## III. Framing

#### The Aff challenges dehumanizing cultural frames that allow us to ignore human suffering. Recognition of common vulnerability is key to a politics that rejects violence, oppression, and indifference.

Butler ’04 - Judith Butler [Prof. of Rhetoric and Comparative Literature, University of California at Berkeley], Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence. New York: Verso (2006; First Published 2004). pp. 30-35 AT

Is there something to be gained from grieving, from tarrying with grief, from remaining exposed to its unbearability and not endeavoring to seek a resolution for grief through violence? Is there something to be gained in the political domain by maintaining grief as part of the framework within which we think our international ties? If we stay with the sense of loss, are we left feeling only passive and powerless, as some might fear? Or are we, rather, returned to a sense of human vulnerability, to our collective responsibility for the physical lives of one another? **Could** the experience of a **dislocation of First World safety** not **condition** the **insight into the radically inequitable ways that** corporeal **vulnerability is distributed globally?** To foreclose that vulnerability,to banish it, **to make ourselves secure at the expense of every other** human consideration **is to eradicate** one of the **most important resources from which we must** take our bearings and **find our way.¶** To grieve, and to make grief itself into a resource for politics, is not to be resigned to inaction, but it may be understood as the slow process by which we develop a point of identification with suffering itself. The disorientation of grief- “Who have I become?” or, indeed, “What is left of me?” “What is it in the Other that I have lost?” – posits the “I” in the mode of unknowingness.¶ But this can be a point of departure for a new understanding if the narcissistic preoccupation of melancholia can be moved into a consideration of the vulnerability of others. Then we might critically evaluate and oppose the conditions under which certain human lives are more vulnerable than others,and thus certain human lives are more grievable than others. From where **might a principle emerge by which we vow to protect others from the kinds of violence we have suffered,** if not **from an apprehension of a common human vulnerability?** I do not mean to deny that vulnerability is differentiated, that it is allocated differentially across the globe. I do not even mean to presume upon a common notion of the human, although to speak in its “name” is already (or perhaps only) to fathom its possibility.¶ I am referring to violence, vulnerability, and mourning, but there is a more general conception of the human with which I am trying to work here, one in which we are, from the start, given over to the other, one in which we are, from the start, even prior to individuation itself and, by virtue of bodily requirements, given over to some set of primary others: this conception means that we are vulnerable to those we are too young to know and to judge and, hence, vulnerable to violence; but also vulnerable to another range of touch, a range that includes the eradication of our being at the one end, and the physical support for our lives at the other.¶ Although I am insisting on referring to a common human vulnerability, one that emerges with life itself, I also insist that we cannot recover the source of this vulnerability: it precedes the formation of the “I.” This is a condition, a condition of being laid bare from the start and with which we cannot argue. I mean, that we can argue with it, but we are perhaps foolish, if not dangerous, when we do. I do not mean to suggest that the necessary support for a newborn is always there. Clearly, it is not, and for some this primary scene is a scene of abandonment or violence or starvation, that theirs are bodies given over to nothing, or to brutality, or to no sustenance.¶ We cannot understand vulnerability as a deprivation, however, unless we understand the need that is thwarted. Such infants still must be apprehended as given over, as given over to no one or to some insufficient support, or to an abandonment. It would be difficult, it not impossible, to understand how humans suffer from oppression without seeing how this primary condition is exploited and exploitable, thwarted and denied. The condition of primary **vulnerability**, of being given over to the touch of the other, even if there is no other there, and no support for our lives, **signifies a primary helplessness and need**, one **to which any society must attend.** Lives are supported and maintained differently, andthere are radically different ways in which human physical vulnerability is distributed across the globe. **Certain lives will be highly protected, and the abrogation of their** claims to **sanctity will** be sufficient to **mobilize the forces of war. Other lives** will not find such fast and furious support and will not even qualify as “grievable.”**¶** A hierarchy of grief could no doubt be enumerated. We have seen it already, in the genre of the obituary, where lives are quickly tidied up and summarized, humanized, usually married, or on the way to be, heterosexual, happy, monogamous. But this is just a sign of another differential relation to life, since we seldom, if ever, hear the names of the thousands of Palestinians who have died by the Israeli military with United States support, or any number of Afghan people, children and adults**. Do they have names, faces, personal histories, family, favorite hobbies, slogans by which they life?