Rethinking Vulnerability and Exclusion

Historical and Critical Essays

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Foreword: Inclusion/Exclusion—On the Conditions of Common or Critical Engagement

My task here is to attempt to explain the title of this paper, 'Inclusion/ Exclusion', and the concepts that appear in the subtitle, 'On the Conditions of Common or Critical Engagement'. It seems to me that, in one way or another, it is possible to understand two of these registers ('inclusion' and 'exclusion'), but the trouble lies in the third, the one in between, the one connecting these two, marked by '/' (slash, as the Americans say, stroke, as they say in Britain). It is within this register, to be found at the very point between 'inclusion' and 'exclusion,' a space brimming with hesitation and reflection (as well as force and violence), that far from simple decisions are made. Before a foreigner or immigrant becomes part of the space designated as 'inclusion' or 'exclusion,' he or she is for us a '/'.

What then is this '/'? In English (and not only English) this sign hides a ferocious strike and violent separation and interruption. At the same time, it announces a choice between 'inclusion' and 'exclusion'; but then, paradoxically, it stands more as conjunction than disjunction. The '/' sign does not represent a brief pause, nor does it imply an urgency to hasten the choice of either 'inclusion' or 'exclusion'. On the contrary, it would appear that 'inclusion' and 'exclusion', thanks precisely to the register covered by the sign '/', are mutually interwoven, interchangeable, or interpermeable one into the other, and are extraordinarily difficult to separate, however deftly or dexterously handled. It is necessary for this

reason—I would like to insist on this—to construct a right to non-separation of the 'inclusion' from the 'exclusion' or, better, a right to the '/'. What we are actually talking about here is time; i.e. a period in which we can carefully and meticulously craft decisions that will neither be exclusive nor exclude, even when, paradoxically, they temporarily (and always temporarily!) suspend inclusion or the participation of all in particular institution (a family, corporation, city, state, etc.).

Before I attempt to consider 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' more closely, as two operations that always complete one another without being complementary, here are a few preliminary and regulative principles that issue from the space in which these two registers differ, and are separated by a '/' (slash):

- 'Inclusion' (integration) and 'exclusion', as well as the '/' space appear wherever there is a project or possibility for the constitution (a closing: *claudere* = to close; *excludere* = not to allow in or admit, to expel) of some fictitious entity such as the family, group, corporation, movement, city, state, Europe, or world state. It is a question of the future, of constructing and projecting actions to be conducted in the near future.[1] A project of closure implies an opening of borders (and vice versa), and this entity that possesses limits could be called the institution, as opposed to 'status', which is an imprecise designation, or 'contract', which a priori excludes a third party. The institution assumes the arrival and presence of those who are not here now, unlike a group, which in one way or another always resists the arrival of new members, but also the potential free departure of those already present, that is, temporary interruptions of movement and border crossing (the border being the limit of the institution).[2]

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[1] In 'Progetto' (published in *Laboratorio Politico*, No. 2, March–April 1981, 81–119), Massimo Cacciari goes back and forth between 'force' and 'violence' in describing the main characteristics of a project. '*Violenza suona nel progetto*' (101). It is an act of overshooting and expanding to beyond the surface or edge (*proictus*), which then always implies exclusion, abolishment, banishment, expulsion (*proicto*).

[2] Two examples: The true impetus for Michael Dummett's book *On Immigration and Refugees* (2011) was the encyclical *Pacem in Terris* by Pope John XXIII: '(…) when there are just reasons in favour of it … must be permitted to emigrate to other countries and take up residence there. The fact that he is a citizen of a particular state does not debar him from membership of the human

- As regards the condition for the 'common engagement' of the subtitle of this paper (von Jhering used a potentially analogous term in 1886, *die aktive Solidarobligation*), such an engagement should be beyond the 'inclusion/exclusion' principle, and will be fulfilled if and only if an ideal institution opens its doors to all without exception, and if one acts in a way that anyone would act and in the way that everyone should act. If the rules of inclusion or exclusion are entirely transparent and achievable for anyone, regardless of any temporary prohibitions, it is possible to speak of fulfilling the principle of universality. Engagements—whether to another person (e.g. to be married), with a political party, in a football supporters group, a movement, in the preservation of one's culture by closing borders, in the activity in war—are not examples of common and critical engagement because they a priori exclude others and exclude the possibility of all being included. 'Critique' (or, for Amartya Sen, 'critical reasoning') consists of engaged acts when it obligates to urgent action not only the members of a group, but all future, inactive members/parts of the human community ('global commitment' for Judith Butler).

