

Veronika Darian is Assistant Professor of Theatre Studies at Leipzig University, focusing on transmediality and transculturality. She received her PhD in 2004 with a dissertation on ekphrasis and the relation between theatre, language, image, and power in the age of sovereignty (*Das Theater der Bildbeschreibung. Sprache, Macht und Bild in Zeiten der Souveränität*, Munich, 2011) and taught at the Freie Universität (FU) Berlin and Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf. Her major research interests include questions of gesture and gestural research (*Gestische Forschung. Praktiken und Perspektiven*, co-ed., Berlin, 2020; *Verhaltene Beredsamkeit? – Politik, Pathos und Philosophie der Geste*, ed., Frankfurt am Main, 2009), artistic practices of iteration (*Die Praxis der/des Echo. Zum Theater des Wiederhalls*, co-ed., Frankfurt am Main, 2015), and the relation between theatre, arts, and history/historiography (*Mind the Map! – History Is Not Given*, co-ed., Frankfurt am Main, 2006). Her further research and teaching focus on theatre in societies in transformation, theatrical research on foreignness/strangeness (Fremdheitsforschung), theatre and age(ing), biography and narration in theatre, dance, and performance, theatre and/of things and “scenes of obstinacy.” Contact: darian@uni-leipzig.de.

Abstract

The study takes Bertolt Brecht’s short story *The Job or By the Sweat of Thy Brow Shalt Thou Fail to Earn Thy Bread* (Der Arbeitsplatz oder Im Schweiß Deines Angesichts sollst Du kein Brot essen) from 1933 as a starting point to discuss matters of gender and class between the two World Wars in Germany. Brecht refers to a true and characteristic event of that time when a woman was forced to take over her husband’s working place after his death, unrecognized, in order to ensure the survival of her family. She becomes a man in all her habits and attitudes in public as in private situations, but society perceives her as a “monstrosity” – not least because of her/him pointing to socio-political difficulties and economic challenges of these times by undermining social and gender affiliations. The different (re)presentations and narratives of the same story – on the one hand by the two authors Bertolt Brecht and Anna Seghers, on the other by the sensation-seeking yellow press – refer to the socio-political explosiveness of the attribution of gender roles within the framework of economic realities. Especially in Brecht’s version, artistic strategies of estrangement (Verfremdung) are used for this purpose, focusing on the figure of the woman which turns out to be alienated even in two ways – firstly by the inhuman economic circumstances, secondly by an unpitying, unemphatic society.

Keywords: Bertolt Brecht, Gender change, Labour, Der Arbeitsplatz, The Job, Anna Seghers, Estrangement, Verfremdung, Alienation, Gender roles, Narrativity, Intertextuality, Socio-politics, Class

Anders Carlsson –
Alice Koubová –
Kent Sjöström

Buying Brass.

A Method Re-Examined

This article is an account of a lecture-performance presentation held in the context of “Contradictions as a Method,” an international Bertolt Brecht symposium which took place in November 2019 at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. As three speakers engaged with theatre in different ways, we were inspired by the dialogical structure of Brecht’s play *Buying Brass* and staged a *similarly* structured conversation. This conversation imitated and transposed the form in which thespians and the philosopher meet in Brecht’s original text. However, we decided not to perform characters from the play, but to speak from our own professional perspectives. Consequently, we focused on the current problems in theatre that we have met within our professional engagement, not specifically problems mentioned in the original play. Yet, during the rehearsals it came to light that there were many overlaps between the themes and characters of Brecht’s *Buying Brass* and the discussion of our live conversations. Therefore, we decided to use explicit references to some parts of the original *Buying Brass* play in our staged lecture-performance.

The initial questions that motivated our conversation experiment were: How can we make use of Brecht’s dialectic methodology in order to re-think the institutional situation of theatre as a starting point of social transformation? Which contemporary philosophies can help in this re-thinking? Is theatre interested in them and is there any transformational potential in the opposite direction: from theatre practice to the philosophical accounts of the contemporary world?

