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CHAPTER TEN

Nonhuman Politics and Its Practices

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What is the relationship between politics and nonhumans? What does it mean to consider *politics* in the context of nonhumans? How are *nonhumans* to be considered politically? The term "politics" itself points to Ancient Greece and that which nonhumans, by definition, do not possess: an institutional structure (*polis*) and the power of speech (*logos*). In this context, is it even possible to conceptualize politics non-anthropocentrically? What would political *practice* mean exactly with reference to nonhumans? Should we question human exceptionalism at all, given the potential for such interrogation to facilitate scientific and commercial exploitation? These are some of the questions that hover in posthumanist writings on politics. Various posthumanist thinkers pose significant challenges to traditional understanding of politics, including governance of a country, management of institutions, legislation, or struggle for power. They re-examine key political concepts, such as agency, subjectivity, freedom, equality, democracy, parliament, constitutionality, political action, and autonomy. The vast majority of this criticism does not, however, aim at merely including nonhumans into existing political structures. Instead, it attempts to redefine the very concept of politics, of which nonhumans could be an integral part.

Whilst there is no unified approach to politics in posthumanist studies, most scholars agree that the received concept of politics is inadequate on at least two counts. First, it is lacking with regard to the past as it is necessary to acknowledge that "human" has been a highly regulatory category and has often referred exclusively to certain type of individuals: white, Western, male, able-bodied. Hence, it has been instrumental to practices of discrimination and exclusion. This is where posthumanism joins arms with some strands of feminism, critical race studies, postcolonialism, environmental philosophy, and disability studies. Second, the established political modes are insufficient with regard to the future as they do not provide us with appropriate conceptual tools to face the challenges of the contemporary world. This is because issues that concern us most—such as climate change or rapidly developing artificial intelligence—do not respect national boundaries or the standard rules of politics. What's more, our lives have become increasingly dominated by questions of "life support systems": habitats, artificial environments, artificial surroundings in which we can safely co-exist, as we are confronted with more and more limited space and resources on Earth.[1] These shifts in

[1] On this, see Sloterdijk ([1998] 2011, [1999] 2014, [2004] 2016); Latour (2014), Latour and Serres (Serres and Latour [1992] 1995).

new life support systems influence considerably our ways of living together. Thinkers in the field of posthumanism, broadly considered, tackle selected aspects of this situation in order to propose a new concept of politics that could constructively respond to the current situation.

Politically engaged posthumanism is rich terrain, an area of thought that develops at a dizzyingly rapid pace. As such, it is impossible to offer an exhaustive account of all its intricacies here. Nevertheless, in this chapter, I discuss some of the most notable and productive efforts at reconceptualizing politics that have been undertaken in the context of nonhumans. I propose a focus that will allow us to interrogate different versions of politics that can be found in posthumanist interventions, and to test their limits, from a very specific perspective: political practice. So far, very little attention has been devoted to concrete political practice in the context of nonhumans. This is mainly due to the fact that such questions can turn normative and prescriptive very quickly. Critical posthumanist thinkers are understandably hesitant about proposing readymade blueprints for action or quick fixes to global problems by technological means. Nevertheless, we need to ask what "nonhuman politics" would actually mean in practice. And, perhaps more provocatively, whether one could potentially be a "posthumanist activist." Such an approach allows us to remain "down to Earth"—to use the English title of Bruno Latour's latest book—in our reflections on politics, while at the same time to experiment with different modalities of political action in the context of nonhumans.

The working thesis for this paper that determines its, undeniably highly selective, choice of thinkers is that the question of posthuman politics is, ultimately, a question of collective transformation in a more-than-human world. Politics is about concrete practices of world-building with a special attention to nonhumans, our "response-ability" (Haraway 2008, 2016) to them and non-parasitic relationships (Serres [1980] 2007, [1990] 1995). Some of the key questions are therefore: what are the entities that *count* in world-building? How do we orient our practices considering that—for better or worse—we can never fully anticipate the results of our actions? What is the role of experimentation and of habits in political practices?

