

Ethnic Cultures of the Mind: The Harrigan-Hart Mosaic

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In the boisterous, sometimes raucous world of popular entertainment in Gilded Age New York, the comedy team of Edward Green Harrigan and Tony Hart (Anthony J. Cannon) reigned supreme. Joining company in Chicago in 1868, the two itinerant troupers developed an act that ultimately resulted in a major popular culture phenomenon: a series of plays-with-music, forebears of modern musical comedy, based on immigrant/ethnic themes and characters that purported to represent the reality of life in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Enormously successful from the onset of their New York career in 1872-73, and appealing to a wide spectrum of local society as well as to professional theatrical pundits, the team achieved a degree of popularity unmatched by any other individual performers or repertory companies of the day. No less a critic than William Dean Howells noted of Harrigan in 1886, "In his province, we think he cannot be surpassed." Another contemporary observer, in a retrospective of Harrigan's career published in 1898, maintained that "Edward Harrigan has occupied the most extraordinary position of any man who has lived in the theatrical world, in any country, at any time, so far as the records of the past and present show."¹ And Hart, perhaps the most popular character actor working in New York between his debut and the time of his death in 1891, was a key element in the success of the company in performing the roles playwright Harrigan created for him.

The Harrigan-Hart phenomenon commenced when the "Merry Partners" joined Tony Pastor's variety company in 1872-1873; then, for the next season, Josh Hart's Theatre Comique on lower Broadway. The New York alliance followed four years of itinerant work in which the two specialized in blackface minstrel bits as well as Irish and "Dutch" (German) character sketches.² Follow-

ing their enormous success in their initial seasons in New York, the team moved quickly to the top of the variety bill at the Comique, typically performing minstrel-style burlesques in addition to their increasingly popular immigrant/ethnic turns. A series of programs from these early years included one “Uncle Tom” burlesque with Harrigan as Uncle Tom and Hart as Topsy (Hart was noted for his female character portrayals), along with Irish and Dutch comic routines—“racial comedy” in the contemporary theatrical parlance.³ From these variety routines Harrigan, assisted by his musical director, the gifted composer David Braham, developed his full-blown musical comedies based on ethnic characters and themes that dominated the popular imagination for a decade and a half. Significantly, the same period also registered an increasing popular awareness of and concern with the problem of a growing American immigrant/ethnic population.⁴

It is not my purpose, however, to offer a detailed recounting of the Harrigan-Hart phenomenon and its significance in theater history. The biographical and theater-historical matters have been covered elsewhere.⁵ Rather, my concerns are with the nature of the immigrant/ethnic characterizations that dominated the plays and captured the popular imagination, and the process whereby these characterizations came to be accepted as versions of “reality.” I argue that Harrigan and Hart created comic caricatures based in the representation of ethnic qualities and characteristics popularly ascribed to the various ethnic groups they portrayed. These ascriptive qualities and characteristics were easily recognized in caricature portrayal because of popular familiarity with them, and were popularly accepted as forms of descriptive reality. The popular acceptance of ascriptive reality as descriptive reality was thus instrumental in establishing or confirming pervasive stereotypes in the form of the “ethnic cultures of the mind” to which my title alludes.

It was Harrigan’s intention from the outset to depict the ethnic life of the Lower East Side in all its diversity. The chorus of the song “McNally’s Row of Flats,” from the play *Mc Sorley’s Inflation*, provides the overview:

Ireland and Italy, Jerusalem and Germany,
Chinamen and nagers, and a paradise for cats,
Jumbled up together in the snow or rainy weather,
They represent the tenants in McNally’s row of flats.⁶

Evocation of the lives, characters and circumstances of these immigrant/ethnic populations constitutes the main body of Harrigan’s thirty-nine extant full-length plays. And it is important to note that playwright Harrigan was wholly committed to what he perceived as *accurate* depictions of the ethnic world he thought he knew so well. Failing to fathom the vital distinction between ascriptive and descriptive reality, he consciously worked to achieve a “realistic” portrayal of the Lower East Side. As he observed in 1889:



Harrigan and Hart about 1874. Photo courtesy of the Theatre Arts Collection, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

Though I use types and never individuals, I try to be as realistic as possible. Not only must the costuming and accessories be correct, but the speech or dialect, the personal 'make-up,' the vices and virtues, habits and customs must be equally accurate in their similarity to the facts.

"Each drama," he concluded, "is a series of photographs of life today in the Empire City."⁷ In actuality, the "plays" were more sequences of type-sketches and "type-scenes" (in William Boelhower's apt phrase), loosely connected by thin plot-lines and much stage music, than they were well-developed and well-integrated dramas.⁸ But Harrigan considered himself a keen observer of detail, and most especially so with regard to the group for which he felt the closest affinity—the Irish.

If the entire immigrant spectrum was represented in Harrigan's ethnic world, his Irish characters dominated in the mosaic. As the character Bernard O'Reagan explains to the green newcomer Paddy Kelso in speaking of the Lower East Side in *The O'Reagans*: "The Italians rule the south of it, the Dutch [Germans] rule the east of it. And the Irish rule the whole of it." To which Paddy replies "That plazes me."⁹ And in *Under Cover*, the politician Owen Gilmartin queries "Why go to Europe to see the people of the different nations when you could see them all in a walk from Union Square to the Battery" (his aldermanic district). "Greeks, Chinese, Italians, and Russians are all bunched together. My district's a tower of Babel, and the Irish flag waves from the top of it."¹⁰

Within the texts of all the plays, the Irish predominate as individual characters and as a group. From the outset of the Harrigan and Hart phenomenon, Irish types were in the forefront of the action, particularly in the well-known "Mulligan" series. Commencing with the sketch "The Mulligan Guard" in 1873, the Irish clan headed by Dan and Cordelia Mulligan was the focus of the majority of the most popular of all the Harrigan plays. It is through the Mulligans that the playwright characterized the Irish generally, and Dan and his loving, long-suffering wife became the prime exemplars of the type. As performed by Harrigan in his self-professed favorite role, Dan represented the very soul of the ethnic Irish-American: In Harrigan's words, "the honest, thrifty, home-loving, genial Irish-American citizen" of the Lower East Side.¹¹ In the fictional version of the Mulligan saga (Harrigan's only published volume), the author noted that Dan was "a rough and ready Irishman whose word was held as good as his bond, and whose quips, jokes, songs and stories made him the soul of every picnic, chowder party and wake of the lower wards."¹² But close examination of the character in the texts of the plays affords rather a different view of Dan and his Irish cohorts than this affectionate gloss would suggest.

