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Two Conversations About Disability

Information on Sunaura Taylor, Judith Butler, and Martha Nussbaum can be found on p.2.

- **Closed captions** are available for both videos.
- On some devices, there are three horizontal dots (...) below each video on YouTube. If you click on the dots, there is a **transcript** option.

Examined Life: Sunaura Taylor & Judith Butler



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0HZaPkF6qE> (17:23)

Examined Life: Martha Nussbaum



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbcGbflpFzI> (7:53)

Sunaura "Sunny" Taylor is an painter, writer and activist for disability and animal rights and has taught at Berkeley University, where she earned her MFA. She also focuses on environmental racism and justice, using the concept of disabled ecologies. She is the author of *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation*, published in 2017. Taylor currently is a Ph.D. candidate in American Studies in the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis at New York University. In 2017, a New Yorker article was written about her, "Are Disability Rights and Animal Rights Connected? The provocative thinker Sunaura Taylor speaks out against the tyranny of ableism."

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/persons-of-interest/are-disability-rights-and-animal-rights-connected>

Judith Butler is a [philosopher](#) and [gender theorist](#) who is best known for her books [Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity](#) (1990) and *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (1993). Like many, Butler can see holes in her own past work. In a 2014 interview with *The Transadvocate*, Butler said, "Gender Trouble was written about 24 years ago, and at that time I did not think well enough about trans issues." Some trans people thought that in claiming that gender is performative that I was saying that it is all a fiction, and that a person's felt sense of gender was therefore 'unreal.' That was never my intention. I sought to expand our sense of what gender realities could be. But I think I needed to pay more attention to what people feel, how the primary experience of the body is registered, and the quite urgent and legitimate demand to have those aspects of sex recognized and supported. I did not mean to argue that gender is fluid and changeable (mine certainly is not). I only meant to say that we should all have greater freedoms to define and pursue our lives without pathologization, de-realization, harassment, threats of violence, violence, and criminalization. I join in the struggle to realize such a world." The author of this interview, Cristan Williams, wrote, "However, the concept of *gender performativity* has been used – and some would assert – abused to support a number of positions that misconstrues Butler's work." https://www.transadvocate.com/gender-performance-the-transadvocate-interviews-judith-butler_n_13652.htm

Martha Nussbaum (you read a small excerpt of her writing in the midst of our focus on narrative theory and the role of stories) and Indian economist-philosopher **Amartya Kumar Sen** developed what they called The Capabilities Approach. Nussbaum jointly teaches in the Philosophy Department and in a School of Law at the University of Chicago. Throughout her career she has written on ancient Greek philosophy, political philosophy, feminism, and ethics, including areas of global inequality, disabilities, animal rights, and aging. She has written extensively on the moral value of emotions. She claims that understanding the emotions can help build just societies that are respectful and deeply moral. Since emotions can be used destructively, the need to understand and manage emotions is crucial for building healthy relationships and societies.



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