POLITICS OF MATTER

When considering nonhumans in the context of politics, it is essential to engage with new materialism. This field of inquiry radically modifies our understanding of matter and proposes a different concept of politics. Various new materialist thinkers place politics at the center of their interests. Their conceptual point of departure is that matter is a monist, vital force that exhibits agency rather than passively receives human action. New materialists call for the reconceptualization of the ontological bases of politics, which constitutes for them an important form of politics. Their crucial assumption is that the realization of different politics is possible only by thoroughly rethinking ontology. And so, new materialists reconsider key concepts in philosophy and political theory, shifting them toward more matter-oriented frameworks. Karen Barad, for example, proposes the concept of "intra-action" (2007) that argues for the ontological inseparability of all interacting agencies, human and nonhuman alike. Jane Bennett speaks of "thing-power" and encourages us to think of natural and technical materialities as co-actors in politics (2010). Diana Cool and Samantha Frost emphasize that body is "a visceral protagonist within political encounters" that dislocates agency and is "indispensable to any adequate appreciation of democratic processes" (2010: 19). Rosi Braidotti refers to

"*zoe*-politics" and "*zoe*-centred egalitarianism" based on the "primacy of the relation, of interdependence, which values non-human or a-personal Life" (2013: 95). She speaks of the politics of autopoiesis (2006, 2016), the importance of "broadening the sense of community" (2010: 206), and an "affirmation of life as radical immanence" (2018: 318). More recently, she turns to "placenta politics" as a new category of "pregnant posthumanism" that re-considers the maternal body (2018: 318).[2]

Beyond such theoretical work, new materialists also interrogate specific forms of material resistance and generativity that would further undermine the discourses on human being as asocial and independent entities. They place the body in the foreground and consider how self-transformative corporeality participates in power, for instance, in relation to sexual difference (Colebrook 2000; Jagger 2015). They incorporate new technological and scientific developments in their considerations of normative questions. Therefore, their efforts are perhaps best understood as ways to propose a more inclusive concept of politics that is equally open to invisible entities. For these scholars, politics is a new way of thinking that is radically open to difference (see Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012; Braidotti and Hlavajova 2018).

Yet, a political activist sympathetic to new materialist projects might ask—in a naïve and irritatingly committed way—how this politics of matter could translate into political practice. If we look at current new materialist literature, there is little indication of what this politics would mean on the level of collective, transformative action, even though new materialists are *explicitly* politically committed (Bennett 2010; Coole and Frost 2010; Braidotti 2013). Admittedly, some contributions to the feminist strand of new materialism show tendencies to consider practice more. This is extremely valuable. For instance, Elizabeth Grosz (2010) thinks productively about practices of freedom that could be translated into feminist political action ranging from feminist co-operatives and clinics to intergenerational initiatives around a specific women's issue.[3] But even such important contributions only hint at concrete set of practices. Thus far, there is little differentiation in forms of action that could orient activism. Politics gets lost in ethics or epistemology (Washick et al. 2015). Meanwhile, the theoretical tools to conceptualize political practice still need to be developed. If, indeed, new materialism and engaged practice are brought together in scholarship, it is a move undertaken almost exclusively by anarchists. The latter turn to Gilles Deleuze, a key reference for new materialists, in order to provide "a foundation for anarchist ethics" and to "explore the 'political' and active aspects of immanent ethics" (Vasileva 2018: 2). Such combinations are inspiring: linking anarchist practice to new materialist ontology could potentially be a particularly productive way for new materialists to overcome an impasse around political practice (see Newman 2001; Gordon 2008; Colson 2019; Gray Van Heerden and Eloff 2019).

Although new materialist contributions are undoubtedly insightful and rhetorically well-crafted, it seems that, for the time being at least, the word "politics" is used here more as a speech act, as a promise of a future materialization. Neomaterialist politics is thus perhaps best described as "politics to come" (*la politique à venir*), playing on Jacques Derrida's notion of "democracy to come" (*la démocratie à venir*). It is a politics that is not here, not now and, at least for the time being, cannot be translated into concrete political action. Nevertheless, it opens up horizons of unknown possibilities, naming an

[2] For another gynaecological approach, see also Sloterdijk ([1998] 2011).

[3] See, for instance, Hinton and van der Tuin (2014); van der Tuin (2011); Alaimo and Hekman (2008).

unpredictable opening and a dislocation from within that has a transformative potential. It is a promise of change that is both now and in the future. This form of political philosophy, one which aims at stretching our thinking about politics, is undoubtedly valuable, but without political practice its transformative potentiality is significantly limited.

