



Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France

By Judith Butler

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This classic work by one of the most important philosophers and critics of our time charts the genesis and trajectory of the desiring subject from Hegel's formulation in *Phenomenology of Spirit* to its appropriation by Kojève, Hyppolite, Sartre, Lacan, Deleuze, and Foucault. Judith Butler plots the French reception of Hegel and the successive challenges waged against his metaphysics and view of the subject, all while revealing ambiguities within his position. The result is a sophisticated reconsideration of the post-Hegelian tradition that has predominated in modern French thought, and her study remains a provocative and timely intervention in contemporary debates over the unconscious, the powers of subjection, and the subject.

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Editorial Review

Review

Butler's book... is an outstanding one, and deserves to be read by anyone interested in the question of the survival(s) of Hegel in contemporary French philosophy.*Annals of Scholarship*

(Annals of Scholarship)

[Butler] writes clearly and without jargon.... The impact of Butler's work is immense.*The French Review*
The French Review

(The French Review)

Subjects of Desire gives evidence of long reflection on important texts and issues in the Continental tradition. There is a sure-footedness of judgment here that historians ought to envy.

(The Journal of Modern History)

What [Butler's] account suggests is that the most damaging aspect of contemporary French Hegel reception is that its highly critical emphasis on the metaphysical issues of identity, rationality, and historical closure have so obscured Hegel's original idealism, especially his theory of reflection, that the rejection of Hegel brings with it, with a kind of dialectical necessity, the return of the pre-Hegelian, even the pre-Kantian, a kind of naive hope for 'immediacy' and, paradoxically, a commitment to a realism that the idealist tradition was to have finished off.

(The Philosophical Review)

About the Author

Judith Butler is the Maxine Eliot Professor in the Department of Rhetoric and Comparative Literature at the University of California at Berkeley, and Visiting Professor in the Humanities at Columbia University. Her books include *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism*; *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*; *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*; and *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*.

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