This all takes place right in the wake of 9-11 xi
our vulnerability was exposed; and fear and mourning are normal xi
she wants to suggest that patient political reflection is possible even after so horrible an attack xi
military violence and retribution is not necessary, and it means we have not mourned the right way xii
we can recognize our dependency on others; and that some are more subject to arbitrary violence than others; and that our First World privilege is shakable xii
the political vision she advocates is not utopian xiii
first essay is about censorship and intellectual critique xiii
those who sought to seriously understand the events were pilloried xiii
but such understanding is the right approach both strategically and morally xiv
we need another public culture where unexpected violence and reactive aggression are not accepted xiv
second essay psychoanalytic understanding of why aggression is our response to loss/vulnerability/being attacked xiv
national sovereignty, by its nature, tries to deny interdependence xiv
we define some lives as more grievable, and more human, than others xiv
third essay explores what it means politically to define some as more members of the human community than others – the Guantanamo prisoners are the focus
sovereignty gets to declare its own suspension [in a state of exception] xv
prisoners are not subjects of any sovereign [but they are subjected to power] xvi
Patriot Act regulates what can be said xvi
fourth essay explores how the charge of anti-Semitism can quell critique of Israel xvi
public sphere is constituted [circumscribed] by what cannot be said and shown xvii
certain ideas are rendered unsayable [and even unthinkable?] xvii
[seems so mild: her vision is just free speech and the Millian marketplace of ideas?]
fifth essay examines a non-violent ethics that understands how easily we can be killed xvii
Levinas: understanding this precariousness of life makes it easier to care about the other xviii
aggression does not disappear, it is the matter that ethical struggles are about xviii
we need to see the faces of the Other (and not present them as symbols of evil) – they must be in public view if we are to value others' lives more fully xviii
[why faces and not voices, as is usual in the study of Politics? – because of Levinas]
then we will be able to mourn their death, and this mourning will be a great resource for better managing violence and aggression in our politics xviii
we have to have critical views to have dissent and debate [duh] xix
dissent is quelled by threatening to revoke one's status as a speaking being [i.e. one who speaks and is understood and taken seriously by others] xix
what is sayable should not be too narrowly constrained xx
critique is “central to any democracy” xx
to produce the public sphere is to control what appears and what is said and therefore what is seen and what is heard [very akin to R’s *partage du sensible*] xx

[and by marking some as speaking outside of those bounds, we can revoke their membership in the polis]

1 – Explanation and Exoneration, or What We Can Hear

Post 9-11: media seen to be the “public voice,” and they are censoring intellectual critique

we are not examining the cause of the war, or justifying our aggression carefully

we are not allowed to critique our waging war, that would be deemed siding with the terrorists

any examination of the grounds of the conflict, i.e. its complex historical and political sources, is off limits

esp. any role that US foreign policy played in begetting the attacks

no dissent on the war allowed, which she overblows into a general devaluing of all dissent

consent is produced on the meaning of terms: terror, self-defense

we are defined as the victim, and so we can do whatever to retaliate

her point is that in the wake of an attack like 9-11, we construct a frame to understand violence:

to condemn our attackers, to preclude certain kinds of questions, and to erect a moral justification for our violence

this frame decides what we can hear, what is coded as exoneration or explanation

we construct a personal pathology for the attackers, limit their agency to their own personal story

we refuse to situate those individuals in a wider history or politics

[As with Holland, I find this kvetching over the importance of the Bush/neocon years overblown – it was our worst selves personified by our worst leaders, being juvenile, macho, dumb, and ineffective, and it was quickly rejected – even by 2004 we were mostly done with Bush and his crew]

our own violence is justified, noble, and principled; we do not see – literally or figuratively – [the faces of] those we kill

no asking how it came to this, no openness to our own failings, the story begins on 9-11: we are the victim, and our acts are justified

we deem ourselves to be the only reasonable actor with autonomy; the rest is noise, we act unilaterally

we must de-center this first-person narrative we are stuck in, and instead understand ourselves as part of a global *polis*, as interdependent with many, many others

to do so, we will need to understand the back story, to understand the many moving, interconnected parts that resulted in 9-11

this better way is both ethical and strategic

we also must avoid the other extreme, the unthinkingly critical claim that the US is evil and it got what it deserved

that still puts the US as the only subject, the only agent

but we must understand that there are many agents operating in a complex system, all of which played a role in producing 9-11

we must understand that there is a collective agency, a *collective responsibility* for 9/11 – and therefore there is a collective response that is called for

