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# OMFÖRHANDLINGAR

## KROPP, REPLIK, ETIK

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**LUND**  
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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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University, Sweden.

To be defended at Malmö Theatre Academy

On February 12, 2018 at 14.00.

*Faculty opponents*

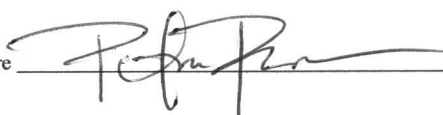
Theresa Benér, theatre critic

Cecilia Roos, professor

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<p>Abstract</p> <p><i>Renegotiations: Body, Line, Ethics</i> departs from questions concerning authorship and agency for actors in institutionalised settings and moves towards a discussion on ethics, responsibility and possibilities in the body – text relationship. The question of how bodies can be renegotiated in and by the theatrical line is central to the work. Against a backdrop of previous and other stage productions in theatre institutions and independent constellations the staging of three texts by Elfriede Jelinek: <i>Rosamunde</i>, <i>The Wall</i> and <i>Winterreise</i> becomes the method for investigating and articulating the authorship of the actor. An investigation of the possible renegotiation of the (female) body from social objectivity to existential subjectivity has unfolded through the three works, partly in dialogue with the thematic content of the texts but mainly through the process of reflection and action spurred by the actor's translation of the dramatic line into bodily and oral specificity, in the labour of making poetry concrete. The ethics of ambivalence proposed by Simone de Beauvoir has emerged as an important artistic method in these processes, as her ethics not only suggests a conceptual and political framing of the work and authorship of the actor as inherently ambivalent and transcendent, but also offers a range of methodological approaches to agency coupled with rather than opposed to doubt and self-criticism, for a simultaneous construction and questioning of subjectivity. Photos and videos from the three performances are part of the final presentation of the dissertation, as are three freely articulated responses from Christina Ouzounidis, Annika Nyman and Hanna Hallgren, who each expose critical, methodological and thematic aspects in one of the works.</p> <p>Part of the presentation is also an essay in four chapters. Departures and conflicts in the project is discussed, in a topology extending from institutional critique to methodology and feminist theory. The work and position of the actor is articulated in relation to thinkers as Hannah Arendt and Virginia Woolf, together with a feminist reading of a dialectical theatre tradition and the historical and philosophical understanding of "the woman" as proposed by Simone de Beauvoir. With Beauvoir the essay moves into a discussion of the theatrical situation as constituted by body and time rather than by social circumstances. This discussion is further deepened by the psychoanalytical approach offered by Julia Kristeva's understanding of the relationship between language and the speaking subject, and then moves into a description of the methods used, using the staging of <i>Rosamunde</i> as example. Finally, an attempt at articulating the actor's work as an ethical practice is presented, as a consequence of the previous discussion but also informed by the postcolonial analysis of feminism and translation of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Sara Ahmed's queer phenomenology and Judith Butler's approach to what constitutes "the possible."</p> <p>Rather than understanding the practice of the performing actor as a work aiming at communicating themes or ideas and bringing narratives to life, this dissertation suggests understanding it as a social and political becoming, where the performing body can create the possibility of observing itself and the possibility of renegotiating the creation of subjectivity; all in the moment of the performance. Thus the work concludes with an insisting on the body – text relationship as performative and potentially radically transformative: a becoming with the other and others where the body is exposed to the risk and possibility of change, a change in which desire, grief and insecurity are embraced as ethical resources.</p>	
<p>Key words</p> <p>Acting, Body, Theatrical line, Ethics, Action, Feminist theatre, Critical practice, Speaking subject, Ambiguity as method, Performativity, Artistic research, Elfriede Jelinek, Simone de Beauvoir, Julia Kristeva, Hannah Arendt, Virginia Woolf, Judith Butler, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Sarah Ahmed</p>	

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