

Contextualizing Gender
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Lecture - 34
Undoing Gender II


Welcome dear friends to this module. In the previous module, we had looked at the first part of Butler's famous work 'Undoing Gender'. In these early chapters, Butler has suggested that to 'do' one's gender, one has to critically 'undo' certain dominant norms of personhood. In today's module, we shall look at the final chapters of 'Undoing Gender'.

In these chapters, Butler addresses the possibility of powerful social transformation through effective critiquing of gender politics.


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Longing for Recognition

- In chapter 6 of *Undoing Gender*, Butler begins with an investigation of the work of Jessica Benjamin.
- Benjamin is an American psychoanalyst and feminist who is known for her interdisciplinary approach to subjectivity and gender in psychoanalysis.
- Butler reflects on her famous work *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination*, published in 1988.
 - This book uses psychoanalytic theory and feminist criticism to consider the problem of recognition, and domination, especially the persistence of women's subordination by men.



Jessica Benjamin
Source: ElSigma.com



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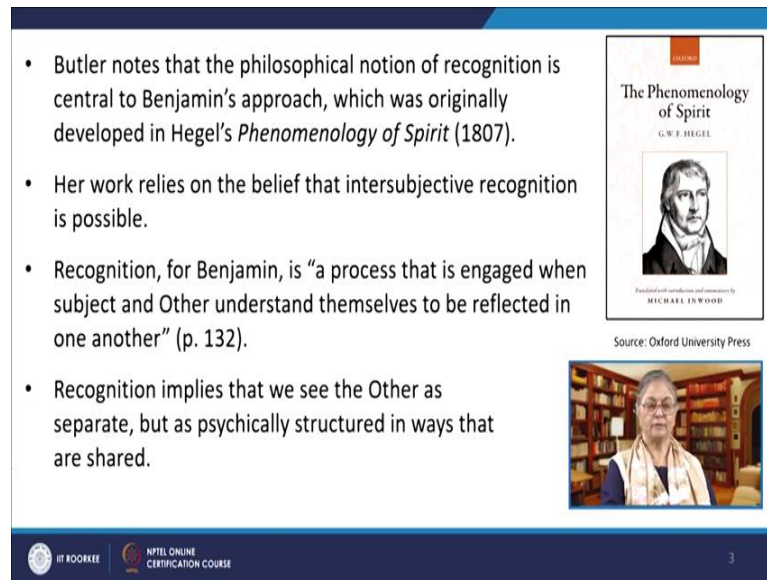
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psychoanalytic theory and feminist criticism to consider the problems of recognition and domination, especially the persistence of women's subordination by men.

Using contemporary research on infancy and gender, Benjamin argues for the importance of recognition among intersubjective relationships.

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The slide features a list of four bullet points on the left side, discussing Butler's views on recognition and its connection to Hegel's work. On the right side, there is a book cover for 'The Phenomenology of Spirit' by G.W.F. Hegel, edited and translated by Michael Inwood. Below the book cover is a small photograph of a woman, presumably the speaker, in a library setting. At the bottom of the slide, there are logos for 'IIT ROORKEE' and 'NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE', along with the number '3'.

- Butler notes that the philosophical notion of recognition is central to Benjamin's approach, which was originally developed in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807).
- Her work relies on the belief that intersubjective recognition is possible.
- Recognition, for Benjamin, is "a process that is engaged when subject and Other understand themselves to be reflected in one another" (p. 132).
- Recognition implies that we see the Other as separate, but as psychically structured in ways that are shared.


Source: Oxford University Press

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In Benjamin's appropriation of the Hegelian notion of recognition, recognition is a normative ideal, the condition under which the human subject achieves psychic self-understanding and acceptance.

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- Benjamin's work has evolved from a foundation that assumes 'dyadic' relations in which two individuals relate, to a foundation based on 'triadic' relations.
- The third entity in this triad is not a person but the relationship that the two partners create.
- Rethinking the binary model for relationships complicates how people process the connection between sexuality and gender, especially for non-heterosexuals.
- Butler opines that it is difficult to classify the sexuality of a transgender person as homosexual or heterosexual, hence the need to think beyond the traditional dyad or binary.



