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Mackenzie, Catriona; Rogers, Wendy; and Dodds, Susan, eds. *Vulnerability: New Essays in Ethics and Feminist Philosophy* (Review)

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that Lippert-Rasmussen taught me in the course of this enjoyable and thoughtful book, which I warmly recommend.

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Mackenzie, Catriona; Rogers, Wendy; and Dodds, Susan, eds. *Vulnerability: New Essays in Ethics and Feminist Philosophy*.
New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. 318. \$99.00 (cloth).

Like most people, I did not think much about vulnerability. Or so I thought. I realized while reading this volume that I have it in the back of my mind all the time, and I would bet that goes for most of us. We just do not want to admit that we think about vulnerability, let alone admit that we are vulnerable, because vulnerability seems to be a sign of weakness. When we have it in the back of our minds, it is because we are trying to avoid the harms that being vulnerable opens us to. At least some of our vulnerability is located in the fact of our embodiment: we eschew thoughts about sickness, disability, aging, and death. Most of us are now familiar with the critique made mainly by feminist philosophers that philosophers traditionally have largely ignored or even loathed the body and have focused mainly on rationality as the feature that sets us apart from other animals and targets us for special moral treatment. So philosophy contributes to the anti-weakness sentiment many of us share.

On the other hand, philosophers have decidedly not ignored other ways in which we are vulnerable. The editors of this volume acknowledge that as socio-political beings, we are vulnerable to exploitation, manipulation, oppression, and the like, and much of moral and political philosophy is concerned with generating theories which, were they carried out in practice, would protect us from the harms we incur in virtue of our vulnerability in this sense. Furthermore, the editors note that we are vulnerable to the natural environment and to its impact on our actions and technologies. Contemporary philosophers writing in environmental philosophy have presumed that we are vulnerable in this sense. The practical-focused papers in this anthology focus on these various vulnerabilities, from the vulnerability of children, the elderly, and the sick to that of past and future generations, as well as the vulnerability of abused women who fail to protect their children from their abusers. Many papers in the volume acknowledge that women are especially vulnerable in their role as caregivers, a role that they are still expected to occupy. This kind of vulnerability is an example of what the editors refer to as situational vulnerability, which is specific to a person's or a group's personal, social, political, or environmental context. Situational vulnerability is distinguished from inherent vulnerability which is intrinsic to the human condition, as in our vulnerability to hunger, thirst, physical harm, and emotional hostility. The more theoretical papers in the volume explain the concept of vulnerability, its connection to autonomy, and how it fits in with various moral theories. I will focus on a handful of papers that I believe make the most original contributions to the topic of vulnerability.

When a person has been harmed by a morally wrongful loss or injury in such a way that reparations are the morally appropriate response, as in cases of mass violence, systemic abuse, or historical injustice, the person suffers a distinct kind of vulnerability that is exposed by the indignity that the harm causes. So argues Margaret Urban Walker in “Moral Vulnerability and the Task of Reparations.” Walker takes the main issue in these cases to be whether those who have been wronged have the standing to call to account those who have wronged them or who can repair these wrongs. This theme is familiar from Stephen Darwall’s widely known work on the second-person standpoint, according to which there is a mutual acknowledgment between persons as beings deserving of respect. Walker understands moral vulnerability to be the vulnerability we have in terms of our moral status as full participants in reciprocal accountability relationships; the harm we might suffer because of this vulnerability is dismissal or degradation of our status as full participants in a moral community. This analysis lines up nicely with the work of other Kantians, including Jean Hampton, who argued that rape threatened to lower (what she called “diminish”) not only the victim’s value but also the value of all women because the practice sends the message to all women that they are inferior beings. Hampton agrees with Kant that we can never lower the intrinsic value of others by our actions, although acts like rape certainly attempt to do so. Walker is not clear about this point, but I think she believes that others can actually degrade our value since this is the harm she identifies that results from moral vulnerability.

