

[Mobile book] Philosophers and Thespians: Thinking Performance (Cultural Memory in the Present)

# Philosophers and Thespians: Thinking Performance (Cultural Memory in the Present)

*Freddie Rokem*

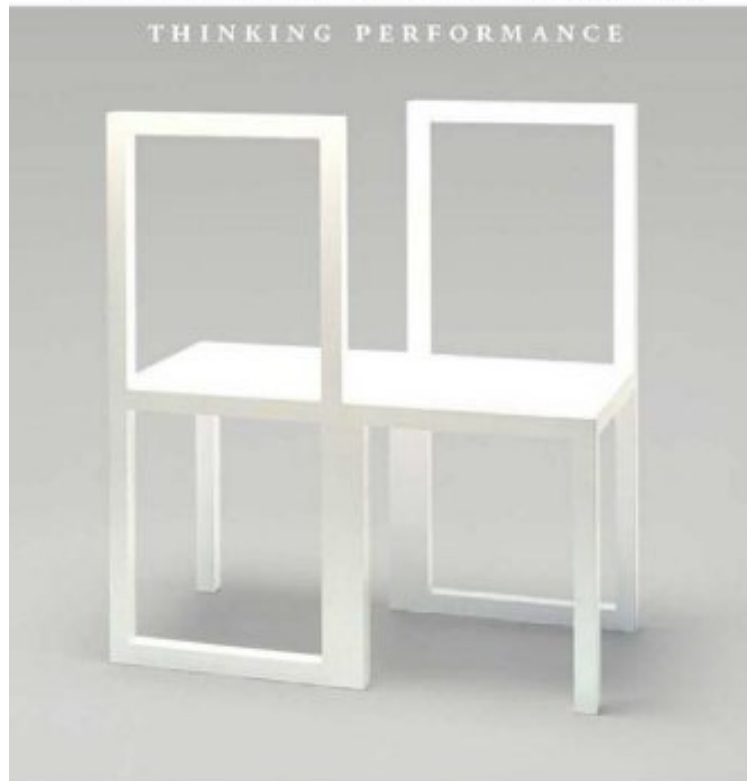
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Cultural Memory in the Present


**PHILOSOPHERS & THESPIANS**

THINKING PERFORMANCE



**FREDDIE ROKEM**

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**Freddie Rokem : Philosophers and Thespians: Thinking Performance (Cultural Memory in the Present)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Philosophers and Thespians: Thinking Performance (Cultural Memory in the Present):

The interaction between philosophy and theater or performance has recently become an important and innovative area

of inquiry. *Philosophers and Thespians* contributes to this emerging field by looking at four direct encounters between philosophers and thespians, beginning with Socrates, Agathon, and Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium* and ending with a discussion between Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht about a short text by Franz Kafka. Rokem also examines in detail Hamlet's complex and tragic split identity as both philosopher and thespian, as well as the intense correspondence between Friedrich Nietzsche and August Strindberg. His investigations—which move between the fictional and the historical—culminate in a comprehensive discussion of the notions of performance and performativity as derived from the discursive practices of philosophy and performance. At times competitive or mutually exclusive, these discourses also merge and engage with each other in creative ways.

"Rokem plays out interaction between Bertolt Brecht and Walter Benjamin as theatricalized philosophical thinking. The volume's second part, 'Constellations,' ponders 'performative agendas' embedded in narratives, wistful imaginings in which constellations of dramatic form take shape from points of thought." (P.D. Nelsen Choice)"This book, by theater historian and performance theorist Freddie Rokem, makes a significant contribution to both fields . . . Rokem has crafted an engaging and vigorous study of the relationship between theater and philosophy that does as Horace recommended theater do, instruct and delight." (Monica Prendergast *Comparative Literature Studies*)"This book's central and brilliant idea is to treat the relation between philosophy and theater not as an abstract, disciplinary one, but as an encounter between philosophers and theater people. By portraying actual and fictional encounters between philosophers, playwrights, and directors, Rokem reminds us that theater history has always been entangled with philosophy and that philosophy ignores the theater at its own peril." (Martin Puchner *Columbia University*)"This is an exemplary book of both comparison and drama. It describes four historical encounters between thespian-like philosophers and philosophically inclined thespians . . . Philosophers and thespians share in thinking and doing, in word and action. Rokem's method of writing and thinking—a method of eyewitnessing and commentary—intends to match and indeed does match his subject matter. The match makes this a most worthwhile book to read and to review." (Lydia Goehr)"*Philosophers and Thespians* is a cultural-studies discourse on human life as a journey. Rokem's book embraces wide-ranging cultural contexts that complement his philosophy of history. In contrast to the proponents of new historicism, Rokem supplements his subjective narration with substantive intertextual and historical research. The practical and detailed applications of the concept of performativity make this book a valuable companion to graduate cultural studies and philosophy programs." (Anna Kawalec)About the AuthorFreddie Rokem, author of the prizewinning *Performing History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre*, is the Emanuel Herzikowitz Professor for 19th and 20th-Century Art at Tel Aviv University.