

# The Shift in How 'Home' Is Encountered in the Enacted Ritual of the American Musical

Nathan Hurwitz

Rider University

As places, locations, landscapes and localities go, no image is more potent than that of home. The history of the enacted rituals played out in the American musical reveals a shift in how we define and how we encounter 'home' as the center of our personal, communal and national spheres and the most potent signifier of our identities on those levels. In early American musicals, the central character's journey is to enter the marital home. Mismatched lovers in these musicals were ultimately reunited with their correct partners and entered the appropriate marital homes, explicitly or implicitly, as the curtain rang down. With the Rodgers and Hammerstein paradigm the central character's journey shifted to leaving 'home' in order to learn that they had to return; in *South Pacific* Nellie's return to de Becque's terrace is inevitable, as is Mrs. Anna's to the Court of Siam in *The King and I* and Tommy's to Brigadoon. The upheavals of the 1960's/1970's were reflected in the American musicals of that period. The Jets and Sharks inhabit a completely different world at the end of *West Side Story* than the one they inhabited at the musical's start; and, by the end of *Fiddler on the Roof* Anatevka is merely a point of departure. By the 1980's the central character's journey was to discover that their original definition of home failed, and to go out into the world to develop a new construct. In *March of the Falsettos*, the home that Marvin ultimately fashions with Whizzer, Trina, Jason and Mendel was as unconventional and all-encompassing as it got in 1981. The surviving characters in *Into The Woods* not only have to reconstruct home, but community itself. *Rent*, *Ragtime*, *Mamma Mia*, *Hairspray* all participate in this ritual enactment of redefining home and community to reflect a more comprehensive vision.

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Dr **Nathan Hurwitz** has had the privilege of studying acting with Stella Adler, directing with Jack Garfein, and conducting and orchestration with Lehman Engel, and spent four years in the ASCAP workshop for musical theatre writers headed by Charles Strouse. Nathan received his BFA from NYU, his Masters from Northwestern University and his Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh. After more than thirty years touring the US and Europe as a conductor and musical director Nathan transitioned to teaching full-time. Having taught one year at NSULA and four at Syracuse University, Nathan is now on the faculty of Rider University.

As places, locations, landscapes and localities go, few images are more emotionally charged in the theatre than that of home. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines home as:

the fixed residence of a family, the members of family, a private house, a place providing home-like amenities, the place where one was born, the place where something is or has been founded, the grave, one's native land, the place where a thing is most common, the abiding place of one's affections, an institution of refuge, and a goal.<sup>1</sup>

These multiple definitions all abound in popular culture.

John Hollander offers a useful model in which the corporeal home of self, the body, is contained within the family domicile, which is contained within the expanding homes of neighbourhood, city, state, nationality and ultimately the planet. "The feeling that one's home is itself really the centre of a series of radiating circles of hominess becomes most apparent when we consider how one returns to a slightly different sense of 'home' from the one which one ventures forth from."<sup>2</sup> Implicit in Hollander's schema is the idea that home, radiating from the self, can be an essential component in defining self.

Tracing the etymology of home, Hollander connects the German *heim* (home, dwelling), *heimat* (homeland) and *geheim* (privacy of the self) to *heimweh* (a melancholic longing for a time past). He relates these to Greek *nostos* and English *nostalgia*.<sup>3</sup> This suggests that home is that place to which we feel compelled to return. This urge to return home, present in literature as far back as “The Odyssey,” becomes central in the American musical theatre as the American musical came of age and became a mechanism for reflecting/defining American identity, selfhood.

Hollander and Joseph Rykwert<sup>4</sup> trace the urge to define various levels of home (and self) back to the expulsion from Eden. They assert that in Eden home was literally everywhere, the expulsion made obliviousness no longer possible and created the need to replace the sense of ‘being at home’ precipitating the continuous task of defining home. This condition of displacement and dislocation evokes the need for a constant redefinition of home. This urge is strikingly present in the art of exiles and émigrés.

Rykwert and Hollander’s home is both a point of origin and a destination, simultaneously behind and before the subject. The circular action of departure from and return to home is most clearly and characteristically felt in comedy; and comedy provides the roots of the American musical theatre.

