Ungovernable Earth: Resurgence, Translocal Infrastructures, and More-Than-Social Movements

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Abstract

How do social movements respond to the ecological crisis? In this paper we reframe social movements as ‘more-than-social movements’ to highlight that many contemporary mobilisations do much more than targeting recognised social institutions and political governance; they are practically transforming eco-societies within and with both the human and the nonhuman world. What constitutes the core of more-than-social movements action is the capacity to set up alternative ecologies of existence, alterontologies, as we call them in the paper. We engage with the imaginaries and practices of agroecology, AIDS treatment activism, and permaculture to rethink what autonomy, and justice might look like in the ecological condition.

Keywords

ecology, materiality, infrastructure, commons, autonomy, justice, political ecology, more than social movements, alterontologies, agroecology, permaculture

When politics comes to matter

Sixth mass extinction, climate crisis, soil depletion, oceans acidification, human displacement, forest destruction, coronavirus. The traces of the global ecological crisis are everywhere. The unpredictable consequences of the ongoing modifications of the chemical, biological and geophysical composition

of the Earth are ungovernable. Increasingly, human societies realise that the vision of a governable Earth was a fallacy. This condition of unpredictability forces us to stay with the ‘many intrusions of Gaia’ (Stengers, 2017): all the environmental events and disasters that upset, interrupt, destabilise and threaten the human world mean that the inconvenient truth of the ecological crises will be part of our present and future. Gaia is the name of the Greek mythological deity, the primordial Mother Earth goddess, that shows a resolute indifference in relation to the effects of its actions: she does not act in order to punish someone or to restore justice. She acts, full stop. The ‘intrusions of Gaia’ interrupt any idea of historical progress, geocentric humanism, passive nature. As philosopher Michel Serres reminds us: ‘it no longer depends on us that everything depends on us’ (Serres, 1995: 189). This statement is not an invitation to inaction. On the contrary it seems to contain a call for action and an invitation to experiment within modes of doing that intervene in the predicament of our current ecological condition.

In recent years a series of contributions in science and technology studies (Winner, 1986; Latour, 1993; Haraway, 1991), cultural anthropology (Tsing, 2015; Holbraad et al., 2014; Viveiros de Castro, 2015), geography (Braun and Whatmore, 2010a), political theory (Coole and Frost, 2010; Bennet, 2010), philosophy of science (Barad, 2007; Stengers, 1997) and related fields have invited us to take seriously ‘the stuff of politics’ (Braun and Whatmore, 2010b). This expression emphasizes the necessity of developing a fully materialist conception of politics (Papadopoulos, 2010), one that does not separate politics from the socio-material basis of life and from the concrete practices through which forms of life are created. For example in the book *Political Matter*, Braun and Whatmore (2010b) start from the acknowledgment of the significant role of more-than-human agencies and technological objects in the fabric of social conduct and political association. They use the term ‘materialisation of politics’ to recognise ‘the constitutive nature of material processes and entities in social and political life, the way that things of every imaginable kind – material objects, informed materials, bodies, machines, even media ecologies – help constitute the common worlds that we share and the dense fabric of relations with others in and through which we live’ (Braun and Whatmore,

2010b: : ix). Politics here means a ‘politics of matter’ (Papadopoulos, 2014), that is politics that acts within and emerges from the ecologies in which we live, inside our common worlds made through a multiplicity of more-than-human relations. A politics of matter is capable of taking into account artefacts and technologies, animals, plants and bacteria, modes of materialisation and mattering in the analysis of how situated collectivities are assembled.

Prefigurative, collective, and ecologically integrated practices¹ give birth to new sustainable systems of production and circulation (Schlosberg and Craver 2019). This reorientation of the material practices of everyday life is at the centre of new materialist work (Meyer, 2015; Schlosberg and Coles, 2016; White, 2019; Pickering et al., 2020; Eckersley, 2020) that highlights the role of local communities’ action in shaping sustainable systems of food, water and energy circulation. The ecological dimension of movements, as we argue in this paper, emphasize the interconnectedness of people, animals, plants and geophysical world, as well as the entanglement of ecosystems, histories, technologies, institutions, and cultures (Chakrabarty, 2009; Kingsland, 2005). While an environmental viewpoint predominantly conceives “nature” as separate from human societies, ecological thinking encompasses the complex web that binds together humans, nonhumans and planetary worlds (Nash, 2006; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017b). Ecological thinking introduces the biggest paradigm shift in social science of the last 50 years, according to Latour (2017; 2018) – framing societies as embedded in interconnected multi-cultural and multi-natural worlds (Rozzi et al., 2015; Hamilton et al., 2015; Krebs, 2016).