- Only those whose action or whose engagement actively excludes all or other groups should be marginalized,[3] temporarily although not for-

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family, or from citizenship of that universal society, the common, worldwide fellowship of men.' The famous observation of Hugh of Saint Victor from Book 3 of *Didascalicon* is even more interesting: 'The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land (*perfectus vero, cui mundus totus exsilium est*). The tender soul has fixed his love on one spot in the world; the strong man has extended his love to all places; the perfect man has extinguished his (*ille mundo amorem fixit, iste sparsit, hic exstinxit*)' (H. Saint Victor, *The Didascalicon*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1961, p. 101).

[3] To 'marginalize' means to 'place' in the margin or background, in a certain way to reject or remove ('injustices' provoke an 'urgent need for their removal', A. Sen), but not put out (*esclore*). The problem is of course with the word 'place', i.e. in the characteristics and execution of such an operation. This temporary 'not taking into consideration' is well formulated by La Rochefoucauld in his *Maximes*: '*Action de tenir quelqu'un à l' écart, de le repousser*' [The action of keeping someone at a distance, of pushing them away]. In 'In Praise of Exclusion', Suzanne Dovi speaks of a certain 'ethics of marginalization': 'However, in order to improve the representation of historically disadvantaged groups, democratic theorists need to consider when it is justifiable, desirable, and even morally necessary to limit, or even deny, access and influence to overrepresented, privileged groups' (Dovi 2009: 1172). Dovi calls this standard 'the oppression principle' (1174): 'Democracies ought to marginalize those who oppress and those who benefit from oppression' (1181).

mally or 'categorically', nor eliminated or disqualified.[4] The temporary suspension of certain groups or minorities still does not mean exclusion, but certainly reveals the limits of democracy and the improvidence of position, according to which the problem of exclusion can be solved simply by inclusion (Iris Marion Young).

Let us look now at the problem of our asymmetrical distinction 'inclusion/exclusion'[5] and why it is insufficient to bind 'exclusion' exclusively with injustice, and 'inclusion' with basic democratic protocol. It is not only a matter of 'exclusion' 'also [being] vital for directly promoting other democratic objectives, e.g. autonomy or equality' (Dovi), just like 'inclusion'; there is also the difficulty of various integrative strategies for advancing institutions, making them moral as well as efficient.

Towards the end of a letter to the Marquis d'Argence de Dirac, on 2 December, 1761, Voltaire sends his fond wishes. Here they are:

> Je vous souhaite, dans votre retraite, des journées remplies, des amis qui pensent, l'exclusion des sots et une bonne santé.

Not a trace of affection or moralizing. On the one hand, we have 'thoughtful friends', who obviously have the capacity for reflection; on the other, there are clods to be excluded, probably because they think poorly and err in judgment or, paradoxically, because they 'exclude poorly'. Voltaire then leads us to the first and most fundamental problem when it comes to 'exclusion', which also refers to epistemology and the *cogito*. Although there are several sets of topics and problems which are easy to classify and connect with our perhaps somewhat rough distinction of 'inclusion/exclusion' (each with certain political consequences and none which is simple or resolvable),[6] the first difficulty that we

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[4] 'Categorical exclusion' is Cathy Cohen's term from 1997. The violation of certain groups, even if it is 'Alternative für Deutschland' (AFD) and its current presence in the Bundestag, is certainly an anti-democratic act.

[5] Niklas Luhmann, e.g., claimed that exclusion rather than inclusion is the rule, and, moreover, that inclusions differ from one another. Cf. Braeckman (2006: 65–88).