we are not the sole author of 9-11, nor is *al-Qa’ida*
no cause is sufficient, but many are necessary 11
    i.e. there are lots of conditions (e.g. US imperialism), none of which caused the
    events, but which still needed to be there for the events to happen 11
    de-centering ourselves can also help us see the situation through the eyes of others (e.g. Arabs),
    and this can help us flesh them out as fully human, as thinking and speaking beings, which will
    help us count their lives as full lives 12
    currently we can't imagine [well, Giuliani can't imagine – but he's an idiot] applying the
    word slaughtered to both the 9-11 victims and the Palestinians killed by the Israeli
government because our frame [well, Giuliani's myopic frame] won't allow it 12-14
    we can't imagine those two victims being equally victims 14
so – for Butler:
    the US needs to think about how its political investments help create a world of rage and
    violence 14
    it needs to intervene more productively in global politics to produce more egalitarian conditions
    so that al-qa'ida becomes less likely 14
again with the complaint that voices of dissent were silenced, accused of being “with the terrorists” 15
    [but not really. I mean Arundhati Roy did speak, and she was heard – it is on the record, and
    Butler did report it in a book published by Verso] 15
    Roy was willing to ask: out of what system did bin Laden emerge? 15
    there is an individual-and-collective responsibility for the existence of bin Laden 15
    it is not just an “evildoer” who is entirely responsible for everything 16
    but we are not allowed to ask about the conditions that gave rise to him [and yet it seems
    we are – Roy was; I taught students in Geog 100 about the context...] 16
    once we are armed with a better understanding of what actually happened, we can start to more
effectively ask what role we want to play in the “relay of violence” 16
    she hopes we can take stock of the world and participate in its social transformation toward
    justice 17
    [I can't help conclude she is only imagining – or only able to imagine – the kindergentler
    foreign policy that Obama brought]
    we should find and try those who are responsible [well, OK, BHO got one out of two] 17
    this wayward military solution will just breed more violence, and it's dumb 17
so to do Butler's agenda in bold, we will have to see and hear beyond what we can currently [2004] see
    and hear, de-center ourselves from the narrative and our supremacy, and get to the root of the violence
    we need another, radical vision of the future 18

    [I can't imagine at all why one would call her vision radical, even if it goes so far as to be a kind of
    geopolitical social democracy (and there is only thin evidence it does) that's not all that radical.  It
    sounds like she just wants more multilateralism abroad and more free speech and open debate at home.  That makes her a liberal more than a social democrat.]

2 – Violence, Mourning, Politics

exposure to violence, mourning, loss can be a basis [a resource] for political community 19
the human is not a universal condition, it is a category, and we decide who counts as part of it and who doesn’t

one way we know who counts as human is whether we grieve them when they die

loss and grieving is common to us, though not identical

exposure of our bodies to violence is common as well, though not equally distributed

our vulnerability to loss comes from our being socially constituted [from being members of a polis, which is what makes us human, for A]

loss, in this sense, is a loss of our attachments to others

so dealing well with loss and mourning is always a political activity

that does not mean forgetting or replacing those that are lost

instead we accept the loss, and accept that we are fundamentally changed; we need to submit to this change, we are fallen, then we go on, but as a different person, one who knows we are not in control fully [not autonomous, because we are not alone – we are in community with others to whom we are attached]

who am I without you [is the question mourning forces us to ask]?

in mourning, we understand that restoring the former order is not going to happen

the ties we make constitute who we are, so losing a tie changes who we are

this loss is therefore a question of truly feeling the extent to which we are in political community, it is a public [i.e. not a private-individual] question

it is a question of dependency, attachedness, and ethical responsibility to Others

in grief, we see the thrall that others hold us in; “we are undone by each other”

this is true of grief and desire both

the ties (of say sexuality [or parenthood]) are not my possession, it is a mode of being dispossessed, of being for another

[cf. Ag. Use of Bodies]

clearly individual rights do not capture the situation satisfactorily

and grief-with-loss can help reveal this inadequacy, reveal the extent to which we are connected to others, the extent to which the idea of autonomous individuals is just not a good way to understand how we live in the world

political community is wrought by speaking to another

autonomy is tricky, because it wants to claim total control for the agent

but each of us can never be fully in control: we are always vulnerable/beholden to others

so “autonomy” cannot pretend this vulnerability does not exist

my self is not there at the beginning, and then later I discover it; my self is constructed through the relations I make with others