In this paper we focus on movements that, starting from situated practices, are constructing other ways of inhabiting our planet. The movements we refer to sit uneasily within the broader political category of social movements (see for example Tilly and Wood, 2009; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). They are *more-than-social* movements in the sense that their practices and aims are not only directed

¹ On prefigurative movements see, amongst others, Yates L (2015) Rethinking prefiguration: alternatives, micropolitics and goals in social movements. . *Social Movement Studies* 14(1): 1-21, van de Sande M (2015) Fighting with tools: Prefigurational and radical politics in the twenty-first century. *Rethinking Marxism* 27(2): 177-194, Swain D (2019) Not Not But Not Yet: Present and Future in Prefigurative Politics. *Political Studies* 67(1): 47-62, Gordon U (2018) Prefigurative Politics Between Ethical Practice and Absent Promise. *Ibid.* 66: 521-537.

to challenge existing power relations or established institutions. Or better, they are doing more than that. *More-than-social movements testify to the emergence of a form of politics that attempts to make a difference in the ontological configuration of the world through experimenting with alternative material politics.* As a response to the quest for generative justice these movements create alternative forms of existence and autonomous infrastructures which involve always the entanglement between human and nonhuman others, between materiality and sociality. Insisting on the emergence of more-than-social movements is a way to highlight the material, ordinary, ontological transformative power of such movements: when politics comes to matter there is no change without creating materially alternative ways of life: alterontologies.

In the course of this paper we engage with the imaginaries and practices of three different movements: agroecology, AIDS treatment activism and permaculture, with the aim to describe the main features of more-than-social movements' politics. Following the example of an Italian network of farmers we offer an understanding of agroecology as a more-than-social movement deeply engaged in the reinvention of alterontological forms of rural living in which self-subsistence and ecological care are inextricably intertwined. Analysing AIDS treatment activism we highlight how the constitution of movement becomes possible because of the everyday alterontological practices of care that allow communities in the making to sustain themselves in times of social, health, or ecological crises. In our discussion of the example of permaculture we reflect on the fact that ecological justice is always a more than human affair. Multispecies commensality, experimental practice, material justice, and an ethos of care: these are the coordinates that define a form of activism that give birth to the creation of more than local and less than global alternative material infrastructures that sustain the everyday life of movements. As we argue in the conclusion, more-than-social movements' alternative translocal infrastructures is what makes their social and political autonomy durable.

Alterontological Resurgence in the Genuino Clandestino Network

With the term ontology we refer to the capacity of certain actors to shape and change the material configuration of their space of existence. So, if ontologies are spaces of existence in which matter is organised in a specific way and not another and can be changed in specific ways and not others, the making of alternative configurations of matter means the making of alternative ontologies: ‘alterontologies’. In each ontological configuration the practices and the interactions amongst certain humans and nonhumans shape the material world in specific directions rather than others. Social change cannot be thought independent of ontological change, in fact social transformation towards justice requires alterontological practice. Let’s take agriculture as an example.

Starting from the end of the sixties of the last century the so called ‘green revolution’ transformed in a significant manner the ways through which agriculture has been developing on a global scale (Rosset, 2017; Shiva, 2008; Altieri, 2018). A central role of mechanisation, the adoption of new technologies, the selection of high yielding varieties of cereals and the extensive use of chemical fertilisers and agro-chemicals are the main features of current ‘industrial’ agriculture. These technologies of food production have wide-ranging eco-social implications on biodiversity and climate change and they entail a relation of strong dependency between farmers and the world’s largest chemical producers. Agroecology (Rosset, 2017) appears nowadays as one of the alternatives for overcoming the shortcomings of the ‘green revolution’. Agroecology is a response to the question how to transform and repair our material reality in food systems and rural worlds starting from the ecological practices of peasants and farmers, artisanal fishers, pastoralists, indigenous peoples, urban food producers etc. (Giraldo and Rosset, 2018; Rosset, 2017; Altieri, 2018). Food movements and agroecological farming represent a direct alterontological form of politics: by seeking different material circulations, they enact different possibilities for the resurgence of alternative human-earth relations.