FROM POLITICS AS ONTOLOGY TO POLITICS AS MODE

Given the evident limitations of new materialism, how can we conceptualize political practice if a re-evaluation of matter is not sufficient? One thinker for whom the question of practice is fundamental is Bruno Latour. Latour has considered practice in a wide variety of spheres, including the sciences, the law, religion, and urbanism. Throughout his work, politics has always been a central concern, although his thinking has mutated steadily: from his early work on the horizontal ontological politics[4] of actor-network theory (ANT), through "parliament of things" and *Dingpolitik*, to politics as a separate mode of existence (AIME: *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence*[5]), arriving finally at Gaia and politics of the *terrestrials* (the Earthbound).[6] In this section, I focus mainly on ANT and AIME, theories which are most relevant to the present discussion. The former demonstrates significant, though limited, political potential. The latter completes this work, extending and developing the earlier framework, by focusing on specific operations that make practices political (cf. Latour [2012] 2013: 353).

In Latour's early work on ANT, he formulates a horizontal description of human and nonhuman assemblages, demonstrating that neither humans nor their actions can be understood without nonhumans. Strongly influenced at that time by Machiavelli, Latour considers alliances and trials of strength crucial because, in his "flat ontology,"[7] all entities are fundamentally equal. This means that they are only as real as they are strong (Latour 1987): "Whatever resists trials is real" (Latour [1984] 1988: 158). That means that entities' existence depends on the effects that they produce rather than on their inherent essence. No entity is inherently political *pace* Aristotle.[8] The more attachments an actor (actant) has, the more it exists (cf. Latour 2005b: 217). "Forces cannot be divided into the 'human' and 'nonhuman,'" argues Latour ([1984] 1988: 199), as both humans and nonhumans are capable of producing effects and resisting trials of strength. Furthermore, politics is potentially everywhere as "[it] is not one realm of action separated from others." Instead, it is "what allows many heterogenous resources to be woven together into a social link that becomes increasingly harder and harder to break" (Strum and Latour 1987: 797; see also Harman 2014: 22–3). This, however, also means that politics is both everywhere and nowhere. Importantly, that position will change in Latour's later work. Nevertheless, a flat description of human and nonhuman assemblages was crucial at this stage for Latour's broader contribution to posthumanist politics. The creation of new links between entities—an integral constituent of the ANT framework—prevented

[4] For other important contributions to "ontological politics," see Winner (1980) and Mol (1999).
[5] See AIME website: http://modesofexistence.org.
[6] That is, if we consider this development from the point of view of the chronology of his published work. Latour states that ANT and AIME developed simultaneously (see Tresch and Latour 2013).
[7] On "flat ontology," see DeLanda (2004); Harman (2014).
[8] As Latour admits, "I do not believe that returning to Aristotle is helpful" (Latour 2007: 814). See also Vries (2016).

Latour from following received wisdom in terms of existing explanations for "social" phenomena (cf. Latour 2005b: 16).

The ontological equality between humans and nonhumans, posited initially in ANT, led Latour to propose an idea of the "parliament of things," in which scientists speak in the name of things, that is, in traditional political terms, they represent them (Latour [1991] 1993). Parliament of things posits, literally, an *experimental* form of politics where democracy is extended to nonhumans (cf. Latour [1999] 2004: 223). A further shift in Latour's politics is his formulation of a controversy-based *Dingpolitik* (politics of things), in which politics is created in response to an issue ("a matter of concern"). *Dingpolitik* reverses the logic of *Realpolitik* (human politics), in which an issue needs to enter an already established sphere of politics and be recognized as political in order to be taken into consideration (Latour 2005a).

As Latour himself admits, the problem of ANT is that, although the framework is well-suited for showing movement between different networks and heterogenous elements, it is ill-adapted at defining differences (see Tresch and Latour 2013: 304). It describes well a given network setup and follows elements that circulate through it. However, because of its inherent lack of differentiation, it does not allow us to think change or, for the matter, how we would bring a change about in a system. This is a serious problem if we assume that politics, considered in its broadest sense, is about practices of transformation. Still, it is important to note that at this stage Latour already develops a position on questions of subjectivity, freedom, emancipation, and the purpose of politics that span both ANT and AIME, and are fundamental to his approach to politics. First, Latour maintains that "subjectivity is not the property of human souls but of the gathering itself" (Latour 2005b: 218). Nonhumans can therefore be "political subjects," due to the fact that *only* a human-nonhuman collective can be a political entity.[9] As Latour tellingly puts it: We are "folded into nonhumans" (Latour [1999] 2004: 189). "Politics is made not with politics but with *something else*" (Latour [1984] 1988: 56); that is, the fabric of politics is made up of heterogenous elements and processes. Considering that our received concepts of politics do not acknowledge this heterogeneity, they need to be revised to "catch up" with new linkages (Latour 2005a: 27). In that sense, we are all "politically challenged" according to Latour (2005a: 20). Second, freedom and emancipation are not concomitant with "an *absence* of bonds." Rather, they are about "getting out of a *bad* bondage" (Latour 2005b: 230) and becoming "*well*-attached" instead (Latour 2005b: 218). What is key are our association and attachment to other entities, both human and nonhuman. Finally, Latour proclaims that "the burning desire to have the new entities detected, welcomed, and given shelter is not only legitimate, it's probably the only scientific and political cause worth living for" (Latour 2005b: 259). This sentiment, as we will see, will be key for the concept of politics as *circulation* found in AIME.

