# 1AC

### Framework

**Empathy is the first question of ethics. In order to have a moral obligation to accept or reject the resolution, we must first have moral obligations towards the other. Before debating normative ethics, we must first find the procedure through which we give the other moral value. We must center policy that enables people to recognize the humanity of the other.**

#### The concept of the human is a relational subjectivity created in the context of a “we.” Our relations to one another determine whose lives are recognizable as fully human. Therefore, life is constituted via our political relationships derived from vulnerability, not just our biological functions.

Butler 1 (2004)

Butler, Judith. Researcher and Professor at UC Berkeley (2004) Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence. London: Verso, Print. (p.20)

I propose to **start**, and to end, **with the question of the human** (as if there were any other way for us to start or end!). We start here not because there is a human condition that is universally shared-this is surely not yet the case. The question that preoccupies me **in the light of recent global violence** is, **Who counts as human?** Whose lives count as lives? And, finally, What makes for' a grievable life? Despite our differences in location and history, my guess is that **it is possible to appeal to a "we," for all of us have some notion of what it is to have lost somebody. Loss has made a tenuous "we" of us all**. And **if we have lost, then it follows that we have had, that we have desired and loved, that we have struggled** and find the conditions for our desire. We have all lost in recent decades from AIDS, but there are other losses that amidst us, from illness and from global conflict; and there is the fact as well that women and minorities, including sexual minorities, are, as a community, subjected to violence, exposed to its possibility, ixf not its realization. **This means that each of us is constituted politically in part by virtue of the social vulnerability of our bodies-as a site of desire and physical vulnerability**, as a site of a publicity at once assertive and exposed. **Loss and vulnerability seem to follow from our being socially constituted bodies, attached to others, at risk of losing those attachments, exposed to others, at risk of violence by virtue of that exposure.**

**This means we must first evaluate the relational question of being vulnerable because it determines who counts under any other framework.**

#### A politics of grief is crucial to collective consciousness, class or otherwise, because it de-privitizes our phenomenological experience of politics and everyday life. This ensures we recognize others as human and address their struggles.

Butler 2

Butler, Judith. Researcher and Professor at UC Berkeley (2004) Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence. London: Verso, Print. (p.23)  
Many people think that **grief** is privatizing, that it returns us to a solitary situation and is, in that sense, depoliticizing. But I think it **furnishes a sense of political community** of a complex order, and it does this first of all **by bringing to the fore the relational ties that have implications for theorizing fundamental dependency and ethical responsibility.** **If my fate is not originally or finally separable from yours, then the "we" is traversed by a relationality that we cannot easily argue against**; or, rather, we can argue against it, but we would be denying something fundamental about the social conditions of our very formation. A consequential grammatical quandary follows. In the effort to explain these relations, I might be said to "have" them, but what does "having" imply? I might sit back and try to enumerate them to you. I might explain what this friendship means, what that lover meant or means to me. I would be constituting myself in such an instance as a detached narrator of my relations. Dramatizing my detachment, I might perhaps only be showing that the form of attachment I am demonstrating is trying to minimize its own relationality, is invoking it as an option, as something that does not touch on the question of what sustains me fundamentally What **grief displays**, in contrast, is **the thrall in which our relations with others hold us**, in ways that we cannot always recount or explain**, in ways that often interrupt the self-conscious account of ourselves we might try to provide**, in ways that challenge the very notion of ourselves as autonomous and in controL **I might try to tell a story here about what I am feeling, but it would have to be a story in which the very "I" who seeks to tell the story is stopped in the midst of the telling; the very "I" is called into question by its relation to the Other**, a relation that does not precisely reduce me to speechlessness, but does nevertheless clutter my speech with signs of its undoing. **I tell a story about the relations I choose, only to expose, somewhere along the way, the way I am gripped and undone by these very relations.** My narrative falters, as it must **Let's face it. We're undone by each other. And if we're not, we're missing something.**

#### My standard is consistency with a politics of vulnerability that determines our relations to one another and is therefore crucial to making decisions that prioritize life and prevent violence. I control a key meta-ethical question of how we identify evil and suffering.