[6] Informally, when speaking of 'exclusion', we think of gender (the exclusion of women from political life), but also of migrants and immigrants, then of the poor who live on the outskirts, in the suburbs and ghettos, followed by various sets of odd or asocial persons (invalids, the autistic, the

encounter with 'exclusion' concerns is that of epistemological or cognitive abilities and activities.

The ability to reason always assumes a deft manipulation of the various techniques and protocols of exclusion. One who is capable of concentrating, of directing his attention unwaveringly, excludes something or perhaps everything else. One capable of counting makes good use of the method of exclusion in situations where, e.g., all variables are systematically excluded. One capable of thinking, whom Voltaire a priori classifies as a friend, probably makes very good use of the three basic laws of thought, one of which is the '*principe du tiers exclu*' (*principium tertii exclusi* or *tertium non datur*, that there is no third possibility or middle term; in English, this is the 'law of excluded middle'),[7] the other two being the law of identity and the law of contradiction.

If we put aside all the other operations and social acts or acts of the community[8] that in one way or another imply exclusion (when we choose, we exclude; when we vote, we exclude; when we decide, we exclude; in competitions, we exclude, or else there is mutual exclusion, etc.), the competence of those who think (Voltaire would call them friends) continuously excludes those who think or act problematically—in a word, the incompetent. The English word 'competence' is perhaps instructive here; as a legal term it refers to the domain of power, a synonym for jurisdiction, as well as more colloquially to someone's ability to perform a task, intellectual or otherwise. Only the competent ought to be given competence; the incompetent must be excluded from competence. It seems to me that it would not be overly intelligent to think that Voltaire had the idea that dimwits exclude themselves (by their very nature, they would in effect be unable to 'exclude' properly). If 'exclusion' involves acts by which one excludes, and further, the subject(s) and subject(s)-object(s) of exclusion, as well as an entity that remains after the exclusion

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disabled, etc.). The great theorist of democracy, Robert Dahl writes: 'The demos must include all adult members of the association except transients and persons proved to be mentally defective' (Dahl 1989: 129).

[7] Every judgment is either true or false; something is either A or not A. There can be no third. Cf. Kolmogorov (1925).

[8] It was likely Edmund Husserl in 1921 who first used this phrase '*Soziale Akte*' and '*Gemeinschaftsakte*'. Husserl (1973: 165, 192).

takes place, and finally the space in which the excluded are found after the exclusion—then those who think and who also spread well-being and kindness (because they are friends) will have a lot of work indeed. If we systematically exclude dullards from our lives, as Voltaire would have us do (and in the contemporary world this would mean unfollowing them on Facebook and Twitter), it would be uncertain indeed whether we would really have peace as individuals (Voltaire is writing to one who is retiring from public life) or succeed in abolishing a group of entirely vague and dysfunctional negative social acts or asocial acts, with the aim of advancing the institution or the community.

When it comes to the histories of institutions and common engagement, Voltaire's advice and counsel, which have lost none of their currency or appeal, have nevertheless implied only two options: (1) those excluded or that which is excluded ought to be eliminated or grouped (pseudo-institutionalized) on the periphery or margins of an entity, or transferred to some new, isolated and secured zones; and (2), the more sophisticated option is the attempt to mitigate the damage by introducing or adding new actors ('inclusion' or regrouping), such as new friends who lessen the influence of the idiots. The problem with such idiots, however, is that they are always widely and evenly distributed (never grouped), and that they are always recognizable (cunning or intelligence can be hidden or tempered; stupidity less so).

The third option concerns the right to something in between, the right to the '/'; i.e. the right to the third (as well as the right of the third),[9] and this right to the third option excludes a priori the coercion of an urgent choice between 'inclusion' and 'exclusion'. That is to say, common or critical engagement, on which I insist, assumes broad action which is in part necessarily epistemological, and does not only include (or bind or involve) Voltaire's '*amis qui pensent*', but also includes those others, whose acts, it seems to me, we still understand insufficiently and rarely take into consideration (provisionally, I will here call them 'negative social acts') and which are diverse and probably necessary for the constitution of the

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[9] Aristotle invented but also called into question the *'principe du tiers exclu'* when distinguishing between judgments about the future that can be neither true nor false, just as Voltaire's wishes for the Marquis d'Argence de Dirac cannot exclude some third possibility.

group.[10] A group pushing a car that has broken down is not endangered and destabilized unless one of them is a disabled person who cannot participate in this action in the same way.[11] How can we classify all these acts which are not complementary and in harmony with the acts of the majority? How do those who Husserl rather vaguely called 'abnormal' (*der Anomalen*)[12] constitute the world and its institutions. How do they (the ones opposite from 'my normal We' [*meines normalen Wir*])[13] participate (*der Beteilingung*) in these acts—answering this is a task that still lies before us.