Source: Pantheon Books



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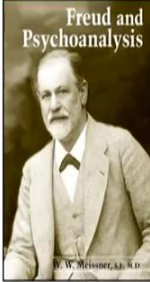
Rethinking the binary model for relationships complicates how people process the connection between sexuality and gender, especially for non-heterosexuals. Butler opines that it is difficult to classify the sexuality of a transgender person as homosexual or heterosexual, hence there is a need to think beyond the traditional dyad or binary.

Forcefully classifying the transgender individuals into one of the categories can cause a splitting in the psychoanalytic sense. Butler lauds Benjamin's dialogue on gender and sexuality which intersects philosophy and psychoanalysis. She underlines the importance of relationality in the process of recognition. By successfully displacing the binary model of thinking about relationality, Benjamin has helped us to appreciate the triangulating echoes of heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual desire.


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Quandaries of the Incest Taboo

- Butler, in this chapter, discusses the intricate relationship between the discourse of incest and normative kinship.
- It is challenging to discuss the term 'incest', as it is surrounded by a sense of shame.
- But psychoanalysis as a theory and practice rejuvenated the questions of incest and kinship.
- Similarly, in structural linguistics, primary incest taboo becomes the way in which sexual positions are occupied, masculine and feminine are differentiated, and heterosexuality is secured.



Source: Notre Dame University Press



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In her chapter on 'Quandaries of the Incest Taboo', Butler discusses the intricate relationship between the discourse of incest and normative kinship. It is challenging to discuss the term incest, as it is surrounded by a sense of shame. But psychoanalysis as a theory and practice rejuvenated the questions of incest and kinship. Similarly, in structural linguistics, primary incest taboo becomes the way in which sexual positions are occupied, masculine and feminine are differentiated, and heterosexuality is secured.


Butler is looking at numerous ways by which a normalisation of sexuality takes place along with its inevitable deviations. She is also keen on decoding how psychoanalysis categorises the incest taboo.

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- Historically, and also commonly, incest is described as a punishable fantasy.
- The epistemological quandaries of incest taboo also revolve around the concepts of memory, event and desire.
- These aspects are detailed in present-day Trauma Studies, primarily in the works of theorists of literary trauma – Shoshana Felman and Cathy Caruth.
- Felman and Caruth believe that “trauma is, by definition, not capturable through representation or recollection; it is precisely that which renders all memory false” (Butler, 2004, p. 153).



Cathy Caruth
Source: Cornell University



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Historically, as well as commonly, incest is described as a punishable fantasy. The epistemological quandaries of incest taboo also revolve around the concepts of memory, event, and desire. These aspects are detailed in present-day Trauma Studies, primarily in the works of theorists of literary trauma: Shoshana Felman and Cathy Caruth. Felman and Caruth believe that “trauma is, by definition, not capturable through representation or recollection, it is precisely that which renders all memory false”.

Butler notes that those who want to underscore the prevalence of incest as an abusive family practice tend to insist that it is a memory of an event.

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- Psychoanalysts, however, argue that the incest trauma takes its toll on narrativity.
- As incest takes a traumatic form, it is not recoverable as an event. Therefore, it cannot take the form of a remembered or narratable event.
- Butler says, “incestuous trauma is variously figured as a brute imposition on the child’s body” (p. 154).
- It would remain as the radically unrepresentable in the child’s experience and in the adult’s memory whose childhood is under discussion.




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Psychoanalysts, however, argue that the incest trauma takes its toll on narrativity. As incest takes a traumatic form, it is not recoverable as an event. Therefore, it cannot take the form of a remembered or a narratable event. Butler says that, “incestuous trauma is variously figured as a brute imposition on the child’s body”. It would remain as a radically unrepresentable in the child’s experience and also in the adult’s memory whose childhood is under discussion.

Psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud attributes incestuous fantasy and its prohibition to the process by which gender differentiation takes place. Butler believes that this also leads to an unwarranted sexual ordering of gender.

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- Butler is against classifying incest as a taboo that should not be talked about in the society.
- She argues that, “by refusing to consider what happens to the child’s love and desire in the traumatic incestuous relation with an adult, we fail to describe the depth and psychic consequence of that trauma” (p. 155).
- The existence of a taboo against incest presumes that a family structure is already there.
- The symbolic family structure with a mother and father prohibits people from acting out sexual taboos.