The Material: The *Buying Brass* Fragments

The fragment collection under the title *Buying Brass*, unfinished and unedited by Brecht himself, belongs among the most extensive and sophisticated of Brecht’s treatises on theatre. It questions theatre in its very being, in its social and cultural function, and in its epistemological potential. Although Brecht’s intention with *Buying Brass* was to formulate a theoretical treatise on epic theatre, the text also offers a basic dramatic situation:

A philosopher has come to a large theatre after the performance has finished, to talk with the theatre people. He has been invited by an actress. The theatre people are dissatisfied. They have been involved in efforts to create a theatre of the scientific age. Science has not benefited much from this, however, while the theatre has suffered all kinds of losses.¹

¹ Tom Kuhn – Steve Giles – Marc Silberman (eds). *Brecht on Performance. Messingkauf and Modelbooks*. London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2014, p. 11.

The dissatisfied theatre people are presented by Brecht with their professional titles which correspond to functions in an institutional condition we recognize from the dramatic theatre – the actor, the dramaturg, the actress, the stagehand – and Brecht introduces the philosopher as someone entering the theatre institution from an imagined outside. As an outsider to the institutional condition, the philosopher inhabits the gaze which is able to scrutinize and assess what the practitioners embedded in the institution have accomplished. Staging a conversation of agents with different interests, attitudes, desires, and functions in the theatrical apparatus, Brecht succeeds in providing an appropriate methodology that tackles theatre dilemmas without reducing them to a one-dimensional view. The very format of a dialogue is congenial with theatrical practice and has a history among philosophers since Plato. Philosopher Denis Diderot as well as theatre practitioners Konstantin Stanislavski and Richard Boleslawski have presented their ideas for a rejuvenation of theatre in the format of written dialogues. Contradictions and objections are made manifest and also shown as anchored in a specific working role or institutional function. Moreover, the dialogue format allows and recognizes the imperfections, fallacies, and misunderstandings of human conversations as relevant aspects of contingency. This contingency is of importance when we consider systemic, institutional, or networked social situations.²

The Rehearsals

Starting out from a discussion on what we, the three collaborating presenters at a conference on Brecht, could represent through our institutional functions, we decided to playfully try out the labels corresponding to the characters of the original *Buying Brass* material. However, with respect to our specific professional profiles, we could additionally perform particular transitions of attitudes and roles with respect to the theatre. Kent, an educator, performed a slide into the researcher’s distance; Anders, a performing artist, slid into the educator’s responsibility; and Alice, a philosopher, slid into the performing arts practice. Although these transitions were considered accurate and relevant, we discovered that Brecht’s definitive and rigid way of labeling institutional functions was both productive and frustrating at the same time.

Regarding the dialogical format of our encounter, we found it especially fruitful for its capacity to welcome and sustain misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and misrepresentations of ourselves. Each of us chose a different entry into the dialogue format, depending on our respective professional roles. This momentum of role-taking, reductively labeling us

² For an ample account of dialogical formats in philosophy, especially in connection with theatre see: Martin Puchner. *Drama of Ideas*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

as representatives of institutional functions, would also add a dimension to performing our dialogue for the audience: what went unsaid would somehow still be inferred by suspicion or imagination. It would be as if an omitted plasticity, as well as a reduced complexity, when performed, would be able to open up a dialectic negation to what was manifest. This approach also has an ambition to renew the customary way of paper presentations at research conferences and symposiums.

The rehearsal process resulted in a performance script which became an order-of-events structure for our symposium presentation, and it also serves as an account of what happened during the lecture-performance.

In this article we are not simply rewriting the script, but we are also referring to what happened during the performance.

Performance Description Commented.