Belgrade, Serbia   Petar Bojanić

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[10] Nussbaum (2009) insists exclusively that the 'law ought to show respect for them as full equals'. 'Law must provide', 'law must go further'—these are the phrases she uses; certainly insufficient, but the basic condition of any future engagement of all.

[11] Cf. Tuomela (1991: 272 and 1995: 138); B. Schmid (2009: 47).

[12] Husserl provides a very broad designation for those who do not belong to the world of the normal (*der Welt der Normalen*). As early as 1931, he wonders about the problem of the participation of the abnormal in the constitution of the world. This includes foreigners, animals, children, the 'twisted' (*die Verrückten*), the ill (*die Kranken*), but also thieves, cheats, the 'pseudo-honest' (*die Scheinehrlichen*), 'pseudo-citizens' (*die Scheinbürger*), etc. Husserl (1973: 133, 146).

[13] Husserl (1973: 141).

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Introduction

This volume presents an attempt to conjoin two related, but in essence deeply problematic notions: vulnerability and exclusion. Their relationship today seems unambiguous: if one is excluded, one is, in all probability, vulnerable and vice versa. We take this as a given. However, we also wish to see what lies behind that givenness, and in a certain sense produces it. Like many of the notions that have taken shape in philosophy and social theory, once they become part of the policy language of righting wrongs, they tend to become hollow and stripped of their multiple layers of meaning. Often, they portray a phenomenon as something that can be singled out and cast outside a larger and inevitably more complex frame. Both exclusion and vulnerability are cases in point: certain groups/populations/identities are vulnerable, thus actions need to be taken to alleviate their vulnerability; certain groups/populations/identities are excluded, and so ways to include them need to be found.

Without questioning the fact that there are indeed such groups, assembled and categorized as vulnerable and/or excluded, we wanted to understand why this is the case; more specifically, in what ways these groups are related to others (those deemed 'invulnerable' or those excluded on some different basis); how, and from where, the boundary between the excluded and the included arises; what the stakes of 'invulnerability' (to which the alleviation of vulnerability supposedly leads) might be; in what ways such categorizations preclude or forestall the agency of the excluded/the

vulnerable. What might be the conclusive frame to which actions of inclusion and alleviation of vulnerability lead—one in which all are recognized as vulnerable and where the notion of exclusion has ultimately lost its meaning, or one in which the desired invulnerable individuals monitor the boundaries of their communities or nation-states, caring for the included and warding off those who do not belong? The questions themselves are certainly not new, although the answers to them have assumed a specific form and content in the twenty-first century. With this volume we want to emphasize both their novelty and their deep-seatedness. Following a variety of critical approaches, all of the contributions here attempt to shed light on the dense theoretical content and complex conceptual history of such notions.

Exclusion and/or Vulnerability

A stock term in a wide range of disciplines, and rooted firmly in everyday language through its various policy and media framings, 'exclusion' is all too often taken to be self-evident and readily understood. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, it refers to a situation in which someone or something is prevented from entering a place or taking part in an activity. The word, in Spanish (*exclusión)*, comes from the Latin *'excludere'* (to keep or shut out, hinder). The Serbian version—*isključivanje*—in fact contains a 'key' (ključ), implying that the one who is kept out and hindered from coming in is without a key, and that there is a door which opens only to those who can unlock it. That door, a threshold between inside and outside, is what makes exclusion liminal (as a boundary defining who is in and who is not), movable (the key can be given to someone who did not possess it before, or be copied and multiplied), and obstructive (of the free passage before the door was built and the key manufactured). Understood in this way, exclusion is operational in citizenship procedures, founded on *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis*; in the contract of marriage, as it functions as an institution based only on two contractors, excluding all possible others; in the ownership of property, since the *privatum* bars, or excludes, all others from laying claim to it. Exclusion is everywhere: it is both constitutive of thinking (*tertium non datur*/the

excluded middle) and indispensable in action—indeed, wherever there is a choice, there is also some form of exclusion (see also Bojanić in this volume).

