

traditional performance forms as well as Chekhov's role in the ascendance of Japanese naturalism. Finally, Yana Meerzon tends to the only film adaptation considered in this collection—Karen Shakhnazarov's *Ward No. 6* (2009)—which she describes as an “analogy” (276) wherein the adaptor uses the original novella as a “cinematic *paratext*” (276) to create a new work of art. In addition to illustrating coeditor Clayton's emphasis on the influence of medicine on Chekhov's poetics, Meerzon's essay reveals how the director's use of nonmatrixed acting styles and filmic techniques served to mirror Chekhov's narrative point(s) of view. In an interview closing the volume, Clayton and Meerzon give the last words to Patrice Pavis, who believes that he and others who rewrite Chekhov do so because they are attracted to the “enigma” posed by the “indeterminacy of meaning” in his dramaturgy (296). In what might serve as a coda to both collections—and a signpost to future directions of adaptation scholarship—Pavis maintains that since adaptation is “part and parcel of the history of drama of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries . . . one can only understand the changes in the nature of the text by comparison and juxtaposition with scenic practice, whether or not the authors in question were concerned or interested in the staging of their plays” (298–9).

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**Theatrical Liberalism: Jews and Popular Entertainment in America.** By Andrea Most. New York and London: New York University Press, 2013; pp. xi + 288, 15 illustrations. \$79 cloth, \$26 paper, \$22.10 e-book.

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Reviewed by Les Hunter, *Baldwin Wallace University*

From Hollywood film to Broadway musicals, Jews have long been associated with the making of popular culture in America. In her ambitious and original book, *Theatrical Liberalism: Jews and Popular Entertainment in America*, Andrea Most claims that historians have tended to view these examples of popular culture as secular works made by Jews utilizing their creations as a way to escape their traditions and assimilate to American culture. Not so, says Most, who instead compellingly claims that Jews making popular entertainment did not simply give up religion for secular life or as an escape, but instead negotiated their own Jewish values to “inhabit a public space shaped by a liberal Protestant conception of faith as an aspect of private life” (6). This negotiation took place through “theatrical liberalism,” a term that has roots in both Enlightenment thinking about the self as well as Jewish traditions and values, and is a distinctly American “worldview” that focuses on a set of “philosophical questions” (9) about the nature of the self and its relation to the community. Theatrical liberalism has four characteristics: it constructs performance spaces as places of religious expression; prefers action over interiority; resists an essentialist identity or the idea of a true self and instead champions a theatrical form of “self-fashioning” (11) and a notion of constructed selfhood; and finally, honors obligations to a like-minded (usually theatrical) community, which restricts personal ambitions. Throughout the twentieth

century, Most claims, plays, musicals, movies, novels, lectures, and critical theory made by those Americans who have “a clear connection to Judaism” (11) have been the site of pitched battles over representations of the self; these battles delineate the field of theatrical liberalism.

Chapter 1 looks to the biblical Jacob for an example of theatrical selfhood that serves as a model for “narratives of theatrical self-making” (38). The multiplicity associated with Jacob’s ability to alter his dress and take on many forms, Most argues, is key not only to Jews, but also to acting and to theatrical liberalism. The birth of theatrical liberalism itself is the subject of Chapter 2, where, by looking at various films including *To Be or Not to Be* (1942), *The Jazz Singer* (1927), and *Show Boat* (1936), Most tracks a trajectory from theatre as “wicked” (40) into a “site for American virtue” (86) during the first half of the twentieth century. In “the backstage musical” (10) a new view of theatre emerged: one that embraced an antiessentialist form of self-fashioning that celebrated theatricality—or acting as someone else—as a form of authenticity, which allowed Jewish writers to imagine new forms of freedom while at the same time resisting total assimilation.