Following the example of an Italian network of farmers, called Genuino Clandestino (Genuine Clandestine), we can see how agroecology can be understood not only as a science that is transforming our understanding of soil and as a set of practices that is redefining the everyday doing

of farming but also as a movement that is trying to redefine the political, economic and juridical space of action of organic food producers. In the case of Genuino Clandestino agroecology is (also) synonymous with the making of alternative forms of life. The network was born in 2010 in order to defend the existence of a multiplicity of alternative rural forms of living and to nurture agroecological knowledges and practices. Genuino Clandestino's practices include grassroots farmers' markets that promote food sovereignty, innovative forms of trust between producers and consumers through a self-organised process called Participatory Guarantee System, civic use and collective care of land as commons, and strong links between the movement and scientific research on soil ecology and food sustainability. Genuino Clandestino can be seen as an example of a novel movement that fuses traditional environmental social movement campaigns – for example against the use of pesticides in agriculture – with the experimentation of alterontological farming and the building of alternative food communities – transforming to a genuinely more-than-social movement.

The resurgence of rural forms of life is not a way for restoring some form of premodern vision of social conditions. In the politics of Genuino Clandestino the farmers and activists who define themselves as 'contadini' (peasants) reactivate the capacity to invent other spaces and times of existence. The peasants of Genuino Clandestino reclaim alternative technoscientific practices and the right to make their own food in self-sufficient farms. Here farming is a way for cultivating a 'practicality' of life within the cycles of the land, for creating alterontological forms of rural living.

Agroecology and food sovereignty are first of all about creating alternative ways to deal with the ecological interactions and interdependencies involved in the processes of farming: the collective enterprise of creating an alternative lifeworld within the interactive dynamics of the soil and its inhabitants.² The resurgence of 'becoming a peasant' is a transition to a form of living in which self-subsistence and ecological care are inextricably intertwined starting from the reinvention of daily

² See Bertoni F (2013) Soil and Worm: On Eating as Relating. *Science as Culture* 22(1): 61-85, Krzywoszynska A (2020) Nonhuman Labor and the Making of Resources: Making Soils a Resource through Microbial Labor. *Environmental Humanities* 12(1): 227-249, Puig de la Bellacasa M (2014) Encountering bioinfrastructure: ecological struggles and the sciences of soil. *Social Epistemology* 28(1): 26-40..

practices of livelihood regeneration and socio-ecological repair. The desire of an embodied, everyday, dirty, material relationship with the land characterises this peasant resurgence. More than a job, the word peasant here evokes a form of life, a secession from the monoculture of economic productivism.

Starting from these foundational alterontological practices or resurgence the food communities of Genuino Clandestino reinvent cooperation between the countryside and the city, creating autonomous infrastructures capable of rearticulating the food web within and beyond the farm. Through the organisation of farmer markets, the experimentation of complementary currencies, the creation of self-organised community emporium, the development of alternative collective agriculture projects, and the adoption of participatory practices of decision making, new transversal alliances amongst producers and consumers give birth to emergent food communities. For example, the Genuino Clandestino network has developed a space outside of state-regulated organic certification: a participatory guarantee system through which producers and consumers (called co-producers in Genuino Clandestino) decide together prices, organise visits in the farms in which they check farming conditions (the type of fodder used, the living conditions of animals, the revenue and working practices of farmers and their co-workers, and so on), make public reports on strengths and limits of each farm, set up self-education workshops on agroecological knowledge. Food communities achieve their political autonomy, their capacity to act and repair economies, ecologies and social relations, through the making of alternative infrastructures. The infrastructures of food communities make agroecology durable, generate ‘generous’ encounters, dislocate politics within everyday practices. How to become companion of the Earth by taking part in more than human communities of food? This is the open question that accompanies the making of alterontologies in the Genuino Clandestino network. This is the open question that forces this more-than-social movement to invent – from seed to the kitchen – autonomous networks of eco-social reproduction.

Autonomy³ historically refers to the idea that social mobilisations and social conflicts drive social transformation instead of being a mere response to social and economic power. The key strategy of more-than-social movements consists in something less and something more than simply contesting and addressing existent political institutions. More-than-social movements rework and expand autonomy to engage with questions of justice in more than human worlds by highlighting, as in the case of Genuino Clandestino, the relevance of creating alternative everyday politics of matter.