Butler 3

Butler, Judith. Researcher and Professor at UC Berkeley (2004) Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence. London: Verso, Print. (p.30-1)

Let us return to the issue of grief, to the moments in which one undergoes something outside one's control and finds that one is beside oneself, not at one with oneself. Perhaps we can say that grief contains the possibility of apprehending a mode of dispossession that is fundamental to who I am. This possibility does not dispute the fact of my autonomy, but it does qualify that claim through recourse to the fundamental sociality of embodied life, the ways in which we are, from the start and by virtue of being a bodily being, already given over, beyond ourselves, implicated in lives that are not our own. If I do not always know what seizes me on such occasions, and if I do not always know what it is in another person that I have lost, it may be that this sphere of dispossession is precisely the one that exposes my unknowingness, the unconscious imprint of my primary sociality. Can this insight lead to a normative reorientation for politics? Can this situation of mourning---one that is so dramatic for those in social movements who have undergone innumerable losses-supply a perspective by which to begin to apprehend the contemporary global situation? Mourning, fear, anxiety, rage. In the United States, we have been surrounded with violence, having perpetrated it and perpetrating it still, having suffered it, living in fear of it, planning more of it, if not an open future of infinite war in the name of a "war on terrorism." **Violence is surely a touch of the worst order, a way a primary human vulnerability to other humans is exposed in its most terrifying way, a way in which we are given over, without control, to the will of another, a way in which life itself can be expunged by the willful action of another.** To the extent that we commit violence, we are acting on another, putting the other at risk, causing the other damage, threatening to expunge the mher. In a way, we all live with this particular vulnerability, a vulnerability to the other that is part of bodily life, a vulnerability to a sudden address from elsewhere that we cannot preempt**. This vulnerability, however, becomes highly exacerbated under certain social and political conditions, especially those in which violence is a way of life** and the means to secure selfdefense are limited. Mindfulness of this vulnerability can become the basis of claims for non-military political solutions, just as denial of this vulnerability through a fantasy of mastery (an institutionalized fantasy of mastery) can fuel the instruments of war. **We cannot**, however, **will away this vulnerability**. **We must attend to it**, even abide by it, **as we begin to think about what politics might be implied by staying with the thought of corporeal vulnerability** itself….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 safelY 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 polities, 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 of the narcissistic preoccupation of melancholia which 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

**Prefer:**

#### 1. Rights discourse - a politics of vulnerability is a necessary approach to the question of rights because it prevents their de-politiczing affect. Grief ensures an affective attachment to one another as the ruled, as workers, and the collectively passionate in the face of inequality.

Butler 4

Butler, Judith. Researcher and Professor at UC Berkeley (2004) Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence. London: Verso, Print. (p.25)

I am arguing, if I am "arguing" at all, that we have an interesting political predicament; **most of the time when we hear about "rights," we understand them as pertaining to individuals. When we argue for protection against discrimination, we argue as a group or a class.** And in that language and in that context, **we have to present ourselves as bounded beings--dlistinct, recognizable, delineated, subjects before the law, a community defined by some shared features**. Indeed, we must be able to use that language to secure legal protections and entitlements. But perhaps **we make a mistake if we take the definitions of who we are, legally, to be adequate descriptions of what we are about.** **Although this language may well establish our legitimacy within a legal framework ensconced in liberal versions of human ontology, it does not do justice to passion and grief and rage, all of which tear us from ourselves, bind us to others, transport us, undo us, implicate us in lives that are not are own, irreversibly, if not fatally.**

#### 2. Subjectivity - vulnerability in the face of loss is a core component of subject formation. In order to recognize that one is part of a “we,” they must lose something that changes their supposedly isolated “I.” We do not need to know what we have lost to participate in a politics of grievability. Relationality is the starting point. An accurate notion of the subject is a prerequisite to ethics because we must tailor obligations to the obligated.

Butler 5

Butler, Judith. Researcher and Professor at UC Berkeley (2004) Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence. London: Verso, Print. (p.22)

Something takes hold of you: where does it come from? What sense does it make? What claims us at such moments, such that we are not the masters of ourselves? To what are we tied? And by what are we seized? Freud reminded us that **when we lose someone, we do not always know what it is in that person that has been lost**.· So when one loses, one is also faced with something enigmatic: something is hiding in the loss, something is lost within the recesses of loss. If mourning involves knowing what one has lost (and melancholia originally meant, to a certain extent, not knowing), then mourning would be maintained by its enigmatic dimension, by the experience of not knowing incited by losing what we cannot fully fathom. **When we lose certain people, or when we are dispossessed from a place, or a community, we may simply feel that we are undergoing something temporary, that mourning will be over and some restoration of prior order will be achieved. But maybe when we undergo what we do, something about who we are is revealed, something that delineates the ties we have to others, that shows us that these ties constitute what we are**, ties or bonds that compose us**. It is not as if an "I" exists independently over here and then simply loses a "you" over there, especially if the attachment to "you" is part of what composes who "I" am**. If I lose you, under these conditions, then I not only mourn the loss, but I become inscrutable to myself**. Who "am" I, without you?** When we lose some of these ties by which we are constituted, we do not know who we are or what to do. On one level, I think I have lost "you" only to discover that "I" have gone missing as well. At another level, perhaps what I have lost '"in" you, that for which I have no ready vocabulary, is a relationality that is composed neither exclusively of myself nor you, but is to be conceived