[cf. Ag. Use of Bodies]

a struggle for autonomy has to be paired with a struggle for seeing ourselves as in community, and therefore not fully in control

demands are imposed on us by others; relations of interdependence and mutual vulnerability are a dimension of our lives, and we should admit them and be attentive to them

violence is one of these relations
and yet each of us is separate, not the same as others

there is a tension between autonomy and interdependence

*my self* is partly undone by a loss, and so therefore I am fundamentally social, made up of others; grief/mourning is the affect that alerts me to that

violence shows us we are vulnerable to an address from another [that is what 9-11 was, a violent interpellation]

we cannot deny this vulnerability (and pretend, instead, that we are fully in control) – we have to *attend* to it, work with it

grieving has to be done right, worked through, not cut off quickly

we cannot restore what was lost, we cannot obliterate the loss; we have to live with it as part of the new us

grief brings disorientation, suffering, unknowingness; but it also opens up a chance for a new understanding

one possibility is: a new order in which some lives are *not* more grievable than others

so that those others can be better protected, less casually killed

there is no human nature, but there is a common human condition of being given over to the other, and vulnerable to violence from that other

this exposure, this vulnerability, this being-laid-bare is a condition to which we must attend, it cannot be overcome

important to remember that this vulnerability is unevenly distributed in the world

and so we can effect an insurrection at the level of ontology, meaning we can redefine whose lives are real

if their lives are real, and therefore grievable they are harder to kill

the war on terror has 'derealized' a whole swath of people; their lives are not publicly grievable [of course they are grieved in private]

we know this ungrievability, because when we try to publicly grieve them and get a backlash

she says that dehumanization emerges at the limits of the discourse, the limits of what we can say/think/feel

for those whose lives are not real, they are not alive or dead, they are not publicly grievable [i.e. they have no *bios*, they are only *zoe*]

they are not vulnerable, not common

Daniel Pearl is the example of a grievable life; he has a name

we cannot consider as dead [i.e. as having lost *bios*] those we have killed

[I think this is not that we are actively preventing recognizing deaths, it is more about the lack of a desire to recognize some deaths (or even a lack of knowledge that they died) – and an eager desire to mourn other deaths like Pearl that crowds out the desire to grieve the others]

this process, of choosing whom to grieve, is part of how the public sphere is constituted

it shores up a nationalism, an 'us' and a 'them'

[there is also the issue of it being 2003, when there were only major news outlets that constituted the 'media' – if CNN didn't report it it didn't happen – now access to the media is radically expanded...is CNN even on the air anymore?]

our loss is a loss of our sense that we are invulnerable, our first-world prerogative to not be in danger

we have lost, and are grieving the loss of a national entitlement, and one bad response is to try
to restore what was lost, to go back to how we were before [which we can't] 39
but we could work through the loss, we could reconsider our hubris, live with the loss of our
first-world privilege, not try to recapture it 40
as a result we could make different kinds of ties, work toward a democratic political culture 40
[here, and this is an important idea, democracy is a community in which the members are given
over to each other, undone by each other, each surrenders their sovereign entitlement and full
autonomy to the others]

there is a sense in which nation has a psyche, in which it is a subject 41
a nation can be violent and self-centered, deny its vulnerability 41
or it can accept its vulnerability and attend to it 42
women are familiar with how to do this 42
we should neither deny vulnerability nor get paralyzed by it 42
we accept that we are vulnerable in common 42
this acceptance is a condition for our humanization [and our building together a
democracy] 43
the vulnerability of each must be honored; and so each must have a real, grievable life
43
community requires us to see that each of us is in the same boat: in a community of others and
wanting to be recognized 44
in asking for recognition, we have changed ourselves, because we have connected to –
and interpellated – those we ask, and that connection is part of what constitutes us 44
so asking for recognition is initiating a becoming, aspiring to a different future-in-
common 44