Emergent socio-ecological movements reclaim everyday materiality by actively recomposing, rearticulating human-nonhuman interdependencies that allow for creating other forms of life and divert existing material articulations in unexpected ways. Autonomy here is about recombining materialities that instigate ecological and social justice. When movements encounter matter as a strategic field of action for experimenting with a generative practices of justice, a new idea of autonomy emerges. Autonomous politics requires material interconnectedness, practical organizing, everyday coexistence, and the fostering of ontological alliances. And these are always more than human, more-than-social. They entail interactions, ways of knowing, forms of practice that involve the material world, plants and the soil, material compounds and energies, other groups of humans and their surroundings, and other species and machines. Autonomy is a call for direct transformative action, for material recombination, for practical, ordinary, reparative justice.

³ The question of autonomy was primarily developed in regard to the role of working class struggles in historical change: capital is not the driving force of change; instead, workers' refusal and insubordination force capital to reorganise itself, see Dyer-Witheford N (1999) *Cyber-Marx: cycles and circuits of struggle in high-technology capitalism*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. Negri A (1988) *Revolution retrieved: writings on Marx, Keynes, capitalist crisis, and new social subjects (1967-83)*. London: Red Notes. In the wake of the new social movements that emerged from the Zapatista encuentros and the Seattle mobilisations in the mid/end of the 1990s autonomy is explored in relation to technoscience, culture, feminist and queer politics, and the struggles for the commons, see Papadopoulos D, Stephenson N and Tsianos V (2008) *Escape routes: control and subversion in the twenty-first century*. London: Pluto Press. Chatterton P and Pickerill J (2010) Everyday activism and transitions toward post-capitalist worlds. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35(4): 475-490. De Angelis M (2017) *Omnia Sunt Communia. On the Commons and the Transformation to Postcapitalism*. London: Zed. Hardt M and Negri A (2009) *Commonwealth*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

From social movements to more-than-social movements: the everyday and the ontological as a unified realm of activity

More-than-social movements operate, as described previously, an alterontological politics embedded within the fabric of everyday life. Political and social autonomy can be performed to the extent that it is rooted in transformative everyday material practices. What constitutes more-than-social movements' action is the capacity to set up alternative mundane practices that later come to force power and control in a specific field to reorganise itself, often in unexpected ways. Now we want to turn to a very different social movement, HIV treatment activism in the eighties, in order to explore this very specific dimension of alterontological practices that focusses on the transformation of the material fabric of everyday life as opposed to large scale and institution driven transformation of the material infrastructures of our societies.

The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) was founded in 1986-1987 in the USA. The formation of ACT UP could be read as a coagulation of practices that have been going on since the start of the epidemic in 1981. Starting from the very beginning groups, individuals and communities living with AIDS shared practices and languages, created common spaces and different modes of the engagement with the virus. These forms of activism and these everyday material practices gave birth to a movement that could no longer be ignored. By contesting existing forms of injustice and by initiating alternative ways of dealing with the virus and its world, AIDS activism became possible as people created the ontological conditions that allowed them to negotiate their sometimes very divergent experiences of the epidemic. From the perspective of situated politics, the point is not primarily to acquire the right credentials in order to participate in governance and institutions but to engage with and compose alternatives to enables a movement to exist, to emerge and to grow.

We are interested on how actors constitute themselves long before they are formally recognised as such. The case of AIDS activism shows that the making of socio-material actors on the level of everyday existence comes before any formalisation of the movement vis-à-vis social power and governance, something that happened with the constitution of ACT UP in 1987. Long before 1987,

AIDS activism and the entanglements of nonhuman actors (HIV virus, medications, tests for viral loads and so on) and human actors (patients, activists, researchers and so on) emerge as a politics of material composition whose primary aim was to enable forms of life that would allow the gay community under threat to continue to exist. A movement is constituted as such by its capacity to set up alternative forms of everyday relationality and material existence.

