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Vulnerability of the Subject, Opacity of Desire: Judith Butler Dislocating Psychoanalysis

Summary:

Subject of Desire (1987) is Butler's PhD dissertation, dedicated to the reception of Hegel in the Twentieth-Century French philosophy. The author shows how crucial this book is for a proper understanding of the development of Butler's thought and how her argumentative method – indebted both to Michel Foucault's genealogy and Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis – is grounded on a theory of subjectivity which actually derives from Hegel. Particular attention is given on the complex relation between Butler and psychoanalysis, and in the conclusion some questions are posed about the pacifism of the late work of Butler that revolves around the ethics of psychoanalysis.