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 the fact that many contemporary mobilisations do much more than target recognised social institutions and political governance; indeed, they are practically transforming eco-societies with and within 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, or 'alterontologies', as we call them in the paper. In what follows, we engage with the imaginaries and practices of agroecology, AIDS treatment activism and permaculture in order to rethink what autonomy and justice might look like in the context of today's ecological crisis.

KEYWORDS

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1. INTRODUCTION: WHEN POLITICS COMES TO MATTER

Sixth mass extinction, climate crisis, soil depletion, ocean acidification, human displacement, forest destruction, coronavirus. Traces of the global ecological crisis are everywhere. The unpredictable consequences of the ongoing modification of the Earth's chemical, biological and geophysical composition are already 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 these environmental events and disasters that upset, interrupt, destabilise and threaten the human world mean that the inconvenient truth of the ecological crisis will be part of our present and future. Gaia is the name of the Greek mythological deity, the primordial Mother Earth goddess, who shows a resolute indifference to the effects of her 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 or passive nature. As philosopher Michel Serres reminds us: 'it no longer depends on us that everything depends on us' (Serres, with Latour 1995: 189). This statement is not to proclaim inaction. On the contrary, it contains a call for action and an invitation to experiment with 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, Pedersen and Viveiros de Castro 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 emphasises 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 their book *Political Matter*, Braun and Whatmore (2010b) start from an 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' (ibid.: ix). Politics here means a 'politics of matter' (Papadopoulos 2014) – that is, a politics that acts within and emerges from the ecologies in which we live, operating inside our common worlds made though a multiplicity of more-than-human relations. A politics of matter is capable of taking into account artefacts,

technologies, animals, plants and bacteria, modes of materialisation and mattering in the analysis of how situated collectivities are assembled.

Prefigurative, collective and ecologically integrated practices give birth to new sustainable systems of production and circulation (Schlosberg and Craven 2019).[1] This reorientation of the material practices of everyday life is at the centre of new materialist work that highlights the role of local communities' action in shaping sustainable systems of food, water and energy circulation (see Meyer 2015; Schlosberg and Coles 2016; White 2019; Pickering, Backstrand and Schlosberg 2020; Eckersley 2020). As we argue in this paper, the ecological dimensions of such social movements emphasise the interconnectedness of people, animals, plants and the 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 2017). Ecological thinking introduces the biggest paradigm shift in social science of the last fifty years, according to Latour (2017; 2018), framing societies as embedded in interconnected multi-cultural and multi-natural worlds (Rozzi et al. 2015; Hamilton, Gemenne and Bonneuil 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 at challenging existing power relations or established institutions – 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. In response to the quest for generative justice, these movements create alternative forms of existence and autonomous infrastructures, which always involve the entanglement of human and nonhuman others, of materiality and sociality. Insisting on the emergence of *more-than-social* movements is a way to highlight the material, ordinary, ontological and transformative power of such movements: when politics comes to matter, there is no change without creating materially alternative ways of life, or *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 of describing 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

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1.   On prefigurative movements, see, amongst others: Yates (2015); van de Sande (2015); Swain (2019); Gordon (2018).

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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 such movements 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 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 and give birth to a new form of activism sustained by the creation of more than local and less than global alternative material infrastructures. As we argue in the conclusion, the alternative translocal infrastructures of more-than-social movements are what make their social and political autonomy durable.

2. 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 interactions among certain humans and nonhumans shape the material world in specific directions rather than others. Social change cannot be thought of as independent from ontological change; in fact, social transformation towards justice requires alterontological practice.

Let's take agriculture as an example. Starting from the end of the 1960s, the so-called 'Green Revolution' significantly transformed the ways in which agriculture had been developing on a global scale (Rosset and Altieri 2017; Shiva 2008; Altieri 2018). The adoption of new technologies, the central role of mechanisation, the selection of high-yielding varieties of cereals and the extensive use of chemical fertilisers and agro-chemicals are the main features of 'post Green Revolution' industrial agriculture. These technologies of food production have wide-ranging socio-ecological implications in relation to biodiversity and climate change, and entail a relation of strong dependency between farmers and the world's largest chemical producers. Agroecology appears nowadays as one of the alternatives for overcoming the shortcomings of the 'Green Revolution' (Rosset and Altieri 2017). Agroecology is a response to the question how to transform and repair our 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 and Altieri 2017; Altieri 2018). Food movements and agroecological farming represent a direct form of alterontological 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, or a set of practices that is reshaping the everyday of farming, but also as a movement that is trying the redefine the political, economic and juridical space of action of organic food producers. In the case of Genuino Clandestino, agroecology is synonymous with alternative forms of life-making. The Genuino Clandestino network emerged in 2010 with the aim of supporting the multiplicity of alternative forms of rural living and nurturing agroecological knowledge and practices. Genuino Clandestino's practices include local farmers' markets that promote food sovereignty; innovative forms of trust-building between producers and consumers through a self-organised process called the 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, genuinely more-than-social, grassroots movement that fuses traditional socio-environmental campaigns – for example, against the use of pesticides in agriculture – with the experimentation of alterontological farming and the building of alternative food communities.