AIME radically departs from ANT's earlier all-pervading ontological politics and proposes instead that politics is a separate mode of existence. He elaborates in detail this differentiated version of politics in several books—chiefly in *Politics of Nature* ([1999] 2004) and *Pandora's Hope* (1999)—leading up to its final insertion into the broader project of AIME. Of critical importance to the present discussion is one aspect of Latour's framework: the process of *circulation* as integral to politics. In AIME, Latour traces

[9] The inverted commas are called for as Latour would actually not use subject-object differentiation in order to speak about what we would traditionally term a "political subject."

the "felicity conditions" of political discourse, that is, what it means "to act or speak *politically*" (Latour [2012] 2013: 340, 2003). The adverb, signaling motion, is important here. The practice of politics is a *circle* which is constituted every time a new human-nonhuman collective is gathered around a single *issue*. When the organizing *issue* changes, the *circle* is re-drawn anew. Politics is a constantly renewed process of collecting entities, which must always start all over again in creating a new "we" in order to include those who have been excluded from its previous reiteration. The inclusion of the entities who were previously invisible sets the terms with which these new members of the collective will be dealt. It is a "performation" in that "[n]either the public, nor the common, nor the 'we' exists; they must be brought into being" (Latour [2012] 2013: 352). This is not a logic of a simple inclusion—the acceptance only of entities that fit into pre-established categories—but instead a process in which the entities themselves can redefine the very categories by which they were previously excluded. Crucially, politics disappears if this renewal stops being performed, if formerly excluded entities are not allowed to redefine the political parameters. However, if this criterion is met, "[d]emocracy becomes a habit" (Latour [2012] 2013: 343).

In the context of AIME, institutions are important as they offer both the means to create *spaces* for the renewal process and a guarantee that it will actually take place. This commitment to institutions, however, raises several challenging questions for Latour to address. What would these institutions exactly look like in practice? To what extent is an invention of new, alternative political forms even possible? Latour's tendency to recuperate traditional political concepts—such as constitutionality, the republic, the parliament, democracy, and diplomacy—could be interpreted as both radically subversive and not radical enough. Is there space for activism? Is there space for non-representational politics? Considering that Latour's concept of the primacy of trials of strength fundamentally undergirds AIME's framework, to what extent is there space for minoritarian views, for the less strong?

Latour's theorization of politics as a "progressive composition of the common world to share" (Latour [1999] 2004: 47) with nonhumans is a form of cosmopolitics, borrowed from Isabelle Stengers ([1997] 2010, [1997] 2011). It is a radical expansion of the meaning of politics that so far has been "restricted to the values, interests, opinions, and social forces of isolated, naked humans" (Latour 1999: 290). It always concerns the composition of a human-nonhuman collective and that is why it always poses questions, chiefly: "How many are we?" and "Can we live together?" (Latour [1999] 2004). Politics for Latour is a performative practice that is constantly busy recreating a more welcoming collective. However, precisely how we identify political actors and political actions—what categories we use for "counting" that make certain entities intelligible in politics to the exclusion of others—is not fleshed out sufficiently in this framework. To what extent would the uncountable, the invisible, the unheard be allowed to transform politics? What would be the constraints of this process?[10] The above questions require further elaboration in order to fully measure this framework's political potential.

[10] On this, see Rancière (Rancière [1995] 1999, [2000] 2013); Butler (2004); Janicka (2017).

