

**Judith Butler, *The Force of Nonviolence* (2020)**

Judith Butler's *The Force of Nonviolence* is a masterfully crafted call to reinterpret the notion of nonviolence. Butler claims that our understanding of the distinction between violence and nonviolence rests upon a discursive paradigm limited by instrumentalism and individualist thought. Building upon her previous work in *Precarious Life: Powers of Violence and Mourning* (2004), Butler argues that this discourse encourages contradictions and differences in how violence and nonviolence are defined. Such confusion can lend credence to the idea that violence should be monopolized by the state. Moreover, it conceals over the state's tendency to designate certain lives as "unworthy of grief". Both of these limit the efficacy of nonviolence as a political and ethical position. Butler argues that a politically meaningful understanding of nonviolence can be conceived. Such an understanding would honor aggressivity as an essential feature of the human psyche and work to provide an outlet for this emotion. More importantly, it would reframe the grievability of life through social equality, interdependence, and a need for mutual support. This new understanding of nonviolence is a fecund basis for a more egalitarian social imaginary.