Talking Contradictions: *Buying Brass* Method Re-Examined

A black box theatre. When the audience enters, Kent and Anders are sitting on chairs, facing the audience. They present the quotation from Bertolt Brecht's Buying Brass cited above in this article. After their presentation, Alice enters the room. She takes a seat. The three speakers thereafter present themselves, their dilemmas, stances, and questions. After each "theme presentation" the two other speakers are allowed to formulate a critical question, but the theme presenter is not allowed to answer. Instead of replying to criticism, the speakers used a prolonged silence to invite the audience to the potentialities of possible further conversation. The silence mounted to the release of an improvised audience discussion at the very end of the presentation.



Anders Carlsson and Kent Sjöström during their performative lecture. Photo Oskar Helcel.

Short Presentations of the Three Speakers

My name is Anders Carlsson, I am currently leading the acting department at the Theatre Academy in Helsinki. I inhabit this professor position, not because of research merits but artistic ones. I am an educated actor and was artistic director of the Swedish independent theatre group Institutet before entering the academic sphere. When reading and discussing Bertolt Brecht's *Buying Brass* together with Kent and Alice, my point of identification was the Dramaturg who is provoked when the Philosopher questions if he could possibly be a "good spectator" for the art produced in this theatre. The Dramaturg bursts out in one of the most extensive monologues of the *Buying Brass* material, listing all kinds of theatre that his institution has produced with a rhetoric figure of *how can it be that nothing in this endless series of variations can meet your demands and make you a good spectator*. In my artistic career, I can certainly identify with this experience of having exhausted all possibilities, but that it is still not good enough to please the Philosopher's gaze.

I am Kent Sjöström, lecturer and researcher at Malmö Theatre Academy. After 15 years of lecturing on movement and acting techniques for actors, I completed a PhD on the actor's cognitive strategies. The research position became a distanced one and created new and critical views on conventional actor's training. I wanted to broaden the field of studies. Theory

and conceptual perspective gained a stronger position at the academy. Not everybody was happy with this, but the conservatoire learned a lot in this process. Acting students and teachers were facing new formats of representations and narratives. Step by step traditional techniques were considered as questionable when facing a discursive gaze. The sometimes agitated discussion between the characters in *Buying Brass* created a historical relief for a contemporary discussion about actor's training: what does the actor's knowledge consist of?

My name is Alice Koubová, I am a researcher in philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy at the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague. I also undertook voice, movement, and speech trainings at the Academy of Performing Arts where I have been active as a lecturer and consultant for many years. My research is focused on the performative turn in philosophy, the reflective turn in theatre, corporeality, subjectivity, identity, and relational ethics. These themes, I trust, are not only themes for detached philosophical reflection, but they have to be tested and explored in embodied situations, through performance. In the long run, they will bring about institutional shifts in academic philosophy and cultural institutions (theatres) as well. For this reason, I practice a "site-specific" and "format-specific" philosophy within theatres, in public spaces, and at different levels of civic institutions.

Anders Carlsson. Photo Oskar Helcel.



Theme Presentation No. 1: Anders Carlsson *The Institution as a Refuge?*

The Philosopher arrives from an outside, she originates from a foreign land called "philosophy" and she approaches our home – the theatre – as a guest.

In Jacques Derrida's elaborations on the concept of *Hospitality*, an unconditional welcome (of a guest) must become conditional in order to function.³ The host must govern (or own) the home in order to be a host, in order to be hospitable. And the guest on the other hand must understand her role: she – the Philosopher – can have a meal and a bed for the night, but the next day she is expected to move on. But according to Derrida, the risk involved in hospitality may upheave the very foundation it rests upon: governance. The ethics of hospitality thereby postulates institutional governance as its condition, but paradoxically: it also risks the institutional status quo and invites the possibility of real substantial change.

