

# Kulturalistična ideologija v literarni teoriji: od »kritične« teorije performativa do »topične« konceptije performativnosti

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*Stari prepad med humanistiko in naravoslovjem pravkar cinično premošča neoliberalno podrejanje tako humanistične kakor naravoslovne teorije ekspertni vednosti, v humanistiki zlasti kulturnim študijem, med ključnimi viri katerih je konceptija performativnosti. Članek oriše proces, ki vodi od Austinove prototeoretske »nomotetične« izključitve literature iz teorije performativa do ideološke »idiografične« utemeljitve konceptije performativnosti pri J. Butler na literaturi.*

Ključne besede: literarna teorija / teorija govornih dejanj / performativnost / kulturni študiji / ideologija / neoliberalizem / performativnost

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Obravnavali bomo institucionalne učinke teorije performativnosti. Institucionalni okvir te teorije, univerzitetne in raziskovalne ustanove v centru stagnirajočega severnoameriškega systemskega akumulacijskega cikla, je trenutno ena strateških tarč neoliberalnih varčevalnih ukrepov. To, kar je sprva videti kot politika zmanjševanja sredstev za humanistiko v prid naravoslovju, je zgolj humanistična projekcija politike odpovedovanja teoriji – bodisi humanistični ali pa naravoslovni – v imenu ekspertne vednosti, nasprotja teorije: naravoslovje je vse bolj poglobljeno za produkcijo reči, humanistika pa za produkcijo ljudi, ki jo vse bolj ogroža produkcija reči. Naravoslovje nadomeščajo informacijske tehnologije, t. i. vojaško-industrijski kompleks in farmacevtska industrija, humanistiko (in družboslovje) pa upravljanje s človeškimi viri, območni in kulturni študiji. Prepada med humanistiko in naravoslovjem, ki ga je postulirala vsaj že Aristotelova *Nikomahova etika* (gl. Knjigo VI; prim. Yu 8–23), tako

brezsramno premošča kapital. Poblagovljenje kognitivne produkcije pre-sega to razliko med humanistiko in naravoslovjem tako, da jo v vsakem od obeh polov podvaja kot razliko med teorijo in ideologijo. Ta razlika, ta manko, ne pa kak pozitiven predikat, danes združuje humanistiko in naravoslovje.

V pogojih komodificirane kognitivne produkcije institucija univerze postavlja uslužbenke in uslužbenke pred zahtevo, da napravijo svoje produkte kvantifikabilne, objavljive v hegemonih, vse bolj profitnih (Peekhaus; Striphas; Sterne 1861–1863) revijah, učbenikih in *readerjih*, ki postajajo »prostor publiciranja, ki ga zahteva korporativizirana univerza« (Discenna 1845; prim. Peekhaus 582, 592, 594, 587, in Striphas 9–10). To zahtevo so domačini postmoderne poblagovljene kognitivne produkcije reflektirali, subjektivirali in legitimirali z geslom *Publish or perish!*, *Objavi ali odidi!* (ki je kritično odmevalo v Lyotardovem geslu /8/ »bodi operativen [...] ali izgini«, v kontekstu akademskega objavljanja pa so ga analizirali na primer Waters, DuBoff, Drew 66). Kakor *Denar ali življenje!*, kar je Lacanov (198) model odtujitvene alternative, ta alternativa med objavo in zginotjem odtuji svojega naslovljenca v institucijo: *Objavi!*, označevalec, ki je v opoziciji le s svojo odsotnostjo, *odhodom*, tako da označuje označevalec kot tak, objavo, interpelira naslovljenca kot subjekt vednosti, verige označevalcev, ki jih prazni označevalec, *Objavi!*, označuje in obvladuje.

Univerza potemtakem izenačuje ekspertno vednost z objavami v hegemonih revijah, alternative vednosti pa z ne-bitjo. Med temi alternativami je teorija kot ekstremna alternativa veliko bolj marginalizirana kakor preprosto idiosinkratična odsotnost vednosti, kar je drugi ekstrem. Kajti prav tisto poblagovljenje, ki naddoloča univerzo, postavlja teoretsko prakso pred neko drugo alternativo: teorijo je mogoče prakticirati bodisi v univerzitetni instituciji bodisi v vse bolj bežnem prostem času prekariziranega kognitivnega delavca in delavke; teorija je tako primorana izbrati ravno tisto institucijo, ki je sama primorana izenačiti teorijo z ne-bitjo.

## **Koncepcija kulturnega prevajanja kot hegemono pojmovanje kulture**

V humanistiki teorijo v veliki meri nadomeščajo kulturni študiji, ki ostajajo »na robu« med korporativizacijo akademske sfere, četudi »imajo na voljo edinstvena teoretska in analitična orodja za raziskovanje razmerij med mediji, institucijami, državnimi aparati in občinstvi« (Striphas 18); natančneje, če naj se ognemo tehnološkemu determinizmu in rešimo protislovje, moramo reči, da so na robu zato, ker, kot Thomas Discenna (1844)

pokaže na primeru komunikologije, »osredotočenost na kulturo predpostavlja zanemarjanje problematike dela«.

V primeru literarne vede so raziskovalci soočeni z dilemo sprejemanja bodisi kulturalizacije bodisi marginalizacije. Kot značilen institucionalen okvir ima tudi ta dilema strukturo izsiljene alternative, saj sili literarno teorijo, da se bodisi odpravi ali pa spremeni v kulturne študije. Kolikor literarna teorija sprejema to dilemo, išče nišo v kulturaliziranem branju literarnosti, ki literarnost zvede na tekstualni postopek in dopolnjuje s t. i. družbenim kontekstom, kot da ta ni zgolj nov tekst, kar pomeni, da je to dopolnilo zgolj heglavska *Verstellung* problematike teksta. Ta kompromis med literarnostjo in kulturo pelje literarno teorijo v slabo neskončnost odkrivanja domnevno literarnih potez v neliterarnih diskurzih in navsezadnje v brisanje meje med literarnim in svojim lastnim diskurzom.<sup>1</sup>

Kakor vsaka izsiljena alternativa ta dilema formalno podreja teorijo, immanentno mišljenje, ideologij, domnevni očitnosti prave izbire v dilemi; naša dilema pa to počne tudi vsebinsko, saj sili teoretsko prakso sámo iz literarne vede. Vendar jo lahko suspendiramo, če opustimo institucionalno gledišče in ocenimo kulturne študije kot teoretsko, ne kot institucionalno prakso. Namesto zunanjega soočenja z institucionalno konkurenčnega gledišča kulturni študiji potrebujejo teoretsko analizo, ki bi zgrabila kot predteoretsko, ideološko – in zato institucionalno hegemono – prakso. S tem namenom bomo v referatu obravnavali pomembno epistemološko izhodišče kulturnih študij, teorijo performativnosti v artikulaciji Judith Butler. Vse od njene obravnave performativnosti in elaboracije Bhabhovega pojma kulturnega prevajanja je prevajanje, kot pravi Hito Steyerl, »model časa-prostora, geopolitičnih razmerij, postnacionalnih identitet in navsezadnje celo metafora za samo kulturo« (Steyerl). Poskušali bomo pokazati, da je ta popularizacija kulturnega prevajanja predteoretska, kolikor ji ne uspe analizirati zgodovinskih pogojev lastne obdelave svojega predmeta ter s tem reflektirati lastnega položaja izjavljanja in se vzpostaviti kot teoretska praksa.

Skicirali bomo proces, ki pelje od Austinove konstitutivne izključitve literature iz njegove teorije performativa do Judith Butler in njenega utemeljevanja lastne teoretizacije performativnosti na literaturi. Tako se bomo lahko vprašali, kako je moglo nekaj, kar se je začelo kot teoretski poseg v »nomotetično«, »kritično« ideologijo logičnega pozitivizma, končati kot »idiografična«, »topična« ideologija kulturne performativnosti. Pri odgovarjanju na to vprašanje bomo kakor Judith Butler izhajali iz izrazito znanstvenega raziskovalnega programa same humanistike: iz antihumanističnega (proti-eksistencialističnega) strukturalizma.