The nostalgic urge to reconnect with home is a central concern in much 20<sup>th</sup> century popular culture (textually) while, evoking this homeward urge in an audience has driven the effectiveness of many pieces of popular American 20<sup>th</sup> century culture (extra-textually). E.T.’s attempts to ‘phone home,’ the power unleashed by Dorothy’s ruby slippers and incantation, ‘there’s no place like home,’ George Bailey’s realising the power of his home and Scarlet O’Hara’s mystical connection to Tara are examples of this urge to reconnect with home as a driving mechanism in popular culture. In these cases, the affirmation of home becomes the stimulus, which evokes in its audiences the nostalgic desire for home, pulling audiences into the central action by creating an empathetic rapport—playing on this universal urge to reconnect with home.

Advertising uses the power of this identification perhaps more than film: a child running home to a mother waiting with a Band-Aid, the warmth of home on a wintery day with a mother preparing soup for children romping in the snow, the warmth of the hearth, good friends and a beer, and so on.

The musical theatre also relies this evocation of home, and examples abound. *Show Boat* (1927) offers the dream of taking your home with you no matter how far you may travel. Nellie Forbush must return to Emile de Becque’s terrace, the locale signifying home in *South Pacific* (1949), and make her home there despite her fears. In *Fiddler On The Roof* (1964), Tevye the dairyman attempts to reconcile a narrow and rigid notion of home with the changing realities of his world until he finally must leave Anatevka and must seek home elsewhere. In these powerful examples of the homing instinct asserted in the face of exotic or radical displacement, the metaphorical vocabulary invokes the emotionally resonant power in the image of home. Interestingly, these images do not necessarily reflect home in actuality, but rather an idealisation of home.

The expulsion of the Jews from Anatevka, re-enacted onstage nightly becomes a ritual enactment of a definition of home breaking down and forcing the character to redefine home. Originally produced in the 1964, this enacted ritual encoded in *Fiddler on the Roof* arose from a time of turmoil and change—civil rights, the sexual revolution, women’s rights and rebellion against the status quo of 1950’s. In the same way, fifteen years earlier in *South Pacific*, Nellie’s return to de Becque’s terrace defined the ritual of acceptance of a new order and a restoration of home.

These home-related enacted rituals in the American musical theatre are traced historically in his paper as they shift to reflect and meet the needs of their audiences. Artefacts of popular culture can be examined from many perspectives; this paper examines one perspective along which the musical theatre encounters the

culture – the relationship with home. As cultures shift, so do the rituals enacted; by examining this shift, we see how we have changed over time. This paper aims to present one means of access to this literature. Many other valuable perspectives exist, and the hope is that when considered alongside this paper they will present a fully dimensional understanding of the American musical theatre.

Christian Mendenhall examines the ritual of the restoration of home in American musicals between 1943 and 1964 in "American Musical Comedy as a Liminal Ritual of Woman as Homemaker."<sup>5</sup> Mendenhall particularises the myth of Romance and the myth of the Hometown to the American dream by joining them with "the myth of the couple who is truly in love and lives happily ever after [and] the myth of the security of the nuclear family in its own self-sufficient home."<sup>6</sup> The dynamic between love and home in this mythic construct brings into play 'Woman as Homemaker' and 'Man as Pioneer.' Mendenhall sees the ritual enactment of these myths in the American musical theatre as, "creedal formulations. In them American society both taught and created its self-definition and named it 'the American Dream.' The stories ... were symbols of what the dominant culture believed to be 'the way things *ought* to be."<sup>7</sup> While Mendenhall's four-faceted mythic structure is particular to this period, it offers a solid model with which to compare other periods of the American musical.

Redefining home is interwoven with a series of social issues and debates.

The New School for Social Research sponsored a conference examining the concept of home called entitled *Home: A Place in the World*, which yielded a publication of the same name, in which editor Arien Mack writes:

We live at a time when the idea of home has become problematic. We are confronted every day with painful images and stories about the growing numbers of homeless people, about criminal violence toward children, and about the plights of those exiled from their homelands. And all of this co-exists with the persistent images of home as a place of comfort, safety and refuge.<sup>8</sup>

While family is not synonymous with home, these shifts in family necessitate changes in the definition of home.