It would thus seem that it is not exclusion that is undesirable in itself—even if we might argue for a more capacious thinking, less prone to cuts and slashes, as much as we might opt for less decisionist and more deliberative modes of acting. What is undesirable is in fact what falls under the umbrella term of 'social exclusion', 'a process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live' (European Foundation 1195, p. 4, quoted in Rawal 2008, 164). If a person is excluded from the workings of the society she assumedly belongs to, then she is not only prevented from taking part in it, but her very rights to participation come into question. For that reason, a broader definition of social exclusion would have to involve 'a process and a state that prevents individuals or groups from full participation in social, economic and political life and from asserting their rights' (Beall and Piron 2005, p. 9)—which they presumably possess but are barred from using in proper ways. The immediate question, of course, is who comes to define *full participation* and the criteria on the basis of which it becomes precluded (the issue is intranational, but also international, with a Northern economic and political model accepted as globally applicable).

The question becomes all the more complex if we remember that the term 'social exclusion' addresses very different groups of people: the lower strata of society (indeed, the term is an expansive addendum to older debates on poverty and deprivation [Aasland and Flotten 2000, p. 1027]); certain identity-based groups within the society, but nonetheless excluded from its dominant norms; and certain groups of people who are external to the society, but still live in it. Social exclusion functions as a systemic blockade, restriction or obstruction of the individual access to resources, opportunities or rights. However, the one who is socially excluded is almost by definition representative of the group one willingly or unwillingly belongs to (whether these are comprised of socially marginalized individuals, delinquents, lesbian mothers, second-generation ethnic minorities or refugees escaping from war). In this sense, exclusion assumes a hierarchy of socially desirable or acceptable groups, and it is this chosen

or unchosen membership in a particular socially-formed group that defines one's capability for full participation in society. Becoming included therefore assumes a certain level of integration (or assimilation), i.e. an acceptance of the existing hierarchy and a willingness to participate in its consolidation. In truth, the desire for inclusion—by becoming a citizen, by gaining the right to marry, by possessing property, by being socially acceptable and so forth—should not be surprising: inclusion not only leads to active participation in society, but it also allows certain rights to be claimed as unalienable.

Exclusion is restrictive to those who are thought to belong to less desirable social groups, but at the same time this is, in a somewhat Foucauldian sense, also a productive phenomenon. Certain norms, social hierarchies, inequalities and alienations are constantly being produced and reproduced through multiple exclusions, which generate a variety of affects (fear, repulsion, self-blame, powerlessness, ambivalence toward measures aimed at lessening social exclusion, feelings of heightened vulnerability, etc.). It might be claimed that it is precisely this productive dimension of exclusion that links it to vulnerability: groups that have a tendency to be or feel excluded also have a tendency to be or feel vulnerable to the social reproduction of discrimination, alienation and deprivation.

And yet, vulnerability is often figured as an immutable state of certain populations, which are not by definition socially excluded. Women are surely the most prominent example of such a figuration. Their disposition to being hurt or injured is not understood as a temporary state, inflicted by some mode of deprivation that can be removed by successful integration, but as a permanent, even distinctive bodily trait. The paternalism implied in actions of alleviating the pernicious effects of exclusion becomes even more conspicuous here. Certain kinds of bodies are prone to injury, to wounding, even if no real wounds have been inflicted, and are thus in need of protection. The wound (*vulnus*, *rana*) figures in both *vulnerabilidad* and *ranjivost*. The presence of a wound, as something embodied and immovable, strongly underscores the division between those that are in possession of agency and in no need of protection, and those who are passively awaiting protection and are always potentially victimized.