Walker’s concern is to identify how we can repair the damage we cause to a person’s or a group’s dignity. She believes, rightly so, I think, that we do not fully redress these moral injuries unless we address the fact that a person’s dignity was harmed and is threatened with similar harm in the future. Significant to her account is the notion that relationships of accountability connect persons through recognition of responsibilities under shared norms regarding acceptable conduct. A person is harmed when she is treated in ways that exclude her from these norms when she believes herself to be entitled to fall under their protection by being a participant in a relationship of accountability. I would add that her being entitled to be a participant is an objective fact, something that holds independent of her belief—I would follow Kant and Hampton on this, since many people, particularly the oppressed, do not believe themselves to be worthy of certain treatment because they have internalized false beliefs about their worth as persons. Walker believes that a person’s vulnerability extends beyond the possibility of being harmed by the perpetrator to include those who fail to respond in ways that confirm the victim’s moral standing by blaming or not believing her. This is often the case with the oppressed—blaming rape victims for provoking the attack is commonplace. Walker believes that in order for there to be true reparations for moral injuries, communities have an obligation to respectfully confirm the victim’s equality with others by taking seriously the injury as a matter for redress.

Paul Formosa’s paper, “The Role of Vulnerability in Kantian Ethics,” more explicitly addresses a Kantian theme, arguing that despite the common reading of Kant that supports the view that Kantian ethics has no room for vulnerability, vulnerability is important in Kantian ethics, both in the broad sense that all persons are vulnerable in virtue of having bodies and in the narrow sense that some

groups of persons are especially vulnerable. Formosa ties vulnerability to Kant's view of dignity that persons have in virtue of their capacity for rationality, a capacity that develops under various empirical conditions. These rational capacities and the bodies they depend on are vulnerable and fragile, according to Formosa. He defines vulnerability as being susceptible to harm or injury but says that vulnerability is not necessarily a bad thing.

Formosa cites three reasons we might believe that vulnerability cannot be part of Kantian ethics: (1) Kantian ethics is a priori, but vulnerability is a contingent fact; (2) Kant idealizes capacities for rational choice, and not acknowledging vulnerabilities is a kind of idealization; and (3) Kantian autonomy seems incompatible with vulnerability. Formosa convincingly argues against these reasons by citing passages from Kant suggesting that Kantian ethics is compatible with vulnerability.

Formosa outlines how vulnerability plays a role in both perfect and imperfect duties. He defines a perfect duty to be a duty to perform or not perform a specific action, while an imperfect duty requires adoption of a general end of one's own, such as a duty to promote others' happiness that can be fulfilled in a variety of ways. Formosa demonstrates how vulnerability factors into the Formula of Humanity. We have a perfect duty not to use our own rational capacities as a mere means to our own ends. For Kant, the body constitutes part of our self since our freedom is possible only through the body. Since our rational capacities are dependent on our bodies, they are vulnerable to damage when we harm ourselves, commit suicide, sell our organs, and abuse alcohol. Thus we have duties to ourselves not to act in these ways. We also have a duty not to use others in terms of their rational capacities. These duties cash out as a duty to respect others and treat them in ways to which they can consent. Failure to treat others respectfully involves interfering with their rational capacities themselves or with their exercise. Exploitation is an example of disrespect for others, one to which the most vulnerable persons are subject.

For Kant, we have an imperfect duty to promote our own natural and moral self-perfection. We promote our natural self-perfection by improving our powers of mind, soul, and body, thereby aiding our rational capacities. We promote our moral self-perfection by disposing ourselves to respect the law unconditionally and by becoming more virtuous. Self-perfection is vulnerable to the attitudes that others express toward us, such as when they express contempt or ridicule us. By impeding our self-perfection, these attitudes impede our rational capacities.

Finally, some of us are much more vulnerable to others' using us for their own ends because we are vulnerable in a narrow sense. For instance, some people are "deferentially vulnerable," meaning that social and cultural forces can make them consent to treatment they do not want to consent to, as is the case for third world women who might consent to whatever doctors advise because of their power. Formosa argues that our perfect duties to these highly vulnerable persons are more onerous, so we ought to be extra careful in obtaining their free and informed consent. Formosa adequately demonstrates how Kantian ethics can accommodate vulnerability despite initial appearances.