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Butler is against classifying incest as a taboo that should not be talked about in the society. She argues that, “by refusing to consider what happens to the child’s love and desire in the traumatic incestuous relation with an adult, we fail to describe the depth and psychic consequences of that trauma”.

The existence of a taboo against incest presumes that a family structure is already there. The symbolic family structure with a mother and father prohibits people from acting out sexual taboos.

This stigmatised sexual irregularity which is repulsive and unthinkable also institutes the norms of heterosexual kinship. Within structuralism, the symbolic positions of mother and father are only secured through the prohibition. Thus, the law that would state the incest taboo as the foundation of symbolic family structure will secure a universality of limited gender possibilities.

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- One of the symbolic consequences of such prohibition is the “de-realization of lesbian and gay forms of parenting, single-mother households, blended family arrangements in which there may be more than one mother or father” (Butler, 2004, p. 158).
- This taboo-based approach will also aid in creating prohibitive discourses surrounding different forms of love, like a lack of recognition for homosexuality.
- If the incest taboo is what is supposed to install the subject in heterosexual normativity, then “homosexual love will emerge as the unintelligible within the intelligible” (p. 160) – a love whose positioning is denied with kinship.



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One of the symbolic consequences of such prohibition is as, Butler suggests, the de-realization of lesbian and gay forms of parenting, single-mother households, blended family arrangements in which there may be more than one mother or father.


This taboo-based approach will also aid in creating prohibitive discourses surrounding different forms of love, like a lack of recognition for homosexuality. If the incest taboo is what is supposed to install the subject in heterosexual normativity, then “homosexual love will emerge as the unintelligible within the intelligible” a love whose positioning is denied with kinship.

Butler highlights how there is a need to do away with stereotypical symbolic family structure to pave the way for acceptance of alternative family structures.

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Bodily Confessions

- In this chapter, Butler closely looks at the act of confession. She examines the relationship between language, body and psychoanalysis.
- Critically shifting her focus towards Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, Butler looks at what Foucault has termed as "pastoral power"-- which refers to the organization of modern political power, in countries like the US, with elements of Christian institutions.
- According to Foucault, implicit within the Christian notion of the pastor is that certain people can care for and minister to the 'soul' of others. This also suggests that application of this knowledge is how people are administered and controlled.



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In the chapter on 'Bodily Confessions', Butler closely looks at the act of confession and examines the relationship between language, body and psychoanalysis in this context. Critically shifting her focus towards Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, Butler looks at what Foucault has termed as "pastoral power" which refers to the organization of modern political power, in countries like the USA, with elements of Christian institutions.

According to Foucault, implicit within the Christian notion of the pastor is that certain people can care for and minister to the 'soul' of others. This also suggests the application of this knowledge is how people are administered and controlled.


Therefore, pastoral power is that form of power by which the administration of the soul takes place. The claim to know the soul of the other and directed towards salvation can place the pastor in a position with an authoritative discourse of truth.

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- For Foucault, the way in which we come to be controlled by such an authoritative discourse is by confession.
- Foucault believes that confessing to a member of the clergy in church has been replaced with confessing to a psychoanalyst and that the person hearing the confession does so to increase their power.
- He finds that confessions have also become the way for people to speak about their repressed desires or accomplished deeds.
- For Butler, “the speaking of the confession in the psychoanalytic setting becomes a different bodily act than the one that is being confessed” (p. 165).



Michel Foucault
Source: Pixels.com



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He finds that confessions have also become the way for people to speak about their personal desires, repressed desires or accomplished deeds. For Butler, “the speaking of the confession in the psychoanalytic setting becomes a different bodily act than the one that is being confessed”.


Butler disagrees with Foucault on the discourse of confession that psychoanalysis is inherited from pastoral power. She says that confession is not the only time a psychoanalyst can exert control. She further explains her attempts to understand the performative force of their spoken utterance and how a confession opens the self to interpretation by referring to a Greek play ‘Antigone’ by Sophocles.