Austinova znana ločitev družbenih učinkov literature od ilokucijske moči govornih dejanj je dokončno, nedialektično odpravljena v kulturnih

študijih. Družbene učinke literature kulturni študiji zajemajo s pojmom performativnosti. Največji vpliv je ta pojem dosegel v artikulaciji Judith Butler (Gorman 1999: 98; Miller 2007: 222). Njena analogija med performativno izjavo in umetniškimi performerstvom je bila aplicirana (Sedgwick 2007: 23–29) – ali kvečjemu revidirana (Fischer-Lichte 2008: 37–41; Miller 2007: 233–235) – v najnovejših obravnavah družbenosti literature. Še več, celo Shoshana Felman mora svojo (»občudovanja vredno in občudujočo« / Cavell 1995: 53/) razpravo o Austinu in *Don Juanu* iz leta 1980 enaindvajset let pozneje brati skozi performativnost Judith Butler (Felman 2002: ix–x). Ne nazadnje o hegemoniji pojma performativnosti govori tudi dejstvo, da se je srečanje med literarno vedo, izhajajočo iz Austina, in kulturnimi študiji nedvoumno končalo v prid *studies*. Srečanje, ki sta ga nevede priredili Mary Louise Pratt in Judith Butler – prva je leta 1986 brez sklicevanja na kulturne študije speljala subjekt izjavljanja Austinovih performativov na zahodnega moškega moderne (Pratt 62),<sup>2</sup> druga je dve leti zatem brez omembe Austina zvedla performativ na performerstvo (Butler, »Performative« 519–522) – se je končalo s prehodom prve v kulturne študije (leta 2004 je Mary Louise Pratt skupaj z Ronom G. Manleyjem in Susan Bassnett celo napisala študijo *Intercultural Dialogue* / Medkulturni dialog/ za The British Council).

Austin s svojo teorijo performativa odkrije razred izjav, ki ne reproducirajo razlike med subjektom in objektom, ampak producirajo intersubjektivna razmerja. Tako odkrite performative ne le doda konstativom, ampak opazi, da lahko kakor performativi tudi konstativi pod določenimi pogoji opravijo dejanje, ki ga imenujejo. Zato razlikovanje med konstativi in performativi degradira v »posebno« teorijo performativa v okviru »splošne« teorije govornih dejanj (Austin 126). Po tej teoriji ima sleherna izjava lokucijsko moč izjavljanja stavka, ilokucijsko moč produkcije intersubjektivnih razmerij s tem izjavljanjem in perlokucijsko moč učinkovanja na nadaljnje izjavljanje. Glede na ilokucijsko moč, ki jo v posebni teoriji zajema pojem performativa, Austin klasificira govorna dejanja kot verdiktive, eksercitive, komisive, behabitivne in ekspozitive.

Derrida prepozna v Austinovem konceptu ilokucijskih dejanj vse poteze lastnega koncepta znaka: neodvisnost od navzočnosti empiričnega sobesedila (referent, odpošiljatelj in prejemnik ter njuna kronotopa) in od strukturnega konteksta (označenec, predpostavljeni avtor in naslovljenec, metaforične in metonimične povezave znaka v tekstu, sam kod teksta) ter iz te neodvisnosti izhajajočo odvisnost od zgodovine uprizoritev. A vse te podobnosti Derrida jemlje samo kot ozadje načelne razlike, svoje lastne razlike. Austinova lokucija naj bi ostala naključen izraz ilokucijske formule in ne njena strukturno nujna uprizoritev/sprememba. Austinova cena za to neodvisnost od lokucije pa naj bi bila odvisnost od enoznačnosti, ki naj

bi jo po Austinu zagotavljala konvencionalni kontekst in »resna« (Austin 9, 27) intenca. V to ceno naj bi bilo vključena tudi Austinova odprava vica, citata in literature kot »etioliranih«, »parazitskih« (31, 84 op. 2, 93), neuspeh govornih dejanj. Po Derridaju je možnost tega neuspeha, etiolacija, nujna možnost, zaradi katere je vsako govorno dejanje prekarno in s tem neredundantno.

Judith Butler, kot bomo poskušali pokazati, to nujno možnost napačno razume kot nujno aktualnost: po njej je vsako govorno dejanje vselej že etiolirano. Vsako govorno dejanje naslovljenec prej ali slej »estetsko uprizori« (Butler, *Excitable* 99), resignificira, reapropriira. Estetski diskurz, ki ga je Austinova »nomotetična« znanost mukoma izgnala iz teorije performativa, je zdaj v »idiografični« koncepciji Judith Butler enako mukoma povzdignjen na raven samega pojma performativa.

### **»Performativno protislovje« pravne institucionalizacije univerzalnosti**

Judith Butler poskuša razviti teoretske argumente za institucionalizacijo univerzalnosti onstran pravne institucionalizacije. Pravo v njeni analizi (Butler, *Excitable* 88–90) nujno partikularizira univerzalnost, saj mora v imenu univerzalnih pravic in svoboščin sankcionirati (na primer cenzurirati) partikularistične izjave, ki onemogočajo izjavljanje svojim naslovljenecem. (S pravnega gledišča na primer sovražni govor vnaprej diskreditira izjave njegovih naslovljencev; »coming out«, razglasitev homoseksualnosti, v vojski ogrozi družbeno vez med vojaškim osebjem; in pornografija prikazuje pripadnike in pripadnice določene družbene skupine kot nevedne izjavljanja.) Pravo bi namreč zašlo v »performativno protislovje« (88), če bi v imenu univerzalnosti zaščitilo te partikularistične izjave. Če naj se ogne protislovju, mora univerzalistično pravo ratificirati le univerzalistične izjave. Toda Judith Butler trdi, da pravo ravno z ogibanjem performativnemu protislovju zapade protislovju univerzalnosti, ki je v tem, da je univerzalnost prav proces ratifikacije, univerzalizacije neuniverzalističnih izjav.

Pri postuliranju univerzalnosti onstran pravnega pojma se Judith Butler sklicuje na Heglovo kritiko Kantove formalistične razločitve subjektivnih kategorij in objektivnega sveta. Hegel pokaže, da individuum participira na univerzalnosti, kolikor subjektivira objektivno sfero nravnosti, *Sittlichkeit*. Kajti kot odtujen v tej sferi družine, civilne družbe in države je lahko pripoznan v skupnosti ostalih subjektov nravnosti. Participacijo na univerzalnosti zagotavlja participacija na nravnosti. Ker pa Judith Butler sodobnost obravnava kot multikulturno, je po njenem univerzalno vzajemno pripo-

znanje mogoče zgolj prek prevajanja med kulturami, prek kulturnega prevajanja. Ko ni več mogoče ne univerzalizirati ene kulture ne najti skupne poteze vseh kultur, je univerzalizacija pripoznanja odvisna od kulturnega prevajanja. (Butler idr., *Contingency* 20–21, 24–45, 35, 172) Multikulturalnost naj bi moglo zagotoviti le prevajanje med partikularnim in univerzalnim, politika prevajanja, ki bi pripoznala partikularne identitete, izključene iz realno obstoječe pravno institucionalizirane sfere univerzalnega, kot participirajoče na univerzalnem in s tem univerzalizirala samo institucionalizirano univerzalnost. Politika kulturnega prevajanja je politika priznanja.