Such ontologizing of the wound has many dangerous consequences, as has been amply testified to in feminist activism and policy-making (we will enumerate only a few examples, as the list does not exhaust itself here): the emphasis on vulnerability reproduces the passivity of the weaker sex; demands for protection are directed towards state structures, themselves productive of various forms of exclusions, especially in today's neoliberal and authoritarian political framework which nurtures right-wing populism and annuls the last vestiges of social welfare; coalitional action is precluded between groups whose vulnerability is socially and politically induced and distributed. Furthermore, a fantasy of invulnerability and mastery is nourished in some population segments, which can themselves turn against the vulnerable: 'When nations advertise their hypervulnerability to new immigrants, or men openly fear that they are now the victims of feminism, the recourse to "vulnerability" in such instances can become the basis for a policy that seeks to exclude or contain women and minorities, as when the vulnerability of "white people" constructs black people as a threat to their existence' (Butler et al. 2016, p. 4).

Many contributions in this volume attempt to elaborate the notion of vulnerability developed by Judith Butler in her later works, applying it in different contexts. Intersecting with the general frame of exclusion, vulnerability is variously entwined with precarity, with socially produced feelings of unequal distribution relative to dependence/independence, or as a background for understanding violence. Rather than being assigned to certain (excluded) groups, vulnerability is regarded as a differential operation of power that demands a critical engagement in the domain of political thinking.

There is one specificity to this volume that should be particularly stressed. It represents the result of two encounters of philosophers from Spain and Serbia, two countries which until now have never had an exchange in the field of philosophy and social theory. With a strong emphasis on exclusion and vulnerability, and without a preliminary set-up for a joint framework or theoretical tools for dealing with the proposed topic, we came together as groups having a pronounced interest in similar problems, with a similar philosophical background—principally without drawing from our own local vocabularies and historical

registers—and with a keenly shared sense of the present and its burning issues. The two workshops in question took place on 7–8 November 2017 at the Complutense University of Madrid (*Engaging Vulnerability and Exclusion: Rethinking the Subject in the 21st Century*) and on 23–24 September 2019 at the Institute of Philosophy and Social Theory in Belgrade (*The Return of Violence: Contemporary Anxieties of the Community*) and offered a context of discussion for almost all of the chapters in this volume. The Spanish contributors are associate professors, lecturers and researchers at the Complutense University of Madrid and the Institute of Philosophy of the CSIC of Spain. Most are members of the Research Group *Normativity, Emotions, Discourse and Society* (GINEDIS) and of the Innovative Teaching Project *Vulnerability, Exclusion and Disability. Logics and Subjective Effects of Contemporary Social Suffering* (PIMCD UCM 1482018/19), led by Nuria Sánchez Madrid. The Serbian contributors are researchers at the Institute of Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade and members of the Group of Social Engagement, led by Adriana Zaharijević. The volume testifies to their common interest in the entwinement of philosophy and social sciences, focusing on the contemporary analysis of the challenges that precarity and the ideological legitimation of exclusion pose to a post-metaphysical conception of human dignity. Yet it also addresses the social recognition of grievable lives and the desire to boost the political agency of minoritized groups in the global sphere, particularly in the social and political context of Southern Europe. The uneasy positioning of Serbia as both 'European' and 'Southern', and of Spain as belonging unambiguously to the West and the global North, while at the same time being emblematically European, complicates the issue of our 'place' and gives to our discussions an added gloss and politically engaging meaning.

The first section, *Rethinking Vulnerability and Exclusion: The Historical Context of the Political*, revisits Hegel's (via Butler), Helmuth Plessner's and Hannah Arendt's notions of the political as the potential source of our contemporary understanding of the entangled knot of exclusion and vulnerability. The opening chapter 'The Vulnerable Subject: Butler Reading Hegel' by Clara Ramas San Miguel, explores the 'double-edged' concept of vulnerability in Butler, as that which both enables the modes of relationality and opens us up to violence, injury and exploitation. The