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- **Antigone's Confession:** To elaborate her position, Butler analyses the confession of Antigone in Sophocles' play.
 - This play was first performed around 442 BCE. Antigone buries her dead brother in defiance of a law set by the king. She openly confesses to the king about the deed by which she broke the law.
- Butler says, "Antigone comes to act in ways that are called 'manly' because she acts in defiance and assumes the voice of the law" (p. 168).

As a woman Antigone uses the language of her confession to take on manhood.




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Antigone was first performed around 442 BCE. Antigone buries her dead brother in defiance of a law set by the king. She openly confesses to the king about the deed by which she broke the law. As a woman, Antigone has used the language of her confession to take on manhood and Butler says that, "Antigone comes to act in ways that are called 'manly' because she acts in defiance and assumes the voice of the law".

Her agency emerges through her refusal to submit to the king's command. In her utterance, she resembles King Creon and his speech. It can be said that Antigone required a sacrifice of autonomy at the very moment in which the act of confession is performed. Because she asserted herself through appropriating the voice and the rhetoric of the king. Thus, within the traces of Antigone's resistance, one can find an assimilation to the authoritarian voice that she is refusing.

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- Butler wonders if Antigone is actually more suicidal than defiant. Antigone is aware of the fact that the act of defying the king would guarantee capital punishment. So, it is with her confession that she both assumes her power and secures her death.
- Butler cites Freud's essay "Criminals From a Sense of Guilt" to show how people commit misdeeds because of a persistent sense of guilt.
- The punishment she knows as inevitable is a way of atoning a sin. Antigone is the child of an incestual relation and this affects her adult life.
- Butler states that confessions not only change the subject from the misdeed but can also work to rationalize feelings of guilt.



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Butler wonders if Antigone is actually more suicidal than defiant. Antigone is aware of the fact that the act of defying the king would result into capital punishment and it is with her confession that she both assumes her power and also secures her death. Butler cites Freud's essay "Criminals From a Sense of Guilt" to show how people commit misdeeds because of a persistent sense of guilt.


The punishment she knows as inevitable is a way of atoning a sin. Antigone is a child of an incestual relation, and this affects her adult life. Butler states that confessions not only change the subject from the misdeed but can also work to rationalize feelings of guilt.

Antigone's confession in Butler's reading produces a set of consequences that illuminate a desire for punishment, a final relief from guilt, a freeing from cultural taboo of incest. So, Butler finds that confession is more than an occasion to assume control and authority like Foucault's proposition. The spoken word can be a bodily act since speech is an action of the body.

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The End of Sexual Difference?

- In this chapter, Butler looks at the limitations and problems behind finding a single definition for gender.
- She also reflects on the presence of a 'global view of feminism.'
- She believes that no definition of feminism will go uncontested.
- Feminists around the world seek a more substantial equality for women and call for equality in social and political institutions.
- But the moment we focus on a particular issue or community, differences emerge and the use of specific terms becomes problematic.



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In this chapter titled, 'The End of Sexual Difference', Butler looks at the limitations and problems behind finding a single definition for gender. She also reflects on the presence of a 'global view of feminism'. She believes that no definition of feminism will go uncontested.

Feminists around the world seek a more substantial equality for women and call for equality in social and political institutions. But the moment we focus on a particular issue or community, differences emerge, and the use of specific terms becomes problematic.

There can be arguments over what is justice, is it the same as fair treatment or what is its relation to freedom and which freedoms are desired and how they are to be valued and similar other opinions. So, before agreeing upon a meaningful international formulation, disagreements among women on the questions of freedom and equality should be taken into consideration.

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- As a democratic enterprise, feminism had to forfeit many presumptions and embrace a notion that certain values will remain contested politically.
 - Butler says that “criticisms of feminism as inattentive to questions of race and to the conditions of global inequality that condition its Euro-American articulation continue to put into doubt the broad coalitional power of the movement” (Butler, 2004, p. 175).
- These engaged political practices attempt to identify and resolve internal dissents, and they can also bring about a unity which will keep the movement alive.
- Feminist theory and feminism as a social movement go hand in hand for Butler. She says:
 - Feminist theory is never fully distinct from feminism as a social movement. Feminist theory would have no content were there no movement, and the movement, in its various directions and forms, has always been involved in the act of theory. (Butler, 2004, p. 175)



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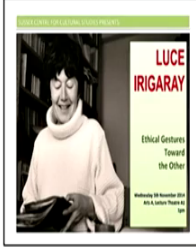
As a democratic enterprise, feminism had to forfeit many presumptions and embrace a notion that certain values will remain politically contested. These engaged political practices attempt to identify and resolve internal dissents, and they can also bring about a unity which will keep the movement alive.