Judith Butler torej očitno izenači nraavnost s kulturo. Samo tako lahko univerzalnost, ki ji pri Heglu daje materialno eksistenco nraavnost, pogojuje s preseganjem kulturnih meja, ki naj bi bile značilne za sodobne družbe. Toda to izenačenje je že regresija v razmerju do Hegla. Pri njem namreč ne le nraavnost univerzalizira tako abstraktno pravo kakor njegovo univerzalizacijo v moralnosti, temveč tudi v kraljestvu same nraavnosti država univerzalizira družino pa tudi njeno univerzalizacijo v civilni družbi. Ko se tedaj Judith Butler vrača h kulturi, ko očita sodobni državi rigidnost, je njeno sklicevanje na *Fenomenologijo duha* in *Oris filozofije prava* neupravičeno (Butler idr., *Contingency* 172). *Pravna filozofija* sicer predvideva takšno vračanje od države k civilni družbi, saj univerzalizacija, ki poganja triado družina/civilna družba/država, ni preprosta negacija prvih dveh členov v tretjem (Theunissen 21, 25 isl.). Vendar tovrstno vračanje prav tako ni nevtralnno, ni brez posledic za univerzalnost, saj se izkaže za regresijo, brž ko *Pravno filozofijo* beremo na ozadju *Fenomenologije*,<sup>3</sup> po kateri država civilne družbe ne negira, pač pa jo naddoloča, tako da je sleherni vrnitev v civilno družbo regresivna v razmerju do sfere države.

Judith Butler lahko prikaže kulturo kot univerzalnejšo kakor država, le če *Pravno filozofijo* interpretira mimo *Fenomenologije*, in sicer mimo njene črke (*Fenomenologija* nraavnost podredi moralnosti, ne nadredi) in zlasti duha (dialektike). Negacijo družine in civilne družbe v državi reducira na medsebojno odvisnost vseh treh institucij nraavnosti, da bi razkrila odvisnost državnega prava od družinskih in civilnodružbenih norm (na primer odvisnost pravne definicije univerzalnosti od homofobne patriarhalne politike /Butler, *Excitable* 62–63, 23, 22, 93/) in da bi nato mobilizirala to odvisnost države od kulture za boj proti hegemoniji pravne države (Butler idr., *Contingency* 174–175). A ta boj za dodelitev statusa pravnega subjekta identitetam, konstitutivno izključenim iz pravne definicije univerzalnosti, je videti le boj za globalizacijo pravno določenih razmerij kapitalistične eksploatacije. Njeno branje Hegla prezre, da je negacija (tako družine kakor civilne družbe v državi) ireduktibilna na medsebojno odvisnost (vseh treh sfer), saj je negirana sfera (na primer civilna družba, ki jo ona brani proti

državi) naddoločena z negirajočo (z državo). Zato je tudi njena zahteva po univerzalnosti kot procesu in ne kot sferi, institucionalizirani v pravni državi, naddoločena s sodobno državo, ki je ravno institucionalizirana regresija socialne in pravne države na raven subsidiarne in identitarne države.<sup>4</sup> Njen antietatizem je antietatizem sodobne države, njena regresija je regresija kot sodobna država. Ko brani civilno družbo, jo podreja logiki kapitala.

Na njeno teorijo performativnosti je bržkone prav toliko vplivalo Derridajevo branje Austinovega koncepta govornega dejanja, kolikor sama vpliva na sodobne debate o govornih dejanjih nasploh in o umetnosti posebej. Pa vendar se ji ob obravnavi sovražnega govora zdi Derridajev filozofski razmislek o pogojih možnosti govornih dejanj prav tako nezadovoljiv kakor Bourdiejeva sociologistična radikalizacija (Austinovega lastnega /Butler, *Excitable* 24/) konvencionalizma. A ta dvojna kritika še zdaleč ni disjunktivna sinteza, ki bi negirala same podmene, ki si jih nevede delita kritizirani opciji. Nasprotno, Judith Butler utaji opozicijo med njima, ko predlaga pojem »družbene iterabilnosti govornega dejanja« (147–152) in uporabi Derridajevo kategorijo iterabilnosti za svojo multikulturalistično kritiko nacionalne države.

## **Sovražni govor kot iterabilno govorno dejanje**

Judith Butler verjame, da lahko sovražni govor njegov naslovljenec reartikulira z »estetško uprizoritvijo« in drugimi transgresivnimi dejanji, ki ne potrebujejo državnega aparata. Še več, s tem ko cenzurira sovražni govor, državni aparat po njenem onemogoča to transgresivno uprizorjanje. To lahko verjame zato, ker sovražni govor interpretira kot ilokucijsko dejanje grožnje, dejanje, ki sproži temporalnost, ki naj bi jo sklenilo zagroženo dejanje kot perlokucijski učinek grožnje. Možnost subverzije sovražnega govora naj bi se skrivala v razkoraku med grožnjo in njenim udejanjenjem (11–12, 15, 40, 41, 101–102, 125–126), ki naj bi zagotavljal možnost pone-srečenosti, zastrelka grožnje (nav. d.: 69).<sup>5</sup>

Takoj moramo opozoriti, da so perlokucijski učinki grožnje ali na primer obljube manj institucionalno nadzorovani in s tem bolj prepuščeni izjavljalcu kakor perlokucijski učinki poroke ali rabsodbe. Razlog je v tem, da enako velja za pogoje posrečenosti teh ilokucijskih dejanj, kakor jih klasificira Austin (25–33). Sovražni govor je produkt benvenistovske (299–308) delokutivne izpeljave verdiktiva: iz besede, ki metaforično designira svojega naslovljenca kot vsebujočega neko potezo (na primer nacionalno, spolno ali versko identiteto), je z redno, konvencionalizirano rabo izpeljan homonim, ki svojega naslovljenca designira kot naslovljenca te be-

sede. Sovražni govor svojega naslovljenca še zdaleč ne opisuje, ampak ga napravi dostopnega sovraštvu, naslavljanju s sovražnim govorom. Kakor *pozdraviti* pomeni zgolj »reči: 'Zdravo!'«, *Idiot!* ni diagnoza, pač pa pomeni »Rečem ti: 'Idiot!'«. Oseba, naslovljena z »Idiot!«, ni designirana kot nekdo, ki ustreza opisu, ki ga opravlja beseda *idiot* (kakršenkoli naj bi že ta opis bil), ampak kot nekdo, ki mu pravijo »idiot« (in ki kot tak ustreza edinemu pertinentnemu opisu).

Zato sta Austinova pogoja posrečenosti (A. 1) in (A. 2) v tem primeru zadovoljena po definiciji: obstaja konvencionalen postopek s konvencionalnim učinkom in udeležene osebe in okoliščine so ustrezne, saj jih retroaktivno konstituira sama izvedba postopka. S to izvedbo je grožnja tudi že izpeljana pravilno (B. 1) in v celoti (B. 2). Konvencionalističnim pogojem torej ni težko zadostiti. Preostala, intencionalistična pogoja – iskrenost govornega dejanja (Γ. 1) in poznejše ravnanje v skladu z dejanjem (Γ. 2) – pa lahko ostaneta neizpolnjena, saj niti brez njiju dejanje ni zastrelak, ampak le zloraba. Butler pozablja, da je lahko grožnja, izjava o razkoraku med ilokucijo in perlokucijo, kvečjemu izrabljena, ne zastreljana.

Ob odsotnosti cenzure lahko potemtakem grozi vsakdo. In tedaj lahko grožnjo udejanji – in pogoju (Γ. 2) zadosti – vsakdo, ki se v konkretnem razrednem boju znajde v zmagovalnem taboru. Se pravi, ko Butler svari pred cenzuro, prepušča naslovljenca sovražnega govora razrednemu boju vladajočega razreda.

Upravičeno pravi, da je naslovljenčeva reartikulacija sovražnega govora mogoča samo v razkoraku med njegovo ilokucijsko moč in perlokucijskimi učinki, tj. v razliki med tem, kar sovražni govor napravi kot izjaven, in onim, kar napravi kot razlog za poznejša dejanja (Butler, *Excitable* 39). In upravičeno tu priključuje Derridajev argument, da je možnost tega razkoraka nujna možnost, ki vsako govorno dejanje naredi za prekarno in s tem neredundantno. A medtem ko se Derrida zgolj odpove analizi institucionalnih pogojev aktualizacije te nujne možnosti, ona prepozna te pogoje prav v demontaži, odsotnosti institucije državne cenzure. Meni, da bo sovražni govor subvertiral že sam proces njegove necenzurirane diseminacije, saj je »iterabilen« v Derridajevem smislu, tj. ponovljiv in kot tak ranljiv za subverzijo. Zakon po njej (23–24, 41, 125–126, 69) odpravi razliko med ilokucijo in perlokucijo, ko sovražni govor (ilokucijo) opredeli kot ravnanje (perlokucijo) in celo argumentira za cenzuro ilokucije. S tem naj bi zakon odvzel identitetnim skupnostim brez države možnost, da bi govorno dejanje grožnje reartikulirale, še preden bi se zaprl razkorak med tem in zagroženim dejanjem (162).

