p. 196).

In *Performance Anxieties: Staging Psychoanalysis, Staging Race* (New York: Routledge, 1997), Ann Pellegrini accurately summarizes antisemitic discourses which locate Jewish men as feminized and render Jewish women absent. She writes, “All Jews are womanly; but no women are Jews” (p. 18).

7. Alexander Doty, *Making Things Perfectly Queer: Interpreting Mass Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 3.

8. Cherry Smyth, “The Transgressive Sexual Subject,” in *A Queer Romance: Lesbians, Gay Men, and Popular Culture*, ed. Paul Burston and Colin Richardson (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 125.

9. Isobel Lennart, *Funny Girl: A New Musical*, music by Jule Styne, lyrics by Bob Merrill (New York: Random House, 1964).

On Fanny Brice, see Barbara W. Grossman, *Funny Woman; The Life and Times of Fanny Brice* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1991); June Sochen, “Fanny Brice and Sophie Tucker: Blending the Particular with the Universal,” in *From Hester Street to Hollywood: The Jewish-American Stage and Screen*, ed. Sarah Blacher Cohen (Bloomington: Indiana UE 1983), pp. 44-57.

10. Diana Karanikas Harvey and Jackson Harvey, *Streisand: The Pictorial Biography* (Philadelphia: Running, 1997), p. 45.

11. In such films as *Clueless* and *In and Out*, *The Nanny*, for example, “Barbra” fandom stands in for musicals’ fandom, which stands in for gayness in a man. See, for example, D. A. Miller, *Place for Us [Essay on the Broadway Musical]* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1998). For references, sections, or chapters on gay men as spectators and fans of Broadway and Hollywood musicals, see, for example, Dory, *Making Things Perfectly Queer*, David Van Leer, *The Queening of America* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Judith Mayne, *Cinema and Spectatorship* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Janet Staiger, *Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992).

12. Doty, *Making Things Perfectly Queer*, p. 10.

13. Miller, *Place for Us*, pp. 89, 90.

14. In other words, I am intentionally considering a feminist reading in conceit with queer theory and politics. For essays that interrogate the relationship between feminist or lesbian theories and queer theory, see Dana Heller, ed., *Cross Purposes: Lesbians, Feminists, and the Limits of Alliance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

15. Corey K. Creekmur and Alexander Doty, “Introduction,” in *Out in Culture: Gay, Lesbian, and Queer Essays on Popular Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 3.

16. Sharif deals with his few songs in a kind of speech-singing that was a convention of nonsinging men in musicals by the 1960s. First performed by Rex Harrison in *My Fair Lady* (with Julie Andrews) on Broadway in 1956, Jack Klugman (in *Gypsy* with Merman in 1959), and Christopher Plummer (in the film of *The Sound of Music* in 1965) also used the same technique.

17. Joseph P. Swain, *The Broadway Musical: A Critical and Musical Survey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 356.