From very early on, gay men and their communities developed and invented a multiplicity of practical engagements with an epidemic that quickly became a devastating social and public health crisis. Building on the work of Puig de la Bellacasa (2015) on the temporality of care, we reconceptualise these practices as *emergency care*: creating autonomous service provision (AIDS service organizations); coordinated challenging of medical decisions; raising money for alternative research; organizing support, volunteer caretaking; setting up new community spaces and community organizations to engage with the new challenges of the crisis; extensive experimenting with one's own body and (not officially approved) drugs; getting involved in intensive lobbying of medical associations, doctors, hospitals, local councils, and public health officials; negotiating the meaning of their own subjectivities by setting up community meetings, educational initiatives, and debates; developing new forms of embodied affection, intimacy, and reciprocity; educating themselves in medical, health, legal, and policy issues; (re-)politicizing white, mostly middle-class gay men who started to realize that their relative privileged positions were inherently precarious; militant action and confrontational activist practices such as sit-ins, traffic tie-ups, blockades, occupations, picketing, AIDS walks, and rallies; inventing and reinventing new sexual practices and sexual expressions; taking direct action and holding contentious protests; defending gay bathhouses and other sex establishments; setting up buyers' clubs of illegally manufactured or illegally imported drugs; attempting to maintain self-respect and gay pride and navigate through all these conflictual feelings about one's own community produced by the hostile social environment and the constant stigmatization and demonization; defending gay male sexuality within the terror and panic of

mysterious deaths and diseases; being proud of the community's attempt to face the crisis; and giving love to the ill and dying.⁴

Through these compositional practices, AIDS activism gradually took shape and constituted itself after the start of the epidemic. Simon Watney (1997: : xii) says that what we could call 'the' gay community 'did not pre-exist the epidemic in any very meaningful sense', and one could add here that AIDS activism did not pre-exist the emergence of this community (see also the important work of Race, 2018). This means that AIDS activism is not just a reaction to the epidemic, as if the epidemic remained the same since it erupted, and AIDS activism was conceived by a community as a full-scale strategy of response. Rather, AIDS activism is the outcome of a long formation process in which thousands of gay men and their communities tried to grapple with a devastating virus. AIDS activism is the outcome of an ontological encounter and an ontological conflict between human bodies and HIV retroviruses unfolding within a hostile homophobic culture and a specific biomedical regime. This group of gay men became a community and engaged in AIDS activism as a way of understanding and managing this ontological encounter. AIDS activism is the attempt to create an alterontology: a material, biochemical, medical, social, and cultural space in which the relation of human body and HIV could be negotiated and reshaped after the initial outbreak of the epidemic. And of course, the first concern was to just survive this encounter. AIDS activism became possible because of the everyday alterontological practices that allowed the community in the making to sustain itself.

Based on our discussion of the Genuino Clandestino network and AIDS treatment activism we want to expand now on the "more-than-social" perspective on social movements. Perhaps it is important to say that the boundaries between social movements and more-than-social movements are not clear cut. The practices of traditional social movements and more-than-social movements are often concurrent even if one or the other might dominate and shape the overall orientation of a

⁴ For an extensive discussion of these practices see Papadopoulos D (2018) *Experimental Practice. Technoscience, Alterontologies, and More-Than-Social Movements*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press., Race K (2018) *The Gay Science. Intimate Experiments with the Problem of HIV*. London: Routledge. and Gould DB (2009) *Moving politics: emotion and act up's fight against AIDS*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

movement. In fact, one could argue that most social movements cannot exist without some form of material activism and more-than-social movements cannot exist without some form of social-institutional politics. Moreover, many social movements oscillate between the two forms of action or move in phases from one form of mobilisation to the other. We could even argue that many social movements have a hidden history of more than human, material action that remain unrecognised because of the dominance of the social over the material.

However, there is a series of constitutive differences between traditional and more-than-social movements, even if these differences remain often non-exclusionary. Traditional social movements conceive political transformation as a matter of power renegotiation inside the sphere of instituted power. Social relations here refer to the idea that movements enact a form of political intervention which aims primarily to transform the governance of social life via oppositional and protest politics. Identity, symbolic representation, and rights are often the main ingredients that feed strategies and forms of mobilisations oriented to renegotiate the organisation of political power. In traditional social movements the struggles for social transformation come first.