The urge to define, locate, and return to home is not unique to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Eighteenth century German philosopher Novalis defined philosophy as, "... essentially homesickness—the universal impulse to be home."<sup>9</sup> Literary scholar Andrew Gurr notes, "The need for a sense of home as a base, a source of identity even more than a refuge, has grown powerfully in the last century or so. This sense of home is the goal of all the voyages of self-discovery which have become the characteristic shape of modern literature."<sup>10</sup>

The above examples from film, advertising, and musical theatre appeal nostalgically to the desire to return to a time and to a home that probably never actually ever existed. In *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*, Stephanie Coontz delineates between created constructs of family (the idealised inhabitants of the mythologised 'home') and families that actually existed.

Like most visions of a 'golden age,' the 'traditional family'... is an ahistorical amalgam of values and behaviours that never coexisted in the same time and place. The notion that traditional families fostered intense intimacy between husbands and wives while creating mothers who were totally available to their children for example, is an idea that combines some characteristics of the white, middle-class family in the mid-nineteenth century and some of a rival family ideal first articulated in the 1920s. The first family revolved emotionally around the mother-child axis, leaving the husband-wife relationship stilted and formal. The second focused on an eroticised couple relationship, demanding that mothers curb emotional 'overinvestment' in their children.<sup>11</sup>

This gap between real homes and literary constructs reflects what society is as opposed to what it wants to be. In images of home presented in the American musical we can learn what people wanted as opposed to what was.

In a musical, home could be referenced textually. The musicals of Rodgers and Hammerstein offer a clear sense of home. On the occasion the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Oklahoma!*'s (1943) opening, choreographer Agnes de Mille described the evocative nature of home at *Oklahoma!*'s heart:

[*Oklahoma!*'s] subject ... is the love of our native land, home, roots. During the war, I remember the triple row of enlisted men standing every night at the back of our theatre. ... standing and watching with a tear streaming down their cheeks. They were going out to die, and this play meant what they were dying for. This was home—Oklahoma—New York, Oregon, Utah, Texas, Georgia, Vermont—Oklahoma—home, home, okay.<sup>12</sup>

Home might be represented scenically in the form of a place to which the central character must return. Emile de Becque's terrace in *South Pacific* functions this way, as does Horace Vandergeller's feed store in *Hello Dolly* (1964). As Nellie Forbush must inevitably return to de Becque's plantation, so Dolly Levi must become Vandergeller's spouse and join him in his home. Home can also be a painful or devastating point of departure as in Tevye's home and the village of Anatevka in *Fiddler on the Roof*, or the three homes in Stephen Sondheim's *Into The Woods* (1987) which are destroyed in order to begin the process of re-examination and redefinition of the home, self and community.

Musically, home can be evoked through motifs. Such motifs are usually established in the locale that represents home; the motif is then used to evoke home, a longing for home or an absence of home. In *Oklahoma!*, Richard Rodgers uses 'Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'' this way. This theme recurs throughout the show, particularly in the 'Dream Ballet' to evoke the solidity and safety of the homestead. 'Dites Moi' and 'A Cockeyed Optimist' function similarly in *South Pacific*, representing De Becque's home; both songs are established early in the first scene. At the end of the first act 'A Cockeyed Optimist' is quoted in a minor key in the underscoring as Nellie flees, unable to accept De Becque's multi-racial children, and at the play's end Nellie's acceptance them and her place in their home is musically established when she joins them in the reprise of 'Dites Moi.' When Emile appears and joins them in the song's final lines, the motif indicates that their home has been restored.

Home can also be evoked musically in key scheme, the overall structure of the score, in which themes established early in the show are resolved at the end of the play. Rodgers frequently uses the keys of E-major or C-major in this manner, establishing them early as the tonal centre, leaving them, alluding to them, and finally returning to them.