A kot bi Judith Butler morala vedeti, prav neoliberalna demontaža nacionalne države trenutno preprečuje naslovljencem sovražnega govora, da



bi suspendirali njegove perlokucijske učinke. V položaju, ko naslovljenec nima več institucionalne zaslombe pred sovražno izjavo, ne smemo reči *Naslovljenčeva reartikulacija je mogoča, samo če ...*, temveč *Samo naslovljenčeva reartikulacija je mogoča, če ...*. K takšnemu položaju pa prispeva tudi sama. Ta napad pa ne pojenja niti v času ekonomske krize, v kateri multinacionalni kapital eksternalizira svoje stroške že v nacionalne države kot take: »Če nas nacionalna država varuje pred nasiljem, smo izpostavljeni nasilju nacionalne države, zato je zanašanje na nacionalno državo pri iskanju zaščite *pred* nasiljem zgolj zamenjava enega potencialnega nasilja z drugim.« (Butler, *Frames* 26)

### **Kulturno prevajanje kot utajitev rigidnosti sovražnega govora**

Butler ne vidi, da se mora naslovljenec zanašati na možnost subverzije sovražnega govora v razkoraku med ilokucijo in perlokucijo šele potem, ko se je glavna sovražnost, odprava pravne in socialne države, že realizirala. Šele ko institucionalna sankcija ilokucijskega dejanja grožnje ni več opcija, postane suspenz perlokucijskih učinkov tega dejanja realna, celo edina opcija (ki seveda sploh ni opcija). A tedaj nimamo niti več institucionalnih sredstev za suspenz perlokucijskih učinkov dejanja grožnje (in edina opcija postane dobesedno ne-opcija). Se pravi, takoj ko moramo suspendirati perlokucijske učinke grožnje, je že prepozno za ta suspenz. Butler prezre, da lahko grožnji preprečimo udejanjenje le, če jo vnaprej obravnavamo kot že udejanjeno in jo zato zaustavimo. Njena politika dopuščanja diseminacije sovražnega govora, da bi bil estetsko subvertiran v svoji iterabilnosti (Butler, *Excitable* 144–145), utaji, da lahko zgolj institucije reartikulirajo rigidne designatorje, med katere, kot sama ve (28–31, 99), sodi tudi sovražni govor (v vseh možnih svetovih *Idiot!* pomeni le »Rečem ti 'Idiot!'«). Kot rezultat delokutivne izpeljave je sovražni govor inherentno institucionalen, vpisan v nacionalni jezik, zato ga je mogoče reartikulirati samo institucionalno. Rigidni designator ne more biti subvertiran brez preoblikovanja institucij, ki verovanju v objekt takega designatorja zagotavljajo materialno eksistenco. Reartikulacije brez institucije ni, zato je vsak napad na institucijo v imenu reartikulacije napad na samo reartikulacijo.

Zato mora Butler utajiti Derridaja: *iterabilnost* uporablja kot njegovo ime za spremenljivost pomena znakma (3, 82 op. 32) in ne za vztrajanje konvencionalnega pomena znaka kljub spremenljivosti izvirnega konteksta in intence izjavljalca znaka (za to vztrajanje gl. Colebrook 198–203). S parafrazo Mannonijevo formulacijo fetišističnega obrazca utajitve (Mannoni)

lahko njeno utajitev povzamemo tako: *saj vem, da je sovražni govor rigidni designator, ki označuje v vseh možnih svetovih, pa vendar verjamem, da ga je mogoče subvertirati brez in samo brez institucionalne intervencije*. Še več, medtem ko je po Derridaju pogoj možnosti govornega dejanja v potencialnosti ponesrečenja govornega dejanja, ona to potencialnost zaostri v aktualnost.: Derrida naj bi »v ponesrečenju performativa« (Butler, *Excitable* 151) – in ne v »možnosti, da je vsako performativno izjavljanje [...] lahko 'citirano'« (Derrida 135) – videl »samo moč in zakon njegovega vznika« (Derrida 136; Butler, *Excitable* 151). Značilen je tudi tale prehod od »tveganja ponesrečenja« k »ponesrečenju«: »Derrida pravi, da obstajata konvencionalnost in tveganje ponesrečenja, lastni samemu govornemu dejanju [...] – tj. ponesrečenje, ekvivalentno arbitrarnosti znaka.« (150)<sup>6</sup>

Le če je vsak primer sovražnega govora vselej že zastreljan, ga lahko naslovljenci reartikulirajo, ne da bi se morali zateči k institucionalni sankciji (Butler, *Excitable* 19, 69). Ta apropiacija Derridajeve dekonstrukcije Austina (3, 25, 32–34, 51–52, 144–145, 165 op. 3, 182 op. 32) je ideološka, primer sodobne ekspertne vednosti o posameznikovem upravljanju z družbenimi učinki identitetnih izjav je. V nasprotju z Derridajem Judith Butler zastavi vprašanje družbenih pogojev pomena izjave, a odgovor najde v iterabilnosti kot zakonu performativnosti (Butler idr., *Contingency* 27–29), se pravi, ravno v iterabilnosti, s postuliranjem katere se Derrida ogne samemu vprašanju. Njen odgovor na vprašanje o pogojih performativa je performativnost, tj. pogoje pojava izenači z njegovim bistvom, namesto da bi jih analizirala in se s tem ognila prav kontempliranju o skrivnosti tega bistva. Tavtološko odgovarja na vprašanje o pogojih za »tautološko« (25–27) dejanje simbolizacije. Njena obravnava torej praktično reproducira svoj predmet – in zato je ideološka obravnava.

Odsotnost institucije v njeni obravnavi sovražnega govora na prazno ustreza dejanski odsotnosti institucij kot pogoja za posrečenost sovražnega govora. Njena obravnava tedaj reproducira svoj predmet. Ne vidi materialnih učinkov odsotnosti, ne vidi, da k posrečenosti groženj bistveno prispeva prav demontaža pravnih in socialnih aparatov, za katero se sama zavzema v imenu boja zoper grožnje. Ker ne vidi te negativnosti, odsotnosti institucionalnega sankcioniranja sovražnega govora, in se omeji na obravnavo navzočih institucij, pa ne le more, temveč tudi mora trditi, da ta obravnava ne zadošča (Butler, *Excitable* 13; prim. Butler idr. 14), in verjeti, da možnost subverzije sovražnega govora zagotavlja že iterabilna narava govora, dovzetnost govora za subverzijo v ponavljanju. Institucije torej ne analizira – in zato institucionalno logiko verovanja in utajitve prakticira. Ker zavrne pravno in socialno državo kot institucionalizirano družbeno vez, ki cenzurira sovražni govor, prispeva k promociji sovražnega govora na položaj

družbene vezi sodobnih identitetnih skupnosti. Domnevno esencialistično, naivno, totalitarno verjetje, da je brezrazredna družba mogoča, je s tem tako rekoč nadomeščeno z verjetjem, da so družbe že brezrazredne.

### **Sklep: od performativa k označevalcu, od izjave k instituciji**

Medtem ko Derrida Austinovo možnost etiološke, neuspeha performativa, radikalizira v nujno možnost, jo Judith Butler reificira v nujno aktualnost, v neogibno neinstitucionalno subverzijo institucije. A s tem ko verjame, da lahko individui sami obrnejo to nujno možnost v nujno aktualnost, s tem ko utaji institucionalno naddoločenost tega obračanja, reproducira ravno institucionalne prakse (utajitev, verovanje), ki so predmet njene kritike.