One fact bears emphasis at this juncture: Harrigan himself was not Irish. He was American, born on the Lower East Side but of Canadian paternal forebears. His mother was also American, born in Massachusetts and later domiciled in Virginia. Thus while an observer of Irish-American ethnics, he was not *of* the

group. He was an outsider; one who had profited from his burlesque version of the Irish type developed in his minstrel and variety days, and based squarely in that earlier tradition. The Mulligans were in reality the linear descendants of a burlesque that had its roots in the eighteenth century, and Dan reflects virtually every characteristic of the stage Irishman that had prevailed on the American stage since the 1840s.¹³ He is, for example, pugnacious and fiesty: In scene after scene he is fighting with someone, often his German neighbor, the butcher Gustavus Lochmuller. "I can kick the socks off any of ye," he boasts in the *Mulligan Guard Ball*, and often enough he is at the center of the "melees" that typically cap the action of the plays.¹⁴

Dan is also ignorant—though often clever—, deficient in his knowledge and use of standard English, and given to outrageous malapropisms. A case in point: He suggests to Cordelia on one occasion that he will deliver "an obituary" in his formal speech at a political gathering. Cordelia asks "what's that?" "Spontaneous emmination," Dan replies. Duly impressed, Cordelia gushes "Daniel, you could rule the nation." "Wid Acclimation," Dan concurs.¹⁵

He and his cohorts are, predictably, given to excessive drinking; booze figures in countless scenes of the plays, and the characters are largely preoccupied with alcohol and its consumption. The Mulligan Guard itself is a self-ordained militia-style "target company" that exists largely to provide the opportunity for the members to drink and carouse removed from the purview of wives and families. Indeed, it would appear that Dan was chosen captain and namesake of the Guard as a result of his getting the other guardsmen drunk. And when Dan enters politics, he acquires the "Wee Drop Saloon" as a focus of his electioneering, by buying votes with free spirits in his own saloon.

As a politician, Dan fits perfectly into the mold of the (by then) stereotyped Irish office-seeker. He itemizes his political promises in song:

I'm faithful to my party,
I'm true as 'yellow gold,'
I promise all my workers,
Fat offices untold.
I'll make ye superintendent,
Of the Coney Island Beach,
I promise that ye'll never take
Anything you can't reach.¹⁶

In order to capture the black vote, Dan promises to incorporate the archrival "Skidmore Guard," the black equivalent to the Mulligans, as the national guard and to convert the East Side reservoir into a swimming pool reserved for African-Americans. "That ought to catch the nagur vote," he submits. "I'll be Boss Mulligan or nothing."¹⁷ But when elected, Dan, who surely knows of the racist predilections of his peers, promises his cronies that he will "drive the Nagurs from this district...." Notably, the neighborhood blacks are quite aware of this perfidy.

THEATRE COMIQUE,

aug 17 1883 728 and 730 BROADWAY.

PROGRAMME. 1883

Messrs. HARRIGAN & HART respectfully announce the Opening of the Fall and Winter Season of 1883-84, when will be presented Mr. Edward Harrigan's Local Play in Two Acts and seven Scenes, entitled the

MULLIGAN GUARD BALL.

New and Beautiful Scenery.....by Charles W. Witham
New and Original Mechanical Effects.....by William McMurray
Properties and Papier Mache Work.....by Robert Puller

OVERTURE

Incidental to the Play by **Mr. Dave Braham**, introducing the following Gems:

1. Little Widow Dunn.
 2. Down in Cossip Row.
 3. Skidmore Fancy Ball.
 4. Pitcher of Beer.
 5. Babies on our Block.
 6. We're all Young Fellows, Bran New.
- Solo and Variations for Xylophone, by Mr. Ed. King.

Between First and Second Acts,

Quadrille--The Muddy Day..... Dave Braham

The Music of the Play published by W. A. POND & CO., 25 Union Square AND FOR SALE IN THE LOBBY.

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY:

Dan Mulligan.....	Mr. EDWARD HARRIGAN
Tommy Mulligan.....	Mr. TONY HART
Captain Sim Primrose.....	Mr. John Wild
Faustine Pater.....	Mr. Geo. Wood
Ferguson Clinton.....	M. James Fox
Gustavus Lochmuller.....	Mr. Harry A. Fisher
Mrs. Honora Dublin.....	Mr. John Queen
Walsingham McSweeney.....	Mr. M. Bradley
Gabe Go-off.....	Mr. P. C. Goldrich
Mr. Edgeup.....	Mr. Richard Quilter
Pizarro Push.....	M. Wm. West
Mr. Overecker.....	Mr. Joseph Sparks
Jackson McGee.....	Mr. James Barlow
Mr. Ceiling.....	Mr. Christie Miller
Simpkin Dainty.....	Mr. John Sparks
Mr. Cloudy.....	Mr. M. Foley
Lafayette.....	Mr. Geo. Merritt
Carl Schroder.....	Mr. Geo. L. Stout
Isaac Goldstein.....	Mr. James Fitzsimmons
Cassius O'Rourke.....	Mr. Thomas Granger
Bolivar McQuade.....	Mr. Chas. Coffey
Mr. Shock.....	Mr. Wm. Merritt
Washington Duplex.....	Mr. J. McCullough
Mr. Doolittle.....	Mr. Emil Housel
Mr. Haxlaere.....	Mr. Wm. A. Barlow
Mr. Bimble.....	Mr. J. Ward
Gunsie Lochmuller.....	Master Guion
Mrs. Mulligan.....	Mrs. Annie Yeamans
Kitty Lochmuller.....	Miss Gertrude Granville
Mrs. Lochmuller.....	Miss Jennie Christie
Cleopatra McSweeney.....	Miss Ada Farnell
Maggie Kearney.....	Miss Lizzie Finn
Miss Riley.....	Miss Sadie Morris
Mary Mullen.....	Miss Annie Langdon
Della Murphy.....	Miss Kate Langdon
Sally Molloy.....	Miss Annie Hall
Mrs. O'Leary.....	Miss Annie Scallan
Hannah Cartright.....	Miss Marie Gorensto

Act 1st. PREPARATIONS.—Scene 1st. The Home of the Mulligans. Scene 2d. Catherine Street. Scene 3d. Simpson Primrose's Barber Shop and Maggie Kearney's Hair Dressing Establishment.

Act. 2d. THE BALL.—Scene 1st. View of Canal Street. Scene 2d. Walsingham McSweeney's Wee Drop. Scene 3d. View of Grand Street. Scene 4th. The Harp and the Shamrock.

THE MULLIGAN GUARD BALL.

TUESDAY. 1 MATINEES 1 FRIDAY.