With the point of identification in the Dramaturg of *Buying Brass*, I will try to outline my own personal and professional contradiction, or rather a "dead-lock" that might correspond to the Dramaturg's frustration. As I mentioned, I have a background as a theatre maker. Just some years ago, I was a leader of an internationally acclaimed independent theatre collective and I enjoyed a short but intense period of worldly and relative success in the contemporary international touring performing-arts market. My dream came true but exposed its nightmarish immanence: Whatever I did artistically was labelled and sorted in a competitive logic of branding. It was awful. So, I left "freedom" for the institution. Castrated but wearing a crown.

Bertolt Brecht's *Buying Brass* takes place in an institution, not in the streets or in a bar. We are in the theatre, late evening, after a performance. The gathering happens thanks to one of the employees – the Actress – who invited an outsider with interesting ideas concerning the societal impact of artmaking. The Actress thought that the philosopher could contribute to a change of the institution and the art that is produced there. And it seems to me, that the author of *Buying Brass* presupposes that a late-night conversation between colleagues in an institution can be meaningful and lead to real substantial change.

But this is not at all my reality as a university professor. The institutional reality is: education as a service, teachers as service providers, students as customers, a catering model of education, a surveillance culture, benchmarks, a pretense of eligibility and measurements (of learning outcomes, teacher's performance, of educational quality, etc.) It all amounts to

³ For an account of Jacques Derrida's elaborations on the concept of *Hospitality*, see: Jacques Derrida. *Of Hospitality*. Translated by R. Bowlby. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.

a standard “governmentality” of a competitive art university. The inside tends to look very much like the outside.

It seems to me that my institution can deal fairly well with history, we are post-drama and we do interdisciplinary work beyond the old hierarchies – but solving that problem brought us to a much more challenging one: the entropy of contemporaneity, novelty, and criticality. Values that belong to the paradigms of interdisciplinary and post-dramatic perspectives. The celebration is so loud that doubt, hesitation, or skepticism is not heard.

The Philosopher comes to “theatre” with some tools of deconstruction, but the application of these tools led to a rootlessness that made the art form vulnerable to the neoliberal celebration of endless series of new combinations. Lazy postmodernism. I am not saying that the Philosopher is responsible for the misuse of her ideas. But the result is a commodifying entropy which gives the image of a psyche that has been turned upside down. In Freudian terms: When the Id is occupying the function of the Superego, it no longer says “wait” or “think first” but screams “enjoy now,” “don’t consider the consequences,” and most importantly “don’t be boring!” Are we living in the realm of the Id? Outside, yes – but also inside? Is there any place to hide? In the theatre?

Kent:

The voices of the provocateur and the activist are always considered more interesting than what is heard from the institutions. It might be therefore that institutions love to take the avant-gardist as a hostage. We now have leaders of institutions and theatre managers that consider themselves rebels and activists. Anders, what is your relation to yourself being castrated but wearing a crown? In this identifying yourself with Bertolt Brecht in the German Democratic Republic? At the same time the institution offered you freedom from the commodified field of “festival art.” My institution really offers me freedom. What is the role of yours?

The theatre’s low self-esteem when it comes to intellectual good manners is displayed in the aggressiveness that usually meets the intellectual. The actor addresses the Philosopher’s suggestions with “Aha! A critic!”⁴ And in accordance with that, you are claiming, hidden behind Derrida, that our guest Alice the Philosopher must leave; she cannot stay? I think that we have here an interesting nodal point: how do the practitioners treat the Philosopher in order to profit from her, while not making her so comfortable that she will settle in the theatre?

Alice:

You are, Anders, talking about a neoliberal uniformity ruling both independent theatre and state-run institutions. Then you mention a possibility to welcome a guest for one night: a stranger coming from a foreign land called Philosophy. This can be a helpful guest but also destructive one, coming with ideas whose applications can be fatal for your domain. You describe that having applied Philosopher’s “tools,” everything turned upside down. The question then is: should you have welcomed me or not? And my question is: do you really believe that the stranger coming with deconstructive ideas is responsible for your rootlessness? And is this stranger a philosopher? Are we again playing the same game of the powerless theatre and responsible, powerful guys violating it? Is this not a strategy of moral outsourcing? I can comment on this with two points: 1. Philosophers do not recognize their own thoughts in what is called “post-modern whatever-ism” at all. They rather feel misused. Postmodernism is not irresponsible. But using few quotations as fancy slogans without any further considerations is an irresponsible act. Moreover, postmodernism is proclaimed dead by many. How does your institution deal with for instance relational ethics, care theory, the institutional turn in political philosophy (Lea Ypi, Jonathan White, Bernardo Zacka, Timothy Snyder or Lisa Herzog, Veit Bader, Ewald Engelen etc.), media theory, and other philosophical ideas of nowadays? 2. Philosophers themselves face the same problems as you do in their academic institutions: pressure on quick results. Competition in quotations. Showing how philosophy is profitable. (!) Showing how it is funny, original, and amusing. (!) Organizing philosophical thought into one-year “projects.” And all this is combined with conservative resistance. (One actual quotation of a Czech professor of philosophy from 2018 as an example: “Women do not have brains for philosophy.”)

So maybe we should rather get together and talk for real and find our responsibilities and intelligent tools supporting sustainability in our future facilitating beneficial institutional structures and identifying values, instead of thinking whose fault it is. Let’s then talk right now. But I hope that you understand that I will come up with my problems as well, I will need your opinion and expertise as well – for instance about the way academics perform in public. I will not only provide smart criticism and give advice to the theatre.



Kent Sjöström and Alice Koubová during their performative lecture. Photo Oskar Helcel.

Theme Presentation No. 2: Kent Sjöström *The Quest for Change and the Conservative Actor*

It is customary for everybody occupied with theatre to encounter the opinion that theatre must change; it is accused of being outdated, and it must be more contemporary. It is a rather conservative art form, dependant on expensive institutions, male directors, and outdated playwrights.

The people asking for change are often those that have theoretical or philosophical agendas. They are sometimes met with an anti-intellectualism that is embarrassing. The Philosopher visiting the theatre is not always welcome.

In *Buying Brass* the Actor is first presented as the conservative fundament in the theatre. The Actor can be considered the main antagonist in relation to the guest, the Philosopher. So, Brecht first gives us the stereotypical critique of the Actor: egotistical, romantic, anti-intellectual, etc. He is critically presented as the most pathetic relic on the scene, a defender of his art as based in self-representation. But anyway, he uses arguments that finally make the Philosopher re-think his own stance. The Actor also re-evaluates his own stances. *Buying Brass* presents an ideal way of creating a fruitful discussion, but also the art of negotiating. It somewhat resembles the harmonious ending of the frame narrative in another play by Brecht, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Der kaukasische Kreidekreis, 1944).

I consider the Actor's resistance as due to the fact that his craft is mainly an embodied craft. A body is a far more conservative entity than the mindset, for sure: one's opinions might be changed, but one's bodily appearance and change are slow as evolution...

In the trendy marketplace of performance art, innovations, experiments, and provocations are honored. This rejuvenation is also signified by a tendency to build a personal brand. The theatre institution and the bodily-transformed knowledge that constitute it are easily considered medieval. But who is responsible for defending the good aspects of this tradition, like that of collective work?

And what about the Actress, the person who invited the Philosopher, and according to the role list, wants a politically engaged and educational theatre? It is hard to find her opinions in the play. In all she delivers two short statements that make sense, the rest is only filling in questions. The same goes for the Stagehand: he represents the workers and the new audience. He is mostly quiet. Could it be that the Philosopher is talking too much?

Alice:

What is emphasized through your talk, Kent, is for me a parallel ambivalence to that of Anders'. You presented the ambivalence of the thespian who is frustrated by cheap, conservative anti-intellectualism among actors, but who also sees the other option as potentially dangerous: the so-called progressive performance art based in self-branding, personal grandiosity, and self-presentation. My proposal is to reverse this negative perspective and discuss the issue from the successful side: Do you know about *any* theatre maker who succeeded to avoid this Scylla and Charybdis, the duality of cheap anti-intellectualism and cheap self-branding? And if so, *what exactly was significant for these productions?* How did the actors perform on stage? How did they communicate their message? What did you like about them? What kind of response did you notice in your mind and body?

