 Logistic(s) OF Subjection. Butler’s Symptomatic Reading Of Hegel And Lacan ON The Symbolic ¹

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Summary

The aim of this paper is to present you the way by which, in the construction of her theory of gender and subjection, Judith Butler maintained as crucial references of “critical support”, the works of Hegel and J. Lacan and their respective placements of Sittlichkeit² and symbolic.

We must acknowledge first that in Butler’s work the predominant effort is mainly concerned with an attempt to plea against a universal model of subjection or resistance³, throughout her different books she never ceases to affirm that any logic of subjection and emancipation, in order to avoid the risk of misappropriation, must be conceived as

¹ With the exception of some minor changes, this text conforms to the one that supported my reading in the colloquium in 24 of June 2008. I want to present my gratitude to Dr. Laura Werner for her pleasant comments; they have helped me in clarify the purposes of this article.

² Taken by Butler as «the shared set of [changeable] norms, conventions and values that constitute the cultural horizon in which subject emerges into self-consciousness (...)» (Butler, 2000 b:172).

³ In this Butler’s reiterated critiques to forms of feminism that remaining “stubbornly” attached to oppressive norms claimed in name of a putative identity of femininity for instance. In Lacanian legacy we encounter Julia Kristeva’s theorization of the platonic chora as the disruptive identity placed in the outside, other of the symbolic order. Against this kind of identitarian politics, in its essentialists or “diaphanous” modes, Butler advances a rational critique of the very terms used in the construction of the fiction of identity and the norms attached with it. But Butler asserts that criticism is not enough given the dependence of one’s existence in the normative sanctioned terms. (Cf. Butler, 1997: 129).