18. In terms of form (as opposed to reception context), it is important, I think, to see *Funny Girl* as a film adaptation of a Broadway musical, like *Oklahoma!*, *The King and I*, *My Fair Lady*, and *The Sound of Music*. The transformation from musical play to film maintains some formal structures (of narrative, character, relationship among song and dance and dialogue, integration of book and nondiegetic song) that differ markedly from the made-for-Hollywood musical, such as *The Wizard of Oz*, *Singing in the Rain*, and the films of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rodgers. See, for example, Robert Lawson-Peebles, ed. *Approaches to the American Musical* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1996); Richard Kislak, *The Musical* (New York: Applause, 1995); Ethan Mordden, *Broadway Babies: The People Who Made the American Musical* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Jane Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).
19. See Andrea Most, "'We Know We Belong to the Land': The Theatricality of Assimilation in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!*," *PMLA* 113.1 (January 1998): 77-89. Also see Mark Slobin, "Some Intersections of Jews, Music, and Theater," in *From Hester Street to Hollywood: The Jewish-American Stage and Screen*, ed. Sarah Blacher Cohen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp. 29-43.
20. There was, of course, an American performance tradition of Jewish female humorists like Fanny Brice and Sophie Tucker. See Sochen, "Fanny Brice and Sophie Tucker."
21. Hugh Leonard. "Barbra in a Ragged Cloak," *Plays and Players* 13.9 (June 1966): 13.
22. Donald Zee, "All Barbra—Heart, Soul, Sound, Music!" *Daily Mirror* (14 April 1966): 3.
23. All examples are taken from the videorecording of the film, produced by Ray Stark and directed by William Wyler, Columbia Pictures and Rascar Productions, 1968.
24. Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, pp. 10-37, 169-193.
25. Barbra's femininity is also emphasized in the moment of disclosure by her extremely long fingernails. Soon after, she plays a few notes on the piano, unable to hit the notes clearly because of her nails. In the opening, postfame scene that frames the film, she is hyperfeminized to accentuate her body as wealthy and nonlaboring (in a job that would require shorter nails, that is.)
26. Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, p. 235.
27. Alan Spiegel, "The Vanishing Act: A Typology of the Jew in Contemporary American Film," in *From Hester Street to Hollywood: The Jewish-American Stage and Screen*, ed. Sarah Blacher Cohen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), p. 272.
28. See Jay Geller, "(G)nos(e)ology: The Cultural Construction of the Other," in *People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective*, ed. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), pp. 243-82.
29. The sound was shaped in part by Peter Matz, who has arranged many of her recordings.
30. Levine. "A Jewess," p. 151.
31. Oppenheimer, "Review of *Funny Girl*"
32. Elizabeth Wood, "Sapponics," in *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Muscology*, ed. Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood, and Gary Q Thomas (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 33.

33. Ibid., p. 33.
34. See, for example, Chris Straayer, *Deviant Eyes, Deviant Bodies: Sexual Re-Orientation in Film and Video* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
35. I want to underline that I'm reading these images in the context of the 1968 film and its available representations available. Certainly the film capitalizes on the well-known image of the Jewish mother.
- Mid-century television saw two contradictory images of Jewish motherhood: the epitome of the Jewish mother stereotype in the dotting Molly Goldberg (written as well as played by the inimitable Gertrude Berg) and the pathetic Jewish mothers who died of terrible diseases on *Playhouse 90*.
36. Interestingly, the character of Fanny's mother, played by Kay Medford, is a gentle (if amusingly wry), sympathetic character who adores her daughter and supports her. It is Mrs. Straikosh who actually functions as the Jewish Mother in the film, as she pressures Fanny about marriage, comments on her appearance, and encourages her to get together with Nick. The film's displaced representation of a Jewish mother both allows that representation to do its ideological work and idealizes a "real" mother who is not quite Jewish.
37. Also, that Fanny can have a child and not care for it is enabled by her African American maid, Emma, who appears in several scenes only to boost Fanny's confidence.
38. Riese, *Her Name Is Barbra*, p. 266.
39. Ibid., p. 291.
40. Harley Erdman, *Staging the Jew: The Performance of an American Ethnicity, 1860-1920* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1997), p. 156.
41. Sochen, "Fanny Brice and Sophie Tucker," pp. 46, 49, 46, 49. Also see Grossman, *Funny Woman*.
42. In 1960, *Playhouse 90* featured a completely different representation of a beautiful Jewess – rape victim that harkens back to the early, pre-nineteenth-century image. In this Nazi (melo)drama, a very young Robert Redford debuted as a boy-Nazi with a heart of gold who rescues her. *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*, aired 18 May 1960, video from Jewish Museum, New York.
43. Fay, "Review of *Funny Girl*."
44. This is one of Fanny's very few self-references to being Jewish in the film. It's also notable that she refers to a stereotypical signifier of lesbianism, the convent.
45. Erdman, *Staging the Jew*, p. 44. Erdman traces what he calls "the rise and fall of the 'belle juive'" (p. 40). He contrasts the "old Jewess," exemplified by *The Merchant of Venice*'s Jessica, with the newer belle juive, an invention of nineteenth-century European Romanticism (p. 42). By the early 1900s, the "untamed passion" of the belle juive is downplayed, with Jewish woman characters in by biblical dramas (p. 54), and shortly, almost no Jewish women on stage at all (p. 156).
46. Ibid., p. 40.
47. As Erdman notes, a key theatrical, semiotic marker of the belle juive was her arms, shoulders and throat revealed (ibid., p. 44).
48. Tamar Garb, "Introduction: Modernity, Identity, Textuality," in *The Jew in the Text*, p. 27.