In more-than-social movements social transformation happens through material transformation, that is social transformation is driven by collective direct action on the immediate level of material life. This of course forces later social institutions and political governance to respond and reorganise. However, the first direct aim of more-than-social movements is not to force institutional change as such but the creation of an alternative infrastructure of material life that enacts a different form of everyday existence.⁵ More-than-social movements are primarily concerned with practices: embodied, material, asubjective, often imperceptible practices that complicate the modern binarism of the human

⁵ See also Monticelli L (2018) Embodying Alternatives to Capitalism in the 21st Century. *tripleC* 16: 501-517., Pickerill J (2021) Making climate urbanism from the grassroots: Eco-communities, experiments and divergent temporalities. In: Broto C and et al. (eds) *Climate Urbanism: towards a critical research agenda*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, Brown G, Kraftl P and Pickerill J (2012) Holding the future together: towards a theorisation of the spaces and times of transition. *Environment and Planning A* 44(7): 1607-1623., van de Sande M (2013) The Prefigurative Politics of Tahrir Square—An Alternative Perspective on the 2011 Revolutions. *Res Publica* 19(3): 223-239..

and the nonhuman worlds as they aim to reconfigure social and political life through transforming ordinary material relations.

Ordinary justice is a more-than-human affair

The question of justice is crucial for understanding the resurgence of more-than-social movements as we described them in the previous sections. The question of justice comes with the emergence of the invisibilised and the imperceptible, of those who have no place within existing normalizing political institutions. Justice as Rancière (1998) says, comes when those who have no part change the material conditions of existence in a way that cannot be overheard or simply squeezed to fit in existing political institutions. The political institutions need to reconfigure themselves in order to accommodate these new material realities and forms of everyday life. Here, we focus on how actors create alternative ecologies of existence that become inhabited by these silenced and absent others, by those who have been rendered residual and invisible whether humans or nonhumans. This is genuinely a politics of matter because certain groups of humans and nonhumans can continue to exist only to the extent that they develop alternative entanglements. For this reason, in more-than-social movements justice is restored through material transformation. And at the same time without ordinary justice there are no more-than-social movements. As Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (2017a) reminds us, material engagement often starts from an obligation to protect an ecology from its degradation and to make it a liveable place for all the participants in it. As in the case of permaculture, a global ecological movement whose aim consist in making ecological justice from below.

Permaculture is a movement of alternative ecological design that takes multiple shapes: rural and urban, projects of local food production, natural building, knowledge production and experiments with different forms of social organising (Lillington, 2007; Macnamara, 2012; Mollison, 1988; Mollison and Holmgren, 1978; Whitefield, 2004). Born with the observations on how a forest works as an ecosystem, the idea of permaculture consists basically of the aim of creating edible and resilient

ecosystems. Permaculture is a situated and minor art of recuperation, an alternative response to environmental crisis based on the idea that humans are subject to the same energetic laws that govern the material universe, including the evolution of life. One of the most popular current definitions of permaculture is ‘consciously designed landscapes which mimic the patterns and relationships found in nature, while yielding an abundance of food, fibre and energy for provision of local needs’ (Holmgren 2002, xix). Permaculture can be seen as both an ethical-philosophical point of view and a practical approach to everyday doing (Centemeri, 2018): a mundane practical ecology. In the words of Patrick Whitefield, ‘the central aim of permaculture is to reduce our ecological impact. Or, more precisely, to turn our negative impact into a positive one’ (Whitefield, 2004: : 5).

Permaculture is just one of practices by which movements of ecological transition are converging today in their attempts to attend to the health of soil (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2014). In permaculture, amongst other things, restoring justice means transforming human relations with soils and its inhabitants by participating in its material regeneration. But moving from soil destroyers to soil growers means recognising that ecological agency is a collective multispecies agency. Justice here is about the ordinary making of ecological reparation: the collective enterprise of creating an alternative lifeworld within the interactive dynamics that inhabit the soil. Justice is a more than human affair: ecological regeneration does not pass through a good ‘Anthropos’, but through its decentralization into the multifaceted interdependencies of more than human communities. In permaculture in fact nothing can be done without acting with existing entities and forces that are populating a territory.

Material justice has a long history in social movement action. For example, movements that emerged around the commons⁶ refer to actively shared worlds that combat injustice that stems from

⁶ For different approaches on commons and commoning see Ostrom E (1990) *Governing the commons : the evolution of institutions for collective action*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press. Gibson-Graham JK (2006) *A Postcapitalist Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. Caffentzis G (2010) The Future of 'The Commons': Neoliberalism's 'Plan B' or the Original Disaccumulation of Capital? *New Formations* 69: 23-41. Read J (2011) The production of subjectivity: from transindividuality to the commons. *Ibid.* 70(1): 113-131. Bollier D and Helfrich S (2012) *The wealth of the commons: a world beyond market and state*. Amherst: Levellers Press. Dardot PaL, Christian (2019) *Common: On Revolution in the 21st Century*. London: Bloomsbury. Barbagallo C and Federici S (2012) "Care Work" And The Commons. *The Commoner* 15.