In the politics of Genuino Clandestino, the resurgence of rural forms of life is not a way of restoring some form of premodern vision of social conditions. Rather, 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 of cultivating a 'practicality' of life within the cycles of the land – of 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 (Bertoni 2013; Krzywoszynska 2020; Puig de la Bellacasa 2014). 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 practices of livelihood regeneration and socioecological repair. The desire for an embodied, intimately involved, material relationship with the land characterises this peasant resurgence. More than a job, the word 'peasant' here evokes an alternative form of life, a secession from the monoculture of economic productivism.

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Starting from these foundational alterontological practices, 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 farmers markets, the experimentation of complementary currencies, the creation of self-organised community emporia, the development of alternative collective agriculture projects and the adoption of participatory practices of decision-making, new transversal alliances amongst producers and consumers give rise to emergent food communities and agroecological collectives. 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 on prices together; organise visits to 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, etc.); make public reports on the strengths and limits of each farm; and 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, spawn 'generous' encounters, dislocate politics within everyday practices.

How to become a 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: the question that forces this more-than-social movement to invent, from seed to kitchen, autonomous networks of eco-social reproduction. Autonomy 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. [2] 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 rearticulating human-nonhuman interdependencies in ways that allow

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2. The question of autonomy was primarily developed in regard to the role of working-class struggles in historical change: here, capital is not the driving force of change but rather workers' refusal and insubordination force capital to reorganise itself (see Dyer-Witheford 1999; Negri 1988). In the wake of the new social movements that emerged from the Zapatista encuentros [encounters] and the Seattle mobilisations in the mid-late 1990s, autonomy is explored in relation to technoscience, culture, feminist and queer politics and the struggles for the commons. See Papadopoulos, Stephenson and Tsianos (2008); Chatterton and Pickerill (2010); De Angelis (2017); Hardt and Negri (2009).

for the creation of 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 experimentation, a generative practice of justice – even a new idea of autonomy – emerges. Autonomous politics requires material interconnectedness, practical organising, everyday coexistence and the fostering of more-than-human ontological alliances. They entail interactions, ways of knowing and 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 and reparative justice.

3. THE EVERYDAY AND THE ONTOLOGICAL AS A UNIFIED REALM OF ACTIVITY

More-than-social movements operate an alterontological politics embedded within the fabric of everyday life. Political and social autonomy can be performed to the extent that they are 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 to reorganise itself, often in unexpected ways. Now we want to turn to a very different social movement – namely, HIV treatment activism in the 1980s – in order to explore alterontological practices that focus on transforming the material fabric of everyday life as opposed to large-scale, 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. From the very beginning, individuals and communities living with AIDS not only shared specific practices and languages, but created common spaces and different modes of the engagement with the virus. These everyday material practices gave birth to a movement that could no longer be ignored. By contesting existing forms of injustice, and 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 that enable social and political movements to emerge, exist and grow.

We are particularly interested in how actors constitute themselves long before they are formally recognised as such. The case of AIDS activism shows

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that the making of socio-material actors comes before any formalisation of movements vis-à-vis social power and governance, as happened with ACT UP in 1987. Long before, AIDS activism and the entanglements of human actors (patients, activists, researchers, etc.) and nonhuman actors (the HIV virus, medications, tests and so on) emerged as a politics of material composition whose primary aim was to enable forms of life that would allow the gay community under threat to defend itself. A movement is constituted 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 within 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*, including: creating autonomous service provision (AIDS service organisations); collectively challenging medical decisions that affect the whole community; raising money for alternative research; organising support and volunteer caretaking; setting up new community spaces and community organisations to engage with the new challenges of the crisis; extensive experimenting with individual bodies and (not officially approved) drugs; getting involved in intensive lobbying of medical associations, doctors, hospitals, local councils and public health officials; setting up community meetings, educational initiatives and debates; developing new forms of embodied affection, intimacy and reciprocity; educating themselves and each other in medical, health, legal and policy issues; (re-)politicising white, mostly middle-class, gay men who started to realise that their relatively privileged positions were inherently precarious; taking militant action and engaging in 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; upholding self-respect and gay pride, while navigating various conflictual feelings about the community produced by the hostile social environment and constant stigmatisation and demonisation; 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.[3]