OPERA GLASSES TO HIRE IN THE LOBBY AT 25 CTS. A PAIR.

Program for a summer 1883 performance of *Mulligan Guard Ball* at Harrigan and Hart's Theatre Comique on lower Broadway. Photo courtesy of the Theatre Arts Collection, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

The street-wise Rebecca Allup—Hart’s great blackface comic role—terms Dan “An Irish Judas Carriot.”¹⁸ Following his election, Dan proceeds to bilk his district of a considerable personal fortune. In all, though Dan Mulligan appealed enormously to audiences who never tired of his shenanigans, he was in all major respects a comic caricature type—the “typical” Irish-American—as were his fellow Irishmen in the cartoon ethnic world of Harrigan and Hart.

Next to the Irish, the African-Americans of the neighborhood dominate the texts of the Mulligan plays, and provide the foil for Dan’s Irish. In reality, however, there are two sorts of blacks represented in Harrigan’s mosaic: The plantation “darker” best exemplified by the comic melodrama *Pete*, and the urban blacks of the Lower East Side represented by the Skidmore Guard and their counterparts in all the plays. Both types, however, were based in established caricature images, and both manifested characteristics deemed typical, and again, wholly realistic, by the audiences of the day. In the novelistic version of the Mulligan saga Harrigan provides further insight into his personal view of American blacks. He suggests, for example, that “humor and cupidity” are “two of the most striking characteristics of the black race,” and he later comments on “that spontaneous mirth that most negroes have always on tap, ready to turn on at any moment.”¹⁹ Later Harrigan adds to the list of ascribed racial characteristics, suggesting that blacks are superstitious and inveterate gamblers: “The superstitious black people will rake, scrape and pawn to get money,” he writes, not representing the point of view of any character in the novel, but rather his *personal* viewpoint.²⁰

Analysis of the dialogue of the plays reveals still more ascriptive detail pertaining to “black character.” As regards the first African-American type, the plantation darker, there is little difference between Harrigan’s version and that of the minstrel stereotype, or the “darker” of Stephen Collins Foster. Plantation blacks were comic caricatures who commit endless linguistic vagaries that reveal their ignorance and buffoonery, and sing sentimental songs—the pervasive “carry-me-backs” so beloved of the day—such as “Where the Sweet Magnolia Grows” from *Pete*:

So happy and contended we passed the time away,
Alistning to the Banjo, that Uncle Pete did play,
While Silas, Sam, and Pompey, and Dear old Aunty Clo,
They sang there in the valley, where the Sweet Magnolia Grows.²¹

Pete himself represents the archetype of the “good” plantation “darker” in the tradition of Stowe’s Uncle Tom. He is among other things a preacher, albeit one with limitations upon his ministerial functions. When, for example, he is asked to officiate over a slave marriage, he confesses “I... can’t tie dese child’n in wedlock bondage.... My geological position here don’t give me de licence to tie niggars in de marriage state. I’m only a mower[?] in de vineyard. I got de facility

to stir religion and sinners in de creek but I haven't got de mancipation from de church to stigmatize de marriage."²² It is ironic that while Harrigan clearly wanted to give Pete a kind of Tomish dignity, he felt compelled to strip him of any dignity at all in such lines as these. He even has Pete confess that blacks are inveterate thieves: "A chicken. . . a niggard and a dark night am true friends," he claims. But most importantly, Pete is thoroughly aware of and content with his "place." He says, with reference to his chosen burial plot: "I...want to be buried in a black graveyard, I don't want my bones tangled up wid white folks. I know my place while I live and I [want to] keep my place when I'm dead."²³ Pete is quite simply the ultimate "good nigger."

It was not the plantation "danky," however, but the wily, cunning *urban* black that dominated the world of lower Manhattan in the Harrigan works. In the Mulligan plays, for example, the leading black characters Simpson Primrose, "a dandy barber," and the Reverend Palestine Puter, a "clerical negro," run a policy racket in which they cheat and steal from each other and everyone else. The secret password required to gain admission to their office is "Watermelon." The pair also hold important positions in the Skidmore Guard as well as in the "Order of the Full Moons," described by one member as "a secret colored society [organized] to prevent de Irish from riding on horse cars."²⁴

Simpson Primrose is especially prominent among the blacks of the East Side. Harrigan characterizes him in the Mulligan novel as "the swellest darkie in the neighborhood," noting further that "He spent his money freely, dressed in loud clothes,... sported paste jewelry and was especially prominent as the captain of the Skidmore Guards...."²⁵ In short, Harrigan's urbane blacks were in the tradition of the "dandy coon" beloved of the minstrel-men since the days of "Long Tail Blue." As with the prior urban dandies, blacks of Harrigan's world were as ignorant as they were foppish; as absurd in their pretensions to sophistication; as foolish in their abuses of the English language and their perversions of "white" culture as were their "danky" counterparts.

The examples are numberless, but take, for instance, the case of "Esau Coldslaw," faro dealer, numbers runner, church deacon, and eminence in the black social and philanthropic organization known as the "Knights of the Mystic Star." Esau and the other knights announce their purpose in a rousing production number in *The Last of the Hogans*:

We represent a mighty cause, dat is to penetrate,
De jungles of dark Africa, all for to educate;
De savages of de wilderness, dat's naked over dar,
Show him the incandescent light,
All of the Mystic Star.

And the chorus proclaims:

The Zulu tribes of Zanzibar, they love to masticate,
White missionary preacher man, [they] serve him on a plate,
They never eat the darkey meat, we sent to Africa,
The blackest kind of minister, All of the Mystic Star.²⁶

But there can be no doubt that in the Harrigan version, the blacks of lower Manhattan were not only comical in their pretensions, but also assertive, even aggressive, and in their proclivity for violence, potentially dangerous. They were in this regard, and indeed, in all respects, virtually identical to the “coon” who formed the subject of the innumerable and enormously popular “coon songs” that became the rage of the 1890s.²⁷ Consider the show-stopping song of the Skidmore Guards from *Mulligan Guard*:

Talk about your Mulligan Guard,
Dese nigs dey can't be beat,
We march to time, we cut a shine,
Just watch dese darkies feet,
De left foot first, de right foot follow,
De heel down mighty hard,
Ten platoons of dandy coons,
March in the Skid-more Guard.²⁸

In its catchy syncopation as well as its dialect lyrics, this is assuredly a “coon song,” as were most of the blackface comic songs of the Harrigan-Braham collaboration. The team thus anticipated the coon song craze and provided a major impetus to the development of that popular culture phenomenon. Once again, Harrigan proved to be a shaping influence in the development of popular tastes, and popular views of and attitudes toward the ethno/racial minorities of his day. This is not to say that Harrigan's racism was more malignant than that which was common among whites of his time and place; he was no doubt less a blatant negrophobe than many of the white inhabitants of New York in the Gilded Age. But in no important way did the Harrigan caricature of American blacks differ from that of the stereotyped “coons” of the 1890s, as they appeared in a seemingly endless succession of Tin Pan Alley hits.