Namesto da se ravnamo na primer po Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (23–29) ali Shoshani Felman (ix–x), ki sprejemata etiološke Judith Butler, ali po J. Hillisu Millerju (233–235) in Eriki Fischer-Lichte (26–36), ki te etiološke revidirata, bi torej morali zgrabiti etiološke kot toge designatorje, prazne označevalce, ki jih je mogoče subvertirati le onstran obzorja atomiziranega naslovljenca, kar navsezadnje izhaja že iz Austinove zavrnitve logično-pozitivistične dvojice subjekt/objekt v prid intersubjektivnega modela komunikacije. Tako bi mogli konceptualizirati ne samo sovražni govor, ampak tudi govorna dejanja, kakršno je *Publish or perish!*, in s tem podeliti svojemu početu status refleksivne, teoretske prakse.

#### OPOMBE

<sup>1</sup> Za nedavni poskus rešitve koncepta literarnosti pred kulturalizacijo gl. Juvan 123–140.

<sup>2</sup> Stanley Cavell (52–57, 61–63, 75–77) pokaže, da Austin s konceptualizacijo govora kot dejanja zavrne metafizično ločitev besede od jaza. Austin (20–21) to metafizično hipokrizijo ilustrira z Evripidovim Hipolitom, ki prekliče dano obljubo, češ da je obljubil z besedami, ne pa tudi s srcem. Cavell (61–63) tako sklene, da je po Austinu jaz zgolj učinek dane besede. Nato se vpraša, kako je Austin mogel prezreti, da tudi sam siže *Hipolita* upri-zarja nemožnost ločitve besede od jaza. Odgovorimo lahko kar na podlagi omenjenega Cavellovega sklepa: če bi Austin nemožnost odpravljanja učinkov dane besede razbral iz samega *Hipolita*, bi moral svojo kritiko Hipolitovih hipokritičnih poskusov tega odpravljanja odpraviti kot redundantno. Austin torej kritizira, prepoveduje nemogoče, paradigmatški primer prepovedi nemogočega pa je seveda prepoved incesta, ki vzpostavi subjekt označevalca. Se pravi, Austinov jaz, za katerega je preklic dane besede nemogoč in še prepovedan, je subjekt označevalca kot Lacanova narobna stran *cogita* – ne pa *cogito* kot pozitivna *res cogitans*, v katero Mary Louise Pratt substancializira izjavljalca govornega dejanja, ko ga predstavi kot austinovski lik zahodnega razsvetljenskega moškega (pot pa ji v literarni vedi utre Stanley Fish /243–244/, ki Austinu derridajevsko očita ideologijo referencialnosti).

<sup>3</sup> Kakor na primer v spremni besedi Jureta Simonitija (110) k Honnethu, ki kakor Judith Butler propagira Hegla prepoznanja in izrecno zavrne Heglov institucionalni pogled na nravnost (79–94). Prim. Laclauov očitek Judith Butler, da poenostavlja Heglovo dialektiko nravnosti (Butler idr. 296).

<sup>4</sup> V svoji kritiki koncepcije kulturnega prevajanja in njegovega verjetja, da zakon funkcionira z izključevanjem identitet iz svoje domene in da ga kot takega lahko univerzalizira boj teh identitet za priznanje, Rastko Močnik (206 op. 32) pravi: »univerzalno je artikulirano v pravnih terminih, abstraktno in formalno je. Vsebina, od katere je abstrahirano, ni ta ali ona identiteta – pač pa produkcijska razmerja in razmerja izkoriščanja«. Širšo obravnavo neoliberalnega obrata, značilnega za antietatizem drugega vala feminizma, poda Fraser 107–113.

<sup>5</sup> Za literarno cenzuro v tranziciji od socializma v postsocializem gl. Dovič.

<sup>6</sup> Ta zamenjava nujne možnosti etioloacije z nujno aktualnostjo, »jezikovne iterabilnosti« z »družbeno iterabilnostjo« (Butler, *Excitable* 150, 152), omogoči Judith Butler, da ohranja svoje verjetje v individualistično reartikulacijo sovražnega govora. V razpravi z Laclauom in Žižkom verjame dobesedno: »[N]apadi naših sovražnikov lahko paradokсно utrdijo našo držo (upajmo)« (Butler idr., *Contingency* 158). Stavek se nadaljuje v istem registru verjetja: trdi, da je to »upanje« zlasti upravičeno, kadar se širša javnost ne poistoveti s sovražnimi napadi, a namesto analize pogojev za samo razliko med javnostjo in našimi sovražniki nam ponudi le vero v derridajevsko iterabilnost (157–158).

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# The Culturalist Ideology in Literary Theory: From a 'Critical' Theory of the Performative to a 'Topical' Conception of Performativity

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*The age-old gap between humanities and sciences is being cynically bridged by the neoliberal subjection of both humanist and scientific theory to expert knowledge, in the humanities mostly to cultural studies, a key source of which is the conception of performativity. The article sketches the process leading from Austin's proto-theoretical 'nomothetic' exclusion of literature from his theory of the performative to Butler's ideological 'idiographic' grounding of her conception of performativity in literature.*

Keywords: literary criticism / speech act theory / performativity / cultural studies / ideology / neoliberalism / performativity

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In this essay, I will examine the institutional effects of the theory of performativity. The institutional framework of this theory – the university and research institutions in the core countries of the stagnant US systemic cycle of accumulation – is currently one of the strategic targets of neoliberal austerity measures. What might seem as a policy of cutting funding for the humanities on behalf of science is merely a humanist projection of the policy that is forsaking theory, basic research, be it humanistic or scientific, for expert knowledge, the opposite of theory: science is being increasingly commodified for the production of things, and the humanities, for the production of people, which is more and more threatened by the production of things. Information technology, the military-industrial complex and the pharmaceutical industry instead of science; human resource management, area studies and cultural studies instead of the humanities (and social sciences). The gap between the humanities and science, which has

been postulated ever since Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (see book VI; see also Yu 8–23), is thus being bridged shamelessly by capital. It is the commodification of cognitive production that has sublated this gap between the humanities and science by redoubling it within both poles as a gap between theory and ideology. This gap, this lack, and not some positive predicate, is what unites science and the humanities today.

In conditions of commodified cognitive production, the institution of university presents its employees with the injunction to render their products quantifiable, publishable in hegemonic, increasingly for-profit (see Peekhaus; Striphas; Sterne 1861–1863) journals, handbooks and readers, which have become 'outlets for the publications demanded by the corporatized university' (Discenna 1845; see also Peekhaus 582, 592, 594, 587, and Striphas 9–10). This injunction was reflected, subjectivated and legitimised by the natives of postmodern commodified cognitive production by the motto *Publish or perish!* (which was critically echoed in Lyotard's [xxiv] 'be operational [...] or disappear', but also analysed in the context of academic publishing by Waters, Drew 66 and, say, DuBoff). Like *Your money or your life!*, which is Lacan's (212) model of an alienating alternative, this alternative between publishing and perishing alienates its addressee into the institution: *Publish!*, the signifier that forms an opposition only with its absence, perishment, thus signifying the signifier as such, publication, interpellates its addressee as the subject of knowledge, of the chain of signifiers that the empty signifier, *Publish!*, signifies and rules.

The university is therefore forced to equate knowledge with publications in hegemonic journals, and the alternatives to knowledge with non-being. Among these alternatives, theory as an extreme alternative is far more marginalised than the simple idiosyncratic absence of knowledge at the other extreme. For the same commodification that overdetermines the university presents theoretical practice with its own forced alternative: theory can be practiced either within the university institution or in the ever fleeting spare time of a precarious cognitive worker; theory is thus forced to choose the institution that is in turn forced to equate theory with non-being.