social enclosure and separation: commons are about co-action, collective stewardship of the material worlds in which they exist, practical self-organisation. But the commons are not only about managing rules and sharing common resources, they also entail a multiplicity of practices of commoning that bring us to the field of processual, actively shared, more than human worlds. It is what Patrick Bresnahan (2013) calls the “manifold commons and Herbert Reid and Betsy Taylor call the “body~place~commons” as they emphasize the “dynamic, interactive process of human and nonhuman production and reproduction’ (2010: : 20). The commons rarely exist in the abstract and never outside of a specific ecology and specific material spaces.

With the insertion of more than human worlds into the practices of social movements a renewed sense of material justice emerges: the emphasis here is on the ability of a common problem and a matter of common interest to capture the attention of different actors. What is common, as Stengers (2005) mentions, is not a common property but rather what brings different actors into play, what forces them to think, to invent, to act in concert depending on each other. The common within an ‘acting with’ is what lies between us, that in various ways challenges us, what calls us and forces us to think and act to restore justice. The co-actors, the commensals of the earth carry on forms of partial recovery, work the Earth within the Earth, create multispecies shelters, learn from each other starting from the situated materiality of the problems they face: “nobody lives everywhere; they all live somewhere. Nothing is connected to everything; everything is connected to something” (Haraway 2016: 31).

Co-action conceptualises the political ecology of our current historical moment in a very different way than the narratives of Anthropocene (and alternative popular narratives as the Capitalocene). The symptom Anthropocene testifies to the indelible traces of human presence on planet Earth, positioning humans as equally the source of the problem and the key to the solution. In a similar pattern, Capitalocene anthropomorphises an economic system by assigning to it some form of human agency as if it is the system itself that is the subject of history and subsequently of Earth’s

futures.⁷ In both narratives the ecological is dependent on the social and humans are positioned as the culprits and, simultaneously, the guarantors of social and ecological justice. Within the framework of more-than-social movements and the imperative to ‘act with’ a different sense of socio-ecological responsibility and a different sense of justice emerges: humans are not in a position to govern Earth; humans are in and with Earth, and the abiotic and biotic powers of the planet make up the key actors of this story.

Conclusion: Infrastructures make resurgence possible and autonomy durable

Multispecies commensality, experimental alterontological practice, material justice, and an ethos of care: these are the practical coordinates that define the actions of more-than-social movements, a multitude of material struggles and collective experiences capable of inventing from below practices of imagination, revolt, resistance and reparation. This is a form of material activism in which the practical continuity of any course of action demands the creation of alternative material infrastructures that allow more-than-social movements to act and persist. As we have seen in the case of Genuino Clandestino farmers network, the possibility to act and repair economies, ecologies and social relations depends on their capacity to set up farmers markets, community markets and dense networks of material circulation between the countryside and the city. There will not be food communities without this focus on the spatial articulation of activism. Something similar could be said in relation to AIDS treatment activism: the emergence of a community of practices, as described earlier in this paper, is not separable from the setting up of a material, biochemical, medical, social and cultural space in which the relation of human body and HIV could be negotiated and reshaped after the initial outbreak of the epidemic. When struggles aim first to make alternative spaces of

⁷ On the concepts of Anthropocene and Capitalocene see Crutzen PJ (2002) Geology of mankind. *Nature*.(415): 23, *ibid.*, Zalasiewicz J, Williams, M., Steffen, W, Crutzen, P. (2010) The new world of the Anthropocene. *Environmental Science & Technology* 44(7): 2228-2231, Moore JW (2016) *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*. Oakland: PM Press, Malm AaH, A. (2014) The geology of mankind? A critique of the Anthropocene. *The Anthropocene Review* xx(x)(201x): 1-8..

existence, the persistence of more-than-social movements action depends on their infrastructural achievements.

Traditional social movements are constituent of social power by inventing alternative institutions. More-than-social movements do the same. However, they do this through the co-emergence of politics and matter which gives birth to alternative spaces of existence. These spaces are the infrastructures that sustain more-than-social movements and allow them to become autonomous. The quest of these autonomous infrastructures is to restore justice step by step through everyday material practices. An autonomous politics emerges in the infrastructures of more-than-social movements: political autonomy as material interconnectedness, being in the quantum vortex of constant interdependences, knowing and naming one's allies and building material communities of justice.