The “coons” of Harrigan's world shared another noteworthy feature in common with their counterparts in the Gilded Age coon song: They routinely carried and made frequent use of a terrible weapon—the straight razor. In this connection, it bears mention that Simpson Primrose functioned as the neighborhood barber who shaved, among others, Dan Mulligan. The razor was, of course, a tool of this trade, but “Simpson's Hardware” also figured prominently and symbolically in virtually every scene involving black interaction among themselves and with other groups. In the words of another song from the *Mulligan Guard Ball*:

Coons all carried razors,
And goodness how dey cut.²⁹

Such people, despite the buffonery that characterized most of their repartee, were potentially dangerous in any confrontation, and confrontation, especially between the blacks and the Irish, is thematic in all of the plays.

To take but a single example, consider the confrontation scene between the Skids and the Mulligans arising over the use of a local hall as venue for their respective annual balls—a type-scene of the first order—and perhaps the best-known single scene in the entire Harrigan oeuvre.³⁰ The dramatic situation has the two organizations by mishap renting the Harp and Shamrock Hall for use on the same night. As the heavily-armed Skids arrive on the scene, Simpson Primrose issues the orders: “You can put your muskets in de hat rack, and every man have his razor ready. No one must interfere wid our pleasures.” Then the Mulligans arrive, and the confrontation ensues:

Dan Mulligan- “What do you coons want here?”
Skids- “Coons!”
Dan- “Yis. Ink bottles.” [Skids draw razors]
Simpson- “Hold on gemmen. I’ll tell you when to cut.”
Dan- [to the Mulligans] “Stick by me boys.”
[Skids rush on Mulligans waving razors; women scream]

But in the meantime the owner of the hall arrives, interrupts the confrontation, and suggests a compromise whereby the two organizations might share the hall; the blacks on the top floor, the Irish below. Simpson comments that the arrangement is acceptable: “As long as we’re upstairs, we’re above de Irish. I know dat suits every Full Moon in de company.” But as the respective balls get underway, the Skids’ dancing and boistrous merrymaking becomes so turbulent that the floor gives way and the entire black party falls through onto the heads of the Mulligans below (Harrigan used black dummies for the descendant Skids). The stage directions then read “A Melee and Curtain.”

The resolution of the conflict is as typical of the Mulligan plays as the tumult of the action at the curtain: No one gets seriously hurt, though Dan and Cordelia are both bruised. She comments later that she has “a black spot on my shoulder where a *nagur* fell on me from the ceiling.” But it is patently clear that Harrigan’s razor-wielding blacks were a far cry from the comic-sentimental “darker” of the minstrels and Tom shows. In the language of semiotics, the razor-signifier yielded a signified African-American that was a potential threat not only to the Irish but to white society at large. And the more perceptive observers of the day comprehended the potential threat represented by Harrigan’s urban blacks, despite the comic veneer. William Dean Howells observed, for example,

“...all the colored people [in the Mulligan series] are bad colored people. They are of the gloomy, razor-bearing variety; full of short-sighted lies and prompt dishonesties, amusing always, but truculent and tricky; and the sunny sweetness which we all know in negro character is not there.³¹

We can only wonder at the extent to which characters perceived as “bad,” “gloomy,” “razor-bearing,” untruthful, dishonest, “truculent” and “tricky” might also be found “amusing.” One senses an element of disquietude in Harrigan’s characterization of such “bad colored people.” It is apparent that Harrigan’s ethnic world was beset with unsettling implications for the late Victorian American audiences; audiences whose members were already noticeably sensitive to potential problems associated with immigrants and ethnic minorities as well as with blacks of the African-American diaspora.

Next to the Irish and the blacks, the German (or “Dutch”) element figures most prominently in the Harrigan and Hart productions. While not as carefully drawn as Dan Mulligan or Simpson Primrose, such characters as Gustavus Lockmuller and August Bimble provide the Harrigan view of this well-established (and much-stereotyped) ethnic population. And here again, there is little discernable difference between the older burlesque tradition and Harrigan’s version. The Germans are all stolid, judgemental, smug, suspicious of and antagonistic toward outsiders (they relax and enjoy themselves only among their own *landsmen*), industrious and frugal. Their dialect provides the primary comic dimension to the type. Physically, their unfailing commitment to a beer-and-sausage diet renders them consistently overweight. The beer stein provides the primary signifier. As the song “What’s De Use” observes,

On Avenue A, where Dutch children play,
...lager beer flows like de tide....³²

The association between beer and the Germans is a constant in Harrigan’s view of their ethnic community.

Yet another foil for both Irish and black, the Germans are normally outwitted by both, but never shy away from confrontation. Beyond this, there is little about Harrigan’s German characters that distinguish them from the types associated with the popular “Double Dutch Act” that was to culminate in the 1890s with the performances of Weber and Fields. The significant fact is, however, that Harrigan perceived the Germans and German-American culture as another integral piece in his mosaic, and another major and long-standing ethnic caricature/stereotype thus appears consistently within his ethnic world.

The same could be said of the Jews inhabiting Harrigan’s Lower East Side. While Jews occupy a relatively smaller place in the mosaic, the playwright carefully recorded their presence. He did so largely, however, by way of replication and confirmation of a type that was even then coming to be called the

“stage Hebrew.”³³ Harrigan’s “Hebrews” tended to be typed as poor immigrant street vendors, especially old clothing dealers. The exception is the central figure in the one play devoted primarily to a Jewish character: In *Mordicai Lyons* the protagonist is a well-to-do clothing merchant and owner of a tenement building. The type featured Yiddish dialect humor and a stereotyped Jewish preoccupation with the acquisition and retention of money. In *The Leather Patch*, for example, Moses Cohn, the widow Rachel Cohn, and Aaron and Isaac Levy compete aggressively for customers. Moses exhorts the passers-by on Baxter Avenue: “Come in an examine my stock; I’ll sell you something for a dollar you wouldn’t get on Broadway for \$15.00.”³⁴ He then tells his story in the song “Baxter Avenue”:

Oh I came from London from Petticoat Lane,
Clothing my business, and Cohn’s my name....
Now bizness is bizness and dot’s my trade mark,
Open on Sundays near Paradise Park,
Den all de poor peeples have nothing to do,
But buy old clothing in Baxter Avenue.