In final bars of *West Side Story* (Figure 1), Bernstein uses both of these techniques as he resolves the 'Finale' and the score overall, bringing together several musical themes simultaneously. Bernstein ultimately returns to the key of C, where he began. Although a C chord with an added ninth over an F# bass is not a natural resolution in the key of E, within the context Bernstein has established it provides a sense of resolution. He references three earlier themes, bringing resolution by referencing the chiming clock that follow the rumble, evoked by the ostinato bass line, juxtaposed against simultaneous quotes from 'I Have a Love' and 'Somewhere.' The fighting is now over, Tony and Maria do have a love which we now know is "somewhere" in the hereafter. The bell tolls for Tony and Maria, and through them for all the characters, and through them the audience. The coincidence of these themes creates a sense of tragic resolution. Through Tony's death and Maria's loss the Jets and the Sharks come to learn that their home is their combined turf.



FIGURE 1. Final bars of the "Finale" from *West Side Story*.<sup>23</sup>

Examining the shifting relationships towards home within the enacted rituals of the American musical, we discern four periods:

- 1915 – 1942, from Jerome Kern's *Princess* musicals through the works of Rodgers and Hart, Irving Berlin, George and Ira Gershwin and Cole Porter – the emergence of the American musical,
- 1943 - 1964 from *Oklahoma!* through the works of Rodgers and Hammerstein, Comden and Green, Lerner and Lowe, Frank Loesser, Jule Styne, Jerry Herman – the integrated musical,
- 1964 - 1990 including the works of Bock and Harnick, Kander and Ebb and Sondheim – the development of the concept musical; and
- 1990-present; including Finn, Larson, Wildhorn, Lippa, LaChiusa, Guettel – home in a time of fragmentation.

Prior to 1915 American musicals tended to have cobbled together plots, excuses for great comic stars and "turns" by specialty artists. In 1915 Jerome Kern and Guy Bolton were commissioned to write a musical for the tiny 299-seat Princess Theatre. With minimal facilities and no chance to amortise the expense of large production, Kern and Bolton had to consider something other than spectacle driving their musical, which brought them to the idea of the plot-driven musical, as Kern described in a interview after the opening of the first Princess musical, *Nobody Home* (1915). Their experiment was a massive success as evidenced by its imitation by so many other American musical theatre artists. With the use of a plot or story as the mechanism driving a musical, we begin to see home images encoded in these stories.

Almost every major American figure in musical theatre from this period was a first or second generation Jewish immigrant. Walsh and Platt suggest that these immigrants were following "traditional economic routes"<sup>24</sup> towards assimilation, but it goes deeper than this. Consciously or not, these artists were defining an American home in which they fit. The one glaring exception, Cole Porter, was a Gentile and from an established American family. Porter, however, as a homosexual was also an outsider looking to create a world and define a home into which he fit.

American musicals of that time exuded the energy and excitement of the sexy, urban, sophisticated new music influenced by ragtime, which provided an idiom in which characters sang in what seemed a uniquely American vernacular; the dialog and lyrics written in contemporary language as well. In the 1920's musicals were produced in massive numbers, sometimes over a hundred in a seasons. These shows were highly formulaic, making them easy to categorise. As a generalisation, the central character's journey in American book musicals from this period was to enter the home. Couples become separated or mis-matched until the final denouement when they are reunited and happily enter the marital home together.

In *Very Good Eddie* (1915), confusion ensues when two couples wind up mismatched at the Honeymoon Inn in Poughkeepsie. An assortment of zany characters, drunken hotel clerks, sex-crazed opera coaches and so on, help the farce dizzily along, but in the end love prevails as Eddie and Georgina and Percy and Elise are reunited and enter their respective marital homes.

The plot formula for these musicals is: a couple destined to be married (betrothed or not), go through adventures, ultimately reunite and enter the marital home. The backdrop might be a sporting event, politics or high society, but the result is always the same and the ritual enacted remains the same – overcoming the craziness of life and entering the home.