Anders:

In Kent's call for change, he spoke about the conservatism of acting being due to a heaviness of bodies which is contrasted by a lightness of the mind. While I certainly agree that actors unfortunately tend to position themselves in an anti-intellectual corner, I would like to understand the gravity of bodies as a possible and potent path of persistence/resistance. How to identify healthy and productive resistance from reactionary anti-intellectualism? How can philosophy (or artistic research) contribute here and help the actor to articulate the healthy side of their stubbornness?



Alice Koubová, Anders Carlsson and Kent Sjöström. Photo Oskar Helcel.

Theme Presentation No. 3: Alice Koubová
Philosophy and Theatre: Ludic Ethos of the Encounter

You both mentioned contradictions that ask for tools that minimize cynicism and decisions driven by desires as well as self-grandiosity and the despising of intellect.

My question is: How can a fruitful encounter of philosophers and theatre practitioners look when facing this task? What kind of philosophy is needed here? What kind of philosophical attitude or ethos?

In *Buying Brass*, the Philosopher is invited to the theatre to help it, but he also has his own non-altruistic, professional interest! We learn that he is philosophically interested in how to “minimize terror of people, and the causes of human tragedies that are human ones.” He claims that “people know too little about themselves,” that they “can cope with earthquakes but not with their own kind.” And he believes that theatre could be of some help in analyzing and answering these questions. *He thus implicitly admits that philosophy cannot solve its own problems alone.* Philosophy searches for help outside the realm of philosophy – in the theatre. He has the same symmetrical need as the Actress has – to find support outside his own realm of expertise.

Why is the Philosopher searching outside? As we all know, philosophy as a love for wisdom was originally invented in order to destruct simplistic (normative, habituated) orientation in the world into a fruitful disorientation and then this disorientation into a more justified knowledge. But after several centuries of different attempts, we philosophers can only conclude, with Wittgenstein, that ultimate knowledge is utopian and impossible. We have already tried everything. Rationality, deprivation of desires, systematic scientific argumentation, hedonism, ascetism, creativity, meditations, relativism, quietism, pragmatism, transcendentalism, hermeneutical negotiation, vitalism, and decentralization of the subject.

Brecht's Philosopher in *Buying Brass* makes one mistake: he seems to be very cool and intelligent and superior to others in his Socratic way of destructing everyone's ideas. But implicitly he gives advice to theatre people so that they transform into a philosophical instrument. I have the impression that he compensates the philosophical failure through patronizing the others who should help him to achieve his own philosophical goals. And this I find another dead end, another narcissistic gesture, a secret grandiosity. Happily, the Philosopher also, maybe even against his own will, changes his position, as we have heard from Kent. Actually, this transformation, that was not intended and is secondary, seems crucial to me. This is how theatre performatively transforms philosophy.

I trust that current encounters between thespians and philosophers can find inspiration in this story. The gesture needed is to accept that we are living in the same world, and search for differences within the same world, in order to take care of them. Being aware of these differences may help us in taking a responsible step forward in our own realms of expertise. The real effect of moving theatre close to philosophy, and vice versa, has a form of side effects, not a form of cause *and* effect. Philosophy can be helpful for theatre, if it is hosted, but the decisions are taken by the thespians themselves.

Anders:

Alice said that philosophy contributes to a “fruitful disorientation,” as a method to facilitate more certain knowledge about the world and one's position in it. I wonder what kind of *event* such disorientation is, and how the effect is produced? Does it produce a distance between the subject and its experience of self and world? Is it a necessary event of *getting lost* followed by a new way of applying reason? It seems it has a dramaturgy, progressing from separation of self and world and then a re-integration. Now to my question: Can such an event of disorientation/reintegration happen without the problematic, patronizing provocation the Philosopher performs? Can it happen without the fallacy that Alice has pointed out?