**3. Performativity – my opponent’s thoughts on ethics are changed when they hear the aff – that’s the only way they could come up with new arguments against it. That means by contesting my framework, they concede my relational theory of the subject.**

**4. Exportability – offense under my standard centers the nature of relationships. That’s more applicable to day to day life than foreign policy scenarios or adherence with an abstract moral code. Exportability matters because it determines what we actually learn from debate.**

**5. Ecology – vulnerability is uniquely able to solve ecological problems in the anthropocene because it enables us to relate to the earth as a mutually vulnerable subject. It affects us, and we affect it. Ecosystems are vulnerable and ecological systems that include humans, and my theory is necessary for us to accept our ecological existence. Absent the affirmative framework, it is impossible to conceive of any genuine relationality between people and the environment, so ecological movements would fail.**

**6. Relational humanism is good:**

**a. Only collective consciousness enables us to recognize the value of the other and grieve their suffering. Without mutual recognition, it’s impossible to fight oppression because we can’t comprehend the struggle of others.**

**b. Recognizing humanity as a distinct concept that is interwoven with the environment is necessary to conceive of anthropocentrism – we can’t describe this ecological era without a strong idea of “anthro.”**

### Contention

**I affirm resolved: A just government ought to recognize the unconditional right of workers to strike.**

#### Class violence is rampant and strikes are method of grieving that violence with other workers from across the world. When they see their comrades faced with oppression and exploitation, workers collectively grieve their loss. They enter mutually vulnerable relationships on the picket line.

Brown 10/17

Brown, Haynes. “John Deere workers on strike are part of a strengthening labor movement.” 17 October 2021. MSNBC. <https://www.msnbc.com/opinion/john-deere-workers-strike-are-part-strengthening-labor-movement-n1281685>

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All around America, workers have had enough. **After a year and a half of a pandemic, after decades of stagnant wages and exploding executive salaries, after industry after industry has used innovation as an excuse for exploitation, more than 100,000 workers are on strike or prepared to go on strike**. The men and women on the picket lines this “Striketober” — and those who are ready and willing to join them — represent the kind of cross-section of America that most politicians only dream of reaching. We’re talking about a **movement** that **stretches from the liberal bastion of Hollywood to the factory lines of the Midwest to the coal mines of Alabama**. And if we’re being honest about the working conditions in this country, the number of people demanding change should be much, much higher. As of Thursday, more than 10,000 John Deere workers at 14 locations in Iowa, Illinois and Kansas have walked off the job. Last week, the strikers voted 9-to-1 to reject a proposed contract from Deere, according to Labor Notes, a resounding dismissal that surprised United Auto Workers union leadership and company management. Deere is doing very, very well for itself this year, a fact that has fueled the workers’ dismay at being lowballed in contract negotiations. By the end of this fiscal year, the company projects that it will have earned around $5.7 billion in profits alone, blowing its previous best year out of the water. In that context, you can see why workers would be frustrated with inadequate wage increases and plans to end pensions for new employees. The Deere strike is currently the largest in the country. That title was set to be stripped from them Monday: 60,000 members of the International Association of Theatrical Stage Employees voted earlier this month to authorize what would have been an unprecedented strike. The willingness to walk off sets around the country came as conditions on those sets and behind the scenes on movie and television productions have only gotten worse over the last few years, union members told NBC News this month: "If we don’t address this, I can't work in this industry till I'm 62, there's no way," said Gina Scarnati, 44, a specialty costume manufacturer who has worked in the industry for a decade. "We shouldn’t be begging for lunch breaks in 2021. I am 100 percent not financially prepared to go on strike, but we need to course correct. Right now, it's an industry I regret even getting into." Making things worse has been discounts on labor provided to “new media” productions, like those from Netflix, Hulu, and Apple, despite a surge of new content from these companies. And the movies and shows on these platforms often mean a loss of future revenue that a traditional TV show might see as it moves from broadcast, to syndication, to digital purchase. The IATSE and Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers announced on Saturday night that they’d reached a deal that would keep productions filming come Monday. Though details of the agreement have yet to be distributed to members, IATSE International President Matt Loeb, in a statement, called the outcome “a Hollywood ending” for members. But the agreement still has to be ratified by union members — and as the UAW learned, that’s not a guarantee until all the votes are cast. Rep. Wasserman Schultz: “Striketober” is workers saying they’re “mad as hell and not gonna take it anymore” OCT. 16, 202107:00 Meanwhile, all eyes will be on Kaiser Permanente to see if nurses and other workers with the health care giant also go on strike next week. So far, 24,000 union members have voted to authorize a strike, demanding that Kaiser “scrap its plans for a two-tiered wage and benefits system, which would pay newer employees less than more tenured colleagues and offers them fewer health protections.” The Washington Post reported that another 50,000 Kaiser workers are asking for similar changes as their current contracts near their expiration date. All of this is happening at a time when the wind is at the labor movement’s back. Gallup found last month that unions have a 65 percent approval rating with Americans, a level of support unseen since 2003. Taken together with ongoing strikes at Kellogg’s factories in Michigan, Nebraska, Pennsylvania and Tennessee, another 1,000 coal miners on strike in Alabama and 2,000 nurses in Buffalo, New York demanding adequate staffing, we have the conditions of what one expert called a “strike wave.” "Strikes can be contagious for unions and workers," Kate Bronfenbrenner, the director of labor education research at Cornell University’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations told NBC News. "**There are shared issues that are pushing workers to go on strike — and workers are looking at each other and getting inspired**." It’s also all happening at a time when labor is in the driver’s seat for a change. Low-wage jobs remain unfilled even as Covid-related unemployment benefits have expired. This labor shortage has employers doing whatever they can to lure workers back into gigs that workers are no longer sure they even want. Yes, management at all of these industries is scrambling to find scabs to take the place of the picketing union members. Kellogg’s is already shipping in “contractors” to work the cereal processing lines; replacement workers provided by a staffing agency in Michigan are crossing the line in Buffalo and drawing the ire of the New York attorney general. And at Deere factories, salaried workers are being made to staff the tractor assembly lines, which seems like something you really don’t want unqualified workers doing. I encourage you to have empathy and act in solidarity. Which, I have to say, really gets at the heart of why these employees are all choosing now to make their demands. These are all skilled workers who work very, very long hours — even if the money is good, the cash only comes in if you put in the hours. And in many cases, the money just isn’t that good, especially not for the soul-crushing conditions that folks are working through. I how long some of these strikes will last. I don’t know if they’ll wind up disrupting you, the reader, and the life you lead. But if they do — if they mean that there are no Frosted Flakes on the shelf or that your favorite actor’s new movie is delayed — I encourage you to have empathy and act in solidarity. These aren’t unreasonable demands from these strikers. They just want to be paid fairly and treated with respect on the job. That said, if you’re also feeling rundown and believe management at your company isn’t listening, do remember that you aren’t alone. And can I suggest joining a union, or even organizing one? As it turns out, when enough voices join together, it’s kind of hard to ignore them. So why not add yours to the chorus?