In one standard plot of this period, the Cinderella musical, a spunky immigrant girl, usually Irish, makes a success of herself by sheer dint of her gumption, but along the way she meets the man of her dreams, frequently her boss, and as the curtain falls they enter the marital home together. In *Irene* (1919), one of most successful and well remembered the Cinderella musicals, Irene not only becomes a business success, but also marries her boss Donald Marshall. As the curtain falls, they marry and move into his home. Only the names and incidental details changed: *Irene*, *Sally* (1920), *Mary* (1920), *The O'Brien Girl* (1921) and scads of others enacted the ritual in musical after musical.

In musical after musical of the period the central character flirts with other possibilities – sometimes a different partner, sometimes career – but ultimately chooses to enter the marital home, subsuming his or herself to the union and the institution. Home defines self and is simultaneously greater than self; giving oneself over to the co-joined home is the ultimate act of selflessness and self-definition. Occasionally musicals celebrated other ritual enactments, but they were the exceptions. Leisure-time musicals, bootlegging musicals, Cinderella musicals, backstage musicals, even the satires of the 1930's all participated in retelling the same story.

One great exception, Kern and Hammerstein's *Show Boat* (1927), should have changed the American musical in structure, subject matter, dramaturgy and musical sophistication. Unfortunately, the Great Depression shifted whatever production money there was to bright and breezy entertainments that would not challenge a beleaguered audience; the serious musical was on hold for over a decade. Several musicals attempted to push the art form forward: the Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* (1935), Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock* (1937), Rodgers and Hart's *Pal Joey* (1940) and Kurt Weill and Ira Gershwin's *Lady In The Dark* (1941), but these were the exception.

In 1943 *Oklahoma!* opened, changing the American musical forever. During World War II, millions of Americans had left their homes to serve overseas; while millions of others experienced a shift in their function within the home, as women entered the workforce. It only makes sense that the prevailing ritual enactment in American musicals of this period dealt with the War or with homecoming.

As the ritual enacted in earlier American musicals described the central character entering home, this period saw a ritual in which the principal character leaves home and discovers why he or she needed to return. In *South Pacific*, Nellie cannot accept de Becque's interracial children and flees his terrace, but ultimately returns

to accept the children and enter their home together. In *Brigadoon* (1947), after having returned to New York, Tommy returns to claim his true love, Fiona and enter her home. *The Music Man's* (1957) Harold Hill starts to flee, but stays in River City to make a home with Marion the librarian. In this period, we see this ritual enacted in musical after musical.

This myth is not unique to America or the 1940's and 1950's. But, according to Christian Mendenhall, during this time in American popular culture:

[Joining] the myth of the couple who is truly in love and lives happily ever after with the myth of the security of the nuclear family in its own self-sufficient home particularises these myths to the American Dream.<sup>15</sup>

Mendenhall's model of "the American Dream" is built on four interdependent myths. An Americanisation of the traditional Western romanticism in which the couple is truly in love and lives happily ever after, this myth remains unchanged in musical theatre from the earlier period. The myth of the Hometown, in which "the myth of the security of the nuclear family in its own self-sufficient home particularises these myths to the American Dream."<sup>16</sup> Such musicals as *Oklahoma!*, *Carousel*, *Finian's Rainbow*, *High Button Shoes* and *The Music Man* present hometown squarely at the centre of their home-based issues. The Woman as Homemaker was an older myth, revived by the need to remove women from the workplace to make room for millions of returning veterans. Man as Pioneer, completes Mendenhall's mythic structure. Pioneers in earlier American musical in from *Sinbad* (1918) to *Girl Crazy* (1930), and beyond were mostly comic figures. However, in making the pioneer a heroic figure and combining with the other three myths it took on a new resonance. In *Oklahoma!* Curly, although a pioneer, is willing to give up his wild cowboy status to become a farmer (a pioneer still, just a calmer one) to establishing a home with Laurey.

*Oklahoma!* is simultaneously about the familial home Laurey and Curly establish and the communal home established by the farmers and cattlemen as the territory becomes a state. The arguments between "The Farmer and The Cowman" and the exultation of the title number are not mere bows to local colour; they lie at the play's heart.