Through these compositional practices, AIDS activism gradually took shape and constituted itself during the epidemic. Simon Watney (1997: xii) argues 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 Race 2018). This means that AIDS activism is not just a *reaction* to the epidemic,

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3. For an extensive discussion of these practices, see Papadopoulos (2018), Race (2018) and Gould (2009).

conceived by a community as a coherent strategy of response; rather, it was and is the outcome of a long formation process during which thousands of gay men and their communities tried to grapple with a devastating virus. AIDS activism is the product of 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, managing and simply surviving this ontological encounter. AIDS activism, then, is an 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. The movement became possible because of the everyday alterontological practices that allowed this community in the making to sustain itself.

Based on our discussion of the Genuino Clandestino and AIDS treatment activism, we want to expand now on the 'more-than-social' perspective of 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 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, most movements oscillate between the two forms of action or move in phases from one form of mobilisation to the other. One 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 social rights are often the main ingredients that feed strategies and forms of mobilisations oriented towards renegotiating the organisation of political power. In traditional social movements, the struggles for social transformation come first.

In more-than-social movements, on the other hand, 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 social institutions and political governance to respond and reorganise. However, the main aim of more-than-social movements is not

to force institutional change as such, but to create an alternative infrastructure of material life that enacts a different form of everyday existence (see also Monticelli 2018; Pickerill 2021; Brown, Kraftl and Pickerill 2012; van de Sande 2013). More-than-social movements are primarily concerned with *practices*: embodied, material, asubjective, often imperceptible practices that complicate the modern binarism of the human and the nonhuman, just as they aim to reconfigure social and political life through transforming ordinary material relations.

4. ORDINARY JUSTICE IS A MORE-THAN-HUMAN AFFAIR

The question of justice is crucial for understanding the resurgence of more-than-social movements as described above. The question of justice comes with the emergence of the invisibilised and the imperceptible, of those who have no place within existing normalising political institutions. Justice, as Jacques Rancière (1998) says, comes when those who have no part in political life change the material conditions of existence in a way that cannot be overheard or simply made to fit within existing political institutions. Instead, political institutions need to reconfigure themselves in order to accommodate these new material realities and forms of everyday life.

In this section, 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, justice is restored in more-than-social movements through material transformation; at the same time, without ordinary justice, there are no more-than-social movements. As Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) reminds us, material engagement often starts with an obligation to protect an ecology from its degradation and to make it a liveable place for all of its participants. This obligation underlies the rise of permaculture, an ecological movement whose aim is to set up alternative forms of ecological life and food production from below.

Permaculture is a movement of alternative ecological design that takes multiple shapes, from rural and urban local food production, through natural building and knowledge production, to experiments with different forms of social organising (Lillington 2007; Macnamara 2012; Mollison 1988; Mollison and Holmgren 1978; Whitefield 2004). 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). Arising from observations about how forests work, the aim of permaculture is,

at its core, one 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. 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 (2004: 5): 'the central aim of permaculture is to reduce our ecological impact. Or, more precisely, to turn our negative impact into a positive one'.

Permaculture is just one of practices by which movements of ecological transition are converging today in their attempts to attend to the health of the soil (Puig de la Bellacasa 2014). In permaculture, restoring justice means transforming human relations with soil and its inhabitants by participating in its material regeneration. But moving from soil destroyers to soil growers means recognising the ways in which ecological agency entails collective multispecies agency. Justice here is about ordinary, everyday 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 decentralisation 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 within social movement action. For example, movements that emerged around reclaiming the commons referred to the importance of actively shared worlds that combat the injustice that stems from social enclosure and separation. Commons require co-action, practical self-organisation and collective stewardship of the material worlds in which we co-exist. [4] But the commons are not only about managing communal 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. This is what Patrick Bresnihan (2013) calls the 'manifold commons' and Herbert Reid and Betsy Taylor (2010: 20) call the 'body-place-commons', emphasising the 'dynamic, interactive process of human and nonhuman production and reproduction'. 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

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4.   For different approaches on commons and commoning, see Ostrom (1990); Gibson-Graham (2006); Caffentzis (2010); Read (2011); Bollier and Helfrich (2012); Dardot (2019); Barbagallo and Federici (2012).

play, what forces them to think, to invent, to act in concert depending on each other. The common within this 'acting with' is what lies between the participating actors, which in various ways challenges them and forces them 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 and learn from each other, starting from the situated materiality of the problems they face. As Donna Haraway avers: 'nobody lives everywhere; they all live somewhere. Nothing is connected to everything; everything is connected to something' (2016: 31).