## **The conception of cultural translation as the hegemonic notion of culture**

In the humanities, theory is to a large extent being forsaken for cultural studies, which largely remains 'on the sidelines' during the corporatisation of the academy despite the 'unique theoretical and analytical resources the

field has at its disposal for exploring the relations among media texts, institutions, apparatuses, and audiences' (Striphas 18); or rather, in order to avoid technological determinism and resolve the contradiction one should say that it stays on the sidelines due to the fact that, as Thomas Discenna (1844) shows for communication studies, the 'focus on culture is predicated on the erasure of labor'.

In the case of literary studies, researchers are faced with the dilemma of accepting either culturalisation or marginalisation. As a typical institutional framing, the dilemma has, again, the structure of a forced alternative, compelling literary theory to die either by or into cultural studies, that is, to either give way to it or to become it. Insofar as literary theory accepts the dilemma, it seeks its niche in a culturalised reading of literariness, which reduces the latter to a textual device and supplements it with the so-called social context, as if this context were not just another text, thus making this supplementation a mere Hegelian *Verstellung* of the problematic of text. This compromise between literariness and culture leads literary theory to the bad infinity of discovering allegedly literary features in non-literary discourses and, in the last analysis, to blurring the line between the literary discourse and its own.<sup>1</sup>

As any forced alternative, the dilemma formally abandons theory, immanent thought, for ideology, the apparent obviousness of the right choice; yet this dilemma does this in its content as well, as it forces theoretical practice itself out of literary studies. It can be suspended, however, by abandoning the institutional perspective and tackling cultural studies as a theoretical rather than institutional practice. Rather than confronted from an external, institutionally competing viewpoint, cultural studies should be analysed theoretically; they should be grasped as a pre-theoretical, ideological – and hence institutionally hegemonic – practice. With this end, I will address one of the epistemological nexus of cultural studies, Judith Butler's theory of performativity. Since Butler's accounts of performativity and elaborations of Homi Bhabha's notion of cultural translation, translation has become, as Hito Steyerl notes, 'a model of time-space, of geopolitical relations, of postnational identities, and ultimately even a metaphor of culture itself' (Steyerl). I will try to show that this practice of popularising cultural translation is pre-theoretical insofar as it fails to analyse the historical conditions of its own reflections on its object and, hence, to consider its own position of enunciation and constitute itself as a theoretical practice.

Austin's much-disputed separation of the social effects of literature from the illocutionary force of speech acts was unproblematically, non-dialectically, undone by cultural studies. The social effects of literature are



grasped by cultural studies with the notion of performativity, whose most influential articulation was proposed by Judith Butler (Gorman 98; Miller 222). Her analogy between performative utterances and artistic performativity has been applied (Sedgwick 23–29) – or at least revised (Fischer-Lichte 37–41; Miller 233–235) – in many recent accounts of literature’s social dimension. Moreover, twenty-one years after its original publication, even Shoshana Felman had to reintroduce her own (‘admirable and admiring’ [Cavell 53]) 1980 study on Austin and *Don Juan* against the backdrop of Butler’s performativity (Felman ix–x). To the hegemony of the notion of performativity attests even the fact that the encounter between cultural studies and the Austin-inspired literary studies ended in favour of the former: the unknowing encounter between Mary Louise Pratt and Judith Butler – the former diminishing, in 1986, the subject of enunciation of Austinian performatives to the Western man of modernity without referring to cultural studies (Pratt 62),<sup>2</sup> and the latter reducing, two years later, the performative to performativity without mentioning Austin (Butler, ‘Performative’ 519–522) – resulted in Pratt’s move to cultural studies (in 2004, she even co-wrote, with Ron G. Manley and Susan Bassnett, a study on *Intercultural Dialogue* for The British Council).

In his theory of the performative, Austin discovers a class of utterances that do not reproduce logical positivism’s difference between subject and object, but produce intersubjective relations. But far from simply adding performatives to constatives, Austin discovers that, like performatives, constatives can under certain conditions do the act they name. Hence, he degrades the constative/performative opposition into a ‘special’ theory of the performative within the ‘general’ theory of speech acts (Austin 147). According to this theory, each utterance has the locutionary force of uttering a sentence, the illocutionary force of producing intersubjective relations by this utterance, and the perlocutionary force of affecting subsequent utterances. Given the illocutionary force, which was designated, in the ‘special’ theory, by the notion of performative, Austin classifies speech acts as verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives and expositives (Austin 150–151).

Derrida recognises in Austin’s concept of illocutionary acts all the features of his own concept of sign: its independence from the original discursive (the signified; the presupposed author and addressee; the metaphorical and metonymical relations with the rest of the text; the text’s code) and extra-discursive context (the referent; the sender and receiver with their chronotopes), and its consequent dependence on the history of its enactments. But this similarity is, according to Derrida, just a backdrop for the fundamental difference, his own *différance*. Austin is said to

regard locution as a contingent expression of the illocutionary formula, and not as its structurally necessary and potentially changing embodiment. Austin's price for this independence from locution is, for Derrida, dependence on unisemy guaranteed, for Austin, by the conventional context and the 'serious' (Austin 9, 27) intention. And included in this price is Austin's dismissal of jokes, citations and literature as 'etiolated' (22, 92n1), 'parasitic' (22, 104), failed speech acts. According to Derrida, the possibility of this failure, etiolation, is a necessary possibility that makes any speech act precarious and hence meaningful, non-redundant.

Butler, as I will try to show, misreads this necessary possibility as necessary actuality: for her, every speech act is always already etiolated. Every speech act is sooner or later 'aesthetically reenacted' (Butler, *Excitable* 99), resignified, reappropriated by the addressee. Aesthetic discourse, which was painstakingly expelled, by Austin's 'nomothetic' science, from the theory of the performative, is now equally painstakingly elevated, by Butler's 'idiographic' conception, to the very notion of the performative.

### **The 'performative contradiction' of the legal institutionalisation of universality**

Butler tries to provide theoretical arguments for institutionalising universality beyond legal institutionalisation. In her analysis (Butler, *Excitable* 88–90), the law necessarily particularises universality because it must censor, in the name of universal rights and liberties, any utterance that prevents its addressee from uttering. (For example, from the legal perspective, hate speech discredits in advance the utterances of its addressees; the 'coming out' in the military jeopardises the *lien social* among military personnel; and pornography depicts members of certain social groups as unworthy of uttering.) If the law were to protect such particularist utterances on behalf of universality, it would conduct a 'performative contradiction' (88). If the universalist law is to avoid such a contradiction, it must ratify only universalist utterances. But according to Butler, it is precisely by shunning a performative contradiction that the law falls prey to the contradiction of universality, which lies in the notion that universality is precisely a process of ratifying, universalising, non-universalist utterances.

In positing universality beyond its institutional, legal notion, Butler refers to Hegel's critique of Kant's formalist distinction between subjective categories and the objective world. According to Hegel, the individual participates in universality inasmuch as s/he subjectivates the objective sphere of customs, *Sittlichkeit*. For as alienated into this sphere consisting

of the family, the civil society and the state, s/he can be recognised within the community of other subjects of *Sittlichkeit*. Participation in universality is guaranteed by participation in *Sittlichkeit*. But since Butler views contemporary societies as multicultural, she claims that today, universal recognition demands the work of cultural translation: since it is no longer possible to either universalise a particular culture or define a universal trait of cultures, the universalisation of recognition depends on cultural translation. (Butler et al. 20–21, 24–45, 35, 172) Multiculturalism is said to require a practice of translating between the particular and the universal, a politics of translation that would recognise all particular identities as participating in universality and hence universalise the institutionalised universality. In short, it seems that the politics of cultural translation amounts to the politics of recognition.