*Oklahoma!* literally revolves around home—the porch of Aunt Eller's farmhouse, representing the point of contact between home and community. Every scene except portions of the Dream Ballet and the party that begins act two, takes place around the porch, environs or the nearby smokehouse. Prior to the play's opening Curly and Laurey have been flirting, and she has kicked him out of the house. However, he knows where he belongs, and returns. As the play begins, he enters and circles the porch, bantering with Aunt Eller. Laurey comes out and, as she and Curly flirt, he continues to circle the porch. This dance of approach and withdrawal from home continues for much of the play. Two thirds of the way through act two Curly and Laurie enter from the house onto the porch following their wedding; they have made the homestead their home.

If the play's central journey were Curly's alone, it would enact the earlier ritual—to enter the home. However, the central journey is as much Laurey's, and her short journey—from her home, through the porch (portal to the community), to the box social and back home again—defines the paradigm: her venture beyond home to discover under what terms she must return.

The play simultaneously deals with Oklahoma's petition for statehood, the need for the farmer and cowman to set aside their differences and enter this state of union and union of states as one. This issue remains sub-textual throughout act one, but becomes a major plot point in the second act opening, 'Farmer and the Cowman,' in which the two sides antagonise each other to the point of brawling. Only Aunt Eller's level-headedness, and shotgun, brings the community together. In the title song, when first Curly and then the full company sing, "We know we belong to the land, and the land we belong to is grand,"<sup>17</sup> they are not generic

merry villagers spouting general good feelings; they are singing about putting aside their differences to form a home—a community to participate in the blessings of America. Leaving selfishness behind to realise a greater self, in order to re-enter the home becomes the play's central theme. Curly puts aside being a cattleman and takes up ranching to establish home with Laurey. Jud is unable to put self aside for community, and dies.

In stark contrast to Aunt Eller's porch is the smoke house where Jud Fry lives, dark and dirty:

*On a low loft many things are stored— horse-collars, ploughshares, a binder twine. ... the bed is grimy and never made. [...] In a corner there are hoes, rakes and an axe. Two chairs, a table and a spittoon comprise the furniture. [...] A small window lets in a little light but not much.*<sup>18</sup>

Is this home, work place or storage facility? Jud's song, 'Lonely Room' articulates the desolation that fills his shack. Juxtaposing Aunt Eller's homestead and Jud's anti-home, the smoke house, creates a dramatic tension that erupts when images from the two worlds collide in Laurey's dream.

In act two, at the shivaree, Laurey and Curly enter from the house onto the porch to join the rest of the community, who have come to celebrate the communal home, Statehood. At this moment Jud, the symbol of anti-home, attempts to kill Curly, causing Curly to accidentally kill him. Home has been established, resisted incursion and survived.

This quickly became the reigning paradigm in the American musical theatre; the central character leaves home in order to learn why he or she must return. However, by the mid-1960's political, social and cultural changes made these musicals feel out of date. Fuelled by social forces including the Civil Rights movement, women's liberation, the sexual revolution, the counterculture movement, the 1960's American musical theatre saw experimentation that ultimately led to a new use of home imagery. In these musicals, the central character realises that the home they had been living in has failed to function and they must establish a new image of home.

In 1964, *Fiddler on the Roof* resonated deeply with audiences with the central idea that traditions are breaking down and old models of home no longer work, home needs redefinition. Director/choreographer Jerome Robbins created a musical in which the central characters' homes become uninhabitable. As traditions break down throughout act one, Tevye and Golde cling to their home and all it stands for. As the act ends, their home is ransacked in a pogrom. Although they attempt to maintain their home and traditions in act two, the tide is rising too quickly and ultimately the Jewish inhabitants of Anatevka must go in search of new homes.

In *Cabaret* (1966), the central home is Fraulein Schneider's rooming house, but the safety of that home degenerates as the Nazis come to power, and by the end play's end that home is abandoned. The risk of continuing to stay in a home which no longer functions is at best decadent and at worst, fatal. Like *Fiddler on the Roof*, as the play progresses home become less tenable, it ultimately fails.