Feminist theory and feminism as a social movement go hand in hand for Butler and she says: “Feminist theory is never fully distinct from feminism as a social movement. Feminist theory would have no content were there no movement, and the movement, in its various directions and forms has always been involved in the act of theory” unquote.


Therefore, theory is an activity that does not remain restricted to the academy in Butler’s opinion. Theory becomes relevant every time a possibility is imagined or when a dispute enters over values and priorities to interpret fundamental issues.

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- Butler considers the terms which can possibly cause a conflict, in this chapter. She elects to elaborate on the term “sexual difference.”
- She questions if ‘sexual difference’ is thought as a framework by which the movements for gender equality are defeated in advance.
- Sexual difference as explained by Luce Irigaray is the theory that Western psychoanalysis ‘assumes’. The ego or the subject is male and sexless, while the female is the Other or non-subject.
- Butler thinks that it is better to interrogate the idea of sexual difference and the language used to describe it rather than assuming sexual difference.



Luce Irigaray
Source: University of Sussex



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In this chapter, Butler also considers the terms which can possibly cause a conflict and she elects to elaborate on the term “sexual difference”. She questions if sexual difference is thought as a framework by which the movements for gender equality are defeated in advance.

Sexual difference as explained by Luce Irigaray is the theory that western psychoanalysis ‘assumes’. The ego or the subject is male and sexless, while the female is the other or non-subject. Butler thinks that it is better to interrogate the idea of sexual difference in the language used to describe it rather than assuming sexual difference.


According to western psychoanalysis which Irigaray critiques, the male perspective is considered first and held up as a norm, while the female perspective always remains outside of the norm. By underlining the significance of language, Butler says that it is important to secure a theoretical basis for the employment of political signifiers to fight the iniquities within contemporary public culture.

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- The Deleuzian feminist critic, in her *Metamorphoses* (2002), critically looked at Butler's 'reduction of body' to discourse and "social repression".
 - Braidotti suggests that, because of a reduction of flesh to discourse and "psychic foreclosure" to "social repression", Butler's work loses sight of "the embodied nature of the subject" and is unable to theorize the kinds of radical "metamorphoses" that she seeks to think.
- Butler responds to the criticism by Rosi Braidotti in *Undoing Gender*, where she highlights that she is not ignoring any form of "future imaginings" in gender theory.
- Butler is of the opinion that there is no single way to define gender.



Rosi Braidotti
Source:
rosibraidotti.com



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At this stage, Butler also responds to the criticism by Rosi Braidotti. The Deleuzian feminist critic, in her famous work 'Metamorphoses' which was published in 2002, Rosi Braidotti has critically looked at Butler's 'reduction of body' to discourse and "social representation".

Braidotti suggests that because of a reduction of flesh to discourse and psychic foreclosure to social repression, Butler's work loses sight of the embodied nature of the subject and is unable to theorize the kinds of radical metamorphoses that she seeks to think.

In 'Undoing Gender', Butler responds to it and highlights that she is not ignoring any form of future imaginings in gender theory. Butler is of the opinion that there is no single way to define and understand gender.

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- Butler feels that Instead of trying to pin down a definition for gender, it would be better to follow the changes in the meanings of gender that undergo in public culture.
- Butler here reiterates that her theoretical approach is not in opposition to the rhizomatic thinking of Giles Deleuze or Rosi Braidotti, rather her philosophy is largely influenced by Hegel and Foucault.
- She says that perhaps it is more relevant to think through the debates on the body, as it can reflect on the cultural construction of sexual difference and bodily process.
- Butler shows how new gender politics can look into the technologies of the body (surgical, hormonal, athletic) and how these are capable of generating new forms of understandings of gender and the body.