And the chorus adds:

Dere is Jacobs and Goldstein and Moses Levy,
Vaiting for customers, Oh walk in and buy,
Der is coats, vests and trousers,
Some old and some new,
Right down in the bay boys, In Baxter Avenue.³⁵

In no important respect does the Harrigan Hebrew differ from the prevailing stereotype, even in the case of Mordecai Lyons, with whom the playwright attempted to create a multi-dimensional, essentially sympathetic figure.³⁶ The result was at best a partial success. The prevailing Jewish stereotype was simply too well established in Harrigan’s mind to permit much flexibility in the way of complex character development.

Harrigan’s Italian types are even less clearly focused, and are at best minor characters in the ethnic mosaic. Probably reflecting the fact that the southern Italian immigration was an essentially new phenomenon, and that there was insufficient prior stereotyping upon which to build, Harrigan found it difficult to isolate sufficient ascriptive characteristics to develop a consistent caricature. He later admitted as much in an interview with the *New York World* in 1908: “Some day there’ll come a man [who will] ... do things with the Italians as I did with the Irish and the Negroes. But not yet. We aren’t well enough acquainted with them yet.”³⁷ Nevertheless, the primary signifier *is* consistent, in the form of the stiletto, ostensibly carried by all Italians and associated with the life-style of Sicilian

immigrants. Airy McCafferty, the Irish barkeep and liquor store owner in *The Leather Patch* observes:

I carry me life in me hands behind me bar. I'm patronized by Italians who carry stilettos and nagurs wid razors.... I'd take me oath it keeps me busy knocking them out." (He employs a shillelagh for this purpose).³⁸

Harrigan also associated Italians with the Mafia. In an exchange with some of the Irish ladies of the neighborhood in *Last of the Hogans*, Esau Coldslaw tells of the conflict between his own organization, the Knights of the Mystic Star, and the growing Italian population:

Mrs. Hogan: "Bleeker Street is full of Italians.

Esau: "Yes. Mafia."

Mrs. Merrifield: "What's that?"

Esau: "Dats an Italian secret society."

Mrs. Hogan: "Your society is secret too, isn't it?"

Esau: "Yes mam. It's razor against stiletto."

He adds (by way of justification): "De guineas have driven all de colored people out from Thompson Street."³⁹ The ensuing stage business has the Knights rush downstage flourishing their razors shouting "Cutta. Soona. Quicka."

But if the stiletto-wielding Italian mafioso represents one stock image in the Harrigan plays, his alter ego is the hard-working junk dealer, organ grinder or fruit stand operator; poor but good-spirited and above all musical. It was another cartoon type that would emerge fully developed only in the vaudeville stage of the 1890s, but Harrigan provided the archetype. One evocation of this image appears in a type-scene in *The Investigation*, a scene featuring a characteristic Harrigan-Braham dialect song describing the life-style of the type, "as fine a looking Lazzaroni as you'd find in Genoa:"

You can see by my face-a I was an Italien
I was what you call-a de honest-a man.
I sell-a de fruit by de stand at de corner
I make-a my living de best what I can.
I roast-a de chestnut, I sell-a de lema,
Every day what I live-a my life....
I sell-a de orange, de sweet-a banana,
De sweet-a banana, de pineapple too.
I like-a de music, I play-a de harpa
When business was done I no sell anything.
I got a fine bird what you call-a de parrot—
I give him de cracker he talk or he sing....

I gott one bruder he playa de organ,
He gotta one monkey, a sweet little thing.
He play-a de alley he play-a de streeta.
He holda dat monkey with one little string....

And finally, all the children “love-a de man from de Sweet Italy.”⁴⁰

But whichever of the two Italian types might be involved in a given scene, all Italians in the Harrigan mosaic were clearly disparaged by Irish, Germans and blacks alike. The blackface chorus of the song “South Fifth Avenue,” from *The Mulligan’s Silver Wedding* expresses the attitude of the blacks, but represents the universal view:

Oh, Dear me, Master Puter
Just loan me your cologne,
I wish to scent my handkerchief,
Passing dis saloon.
De vapors quite distressing,
From dat Italian crew,
Dis padrone immigration,
To South Fifth Avenue.⁴¹

Late-comers to the ethnic world of the lower East Side, the Italians stood near the very bottom of the social hierarchy in the minds and hearts of the locals, and served in that capacity in Harrigan’s ethnic world.

But the bottom-most rung of the social ladder was reserved for another group, the single most detested and detestable occupant of Harrigan’s ethnic arena. That wretched group, the only one deemed actually less-than-human by the normally tolerant Harrigan, or at least by the characters through which he speaks, was the Chinese. In *The Mulligans* (the novel) the author again speaks for himself, rather than through any of his characters, on the nature of “Ah Wung,” a slumlord “with the miserly tenacity of his race;... Shrewd, cunning, and close mouthed, like all of his race....”⁴² More descriptively, as opposed to *ascriptively*: “His yellow face, devoid of expression, threw out the sinister glare of his little ratty eyes, scintillating with cunning cruelty and heartlessness.” Ah Wung proceeds to evict a poor family with a sick child, merciless in his determination to accumulate enough capital to return to China, “leaving nothing behind him but the taint of his opium pipe.”⁴³

Virtually all the characters in the plays share Harrigan’s views of the Chinese. Peter McSorley observes in *McSorley’s Inflation*: “The Chinaman. Ah, he’s the scum of a barbarization that would put its (illegible) brand upon the Anglo Saxon... and drive us into the whirlpool of the Pacific Ocean. My execration and indignation be upon them.”⁴⁴ Honora Dublin shares McSorley’s opinion. In *Mulligan’s Silver Wedding*, she excoriates “Hog Eye,” a Chinese laundryman (who, significantly, competes with Honora, a washerwoman by trade):

You're not half a man. You're a nagur, you eat your dinner with drumsticks. You're a monkey, you have a tail growing out of your head.... You're a mongrel Asiatic.... Why don't you have whiskers on your face like a man you baboon you.[Imagine] the likes of you coming to a free country and walking around in your petticoats and calling yourself a man. Bah, ye omadoon [sic] you.

Honora then evokes the primary Chinese signifier: "Its the roton pipe you smoke. The neighbors are moving out of Mulligan Alley from the fume of it." And Hog-Eye confirms the charge: "Velly good-ee pipe smok-ee. Ilish ladee smooke one pipe opium see Ilish heaven ... quick."⁴⁵ In virtually every scene involving the Chinese, the opium pipe is associated with the Chinese character as a means of establishing the type.⁴⁶ The opium pipe thus symbolically suggests the entire spectrum of negative ascription, and provides the semiotic link to the signified Chinese-American. In this case, as with all the other ethnic types inhabiting Harrigan's world, the type is patently a caricature.