Or, can we imagine a dialectic materialist protocol of change without the problematic hierarchies of power relations and the violence these entail? Or, how can a ludic approach (which probably pre-supposes an equal playground, a safe space, and an inside/outside of the game) transgress play and address reality?

Kent:

The Philosopher that is engaged in theatre today often brings a political agenda. Judith Butler, Chantal Mouffe, Sarah Ahmed, bell hooks... all of them enter the theatre, or the field of performance, with a lifted index finger and some demands: don't be ignorant, sexist, or re-enact gender conservatism. These interventions have provoked reactions and they are necessary.

But I am very satisfied with keeping my ambiguous attitude towards the Philosopher visiting the theatre. She is necessary, often as a provocateur, and has always been so in history, and many major changes in theatre have been anchored in philosophical agendas, like that of Diderot.

Something else came to mind, something more general, and contrasting to the *Buying Brass* Philosopher's demands on theatre: When some theoreticians visit the theatre and enter the practical work, they are searching for embodied knowledge, even embracing anti-intellectualism, and cultivating a rather romantic view of the actor's craft. Isn't it very much the same phenomenon as when Western culture appropriated Eastern cultures during the 19th and 20th century? If we accept this parallel, the current theatre can in a similar way be understood as the nourishment of the barren grounds or dryness of intellectualism and rationalism.

But I agree that theatre and philosophy can create a shared and ludic playground, and it will be an interesting time when creating the rules for this game. My hope is that philosophy can free the theatre from being trapped in its psychological cave (that it has inhabited for far too long). With such help, theatre can again discuss ideas, and not be caught in the fruitless possession of character traits and bad psychology. I think that this is the main wisdom that can be dredged up from *Buying Brass*. But then we must challenge the philosophical slogan "Gnothi seauton" – "know thyself."

At this point the three speakers offered the audience a final silence and then they announced the possibility for audience to comment, ask questions, or associate from their own experiences. It seems that the Buying Brass reenactment started only at this very point – when the lecture-performance ended. The audience members took over the proposed format and created a spontaneous discussion on important and relevant aspects of the theme. They tended to identify with particular roles in the contemporary theatre world and expressed their opinions from these perspectives. The initial lecture-performance created a sufficient playground for a rich and multilayered dialogue in the aftermath.



Discussion. Photo Oskar Helcel.

Anders Carlsson, Professor of Acting at the Theatre Academy of Uniarts Helsinki, actor, theatre director, and the former artistic founder and director of the Swedish theatre collective Institutet. Under the catchphrase “acting as expertise,” his agenda is to open the art form of acting to artistic research as to what acting is and to how it works in light of the performative turn.

Alice Koubová is a senior researcher at the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Associate Professor at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. She has published *Self-Identity and Powerlessness* (Brill, 2013), *Myslet z druhého místa. K otázce performativní filosofie* (To Think from the Secondary Position: Towards the Question of Performance Philosophy; NAMU, 2019), and other books and articles on performance philosophy, post-phenomenology, and ethics. She examines the performative aspects of thinking and reflective components of the theatre both theoretically and practically, i.e. performatively.

Kent Sjöström, Associate Professor at Malmö Theatre Academy, author of the monograph *Skådespelaren i handling. Strategier för tanke och kropp* (The Actor in Action: Strategies for Mind and Body, Carlssons, 2007) and a collection of essays about Brecht, *Rökarens blick. Skådespelarens Brecht* (The Smoker's Gaze, Nordic Spleen, 2019). His current research, appearing in workshops, seminars, and articles, focuses on how the working actor conveys ideology and theory, mainly with tools taken from Brecht's work.

Marc Silberman

Brecht, realismus a média