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She feels that instead of trying to pin down a definition for gender, it would be better to follow the challenges in the meanings of gender that undergo in public culture. Here Butler reiterates that her theoretical approach is not in opposition to the rhizomatic thinking of Giles Deleuze or Rosi Braidotti, rather her philosophy is largely influenced by Hegel and Foucault.


She says that perhaps it is more relevant to think through the debates on the body, as it can reflect on the cultural construction of sexual difference and bodily process. Butler shows how new gender politics can look into the technologies of the body that is surgical, hormonal or athletic and how these are capable of generating new forms of understandings in the context of gender and the body.

Butler here hints at later theories on trans-humanist and post-humanist discourses in critics like Anne Balsamo and Rosi Braidotti. These critics reflect on the plurality of bodies at the intersection of science and technology. We shall examine these two major critics extensively in the upcoming weeks.

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The Question of Social Transformation

- In chapter 10 of *Undoing Gender*, Butler reflects on the social transformation of gender relations.
- People can have opposing opinions on what qualifies as a transformational exercise.
- Butler argues that we must also have an idea of how theory relates to the process of transformation.
- Something besides theory must take place as well, such as interventions that involve actions, sustained labor and examining institutionalized practices.




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In chapter 10 of ‘Undoing Gender’, Butler reflects on the social transformation of gender relations. People can have opposing opinions on what qualifies as a transformational exercise. Butler argues that we must also have an idea of how theory relates to the process of transformation. Something besides theory must take place as well, such as interventions that involve actions, sustained labor in examining institutionalized practices.

It is crucial to know how theory is itself a transformative work that has transformation as one of its effects. However, Butler expresses that theory alone is not sufficient for social and political transformation.

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- Butler looks at philosophical pursuits aimed at social transformation.
- Feminism has been consistently philosophical in that it always considered questions of life, quality of life, and death. She notes how feminist philosophy has asked questions like what is a good life, what would be a good life for women, how do we organize life, how do we accord it value, and how do we safeguard it against violence?
- Butler, in this chapter, revisits her work *Gender Trouble* to take on the questions of violence, and the possible transformation of the scene of gender violence into a future of social survival.
- She says that the primary aim of writing *Gender Trouble* was to highlight the heterosexism in feminist theory.




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Butler looks at philosophical pursuits aimed at social transformation. Feminism has been consistently philosophical in that it always considered questions of life, quality of life and death. Butler notes how feminist philosophy has asked questions like what is a good life, what would be a good life for women, how do we organize life, how do we accord it value, and how do we safeguard it against violence?

Butler revisits her work ‘Gender Trouble’ to take on the questions of violence, and the possible transformation of the scene of gender violence into a future of social survival. She says that the primary aim of writing ‘Gender Trouble’ was to highlight the heterosexism in feminist theory. She wanted to envision how those living outside of established gender norms could value themselves even when the society does not.

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- In *Gender Trouble*, she argued that sexual difference is not the same as the categories of women and men.
- Sexual difference is a category that conditions the emergence of gender into language and culture.
- By looking at how gender is complexly produced through identificatory and performative practices, one can combat various forms of essentialism.
- We live in a world which can risk serious disenfranchisement and physical violence if one fails to perform the scripted gender roles.




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In ‘Gender Trouble’, she argued that sexual difference is not the same as the categories of women and men. Sexual difference is a category that conditions the emergence of gender into language and culture. By looking at how gender is complexly produced through identificatory and performative practices, one can combat various forms of essentialism. We live in a world which can risk serious disenfranchisement and physical violence if one fails to perform the scripted gender roles.

Butler shows how, when gender norms are violated, people can lose their job, home, the prospects for desire in life. Women and men exist as social norms and one should not overlook how sexual difference operates as a symbolic order. This prompts feminist theory to rethink the idea of social transformation.

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- It is important to understand how the terms of gender are instituted, naturalized, and established as presuppositional.
- This will help to dispute and challenge the binary system of gender and question the coherence of the categories.
- Additionally, sustaining bonds of community, where recognition becomes possible; are essential to ward off violence, racism and homophobia.
- To prevent instances of gender violence, one has to decode “why certain gender presentations are criminalized and pathologized” (p. 218).