Are the dead and future generations vulnerable to harm? Janna Thomson poses this fascinating question in "Being in Time: Ethics and Temporal Vulnerability." She argues that rather than explaining the vulnerability of past and fu-

ture persons in terms of their location in time, which would run into the problem of explaining how nonexistent persons can be vulnerable to harm, we should explain their vulnerability in terms of intergenerational relationships and dependencies. She labels this the diachronic view of vulnerability. The standard, or synchronic view, has it that we locate the vulnerability of persons in their nonexistence, their relation to the present. Thomson finds this view to be wrong-headed mainly because when it comes to the issue of harming the dead and unborn, it cannot explain how we can harm those with no potential to have experiences or who do not yet have identities.

Thomson prefers to take a diachronic perspective, according to which we are beings who move through time with generational dependencies. That is, we depended on our predecessors for our ability to flourish, and we depend on our successors to fulfill our desires and demands after we are dead. What makes us vulnerable, then, is not our nonexistence but these intergenerational dependencies. This is an innovative proposal that seems to skirt the problems of the synchronic view. The proposal aligns with feminist concerns about seeing persons in the context of relationships rather than strictly in individualistic terms.

On the diachronic account, we are all vulnerable to our successors' not fulfilling our lifetime-transcending interests. When these are not fulfilled, the person who promised to fulfill them harms not only the no-longer-living person whose interests that go unfulfilled may be central to her conception of herself and to the meaning of her life, but he harms all of us who count on this intergenerational practice being honored. Thomson believes that this way of thinking of intergenerational duties can be accommodated by Scanlon's contractarianism. Applying the contractarian model to our relationship to future generations, we can agree that all generations have reason not to reject principles that require them to be concerned about their successors' welfare, just as we expect that caretakers of children should aim to prevent harm from occurring to them. More generally, we know that all future generations are vulnerable to decisions we make about the environment, and we have reason to believe that they will have claims on us to provide them with things we believe they ought to enjoy. I find persuasive Thomson's proposal to locate our vulnerability in the generational model as a way of solving the problems facing the synchronic view.

The last paper I take up is Marilyn Friedman's on the case of abused women who fail to protect their children from abuse at the hands of their abuser. Abused women are vulnerable to being coerced by their abuser into failing to protect their children from abuse, either by not preventing abuse when present during an abusive act, leaving the child alone with the abuser, or failing to seek medical attention for an abused child after learning that the child was abused. Both the child and the mother are vulnerable, and Friedman aims to explore the complex relationships of vulnerability at stake. She focuses on cases where the harm to the child is serious and where an average nonabused mother would not have to use superhuman effort to protect the child. The question is whether the mother's vulnerability frees her from responsibility if she fails to protect her children from abuse.

Friedman examines three options for freeing the mother from responsibility—exemption, justification, and excuse—and favors the last one. A person is exempt from moral responsibility if she is incompetent. It has been argued that

abused women are so traumatized by their own abuse that they become incapable of protecting themselves and their children. They suffer, some believe, from chronic moral incapacitation. But Friedman notes that many abused women do try to defend themselves from attack and try to protect their children, even though some women may be morally incapacitated. Friedman also believes that it would be dangerous to characterize abused women as morally incapacitated because their moral character in its entirety is not compromised even if they fail to protect their children from abuse, and it might be the case that they just lack the means to resist the abuser. Additionally, to perceive them as morally flawed might result in their losing custody of their children. So Friedman rejects exemption as the way to free these women from responsibility.

A second option is justification: failure to protect is justified when it is wrong but the best thing to do in the circumstances. Friedman identifies four factors relevant to determining whether the abused mother is justified in failing to protect her child from abuse: severity of the abuse, cessation of the abuse, whether they can escape, and the possibility of further abuse. For example, if the abuser will harm the child further if the mother protects the child, her failure to do so can be justified. My disagreement with Friedman lies with her position on whether the abused mother who fails to protect her child because she fears harm to herself is justified. While Friedman acknowledges that women are expected to sacrifice themselves for their children to a much greater extent than are men, she argues that the abused mother (and for that matter, the father) is justified in failing to protect only when the harm done to herself would be much worse than that done to her child. This is because children are one of the most vulnerable members of society and thus in need of their parents' protection. Since Friedman thinks this will leave few cases in which we could exonerate abused women from failure to protect, she does not favor the justification approach.