Chapter 3 examines a period during which theatrical liberalism lost its sway, as seen onstage in *Pal Joey* (1940), *Death of a Salesman* (1949), and *West Side Story* (1957). In the wake of the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust, American artists witnessed the limits of how far self-fashioning and communal obligation could take them. Instead, a belief in American universalism took hold, which posited that differences of race, religion, and ethnicity could be overcome because of a “fundamental *sameness* of all humanity” (111, italics in original), as well as a rejection of artifice and an embrace of psychological inner truth. Chapter 4 begins by exploring the theatrical nature of identity in everyday life in such works as Erving Goffman’s book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), the television program *Your Show of Shows* (1950–4), and the Broadway musical *My Fair Lady* (1956). The chapter concludes by looking at *Funny Girl* (1964) and *Fiddler on the Roof* (1974), which reimagined historical Jewish characters or character types as already having begun to negotiate their position as Americans through theatrical liberalism.

Chapter 5 finds the cultural wars of the 1960s in surprising texts like Cynthia Ozick’s 1970 essay “Towards a New Yiddish,” which called for a “Jewish liturgical literature” that does not ignore the past (Ozick, *Art and Ardor*, 175), and Norman Mailer’s *Armies of the Night* (1968), where Mailer explores the limits of self-fashioning his own Jewishness. Most likens these writers’ arguments to her own notion of theatrical liberalism. Chapter 6 stirringly pairs Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* (1990) and Woody Allen’s *Zelig* (1983) to show how these works suggest that performance is what constructs the performer, not the other way around. The chapter concludes by looking at a defense of theatricality in Philip Roth’s *The Counterlife* (1986) and a critique of those same impulses in Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America* (1993).

The primary weight of Most’s argument rests upon her insightful analyses of a dizzying array of texts brought together in an audacious fashion. The sometimes startling incongruity of these texts can be witnessed in Chapter 5, where Most argues that Mel Brooks’s film *Young Frankenstein* (1974) and cultural critic Lionel

Trilling's *Sincerity and Authenticity* (1970) articulate a similar critique of authentic identity. Her ability to read texts closely and create suggestive connections between them is impressive, but I would sometimes have liked to see other, extratextual evidence to illustrate how Jewish artists negotiated the freedoms of America by interrogating their ability to perform as others in theatrical spaces and communities. Most makes little use, for example, of artists speaking of their own work, and there is scant attempt to use sociological evidence, which is surprising because the argument has deep sociological implications. So, too, the effort to unite disparate elements under problematic labels like "liberalism" or "popular entertainment" can sometimes get in the way of the great strength of the individual textual analyses.

Despite these minor problems, the originality of the argument and the scope of its claims make the text a welcome addition to studies on American entertainment in the twentieth century. Perhaps most provocatively, *Theatrical Liberalism* makes a case for the reason that Jews have been so successful in making popular culture in America. The monograph will provoke useful debate and inspire further discussion for scholars of cultural studies, American theatre and film history, and historians interested in Jewish and Jewish-American history.

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**Neoliberalism and Global Theatres: Performance Permutations.** Edited by Lara D. Nielsen and Patricia Ybarra. *Studies in International Performance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012; pp. xii + 328, 1 photo, 2 maps. \$100 hardcover, \$90 e-book.

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The corrosive effects of neoliberalism, which have led to the use and abuse of financial markets, the maximization of resources (from oil sands to garment workers), and the privatization of welfare state provisions, have not left art and performance unscathed. In recent years, scholars in theatre and performance studies have analyzed how the political and economic crises provoked by neoliberalism have irrevocably transformed art and cultural practices. Lara D. Nielsen and Patricia Ybarra's redoubtable anthology, *Neoliberalism and Global Theatres*, joins this bumper crop of work and expands the conversation on neoliberalism and the arts in a number of productive ways. First, they show that neoliberalism is not a static or top-down phenomenon; rather, as Margaret Worry's opening essay notes, "neoliberalism *is* a form of culture, as heterogeneous, historically contingent, contested, and mutable as any other, and just as worthy of scholarly attention" (27, italics in original). Second, the collection confronts us with the plurality of neoliberal cultures across the arts including local and state-appropriated *Gandrung* dances, African American social dances, New Orleans second-line parades, Hollywood films, theatre, and traveling exhibits. These are potent cultural practices that bind us to neoliberal agendas through affect and embodiment.