exploration of this double valence comes conjointly with a critique of the sovereign subject in Judith Butler's later thought, tracing its connections to Hegel and his reception by Žižek, Malabou and Nancy. Ramas' goal is to show that in conceiving of the vulnerable subject Butler remains faithful to the long-standing Hegelian legacy. In his chapter 'Human Being, Vulnerability and Politics: Helmuth Plessner's Political Anthropology', Roberto Navarrete approaches vulnerability through Plessner's *Macht und menschliche Natur*, a book published just two years before the collapse of Weimar Republic. This contribution invites us to revisit a largely forgotten but uncannily relevant discussion on the nature of the political, where the 'friend-enemy' *topos* would give shape to two crucially different political anthropologies—one of difference in Schmitt and one of relation in Plessner. At the core of this essay is Plessner's notion of human inscrutability, taken to be the cause of essential human vulnerability, since the individual identity emerges from a constant exposition and relation to 'otherness'. This chapter also aims to highlight some affinities that this episode of Weimar intellectual life shares with the contemporary revival of populism. Sara Ferreiro's contribution takes issue with Hannah Arendt's distinction between life-sustaining activities and political issues. In this vein, she tackles the arguments which Arendt draws upon for legitimating a standpoint on the public value of the body that disavows private space insofar as it reduces the tasks related to the reproduction of life to a bare compulsion of need or to a state of pre-political violence.

The second section, *Changing the Scene of Vulnerability*, invites us to consider some notions or experiences that may seem apparent and unambiguous, but are, on closer examination, potentially generative of an endless spiral of exclusions. Adriana Zaharijević's contribution 'Independent and Invulnerable. Politics of an Individual' is an inquiry into the nineteenth-century liberal conception of the individual and its uses in the framing of neoliberal political rationality. Zaharijević claims that the notion of independence is indeed inextricable from an incessant circuit of exclusions, but that it is also closely related to a specific epistemic and normative configuration of the creature who is the bearer of independence, i.e. a sovereign individual who governs himself. Questioning this legacy proves to be a step towards a political imagination appreciative of bodily vulnerability. The chapter by Igor Cvejić, entitled 'Feeling

Vulnerable: Interpersonal Relatedness and Situatedness', delves into the intersubjective recognition of another's vulnerability. Cvejić tries to understand not vulnerability per se, but how one feels vulnerable and how others perceive and appreciate one's vulnerability. Due to the fact that culturally and socially dependent criteria condition one's emotional agency, emotional exclusion can be treated as a form of a social exclusion, conditioning not only one's own feeling of vulnerability, but also the other's capacity to feel or grant to another the right of emotional agency. In his chapter, 'Vulnerability and Care as Basis for an Environmental Ethics of Global Justice', Txetxu Ausín links the development of a solid base for an environmental ethics of global justice with a proper understanding of vulnerability as a basic fact of human existence. In dialogue with contemporary authors (I. M. Young, Butler, Pérez Orozco, Puyol), he introduces the concept of *care* as a necessary basis for an environmental ethics adequate to our essential and supervening condition as vulnerable and eco-interdependent. Finally, Emma Ingala's contribution to this volume, 'Declinations of Violence: Thinking Extreme Violence and Vulnerability with Étienne Balibar and Judith Butler', ponders the turn to non-violence/anti-violence, together with a certain recuperation of the notion of the human, as a response to a specific conjuncture characterized by extreme forms of violence. These forms of violence require a reassessment of what we understand by and how we conceive of violence, as well as of the particular effects of extreme violence, crystallized in enhanced modes of exclusion and vulnerability which, again, are so pervasive and omnipresent that they frequently go unacknowledged.

The third section of the book, *Rethinking Exclusion: the Challenges of Democratic Orders in the 21st Century*, engages with contemporary struggles of exclusionary conceptual frames, recounting some of the key challenges faced by democratic orders in the twenty-first century. The chapter by Laura Herrero Olivera, 'Difference and Recognition. A Critical Lecture on Axel Honneth, Jacques Rancière and Nancy Fraser' argues for the intertwining of difference and recognition, following the conceptual thread of Arendt, Honneth, Rancière, Fraser and Semprún. Her contribution deals with the performative features of social identity, addressing Arendt's appraisal of the pariah, Honneth's model of social recognition and Rancière's conception of disagreement. The tensions that have