#### Striking itself is an act of communal vulnerability: Emotional vulnerability to those you walk with and those who support you. Physical vulnerability to cars, weather, and and security guards. Economic vulnerability when you don’t get paid. Strikers engage in a politics of vulnerability when they stand and support each other in the face of capitalist violence. They do not know if the results will be good or stable, but they embrace the loss as they take to the streets.

Morgan 16

Morgan, Allan. “Life On The Picket Line Isn’t Fun, But It Can Be Sweet” 2016. Movement of United Professionals. <https://moveuptogether.ca/the-latest/life-on-the-picket-line-isnt-fun-but-it-can-be-sweet/>

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**You walk a lot on the picket line**. Not a startling revelation to most I realize, but it is an odd way to spend your working day. As the management of BCNU de-camped to an unknown locale after the first day (having erected a huge fence around the entire building and brought in non-union security guards) **we walk mostly along the highway to make our plight known and to elicit honks from motorists.** NB – HONKS MATTER. You can walk alone, in groups, quickly, slowly, in wheel chairs, or any combination thereof. There are two shifts – morning and afternoon and about 120 of us in total doing the picketing (to surround with pointed sticks). **It makes for some amazing conversations**. Not so much the situation we are in – we are all of one mind about that – but **hearing people’s stories: how they got here, who they are, what they care most about, their spouses, their children, their parents. The fabric of their lives.The joy in finding where our stories are interwoven, and the curiosity to find out more when they are not. That is the gift of this walking, and the people I work with, and it is giving this walking line of people an incredible bonding experience. Solidarity**. It also allows you to try and erase the number of Timbits, doughnuts and cookies one ingests while there. I had no idea to what extent these morsels are the common currency of solidarity and support in the labour movement. They are the Lingua Franca of labour love, and since I have rarely met a baked good with it’s gluten intact that I haven’t loved, I am happy to use them as my fuel. Most importantly though these gifts by other unions, or retirees, or nurses or friends are not simply sugary snacks – **they are big doses of support, love, and solidarity and that fuel feeds our souls** and fires our determination.