

**An Ethics of Sustainability for the Post-Truth Era:
Response-ability as Counter Affect in 21C Canadian Fictions**

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Touching is a matter of response. Each of “us” is constituted in response-ability. Each of “us” is constituted as responsible for the other, as the other.

Karen Barad (2012: 215)

We live in the era of sustainability. And yet, the on-going war on Syria, the plight of refugees, and the rise of neofascisms in the US and Europe are only some instances of the current intensification of unsustainable practices of power that thrive on inhumanity and precariousness. Populations who are rendered unproductive and debilitated—the migrant, the refugee, the trans—are often relegated outside the script of sustainability by a dominant politics of indifference. The motivation behind this paper sparks from the ethical imperative to trace the paradoxical asymmetry between the rhetoric of sustainability, which has become a popular discourse among normative structures of power, and an ethics of sustainability, which stands as a counter-discourse that seeks to dismantle the shortcuts proposed by those very same structures. Drawing on feminist and queer philosophy (DeFalco 2016; Puar 2015; Barad 2012; Braidotti 2006), this paper seeks to unravel the workings of this perverse logic through the lens of contemporary Canadian writing. In particular, I will focus on how *response-ability* functions in the work of Kai Cheng Thom and Vivek Shraya as a counter affect, that is, a mode of ethical intervention that destabilizes terror in its multifaceted iterations. These authors, I argue, pose a critique of the violence that systematically targets non-normative populations, while simultaneously offering an ethics of sustainability for this era of indifference and post-truth.

BIO

Dr. Libe García Zarranz is a Researcher in the Department of Language and Literature at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU, Norway). She is also Research Affiliate for the Canadian Literature Centre at the University of Alberta (Canada), Scholar in The Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, and member of the international research project “Bodies in Transit: Making Difference in Globalized Cultures”. Dr. García Zarranz is the author of *TransCanadian Feminist Fictions: New Cross-Border Ethics* (McGill-Queen’s UP, 2017). She has also published and edited special issues on Canadian and American literature, transnational studies, feminist and queer theory, affect, and film. Dr. García Zarranz has held postdoctoral positions at the University of Innsbruck (Austria) and at the Centre for Globalization and Cultural Studies at the University of Manitoba (Canada). Prior to joining NTNU, García Zarranz taught critical theory and gender studies at the University of Cambridge (Magdalene College, UK).