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It is important to understand how the terms of gender are instituted, naturalized, and established as presuppositional. This will help to dispute and challenge the binary system of gender and question the coherence of the categories. Additionally, sustaining bonds of community where recognition becomes possible, are essential to ward off violence, racism, and homophobia. To prevent instances of gender violence, one has to decode “why certain gender presentations are criminalized and pathologized”.

The desire to understand gender and to live outside of the normative realm can only thrive without the threat of violence from the community and the state.


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Beyond the Subject with Spivak

- Butler, in this chapter, looks at different ways of questioning the foundational status of the category of the subject.
- Gayatri Spivak has explicated the concept of a 'fractured subject'. She argues that we cannot examine the oppression that the women of color have experienced within a global framework if we neglect the first world imperialism in deciding a unitary category for women.
- This category must undergo a crisis to expose its fractures to public discourse.



Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak
Source: transform-network.net



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Butler also looks at different ways of questioning the foundational status of the category of the subject and she refers to Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, who has explicated the concept of a 'fractured subject'. She argues that we cannot examine the oppression that the women of colour have experienced within a global framework if we neglect the first world imperialism in deciding a unitary category for women. This category must undergo a crisis to expose its fractures to public discourses.


To question the foundationalism of a category is not the same as doing away with the category altogether. To question the subject is to put at risk what we already know. Spivak urges us to listen to the voices of the disenfranchised and also to represent those voices in one's critical work.

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- Butler notes that Spivak has translated the work of Mahasweta Devi, a renowned fiction writer in Bengali, and whose works appear in the academia.
- Devi writes as a tribal woman, for and about tribal women's rights and challenges, but the "tribal" is precisely what becomes complex to identify in the course of her writing.
- Butler highlights that Devi's voice arrives in the first world through a translation. In the process of translation a vision of internationality is at stake.
- Butler quotes Spivak who says that a strong connection between the "bourgeoisie of the Third World and migrants in the First cannot be ignored" (p. 230).



Mahasweta Devi
Source: NY Times



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Butler notes that Spivak has translated the work of Mahasweta Devi, a renowned fiction writer in Bengali whose works appear in the academia. Devi writes as a tribal woman for and about tribal women's rights and challenges, but the tribal is precisely what becomes complex to identify in the course of her writing.

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In Devi's stories, women mainly suffer because the land is exploited and ravished because the traditional means of labour are systematically exploited by developers. In the sense, it is a local story, but those developers are also linked to broader currents in global capitalism.

The political vision that emerges from Devi's translation influences long-term radical environmental politics and inspires non-violence as a political practice. For Spivak, the subaltern like the tribal woman has been excluded from the parameters of the western subject and the historical trajectory of modernity.

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Can the “Other” of Philosophy Speak?

- In the final chapter of *Undoing Gender*, Butler reflects on the discipline of philosophy and her own philosophical career which began with Jewish education.
- Her first introduction to major philosophers like Spinoza and Kierkegaard was through her parents and she found philosophy as a form of consolation.
- Her time in Germany and her Jewish intellectual background also influenced her thoughts on human vulnerability, crisis and violence.
- After she came across Foucault’s work on politics and philosophy, only then she started devising a particular approach to gender.




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Formiranje vrednosti
Defining of Values

Source: FMK Beograd [YouTube]

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Butler on Philosophy and the Humanities

- Interview held at the 2015 International Conference on 'How to Act Together' in Serbia.
- Butler talks about the disciplinary nature of Humanities and how human values are defined and conveyed through it.



In an interview held at the 2015 International Conference on 'How to Act Together' in Serbia, Butler talks about the disciplinary nature of humanities and how human values are defined and conveyed through it.