Yet, to emphasize the point, these caricatures were routinely accepted as versions of reality, both by Harrigan himself and by his enchanted audiences: even by the most enlightened and sophisticated among them. Consider, for example, the case of William Dean Howells. Howells, himself a leading literary "realist" of the day and a great Harrigan fan, believed the Harrigan characters and situations to be entirely representative of "reality." He observed in *Harper's* in 1886:

Mr. Harrigan accurately realized in his scenes what he realizes in his persons: . . . the actual life of this city. . . . [His is] the joyous yet conscientious art of the true dramatist in all times who loves the life he observes. . . . In certain moments the illusion is so perfect that you lose the sense of being in the theatre; you are out of that world of conventions and traditions, and in the presence of the facts. . . . Consciously or unconsciously, he is part of the great tendency toward the faithful representation of life which is now animating fiction.⁴⁷

The *Times* critic agreed: ". . . Balzac and Zola, it is clear, have two earnest disciples in Messrs. Harrigan and Hart of the Theatre Comique;" and the *Herald* termed The Mulligan series "the Pickwick Papers of a Bowery Dickens. . . ."⁴⁸

Such observations were unanimously supported by contemporary critical opinion. Laurence Hutton noted in 1890 that Harrigan "puts living men and women upon the stage," and Richard Harding Davis concurred, observing in 1891 that "Mr. Harrigan has been for the last fifteen years doing more than simply amusing people; he has been reproducing and delineating New York." The plays, he added, portray day to day reality "with the fidelity of a reporter or snap-shot

camera."⁴⁹ The critic for the *Illustrated American* noted in 1892 that Harrigan's portrayals "are mirrors set up to reflect with perfect accuracy certain types and forms of life. . . ." Harrigan "is more than the playwright, he is the historian," and the characters are drawn from life: ". . . the peculiarities of each are accurately and carefully reproduced with unquestionable fidelity."⁵⁰ The *Critic* review of an earlier show, "The Muddy Day," noted that Harrigan "observes, and what he sees he is able to reproduce."⁵¹ The examples are numberless and entirely consistent.

It is important to reiterate that Harrigan tacitly attempted to model his characters from "reality." As he noted in 1891, "Being true to life, being natural, is what I am always aiming for."⁵² Moreover, the members of his company, each carefully chosen by the manager, were acclaimed for their ability to bring to life (in the words of a *Herald* review) "local types of character that we all know" ⁵³ Types "*that we all know*": The observations bears special emphasis. Somehow the Broadway Dickens (or Balzac, or Zola, or indeed, Howells) succeeded in evoking reality through his immigrant/ethnic caricatures, and the fundamental basis of his immense popularity, it would appear, lay in this uncanny knack. He managed to capture some recognizable essence, the "that which goes without saying," in Roland Barthes suggestive phrase, that rendered his comic images identifiable.⁵⁴

To put it differently, the ethnic types that inhabited the dramatic and musical world of Harrigan and Hart were, in a word, stereotypes, based in and reinforcing prevailing popular perceptions of ascribed characteristics and shaped in their particularities by the talents of "the Merry Partners" and their supporting company. The ethnic cultures so uproariously detailed by Harrigan and his minions were caricature cultures in and of the minds of their creators, and evoked in the minds of their perceivers through what was essentially a semiotic process.

But surely the process of image formation and/or confirmation and perpetuation must have had some social-historical basis; some social meaning for the time and place. And while it is a dangerous thing for historians to probe the collective psyches of people long dead, some element of speculation is surely permissible in an honorable quest for the meaning of historical phenomena. So let it be said, speculatively to be sure, that the Harrigan and Hart phenomenon was apparently based in a social-psychological *need* for a people to believe in the reality of the Lower East Side denizens as portrayed by the Harrigan company. The perception of the caricature as a form of reality was obviously based on the audiences' recognition of some quality or qualities in the caricature deemed *essential* to the type, and thereby identifying the type as a whole as a "realistic" portrayal. Clearly, the end result was the creation of a series of stereotypes of ethno/racial groups and individuals; stereotypes that were unreflectively accepted, as is the way with stereotypes, as reality. The stereotyping process has been accepted in contemporary social psychology as an essentially cognitive process, serving to aid the overburdened human mind in processing information. As such, stereotypes are essential to the process whereby we "know" anything.⁵⁵ In the case of Harrigan's ethno/racial caricature types, the *functional* reality was

the stereotype; even as the stereotype reciprocally defined reality. Accordingly, the “picture in our heads,” to quote Walter Lipmann’s seminal definition of a stereotype, are images of “reality” regardless of the fact that they relate little if at all to the *objective* reality of living human beings.⁵⁶ The objective reality simply does not matter. The stereotype deriving from the caricature *is* the reality. And in this manner, ethnic stereotypes served to create the reality demanded by the need to “know” the ways of these essentially foreign folk portrayed by Harrigan on stage.

It would appear that we all need stereotypes to help us categorize and simplify information; to help us provide order in a world of bewildering complexity. And Gilded Age America was assuredly a complex place to the people of the day; not the least with regard to the new, different, exotic sorts of people who were arriving in such numbers and establishing themselves in the tenements of lower Manhattan and similar enclaves throughout urban America. Harrigan provided comprehensible categories; he pointed to ascribed ethnic qualities and characteristics that collectively constituted recognizable types; he enabled “us”—his audience—to identify “them,” to believe in “their” ascribed qualities; and to separate “them” from “us.” And so “we” believed in them because we *needed* to believe, to distinguish these “others” from “us,” the “veritable” Americans. As Alan Trachtenberg has noted, “Stock notions of the ‘other half,’ were imparted in the evolving middle-class consensus, notions which served the negative purpose of proclaiming *what the true America was not, what it must include to eradicate in order to preserve itself*” [Emphasis added].⁵⁷ Harrigan and Hart, it would seem, provided compellingly “realistic” and consistently humorous examples of what true Americans were not.