It is now clear that Butler equates *Sittlichkeit* with the cultural sphere. Only after this equation can she derive universality, whose material existence is for Hegel *Sittlichkeit*, from the cultural overcoming of cultural differences, which are supposedly characteristic of contemporary societies. This equation, however, is a regression in relation to Hegel. In Hegel, not only does *Sittlichkeit* universalise both abstract law and its universalisation in morality, but also, in the sphere of *Sittlichkeit* itself, the state universalises both the family and its universalisation in civil society. So when Butler returns to the sphere of culture, accusing the state of rigidity, her reliance on *The Phenomenology of Spirit* and *The Philosophy of Right* (Butler et al. 172) is illegitimate. Granted, the latter text does envisage such a return from the state to civil society, since it views the universalisation that propels the family/civil society/state triad as more than a linear negation of the first two spheres by the third one (Theunissen 21, 25ff). But this return is by no means neutral or without consequences for universality: it proves regressive as soon as *The Philosophy of Right* is read with *The Phenomenology*,<sup>3</sup> in which the state, far from negating civil society, overdetermines it, rendering any return to civil society regressive.

In order to interpret culture as more universal than the state, Butler has to read Hegel's philosophy of right without considering *The Phenomenology*, without addressing the latter's letter – according to which *Sittlichkeit* structurally precedes, rather than follows, morality – or, more importantly, spirit – the dialectics. She reduces the negation of the family and civil society by the state to a mutual dependence of all three institutions of *Sittlichkeit*. She does that so as to reveal the dependence of the state's legal apparatus on the norms of the family and civil society (for example, the dependence of the legal definition of universality on the patriarchal homophobic politics [Butler, *Excitable* 62–63, 23, 22, 93]), and then to deploy this hinging of

the state upon culture in her struggle against the hegemony of the existing state (Butler et al. 174–175). But in my view, this struggle for elevating the legally unrecognised identities to the status of legal subjects is effectively a struggle for globalising legally defined relations of capitalist exploitation. Butler's reading of Hegel neglects that negation (of the family and civil society alike by the state) is irreducible to mutual dependence (of these three spheres), as the negated sphere (say, the civil society defended by Butler against the state) is overdetermined by the negating one (the state). This is why her demand that universality be a process to come, not merely a sphere already institutionalised in the modern nation-state, is overdetermined by the viewpoint of the contemporary state, which is precisely the institutionalised regression of the nation-state to the identitary community.<sup>4</sup> Her anti-étatisme is the anti-étatisme of the contemporary state itself, her regression is the regression that is the contemporary state. Defending civil society amounts here to exposing it to the logic of capital.

Butler's theory of performativity is probably as much informed by Derrida's reading of Austin's speech-act theory as it informs current debates on speech acts in general and on art in particular. And yet in her account of hate speech, Butler finds Derrida's philosophical meditation on the conditions of possibility of a speech act as unsatisfactory as Bourdieu's sociological radicalisation of (Austin's own [Butler, *Excitable* 24]) conventionalism. However, this view is hardly a disjunctive synthesis that could negate the very presuppositions unwittingly shared by the two opposing options. Rather, Butler disavows this opposition by proposing the notion of the 'social iterability of the speech act' (147–152), thereby deploying Derrida's category of iterability for her multicultural critique of the nation-state.

### **Hate speech as an iterable speech act**

Butler believes that hate speech can be rearticulated by its addressees via 'aesthetic re-enactment' and other transgressive acts that do not need to resort to the state apparatus. Moreover, by censoring hate speech, state apparatus are said to disable this rearticulation. She can believe this because she interprets hate speech as the illocutionary act of threat, the act that brings about a temporality that can be brought to a close only by the threatened act as the perlocutionary effect of the threat. In this interval between the threat and its realisation lies, for Butler, the opportunity to subvert hate speech (11–12, 15, 40, 41, 101–102, 125–126), the possibility of the threat's misfiring (69).<sup>5</sup>

Now, the perlocutionary effects of a threat or, say, a promise, are much less institutionally mediated, and hence much more in the hands of the utterer, than those of a marriage or a verdict. The reason for this is that the same goes for the felicity conditions of these illocutions as classified by Austin (14–24). Hate speech can be viewed as a result of a Benvenistean (239–246) delocutive derivation of a verdictive: from a word that metaphorically designates its addressee as having a certain property (say, his/her national, sexual or religious identity) is with continuous, conventionalised use derived a homonym that designates its addressee as the addressee of that word. Far from describing its addressee, hate speech makes him or her hateable, addressable by hate speech. Just like *to okay* means simply ‘to say: “Okay!”’, *Idiot!*, far from being a diagnosis, means ‘I call you “Idiot!”’ If called ‘Idiot!’, a person is designated not as someone who fits the description that the word *idiot* makes (whatever that description may be), but as someone who is called an ‘idiot’ (and as such fits the only pertinent description).

Consequently, Austin’s felicity conditions (A. 1) and (A. 2) are in this case satisfied by definition: there is a conventional procedure with a conventional effect, and the involved persons and circumstances are appropriate, as they are retroactively constituted by the very invocation of the procedure. Due to this invocation, utterance, the threat is also executed correctly (B. 1) and completely (B. 2). The four conventionalist conditions are hence easily met. And the remaining two, the intentionalist conditions – the sincerity of (Γ. 1) and subsequent adherence to (Γ. 2) the speech act – need not be met at all, for even without them the act is not a misfire, but merely an abuse. Butler seems to forget here that a threat, an utterance about the rift between illocution and perlocution, can only be abused, and not misfired.

Thus, in the absence of state censorship anyone can make a threat. And anyone who happens to be on the winning side of a concrete struggle can execute a threat, thereby satisfying the condition (Γ. 2). By warning against censorship, Butler in fact exposes the addressees of hate speech to the class struggle of the ruling class.

She is right in saying that hate speech can be stopped only in the gap between its illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effects, in the rift between what hate speech does as uttered and what it does as a cause of a later event (Butler, *Excitable* 39). And she legitimately applies here Derrida’s argument that the possibility of this gap is a necessary possibility that makes any speech act precarious and hence meaningful, non-redundant. Yet while Derrida merely abstains from analysing the institutional conditions of actualising this necessary possibility, Butler recognises

these conditions precisely in a disintegration of the institution of state censorship. She thinks that hate speech will have been subverted already in the process of its free, uncensored dissemination, since it is ‘iterable’ in Derrida’s sense, that is, repeatable and as such prone to subversion. The law, claims Butler (23–24, 41, 125–126, 69), cancels the gap between illocution and perlocution as it defines hate speech (illocution) as conduct (perlocution) and even provides an argument for censoring the illocution. By doing this, the law deprives the non-state identitary groups of the opportunity to rearticulate the speech act of threat before the gap between this act and the threatened act is closed (162).

But as Butler may very well know, it is the neoliberal commodification of the nation-state that itself currently prevents the addressees of hate speech from suspending its perlocutionary effects. In a situation when the addressees is deprived of any legal and social support, one shouldn’t say, *A rearticulation of hate speech by its addressee is only possible in the absence of censorship*, but, on the contrary, *Only a rearticulation of hate speech by its addressee is possible in the absence of censorship*. And Butler’s critique of the nation-state actively contributes to such a situation. And this attack does not seem to lose its force despite the economic crisis in which multinational capital is by now externalising its costs to entire nation-states: ‘To be protected from violence by the nation-state is to be exposed to the violence wielded by the nation-state, so to rely on the nation-state for protection *from* violence is precisely to exchange one potential violence for another.’ (Butler, *Frames* 26)

### **Cultural translation’s disavowal of the rigidity of hate speech**

In my view, the addressee is forced to rely on the option of subverting a threat only after a bigger threat, that of dismantling the legal and redistributive state apparatuses, has been realised. Only after the institutional sanctions against the illocutionary act of threat are no longer an option, a suspension of the act’s perlocutionary effects becomes a real, even the only, option (which is of course no option at all). But at that point even the institutional measures necessary to sanction the perlocutionary effects become unavailable (the only option literally becoming a non-option). As soon as an individual has to suspend the perlocution, it is too late. Butler fails to see that we can prevent the realisation of a threat only if we treat the threat as always already realised, and silence it. Her politics of allowing the dissemination of hate speech in order that it be aesthetically subverted in its iterability (Butler, *Excitable* 144–145) disavows the fact that only institutions can rearticulate rigid designations, to which hate speech,

as Butler herself knows (28–31, 99), pertains (in all possible worlds, *Idiot!* means only ‘I call you “Idiot!”’). As a result of a delocutive derivation, hate speech is inherently institutional, inscribed in the national language, which is why it can only be rearticulated institutionally. A rigid designator cannot be subverted without a transformation of the institutions that give the material existence to the belief in the object of such a designator. There is no rearticulation without the institution, so any attack on the institution on behalf of rearticulation is effectively an attack on rearticulation itself.