Co-action frames the political ecology of our current historical moment in a very different way to the narratives of the Anthropocene (and alternative popular narratives, such as the Capitalocene). The 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 way, the Capitalocene anthropomorphises an economic system by assigning it agency, as if it is the system itself that is the subject of history and, consequently, of Earth's futures.[5] In both narratives, the ecological is dependent on the social while humans are positioned as simultaneously the culprits and 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, a different sense of justice emerges. Here, humans are not in a position to govern Earth; humans are in and with the Earth, and the abiotic and biotic powers of the planet form the key actors of this story.

5. CONCLUSION: INFRASTRUCTURES MAKE RESURGENCE POSSIBLE AND AUTONOMY DURABLE

Multispecies commensality, experimental alterontological practice, material justice and an ethos of care: these are the coordinates that define the actions of more-than-social movements as a multitude of material struggles and collective experiences capable of inventing practices of imagination, resistance and reparation from below. 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 in the case of the Genuino Clandestino farmers' network, the possibility to act and repair economies, ecologies and social relations depends on their capacity to set up community food 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

5.   On the concepts of Anthropocene and Capitalocene, see Crutzen 2002; Zalasiewicz et al. 2010; Moore 2016; Malm and Hornborg 2014.

emergence of a community of practices, as described earlier in this paper, is inseparable from the setting up of material, biochemical, medical, social and cultural spaces in which the relation of human body and HIV could be negotiated and reshaped after the initial outbreak of the epidemic. While struggles aim first and foremost to make alternative spaces of existence, the persistence of more-than-social movements 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 object of these autonomous infrastructures is to restore justice step by step through everyday material practices. An autonomous form of politics thus emerges in the infrastructures of more-than-social movements, where political autonomy refers to 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 movements' infrastructures are autonomy made durable. They constitute transparent, unnoticed and inconspicuously present spaces that incorporate political practice in their workings. Infrastructures allow more-than-social movements to politicise ontological practice, shaping political developments and life without needing to start again and again from scratch. They become part of an infrastructural imagination with the capacity to transfer infrastructures beyond a specific spatial and temporal location, and to reclaim them for a different ontology: the ability to connect, tweak and reconnect different infrastructures across different locales, and to extend infrastructures over time and redeploy them in the future.

Such autonomous infrastructures are thus always less than global and more than local. Rather than enclosed, private or state-managed infrastructures, more-than-social movements create generous *translocal* infrastructures – that is, infrastructures that can be partly borrowed, shared, replicated or recreated in other locales to allow 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, more-than-social infrastructures are directly and inherently political. Politics (and the social) do 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 or shared knowledges deployed in a cooperative farm an infrastructure for subsistence or a political project for community empowerment? Is an open-access bike workshop an infrastructural project 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, but rather become managed as tools and appropriated for other social aims and political targets. Instead, generous translocal infrastructures always involve the entanglement of human and nonhuman others, of 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 discussed earlier, in more-than-social movements, social transformation happens through material and more-than-human transformation. Social change cannot be thought of or achieved without ontological change, and ontological transformation 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 modernity's material sustainability and the safe governability of human societies has already been crossed. An alternative politics of matter is emerging, involving alternative forms of coexistence between species, inorganic substances and technologies. Political ecology is not only the 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 this dense network of interdependencies and the ability to create translocal infrastructures that are 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 health-based solidarity, feminist and queer movements to grassroots indigenous resistance, environmental justice campaigns to alternative subsistence movements, a central and common feature of contemporary political ecology lies in experimenting with other ways of relating to and among humans, animals, plants, objects and technologies. Instead of situating politics within the sphere of production and social reproduction only, more-than-social movements locate politics within the forest, the scientific laboratory, the clinic, the commune, in the field and the farm, in the hackerspace and in the many other places where humans are learning how to decolonise their relationship with earth and its materiality.[6]

6.   See, for example, Rose 2004; Rivera Cusicanqui 2010; Simpson 2021; Kimmerer 2020.

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