But what of that portion of Harrigan’s audience that was itself of immigrant/ethnic origins? Surely the Irish, and to a lesser extent the Blacks, attended his productions. What was the basis of *their* response to the stereotypes? This is of course a difficult question. Two facts, however, stand out as meaningful. First, while the earlier Harrigan productions, those of the 1870s for example, did indeed attract ethnic audiences, over time, and surely by the mid-1880s, the preponderance of the audience comprised increasingly non-ethnic elements. What the *Spirit of the Times* called the “fashionable” portion of the audience, as distinguished from the “popular” portion, grew ever larger, such that by the early 1890s this “fashionable” elements dominated in numbers and enthusiasm.⁵⁸ The immigrant/ethnic portion, conversely, declined; partly because prices of admission increased as the productions grew ever more elaborate; partly because the ethnic audiences were attracted in increasing numbers to the less sophisticated vaudeville and variety houses. Second, there was clearly something in earlier Harrigan portrayals that appealed to the ethnic Irish population in particular. The Irish found Harrigan’s characters and situations appealing for very much the same reasons, one suspects, that Black American audiences would later find Amos and Andy appealing: Because they were diverting and funny, and to some degree provided recognizable, if clearly overstated and distorted, characters and situa-

tions.⁵⁹ The essentially negative and potentially malignant dimensions of the caricature/stereotypes did not register as such precisely because the Irish viewed these performances from the perspective of an different sensibility; refracted through a different perceptual prism.

For the majority of the Harrigan audiences, however, ethnic “types,” whose ascribed distinguishing characteristics were symbolically transmitted through established, accepted codes—Barthes’ “that which goes without saying”—were a necessary part of the conceptual and cognitive apparatus of “fashionable” America in the Gilded Age.⁶⁰ Such was the case for those of the population who shared the code: The middle-class to upper-middle-class white Americans, normally of northern European extraction, by now divested or coming to be divested of any ethnic taint. And while the messages were doubtless interpreted differently by the “others” of the audience, it was the “veritable” American whose perceptions and attitudes ultimately mattered. The ethnic world of Harrigan and Hart thus impinged upon the “real” world, their stage caricatures providing a basis for popular attitudes that would ultimately be reflected in collective behavior as well as public policy toward America’s burgeoning immigrant/ethnic populations. In this fashion the “Merry Partners,” paragons of popular culture, contributed immeasurably to the shaping of the late Victorian immigrant/ethnic discourse in the United States.

Notes

1. William Dean Howells, “Editor’s Study,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 73 (July 1886), 316; Clipping, “Life Story of Edward Harrigan,” n.d. [1898], Harrigan Scrapbook, Theatre Collection, Library of the Performing Arts, New York Public Library (hereafter cited as “Performing Arts Library”). While both Harrigan and Hart performed leading roles in their productions, Harrigan wrote all of the scripts and all of the lyrics to the music provided by composer/music director David Braham (Harrigan’s father-in-law).

2. The three full-length studies of the Harrigan career are by theater/drama historians, and reveal the special concerns of theater history and history of the drama. See Warren T. Burns, “The Plays of Edward Green Harrigan: The Theatre of Intercultural Communication,” (Ph.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1969); Alicia K. Koger, “A Critical Analysis of Edward Harrigan’s Comedy,” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1984); and Richard Moody, *Ned Harrigan: From Corlear’s Hook to Herald Square* (Chicago, 1980). Moody also published an earlier, brief assessment of the career. Moody, “Edward Harrigan,” *Modern Drama* 19 (December 1976), 319-326. Ely J. Kahn’s *The Merry Partners: The Age and Stage of Harrigan and Hart* (New York, 1955) is a popular account, affectionate but impressionistic. See also an earlier assessment by Arthur H. Quinn: “Harrigan, Hart, and the Comedy of Types,” in Quinn, *History of the American Drama* (New York, 1927).

3. Program, Theatre Comique, week commencing October 27, 1872, in Harrigan Collection, Performing Arts Library.

4. On the contemporary response to the growing immigrant populations of the urban Northeast, see James Stuart Olson, *The Ethnic Dimension in American History* (New York, 1979), 214-344; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*, (New York, 1963), 35-105; 131-193; Alan M. Kraut, *The Huddled Masses: The Immigrant in American Society, 1880-1921* (Arlington Heights, Illinois, 1982); Glenn C. Altschuler, *Race, Ethnicity, and Class in American Social Thought, 1865-1919* (Arlington Heights, Illinois, 1982), 40-65; Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1988), 176 and *passim*; Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America. Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York, 1982), 140-181; and for contemporary observations in dramatic form, with special reference to the growing Jewish population, Israel Zangwill, *The Children of the Ghetto* (New York, 1895).

5. See above, note 2. The Koger dissertation provides the best critical analysis of the plays.

6. "McNally's Row of Flats," *McSorley's Inflation* (1882), Act II, Scene ii, 27-28, in Harrigan Collection, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library. Unless otherwise indicated, all citations to the plays are from holograph manuscript or typescript versions in the Harrigan Collection. None of the plays was published in a complete version, though many of the songs were made available in sheet music form. Several of these songs were among the period's best sellers.

7. "Mr. Edward Harrigan Speaks," in "American Playwrights on the American Drama," *Harper's Weekly* [supplement] 33 (February 2, 1889), 97. See also Harrigan, "Holding the Mirror up to Nature," *Pearson's Magazine*, n.d. [November, 1903?], Clipping, Harrigan Scrapbook, Harrigan Collection, Performing Arts Library, for a corroborative observation. It is especially noteworthy that Harrigan claims to have portrayed realistically the "vices and virtues, habits and customs" of his "types."

8. William Boelhower, *Through a Glass Darkly: Ethnic Semiosis in American Literature* (New York, 1987), 99. The author writes "Because the type-scene is structured as a performance, its spatio-temporal organization is associated with typical capacities, events, and roles, embodies a specifically ethnic perspective, and reveals an ethno-semiotic interpretative calculus." For a useful application of the concept, see Boelhower, "Describing the Italian-American Self: Type-Scene and Encyclopedia," *In Their Own Words 2* (Winter 1984), 37-48. Koger makes the point that the plays grew more elaborate and well developed by the mid-1880s. "Critical Analysis," *passim*.

9. *The O'Reagans*, I, i, 13.

10. *Under Cover*, I, i, 57. The next lines are also noteworthy. When asked whether Owen controls the district, he replies "Politically. The physical end is controlled by the coppers."

11. Harrigan, "Holding the Mirror," 504. The Mulligan saga was developed through a series of sketches and plays that included *The Mulligan Guard* (1873), *The Mulligan Guard Ball* (1879), *The Mulligan Guard Chowder* (1879), *The Mulligan Guard Nominee* (1880), *The Mulligan Guard Picnic* (1878), *The Mulligan Guard's Christmas* (1879), *The Mulligan Guard's Surprise* (1880), *The Mulligans' Silver Wedding* (1881), and *Cordelia's Aspirations* (1883). The novel *The Mulligans* (New York, 1901) represented Harrigan's effort to present much of the Mulligan material in a different literary format.