This is why Butler has to disavow Derrida’s point: in her reading, iterability guarantees for the changeability of the sign’s meaning (Butler, *Excitable* 3, 82n32), not for the persistence of the sign’s conventional meaning despite the changeability of its original context (for this persistence, see Colebrook 198–203). Paraphrasing Octave Mannoni’s formula for fetishistic disavowal (Mannoni), her disavowal can be summed up as *I know very well that hate speech is a rigid designator effective in every possible world, but all the same I believe that it can be rearticulated without, and only without, institutional intervention*. Moreover, if, in Derrida, the possibility of a speech act is conditioned by the potentiality of etiolation, failure, Butler reifies this potentiality into actuality: Derrida is said to see in ‘the failure of the performative’ (Butler, *Excitable* 151) – and not in the performative’s ‘possibility [...] to be “quoted”’ (Derrida 16) – ‘the very force and law of its emergence’ (Derrida 17; Butler, *Excitable* 151). Note also the following transition from ‘a risk of failure’ to ‘a failure’: ‘Derrida [...] argues that there is a conventionality and a risk of failure proper to the speech act itself ([Derrida] 15) – a failure that is the equivalent to the arbitrariness of the sign.’ (Butler, *Excitable* 150)<sup>6</sup>

Only if each case of hate speech is always already misfired, can it be subverted by its addressees without their having to resort to institutional sanctions (Butler, *Excitable* 19, 69). Her appropriation of Derrida’s deconstruction of Austin (3, 25, 32–34, 51–52, 144–145, 165n3, 182n32) is ideological, it is a case of contemporary expert knowledge on the individual’s management of the social effects of identitary utterances. Unlike Derrida, Butler raises the question of the social conditions of the meaning of an utterance, but she finds the answer in iterability as the law of performativity (Butler et al. 27–29), that is, in the very iterability the postulating of which allows Derrida to dodge the question itself. Her answer regarding the conditions of a performative is performativity, that is, she equates conditions of a phenomenon with its essence instead of studying its conditions precisely in order to avoid contemplating the mystery of its essence. She answers by way of tautology the question of the conditions of what she calls a ‘tautological’ (25–27) act of symbolisation. Hence, her account of her object reproduces this object – which makes it an ideological account.

The absence of institution in Butler's analysis of hate speech uncannily fits the absence of institution from the list of sincerity conditions of the speech act of threat. Her argument therefore reproduces its own object. It fails to consider the material efficacy of absence; it neglects the fact that the very action it suggests, the disintegration of legal and social institutions, contributes to bridging the gap between the act of threat and the threatened act. This omission of the absence of institutional suspension of hate speech, this consideration of but the existing institutions such as contemporary US law, indeed makes possible, if not necessary, the conclusion that such a consideration is insufficient (Butler, *Excitable* 13; see also Butler et al. 14) and the belief that the iterability of speech (its proneness to rearticulation by repetition) is by itself a guarantee of rearticulation. Because this argument refuses to analyse the institution, it follows the institutional logic of disavowal and belief. Because it rejects the nation-state as the institutionalised social bond that censors hate speech, it helps promoting hate speech itself to the status of the social bond of contemporary identity communities. The supposedly essentialist, naive, totalitarian, etc. belief that classless societies are possible has effectively been abandoned for the belief that societies already are classless.

### **Conclusion: From the Performative to the Signifier, From the Utterance to the Institution**

If Derrida radicalises Austin's possibility of etiolation, of a performative's failure, into a necessary possibility, Butler reifies it into a necessary actuality, into an unavoidable non-institutional subversion of the institution. Yet by believing that individuals themselves can turn this necessary possibility into a necessary actuality, by disavowing the institutional overdetermination of this turning, she reproduces the very institutional practices – disavowal, belief – that are the object of her critique.

So, instead of following Sedgwick (23–29) or, say, Felman (ix–x) in their adherence to Butler's etiolations, or even Miller (233–235) and Fischer-Lichte (26–36) in their revisions of Butler, we should grasp etiolations as rigid designators, empty signifiers, which we can subvert only by subverting their institutional legitimisation, only beyond the horizon of the atomised addressee, as suggested by Austin's own forsaking of logical positivism's subject/object pair for an intersubjective model of communication. This would allow us to conceptualise not only hate speech acts but also such speech acts as *Publish or perish!*, thus making our practice a reflexive, theoretical practice.



NOTES

<sup>1</sup> An attempt to save the concept of literariness from culturalisation was recently made by Marko Juvan (123–140).

<sup>2</sup> Stanley Cavell (52–57, 61–63, 75–77) demonstrates that by conceptualising speech as act, Austin rejects the metaphysical word/I opposition. Austin (9–11) illustrates this metaphysical hypocrisy with Euripides's *Hippolytus*, who revokes a promise saying that he had promised with words but not with his heart. Cavell (61–63) concludes that for Austin, the I is but an effect of the given word. Then he goes on to ask how Austin could have missed the fact that the very plot of *Hippolytus* enacts the impossibility of separating the I from the word. A possible answer is implied in Cavell's above-mentioned conclusion itself: if Austin had read *Hippolytus* as a text on the impossibility of undoing the effects of the given word, he would have had to admit the redundancy of his own critique of Hippolytus's hypocritical attempts at this undoing. Austin thus criticises, prohibits, the impossible, the paradigmatic example of a prohibition of the impossible being of course the prohibition of incest, which institutes the subject of the signifier. Hence, Austin's I, for whom it is both impossible and prohibited to revoke the given word, is the subject of the signifier, the Lacanian other side of *cogito* – and not the *cogito* as the positive *res cogitans*, into which Pratt substantialises the utterer of a speech act as she embodies it as the Austinian man of Western Enlightenment (which was in literary studies already done by Stanley Fish's [243–244] Derridean claim about Austin's ideology of referentiality).

<sup>3</sup> As in Simoniti's (110) afterword to Honneth, a proponent, like Butler, of the Hegel of recognition, who explicitly rejects Hegel's institutional view on *Sittlichkeit* (Honneth 63–80). See also Ernesto Laclau's objection to Butler's appropriation of Hegel's dialectics of *Sittlichkeit* (Butler et al. 296).

<sup>4</sup> In his critique of the conception of cultural translation and its belief that the law functions by way of excluding identities from its domain and can as such be universalised in these identities' struggle for recognition, Rastko Močnik (206n32) writes, 'the universal is articulated in juridical terms, it is abstract and formal. The content from which it is abstracted is not this or that identity – it is the relations of production and exploitation'.

A broader account of the neoliberal turn in the second-wave feminism's anti-étatisme is given in Fraser 107–113.

<sup>5</sup> For an account of literary censorship in the transition from socialism to post-socialism, see Dović.

<sup>6</sup> This substitution of the necessary actuality for the necessary possibility of etiolation, of 'social iterability' for 'linguistic iterability' (Butler, *Excitable* 150, 152), allows Butler to maintain her belief in the rearticulation of hate speech by its addressees. In her discussion with Laclau and Žižek she believes quite literally: '[A]ttacks by one's enemies can paradoxically boost one's position (one hopes)' (Butler et al. 158). The sentence goes on in the same register of belief: Butler claims that this 'hope' is especially legitimate when the broad public refuses to identify with the enemy attacks, but instead of providing us with an analysis of conditions of the very difference between the public and our enemies, she offers us her belief in Derridean iterability (157–158).

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