49. See Al LeValley, "The Great Escape," in *Out in Culture: Gay Lesbian, and Queer Essays on Popular Culture*, ed. Corey K. Creekmur and Alexander Doty (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 60-70.
50. Garb, "Introduction," p. 26.
51. This scene apparently caused some friction during rehearsals for the play, as Streisand invented many of the one-liners and much of the schtick and turned the song from Nick's seduction number to Fanny's parody of it. Sidney Chaplin, who played Arnstein on Broadway, objected to his diminished role in this and other songs. "It had been an emasculating process for Chaplin" (Riese, *Her Name Is Barbra*, p. 227).
52. On typical Hollywood musical narrative structures, see Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical*.
53. Spiegel calls this song one of Streisand's "arias of self-intoxication" ("The Vanishing Act," p. 272).
54. As I note above, my reading is based on the film's 1968 release, when the JAP image no doubt influenced the production and consumption of this number. A reading of "Sadie," a song that asserts a working woman's desire to be a married, middle-class homemaker, would be different in the context of *Funny Girl's* pre- and post-WWI setting. Thanks to Carol Backer for helping me to clarify this point.
55. Riv-Ellen Prell, "Why Jewish Princesses Don't Sweat: Desire and Consumption in Postwar American Jewish Culture," in *People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective*, ed. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), p. 331.
56. Prell, "Why Jewish Princesses," p. 331.
57. Riv-Ellen Prell, "Rage and Representation: Jewish Gender Stereotypes in American Culture," in *Uncertain Terms: Negotiating Gender in American Culture*, ed. Faye Ginsburg and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (Boston: Beacon, 1990), p. 258.
58. Prell, "Why Jewish Princesses," p. 336.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 336.
60. The second part of the film also downplays Fanny's Jewishness and links her visually to 1968 fashion through a boyish bob haircut and loose, silky fabrics of mixed textures and warm, bright colors. Streisand reenvoices Fanny, speaking in an almost British dialect, lapsing only into the "Jewish" accent, which dominates her speaking voice in the first part, when she cracks a joke. Fanny shows that she has remade herself. The parody of *Swan Lake* in which Fanny appears toward the end of the film reminds viewers that her markedly Jewish performance style is still authentic. She's still Jewish.
61. Levine, "A Jewess," p. 151.
62. Spiegel describes the male protagonists in Streisand's films as "pallid, or feckless, or self-destructive, or in any event, fully unworthy movie lover of her immediate attentions." He adds, "Each other four most famous films allows her to lose this lover and gain herself," but he harshly criticizes what he sees as her limitless ego ("The Vanishing Act," p. 272).
63. Not only that, she was a Jew with an Arab who portrayed a Jew shortly after the 1967 war. The studio played it up as cultural diplomacy, but the film was banned in Egypt.
64. See Gilman, "Salome, Syphilis, Sarah Bernhardt, and the Modern Jewess," in *The Jew in the Text*, pp. 97-120; Alisa Solomon, "Queering the Canon: Azoi toot a Yid," in

Re-Dressing the Canon: Essays on Theater and Gender (New York; Routledge, 1997), pp. 95-129.

65. Riese, *Her Name Is Barbra*, p. 278.

66. George Bernard Shaw quoted in Solomon, "Queering the Canon," p. 101.

67. Spiegel, "The Vanishing Act," p. 271.