** What defense against the apprehension of loss is at work in the blithe way in which we accept deaths caused by military means with a shrug or with self-righteousness or with clear vindictiveness? To what extent have Arab peoples, predominantly practitioners of Islam, fallen outside the “human” as it has been naturalized in its “Western” mold by the contemporary workings of humanism? What are the cultural contours of the human at work here? How do our **cultural frames for thinking the human set limits on the kinds of losses we can avow** as loss**?** After all, if someone is lost, and that person is not someone, then what and where is the loss, and how does mourning take place?¶ This last is surely a question that lesbian, gay, and hi-studies have asked in relation to violence against sexual minorities; that transgendered people have asked as they are singled out for harassment and sometimes murder; that intersexed people have asked, whose formative years are so often marked by unwanted violence against their bodies in the name of a normative notion of the human, a normative notion of what the body of a human must be. This question is no doubt, as well, the basis of a profound affinity between movements centering on gender and sexuality and efforts to counter the normative human morphologies and capacities that condemn or efface those who are physically challenged. It must also be part of the affinity with anti-racist struggles, given the racial differential that undergirds the culturally viable notions of the human, ones that we see acted out in dramatic and terrifying ways in the global arena at the present time.¶ I am referring not only to humans not regarded as humans, and thus to a restrictive conception of the human that is based upon their exclusion. It is not a matter of a simple entry of the excluded into an established ontology, but an insurrection at the level of ontology, a critical opening up of the questions, What is real? Whose lives are real? How might reality be remade? Those who are unreal have, in a sense, already suffered the violence of derealization. What, then, is the relation between violence and those lives considered as "unreal"? Does violence effect that unreality? Does violence take place on the condition of that unreality?¶ If violence is done against those who are unreal, then, from the perspective of violence, it fails to injure or negate those lives since those lives are already negated. But they have a strange way of remaining animated and so must be negated again (and again). They cannot be mourned because they are always already lost or, rather, never "were," and they must be killed, since they seem to live on, stubbornly, in this state of deadness. Violence renews itself in the face of the apparent inexhaustibility of its object. The derealization of the "Other" means that it is neither alive nor dead, but interminably spectral. The infinite paranoia that imagines the war against terrorism as a war without end will be one that justifies itself endlessly in relation to the spectral infinity of its enemy, regardless of whether or not there are established grounds to suspect the continuing operation of terror cells with violent aims.¶ How do we understand this derealization? It is one thing to argue that first, on the level of discourse, certain lives are not considered lives at all, they cannot be humanized, that they fit no dominant frame for the human, and that their dehumanization occurs first, at this level, and that this level then gives rise to a physical violence that in some sense delivers the message of dehumanization that is already at work in the culture. It is another thing to say that discourse itself effects violence through omission. If 2oo,ooo Iraqi children were killed during the Gulf War and its aftermath/ do we have an image, a frame for any of those lives, singly or collectively? Is there a story we might find about those deaths in the media? Are there names attached to those children?¶ There are no obituaries for the war casualties that the United States inflicts, and there cannot be. If there were to be an obituary, there would have had to have been a life, a life worth noting, a life worth valuing and preserving, a life that qualifies for recognition. Although we might argue that it would be impractical to write obituaries for all those people, or for all people, I think we have to ask, again and again, how the obituary functions as the instrument by which grievability is publicly distributed. It is the means by which a life becomes, or fails to become, a publicly grievable life, an icon for national self-recognition, the means by which a life becomes noteworthy. As a result, we have to consider the obituary as an act of nation-building. The matter is not a simple one, for, if a life is not grievable, it is not quite a life; it does not qualify as a life and is not worth a note. It is already the unburied, if not the unburiable.¶ It is not simply, then, that there is a "discourse" of dehumanization that produces these effects, but rather that there is a limit to discourse that establishes the limits of human intelligibility. It is not just that a death is poorly marked, but that it is unmarkable. Such a death vanishes, not into explicit discourse, but in the ellipses by which public discourse proceeds. The queer lives that vanished on September I I were not publicly welcomed into the idea of national identity built in the obituary pages, and their closest relations were only belatedly and selectively (the marital norm holding sway once again) made eligible for benefits. But this should come as no surprise, when we think about how few deaths from AIDS were publicly grievable losses, and how, for instance, the extensive deaths now taking place in Africa are also, in the media, for the most part unmarkable and ungrievable.