yet she cautions against a psyche-nation analogy, and then using psychotherapy on a nation 45
but psychoanalytic feminism can: understand how “I” cannot come into being without a “You”,
without being enmeshed in systems of recognition and valuation 45
it can help us see that all “I”s are always enthralled in a “We”, and so psychoanalysis of an
individual must involve political (and ethical) analysis of the community 45
an individual is made up of attachments [and so loss of attachments is a reconstitution of the
individual] 45
I cannot know myself perfectly because I do not contain myself fully, I am contained in others,
and others are contained in me 46
so psychoanalysis is ethical analysis is political analysis 46
norms of public grieving reveal how the polis constitutes the human 46
we do not need universal claims (of ethics, politics, communication, reason, subjects) 47
there are many ways of being human, many ways of being a political agent 47
and our agency is constantly developing 47
incommensurable political and ethical beliefs are inevitable in a political community 48
Adriana Cavarero: we are connected to each other because we are exposed to and different from each
other 48
what binds us together? Not universals, not western political ideals 49
maybe it is that we confound each other, that we are already implicated in each other, the we is
constituted by my tied-ness to you 49
I must know you to know myself, and so I must learn how to open into your idiom, to some
extent, even if we must always remain different 49
through disorientation and loss [and grieving well], what I gain is being exposed to you [or at least understanding that I am exposed to you] 49

5 – Precarious Life

Worry that the humanities’ relativism has gutted their ability to be ethically relevant 129
not that we should re-establish the old certainties; but we could, instead, say something about
the structure of address 129

to practice/think ethics by asking what responsibilities the addressee has toward the addresser

we come to exist in the moment of being addressed, which is to say we need our connection to

the other 130

and this address-that-we-cannot-prevent binds us morally; that is how moral demands exist, not

as the creation of an autonomous will, [or as a priori laws], but as a demand placed on an

addressee – an interpellation 130

Levinas works on this issue 131

the face of the Other, he says, is the Other before death who asks me not to let him die alone

131

my duty to the other suspends even my right to survive, my conatus 132

I and the Other are tied together, neither can survive without the other 132

and so I have no choice but to expose myself to the face and attend to its call 132

the face is that whose meaning consists in saying “thou shalt not kill” 132

the face does not speak, yet it conveys the message 132

the sounds that emanate from it are suffering; it is an utterance that is not linguistic 133

the face presents the extreme precariousness of the Other, and we can be awake to this precariousness,
a condition he calls ‘peace’ 134

peace means to be awake to the precariousness of life in general 134
I do not project my own precariousness onto the Other; I really get that the Other's life is

precarious 134

when I really get the precariousness of the Other, then I am both called to peace and tempted to kill 134

this is the struggle at the heart of ethics 135

I am murderous and prohibited from murder 135

[the State, as sovereign relation to me, is analogous to this: I am tempted both to surrender to

the State, and to not surrender and be democratic]

the face is an artificial person of sorts, who “speaks in a voice that is not its own” 135

why would the other's precariousness tempt us to kill, to totally negate? 136

fear for our own survival 136

and this desire is primary to humans 137

but we are also anxious about hurting the other 137

ethical non-violence exists in the tension between the two desires 137

speaking/discourse arises in the context of this primary address: “thou shalt not kill” 138

we are addressed by the Other, even though we do not wish to be, before we ever speak
ourselves 138

and, as well, this interpellation initiates the tension between killing and not killing 138

we do not want to be addressed, because it constrains our will 139
but even so, to be in a political community, and in a linguistic community, is to be interpellated by Others and thus deprived of will 139
we do choose how to respond to every interpellation though, and we can (and do) choose to respond differently to different speakers 140
seeing bin Laden as the 'face' of evil makes us unable to see the Levinasan face (to see the precariousness) of the Muslim Other 142
but however it actually plays out in practice [her interpretation of real events is not very convincing here], Butler wants us to make real the lives of others, and to be able to really see the precariousness of those lives 143
the human is that which limits the success of any representation 144
[a kind of remainder for all partages du sensible]
the human loses something important when it is represented 145
all claims of sameness/identicalness, as having overcome difference, must fail 145
all claims of representation, as having accurately represented, must fail 145
and it is crucial to point out this failure 146
we have to be attentive to how we decide what lives count as human, what deaths can be mourned, what cries/interpellations we hear and respond to, what images we take to be real 147
in her time, Big Media controlled these processes, and she calls for its dissolution [which actually took place, though not through legislation] 147
so seeing, grieving, and hearing are all political resources and actions 149
they are hard, b/c they force us to see our own precariousness, our own dependence on the Other, our own weakness and unfreedom 149
but, she says, we will be the better for it, as long as we confront that precariousness honestly instead of covering them up with violence or denial or diversion 150
there are times, like the photo of kids burned by napalm, where we really see/hear the face, and we are awoken 150
we need to see the human in its frailty and inability know and make sense 151
and create a public with truly oppositional voices that awaken us to see/feel/hear differently 151
[quite close to R's vision of politics disrupting the partage du sensible, though she gives us new tools – mourning, listening, being vulnerable – that R does not]