12. *The Mulligans*, 11.

13. On the earlier versions of the comic stage Irishman, see especially Dale T. Knobel, "Vocabulary of Ethnic Perception: Content Analysis of the American Stage Irishman, 1820-1860," *Journal of American Studies* 15 (April 1981), 45-71.

14. *Mulligan Guard Ball*, III, ii, 39 (variant ms.)

15. *Ibid.*, 53.

16. "Mulligan's Promises," in *Mulligan Guard Nominee*, II, iv, 72.

17. *Ibid.*, I, i, 12-13.

18. *Ibid.*, 16.

19. *The Mulligans*, 25-26.

20. *Ibid.*, 66.

21. "Where the Sweet Magnolia Grows" (from *Pete*), in *Harrigan and Braham's Popular Songs* (New York, 1883), II, pp. 104-106. The refrain concluded

In that land, that land, that sunny, sunny land,
Down where the Swaney river gently flows,
Oh, a band, a band, a happy darkey band
Would meet thee in the valley
Where the sweet magnolia grows.

22. *Pete*, III, i, 15.

23. *Ibid.*, IV, i, 5-6.

24. *Mulligan Guard Ball*, I, ii, 36-38.

25. *The Mulligans*, 102.

26. "Knights of the Mystic Star," from *Last of the Hogans*, II, i, 33.

27. On the coon songs and their social-historical significance, see James H. Dormon, "Shaping the Popular Image of Post-Reconstruction American Blacks: The 'Coon Song' Phenomenon of the Gilded Age," *American Quarterly* 40 (December 1988), 450-471.

28. "The Skidmore Guard," in *Harrigan and Braham's Popular Songs*, II, 109-111. Cf. "A Coon Will Follow a Band," *Under Cover*, II, i, 95, the chorus of which proclaims "Zim, boom, boom; a coon, coon, coon; A coon will follow a band."

29. *Mulligan Guard Ball*, II, iii, 73-74.

30. *Ibid.*, II, ii, 52-70.

31. Howells, "Editor's Study," 316.

32. "What's de Use," from *Under Cover*, I, i, 49. Notably, the German immigrants' aid society in the Mulligan series is called "The German Fat Men's Club."

33. On the stage Hebrew, see Robert M. Dell, "The Representation of the Immigrant on the N. Y. Stage, 1881-1916" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1960), *passim*; Paul Antoine Distler, "The Rise and Fall of the Racial Comics in American Vaudeville," (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1963), *passim*; and my own "American Popular Culture and the New Immigration Ethnics: The Vaudeville Stage and the Process of Ethnic Ascription," in *Amerika Studien/American Studies* 36 (Winter, 1992), 179-193.
34. *Leather Patch*, II, iii, 73.
35. *Ibid.* See also the program for the show (undated) in Harrigan Scrapbook, Harrigan Collection, Performing Arts Library.
36. The type would be central to the "Hebrew Act" of a generation of vaudeville comics. See above, note 33. Mordecai Lyons, however, while assuredly greedy, parsimonious, and relatively unfeeling at the outset of the play, does develop other, less demeaning qualities as the drama unfolds.
37. *New York World*, n.d. (1908), quoted in Koger, "Critical Analysis," 309.
38. *Leather Patch*, I, ii, 18.
39. *Last of the Hogans*, II, ii, 40.
40. *The Investigation*, II, i, 11-12.
41. *The Mulligan's Silver Wedding* I, iii, nonpaginated holograph manuscript.
42. *The Mulligans*, pp. 128-129.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Mc Sorley's Inflation*, II, i, 11-12.
45. *The Mulligan's Silver Wedding*, II, vii, 171-173.
46. See, for example, *Under Cover*, II, i, 83; *The Investigation*, II, i, 2 and ff.; *The O'Reagans*, II, i, 17. In the language of semiotics, the established "signifiers" yielded meaningful "signifieds," providing the semiotic links to the evoked type. For other examples of such semiotic links, see my "Ethnic Semiosis in American Popular Culture, 1880-1910," *Semiotica* 83 (Spring 1991), 197-210.
47. Howells, "Editors' Study," 315-317. For a pertinent analysis of Howells' perception of "realism," see Trachtenberg, *Incorporation*, 182-210. It should be noted that Harrigan made every effort to portray "realistically" all costumes and settings as well as ethnic "types." His excellent scenic designer, Charles W. Witham, was doubtless in part responsible for the aura of "reality" that framed the Harrigan action. See *New York Mirror* review of the *Mulligan Guard Ball* revival, which states "The scenery was of course capital, for Witham painted it, every feature of local character being faithfully represented by his talented brush." *Mirror*, August 11, 1883.
48. *New York Times*, August 12, 1879; *New York Herald*, November 23, 1880.
49. Laurence Hutton, *Curiosities of the American Stage*, 52; Davis, "Edward Harrigan," 210. Davis added "As a historian of the war of the races, Mr. Harrigan makes no mistakes."
50. "Last of the Hogans," *Illustrated American*, January 23, 1892, 443. Harrigan scrapbook, Performance Arts Library.
51. *The Critic*, April 7, 1883. Harrigan scrapbook, Performance Arts Library.
52. "Hunting 'Types'" in the Slums with Harrigan," *New York Herald*, July 12, 1891.
53. *Ibid.*
54. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York, 1972), 11.
55. On the cognitive function of stereotyping, see David L. Hamilton, ed., *Cognitive Processes in Stereotyping and Intergroup Behavior* (Hillsdale, New Jersey, 1981), especially the contributions of Hamilton himself, "Stereotyping and Intergroup Behavior: Some Thoughts on the Cognitive Approach", and Richard D. Ashmore and Frances K. Del Boca, "Conceptual Approaches to Stereotypes and Stereotyping", as well as David L. Hamilton and Terrence L. Rose, "Illusory Correlation and the Maintenance of Stereotypic Beliefs," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39 (1980).
56. Walter Lipmann, *Public Opinion* (New York, 1922), 7.
57. Trachtenberg, *Incorporation*, 144.
58. Koger, "Critical Analysis," 18, 131, 188, and *passim*; *New York Spirit of the Times*, February 21, 1880.
59. The Amos and Andy phenomenon receives detailed and thoughtful consideration in Melvin P. Ely, *The Adventures of Amos and Andy. A Social History of an American Phenomenon* (New York, 1991).
60. On the theory of semiotic codes, see Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1983) 48-150; Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics* (New York, 1983), 25-32; 237-259; Terrence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics* (Berkeley, 1977), 130-134.