In 1970, Stephen Sondheim's *Company* explored the state of disconnectedness, in contemporary New York. Despite its enigmatic ending, it concludes that it is better to connect to others than not to try.

*Company's* hero, Bobby, is an empty vessel; he spends the play observing the relationships of his married friends. Through the course of the evening, he observes all the difficulty and pain involved in maintaining a committed relationship and comes to the conclusion in the evening's finale, that rootedness is missing from his life, he needs to find companionship and establish home. Ultimately he must leave his apartment and create a new home for himself. Bobby's apartment, the setting of the recurring thirty-fifth birthday party, is *Company's* central image of home; Bobby admits to that he just comes goes and never seems to notice his

apartment. The apartment fails to offer any of the traditional functions of home; it is merely a convenient place to change clothes and for occasional superficial sexual encounters.

A milestone musical of the 1980-1981 season was off-Broadway's *March of the Falsettos*. *Falsettos* tells the story of a middle class Jewish family whose father, Marvin, realises that he is gay and leaves his home to establish a new home with his lover Whizzer. His wife Trina re-marries and builds a home with her new husband, and their son Jason's psychiatrist, Mendel. Trina and Mendel sing about how one goes about "Building a Home" and what it means. As the play concludes, Trina and Marvin's son Jason has two homes, his home with Trina and Mendel and a second home with his father. The ritual enacted here is the deconstruction of a traditional home, self-examination and eventually the establishment of several new types of homes, and the resulting community of homes.

Since the 1990s home appears to have become less image in the American musical theatre. Why?

Has the question of geographical fixity become less urgent with the advent of the Internet? To a generation raised on hyperlinks and interconnectivity does the concept of a linear geographic construct seem antiquated? Does the concept of home as a central location from which all other geographic constructs radiate still resonate as strongly for today's audience? Time will tell if the homes of the squatters in *Rent* offer as strong an image as the hovels of *Anatevka*.

Throughout the earliest American musicals the central question was how to enter the home. In the second period the question became, how do I get back to that home that I had foolishly left behind." The last period the question became, 'how do I change or redefine home to work for me.' 1990s and 2000s saw a diminution of locationality as a primary concern in the rituals enacted in the American musical. The metaphoric and allegorical expression of location may be becoming archaic, the structures employed, particularly home, may not reflect the new structures that we used to define our selves.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> John Simpson and Edmund Weiner, ed., *Oxford English Dictionary*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> John Hollander, 'It All Depends' in *Home: A Place in the World*, ed. Arien Mack (New York: NYUP, 1993) 32-33.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed tracing of the nostalgic urge through Western literature, see: John Hollander, 33-37.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History*, 2nd ed., (Cambridge, MS: MIT Press, 1981).

<sup>5</sup> Christian Mendenhall, 'American Musical Comedy as a Liminal Ritual of Woman as Homemaker', *Journal of American Culture* 4.13 (1990): 57-69

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 57.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 57.

<sup>8</sup> Arien Mack, ed., *Home: A Place in the World* (New York: New York University Press, 1993) 1.

<sup>9</sup> Stanley Cavell, 'Introduction' *Home: A Place in the World*, ed. Arien Mack (New York: New York University Press, 1993) 5.

<sup>10</sup> Andrew Gurr, *Writers in Exile: The Identity of Home in Modern Literature* (Sussex, New Jersey: The Harvester Press, 1981) 13.

<sup>11</sup> Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992) 9.

<sup>12</sup> Agnes De Mille, unpublished acceptance speech for a lifetime achievement Antoinette Perry Award, Antoinette Perry Awards Ceremony, Shubert Theatre, New York, 6, June, 1993.

<sup>13</sup> Leonard Bernstein, "Finale," *West Side Story* (New York: Music Theatre International, 1957) 244.

<sup>14</sup> David Walsh and Len Platt, *Musical Theater and American Culture* (Westport: Connecticut: Preager Press, 2003) 67.

<sup>15</sup> Mendenhall, 57.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 57.

<sup>17</sup> Oscar Hammerstein, II, *Oklahoma!*, (New York: Rodgers and Hammerstein Library Theatre, 1942) 58.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 22.