**The Aff challenges the hegemonic ideology of the status quo by rejecting sacrificial rationalizations. That logic is the basis for colonialism, slavery, genocide, war, and global poverty.**

**Santos 3** 2003, Boaventura de Souza Santos is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Coimbra, “Collective Suicide?”, Bad Subjects, Issue # 63 , http://www.ces.fe.uc.pt/opiniao/bss/072en.php

According to Franz Hinkelammert, **the West has repeatedly been under the illusion that it should try to save humanity by destroying part of it.** This is a salvific and sacrificial destruction, committed in the name of the need to radically materialize all the possibilities opened up by a given social and political reality over which it is supposed to have total power. This is how it was in **colonialism,** with the **genocide of indigenous peoples,** and the **African slaves.** This is how it was in the period of **imperialist struggles, which caused millions of deaths in two world wars and** many other **colonial wars.** This is how it was in **Stalinism, with the Gulag and** in **Nazism, with the holocaust.** And now today, this is how it is in **neoliberalism, with the collective sacrifice of the periphery** and even the semiperiphery of the world system**.** With the war against Iraq, it is fitting to ask whether what is in progress is a new genocidal and sacrificial illusion, and what its scope might be. It is above all appropriate to ask if the new illusion will not herald the radicalization and the ultimate perversion of the western illusion: destroying all of humanity in the illusion of saving it. **Sacrificial genocide arises from a totalitarian illusion** that is manifested in the belief **that there are no alternatives to the present**-day **reality and that** the **problems** and difficulties confronting it **arise from failing to take its logic** of development **to its ultimate consequences**. If there is unemployment, hunger and death in the Third World, this is not the result of market failures; instead, it is the outcome of the market laws not having been fully applied. If there is terrorism, this is not due to the violence of the conditions that generate it; it is due, rather, to the fact that total violence has not been employed to physically eradicate all terrorists and potential terrorists. **This political logic is based on the supposition of total power and knowledge, and on the radical rejection of alternatives; it is ultra-conservative** in that **it aims to infinitely reproduce the status quo.** Inherent to it is the notion of the end of history. During the last hundred years, the West has experienced three versions of this logic, and, therefore, seen three versions of the end of history: Stalinism, with its logic of insuperable efficiency of the plan; Nazism, with its logic of racial superiority; and neoliberalism, with its logic of insuperable efficiency of the market. The first two periods involved the destruction of democracy. The last one trivializes democracy, disarming it in the face of social actors sufficiently powerful to be able to privatize the State and international institutions in their favour. I have described this situation as a combination of political democracy and social fascism. One current manifestation of this combination resides in the fact that intensely strong public opinion, worldwide, against the war is found to be incapable of halting the war machine set in motion by supposedly democratic rulers. At all these moments, a death drive, a catastrophic heroism, predominates, the idea of a looming collective suicide, only preventable by the massive destruction of the other. Paradoxically, the broader the definition of the other and the efficacy of its destruction, the more likely collective suicide becomes. In its sacrificial genocide version, neoliberalism is a mixture of market radicalization, neoconservatism and Christian fundamentalism. Its death drive takes a number of forms, from the idea of "discardable populations", referring to citizens of the Third World not capable of being exploited as workers and consumers, to the concept of "collateral damage" , to refer to the deaths, as a result of war, of thousands of innocent civilians. The last, catastrophic heroism, is quite clear on two facts: according to reliable calculations by the Non-Governmental Organization MEDACT, in London, between 48 and 260 thousand civilians will die during the war and in the three months after (this is without there being civil war or a nuclear attack); the war will cost 100 billion dollars, enough to pay the health costs of the world's poorest countries for four years. Is it possible to fight this death drive? We must bear in mind that, historically, sacrificial destruction has always been linked to the economic pillage of natural resources and the labor force, to the imperial design of radically changing the terms of economic, social, political and cultural exchanges in the face of falling efficiency rates postulated by the maximalist logic of the totalitarian illusion in operation. It is as though hegemonic powers, both when they are on the rise and when they are in decline, repeatedly go through times of primitive accumulation, legitimizing the most shameful violence in the name of futures where, by definition, there is no room for what must be destroyed. In today's version, the period of primitive accumulation consists of combining neoliberal economic globalization with the globalization of war. The machine of democracy and liberty turns into a machine of horror and destruction.