I think her position is too strong. Granted, we have obligations to our children, especially an obligation to prevent harm to them, but on Friedman's view parents would have to sacrifice their bodies in order to prevent worse harm to their children. Suppose that the abuser will beat up the mother if she intervenes when her child is being beaten (and we can't predict how serious the attack will be in either case). Friedman's view would have it that the mother has to forgo her right to self-defense for the sake of protecting this same right in her child. Judith Jarvis Thomson famously argued that if we have a right to anything, we have a right to determine what happens in and to our bodies. Thomson gives a case in which the mother's right to life comes into conflict with the fetus's right to life and argues that the mother's right to life takes precedence over the fetus's life. Granted the harms are equal in Thomson's case—either will die—and granted one party is a fetus rather than an already born child. Yet Thomson grants the fetus full-fledged personhood rights. In Friedman's case, the right at issue is still self-defense for either party. Her argument requires that the mother give up this right or allow it to be overridden at least in certain circumstances. I am not convinced that parental duties extend this far when it comes to our bodies. To put this in Thomson's terms, Friedman is saying that the mother should give her child the right to use her body. But I am not sure why this holds for the abused child any more than it would hold for the fetus. Perhaps Friedman intends this to be an "ought" of minimal decency: it does not derive from a moral requirement

in the sense that there is no corresponding right the child can claim against the mother. Thomson believes that these are still “oughts,” just ones not correlated with obligations. But she believes that nobody is morally required to make large sacrifices of health and other interests except where there is a right to demand it. I would add that this is because of the significance of the body to a person’s self, identity, and membership in a moral community. A person’s body is the vehicle through which she lives her life, coming into and going out of the world with it, feeling pain and pleasure through it like no one else can. We need to be careful in deciding when someone’s right to self-defense should be overridden even for the sake of her children. Friedman hints that the agent-relative reason to protect oneself should be balanced against an equal, if not more compelling, agent-relative reason to protect one’s child (237). But overriding the right to self-defense might be to endorse servility.

In the end, Friedman favors excusing abused women who fail to protect their children. Excusing acknowledges the wrongness of the act but acknowledges the agent’s motives as ones it would be very hard for an ordinary person to resist in the situation. Friedman acknowledges that we all have the strong motivation of self-protection, but she says that the harm the mother averts to herself must substantially outweigh the harm she allows the abuser to inflict on her child in order for her failure to be excused. Yet it seems wrongheaded to classify self-defense as an excuse rather than a justification. Whatever side we take, it is clear that Friedman’s paper nicely illustrates the complexities involved in vulnerability.

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Markovits, Julia. *Moral Reason*.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. 208. \$58.50 (cloth).

The main thesis of Julia Markovits’s thoughtful book is highly controversial. It has two parts: internalism about reasons for action is right, and everybody has moral reasons. I really enjoyed reading a dense and clear book that has been reworked so thoroughly over an extended amount of time.

The thesis is surprising and ambitious. For it seems almost self-evident that internalism about reasons, especially if combined with a desire account of action, leads to an insurmountable gap in arguing for the generality of moral reasons. Why does someone who does not happen to have a subjective moral reason to start with nevertheless have an internal one? Markovits defends a kind of diluted but augmented rationale of Kant’s categorical imperative. It is not the autonomy of other beings grounded in their rationality that justifies the demand for moral respect. Normativity is found instead in one’s own practical deliberation, that is, in the form of how to reason properly if reason is to guide action. I will give a brief overview of the book and try to bring out what Markovits does to narrow the gap between internalism about reasons and the validity of the categorical imperative.

On Markovits’s account there are internal reasons that are normative. She employs the distinction between motivating and justifying reasons: motivating