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Mislim da ono što studenti na fakultetu nalaze

Source: FMK Beograd [YouTube]

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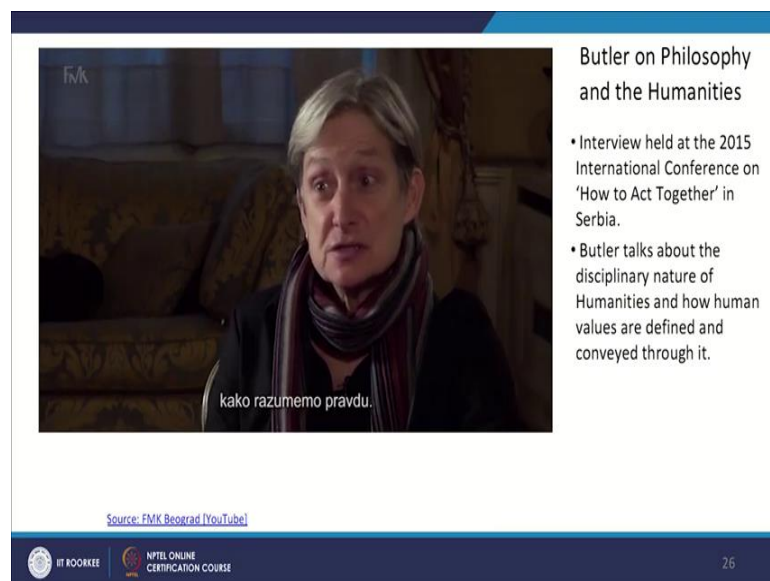
Butler on Philosophy and the Humanities

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- Butler talks about the disciplinary nature of Humanities and how human values are defined and conveyed through it.

I do think that one thing that university students find is that there are still certain values that are more highly prized than other values, do you have to show that the work you do is useful, do you have to show that it has an impact, do you have to show that it is not just profitable, but in some ways recognized within a larger, scientific or technological community.

The arts and the humanities have to struggle when our values become defined through some of those market values. But it does seem to me that the university is a place where you can reflect on market values, why and how did market values become the ultimate value in the university even in the free university.

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Butler on Philosophy and the Humanities

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kako razumemo pravdu.

Source: FVK Beograd [YouTube]

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How do we think about the value of the arts, the arts in public life, how do we think about the value of literature not just the life of imagination, but also the important ways in which we can consider alternate views of reality through reading a literary text and being productively displaced from our everyday understanding. A philosophy what is possible, what is right, what can we hope for, how do we understand justice.

Although departments like philosophy are on the decline pedagogically and popularity wise, human values of justice associated with topics like gender could undergo a thorough study in these institutions. Butler notes that universities are influenced by market values, but they also become a space to reflect on the impact of global capitalism

and help us to envision alternate views of reality through reading texts and decoding our everyday understanding of reality.

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- In *Undoing Gender*, Butler examines the problems with binary gender categories.
- Gender is more like a spectrum and one has to embrace the idea that there are more than two ways to express gender identity.
- By analyzing kinship structures, Butler asserts that many people believe that the family is supposed to consist of two parents -- one male and one female. She states that alternative kinship structures threaten that status quo.
- Butler connects kinship structures to the incest taboo. The incest taboo can be a way to maintain an ethnic purity of heterosexuality.




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In ‘Undoing Gender’, Butler examines the problems with binary gender categories. Gender is more like a spectrum, and one has to embrace the idea that there are more than two ways to express gender identity.

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- Butler includes intersex people -- those are born with, or who later develop, physical features that do not adhere to the expected norms for being a male or a female.
- Many intersex people have suffered after being forced into one of the two genders that many societies routinely recognize.
- She takes various examples from literature and contemporary social issues.
- She analyses ancient Greek play *Antigone* by Sophocles. She also undertakes a case study of David Reimer who was born as a boy but was brought up as a girl after he was made to undergo a sex reassignment surgery.




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- Butler wants people to be free to define themselves, but knows that this is difficult when society has already laid out roles for people to assume.
- She also explains the important difference between gender and sexuality, and how they cannot be equated as the same.
- Identifying with a certain gender does not mean a person is engaging in the sexual acts associated with that gender.



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Butler wants people to be free to define themselves, but knows that this is difficult when society has already laid out roles for people to assume. She explains the important difference between gender and sexuality, and how they cannot be equated as the same. Identifying with a certain gender does not mean a person is engaging in the sexual acts associated with that gender.

The ideas depicted an undoing gender were revolutionary for its time. This book still remains an important work in Butler's contribution to gender studies, shaping and influencing contemporary understandings.

In this module, we have looked at the final chapters of 'Undoing Gender'. In the final module of this week, we shall look at how Butler tests the limits of individual resistance by a deeper understanding of subjectivity.

Thank you.

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