More-than-social movement infrastructures are autonomy made durable: transparent, unnoticed, and persistently present spaces that incorporate political practice in their workings. Infrastructures allow more-than-social movements to politicise ontological practice. These infrastructures shape political developments and life without the need to start again and again from scratch. They become part of infrastructural imagination: the capacity to transfer infrastructures beyond a specific spatial and temporal location and to reclaim it for a different ontology; the capacity to connect, tweak, and reconnect different infrastructures across different locales; the capacity to extend infrastructures over time and to redeploy them in the future. Such autonomous infrastructures are always less than global and more than local.

Rather than enclosed, privately or state managed infrastructures, more-than-social movements create generous translocal infrastructures, that is infrastructures that can be partly borrowed and shared or replicated and recreated in other locales to allow for communities to maintain and defend the ontological conditions of their forms of life even when instituted infrastructures break down by failure or by intent. In this sense these infrastructures are directly political. Politics (and the social) does not come on top of the infrastructures that more-than-social movements create. Is a self-managed non-privatised water system an infrastructure for sustaining access to water or an environmental justice campaign? Is an

educational workshop in a hackspace a socio-technical learning infrastructure or a tool for achieving other social goals, such as promoting hobbyism or hacker culture? Are the agroecological technologies, open hardware, share knowledges deployed in cooperative farm an infrastructure for subsistence or a political project for community empowerment? Is an open-access bike workshop an infrastructure or a commitment to a different lifestyle? Most of these infrastructures do both at the same time. In fact, if there is a split between the material and the political, infrastructures cease to be generous, they cease to be infrastructures of the commons. They are no longer autonomous, and they are appropriated for other social aims and political targets. They become managed as tools. Instead, generous translocal infrastructures involve always the entanglement between human and nonhuman others, between materiality and sociality, and only by doing this they become an alterontological practice. Political and social autonomy can be performed to the extent that they are rooted in transformative everyday material practices. As we have seen earlier, in more-than-social movements social transformation happens through more than human and material transformation: social change cannot be thought independent of ontological change. That's why in the ecological condition social transformation towards justice requires alterontological infrastructures.

More-than-social movements offer a vision of materialism that engages seriously with the challenges of political ecology, a materialism that allows us to think of our material worlds not only as a matter of governance and regulation. The threshold of the material sustainability of modernity and the safe governability of human societies has been crossed. An alternative politics of matter is emerging: alternative forms of coexistence between species, inorganic substances and technologies. Political ecology is not the only field in which a multitude of revolts against ecological injustices are recorded on a global scale, political ecology is also the field for experimentation with everyday practices of socio-ecological regeneration. The autonomy of the twenty-first century comes from the resurgence of the dense network of interdependencies and the ability to create translocal infrastructures able to support, defend and remake alternative forms of existence.

By inventing ways of reactivating heterogeneous elements, creating ecologies of existence that are rich and responsible enough for cultivating worldly prosperity and the least possible suffering for all the entities that inhabit them, these movements are experimenting with material justice within a politics of everyday life. From food sovereignty movements to practices of solidarity for the right to health, from permaculture to occupied factories, from feminist and queer movements to indigenous resistance, from environmental justice campaigns to alternative autonomous subsistence movements, from grassroots climate urbanism to alternative making, mending, hacking and design practices, a central point of contemporary political ecology lies in the experimentation of other ways of relating between humans, animals and plants, objects and technologies. Instead of situating politics within the social sphere of production and social reproduction only, more-than-social movements place politics in the ecology, in the forest, in the scientific laboratory, in the clinic, in the commune, in the field and the farm, in the hackerspace, and in the many other places where humans are learning how to decolonise⁸ their relationship with of earth and its materiality.

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⁸ See for example Rose DB (2004) *Reports from a Wild Country. Ethics for Decolonisation*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, Rivera Cusicanqui S (2010) *Ch'ixinakax utxiwa: una reflexiòn sobre pràcticas y discursos descolonizadores*. Buenos Aires Tinta Limòn. Simpson LB (2021) *As We Have Always Done. Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Kimmerer RW (2020) *Braiding Sweetgrass. Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions.

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