



Call for Papers - The Life of Others: Narratives of Vulnerability

for a special issue of [*Canada & Beyond: A Journal of Canadian Literary and Cultural Studies*](#)
(Spring 2018 issue) Guest Editor: **Eva Darias-Beutell**

In her Levinasian discussion of the functioning of ethical obligations in the face of global and local forms of precarity, Judith Butler links the production of vulnerability with a situation of “up againstness” or “unwilled adjacency,” of one’s involvement in a relation of proximity that has not been chosen (134). Vulnerability in those cases arises from the realization that “one’s life is also the life of others”, and that “the bounded and living appearance of the body is the condition of being exposed to the other, exposed to solicitation, seduction, passion, injury, exposed in ways that sustain us but also in ways that can destroy us” (141). Itself the site of production of various forms of violence and vulnerability, this adjacency also triggers the affective and creative engagements necessary for action (134).

These seem crucial issues in Canada, where contemporary debates over citizenship and social justice often take place within complex transnational, transcultural, and (post)colonial contexts as well as beside the historical experiences of settlement and migration, with their contested forms of national or cultural belonging. Additionally, Canada’s humanitarian tradition, itself marked by convoluted narratives, is increasingly challenged by new conditions of global violence, environmental threats, social and political unrest. Canadian literatures do not merely reflect on these conditions but engage with them, exploring the aesthetic possibilities of what could be thought of as a reconnection between the text and the world. How does cultural production articulate and propose strategies of resistance to the massive production of vulnerability? Are the examples of resilience offered by Canadian literature, film, performance and visual arts able to reactivate ethical responsibility and political activism?

This special issue invites contributors to offer a critical examination of Canadian cultural production with an emphasis on the discursive modes that deconstruct the hegemonic structures that produce vulnerability. We also wish to invite research articles that interpret the present condition of (un)willed adjacency in its real and metaphoric possibilities as a site of production of violence and vulnerability, but also (potentially) of lucid creativity, exposing, soliciting, seducing “in ways that sustain us but also in ways that can destroy us.”

Possible areas of interest include (but are not limited to): urban poverty, the medicalized body, indigenous activism, colonial violence, migration and war narratives, ecological vulnerability, the posthuman seduction, emotional precarity, sexuality and (trans)narrative desire, gender and agency, technological liquidity, queer creativities, precarious labour, (non)narratives of resistance, narrative ethics and the post-truth moment. Comparatist and interdisciplinary approaches are most welcome.

All submissions to [*Canada & Beyond*](#) must be original, unpublished work. Articles, between 6,000 and 7500 words in length, including endnotes and works cited, should follow current MLA bibliographic format.

Submissions should be uploaded to *Canada & Beyond’s* online submissions system (OJS) by the deadline of **June the 1st, 2017**. They will be peer-reviewed for the Spring 2018 issue.

Work Cited: Butler, Judith. 2012. “Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation.” *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26.2: 134-151.