

## VULNERABILITY AND AGENCY: AN IMPOSSIBLE MATCH?

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**Abstract:** In this paper I will analyze the Arendtian heritage in Judith Butler's recent 'theory of assembly' with a special focus on the possible match between vulnerability and agency. I will argue that both authors in thinking about politics are at the same time developing a radically innovative theory of the subject, one that deconstructs and displaces the autonomous, sovereign self of modern individualism in order to re-allocate it in a shared, relational dimension that is at once vulnerable and political. There is, I claim a political way of reading vulnerability – one we can infer from both Arendt and Butler – that does not entail victimization and passivity, but instead enables us to rethink political action, freedom and happiness.