DEVICE-ORIENTED POLITICS

As noted above, the principle drawback of ANT for thinking politics is that it lacks an account of change. Having said that, some scholars in science and technology studies (STS) use ANT productively to consider politics, for instance, through the concept of publics. Notably, Noortje Marres's work and her slogan "No Issue, No Politics" contributed significantly to Latour's concept of *Dingpolitik* and its further elaboration in AIME. Following Marres, Latour's "matters of concern" become "issues" that show reticence or cause problems. Marres's object-oriented politics concentrates on how nonhumans—particularly technologies, settings, and devices—generate their own publics. She queries the role of concrete objects in enacting political participation, which she calls "material participation" (Marres 2012). Here, politics is experimental, performative, device-centered, and very *specific* as it varies in different settings. Instead of asking whether nonhumans can be recognized as political entities engaging in participation, Marres proposes to focus on the ways in which these entities acquire and lose political powers in concrete circumstances (106). For her, it is not about solving the question *once and for all* whether nonhumans are "naturally" political beings, but instead to establish how nonhumans come to matter in *specific* settings and under what conditions they become invested with *specific* normative capacities (112). This leads her to turn to an empirical approach whereby experimenting with "material politics" allows her to account for the role of nonhumans in politics (113). She calls this "experimental politics," where "normative variability of material objects" is considered empirically "as an effect that is achieved in specific settings" (127).

In *Material Participation*, Marres focuses her attention on sustainable living experiments such as "ecoshowhomes." As she admits, this sort of politics does not provide us with a model of participation nor does it ensure that it takes place. "It is of the order of event"—something that just happens—rather than a given (131). As an experiment, it can also succeed or fail. Considering the focus on the specificity of this zoomed-in concept of politics, it is worth asking whether it is possible to make it scalable in a productive way. Could Marres's politics ever be translated into more than a very specific setting? Could serialization be one way to overcome this problem? As with Latour's early work on ANT, the question that comes to the fore is whether this approach allows for a *transformative* doing rather than only *following* a doing, that is, following how things are already being done. To what extent could we orient the direction of change?

COMMUNAL ECOLOGY OF PRACTICES

One approach that implicitly responds to these issues is that of María Puig de la Bellacasa. Puig de la Bellacasa takes up productively Latour's "matters of concern" and combines them with feminist theories of care in order to propose "matters of care." The reason for this is that "care" can be "more easily turned into a verb: *to care*. One can make oneself concerned, but 'to care' contains a notion of doing that concern lacks" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 42). She is interested in how we can get involved in orienting matters of care, that is, in their "possible becoming," and how we can intervene in "what things could be" (66). It is important to note that care is not conceived here as an innocent, warm fuzzy feeling or a feel-good approach. It is neither a social contract nor a moral idea but instead a *condition* of interdependency that is essential for any existence. It is a concrete work of maintenance and repair that is at the same time ambivalent. Puig de la Bellacasa strongly

argues against a normative approach to care, which assumes that we know *in advance* and *once and for all* how to care. Ethics in this context is about "intensities and gradations of 'ethicality'" (151). Instead of a normative ethics, she proposes to think about care as a "transformative *ethos*"—a practical, everyday engagement with the worlds we inhabit and the concrete ways to make them more habitable. Specifically, Puig de la Bellacasa focuses on practices of the permaculture movement, and the relationship between human and soil, to trace the ways in which this movement's daily ecological *doing* transforms our relations to the planet, its inhabitants, and its resources. This activity, she admits, is always relationally specific and would not necessarily be transposable somewhere else: "care responds to a situated relationship" (163). However, because she focuses on the personal-collective, that is how we go about building alternative communities for existing in more than human world—what she calls an "ethico-political" commitment or "alterpolitics"—this experiment in alternative living is scoped more broadly than a device-centered approach. Politics and ethics are very closely linked here: ethics is not an individual's care of the self (Foucault's *souci de soi*) that in the next phase could become expanded into the "outside" world but instead it is already a collective action embedded in a concrete *community* of living.

MORE-THAN-SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

If we continue zooming-out in our approach to practice and consider how to think about wider, collective movements of transformation in experimental politics, the next step on our path is Dimitris Papadopoulos's idea of insurgent posthumanism. In his work, Papadopoulos proposes to speak about "*more-than-social* movements" as a way to both "politicize posthumanism" and "posthumanize politics" (2018: 114). The real challenge that "posthuman politics of movements" faces, according to Papadopoulos, is how to go beyond anthropocentrism and humanism, whilst simultaneously addressing asymmetries in human-nonhumans relations and maintaining a commitment to justice. Justice is defined in this context as "crafting material worlds in which the very existence of the actants involved is made possible" (2014: 76). Papadopoulos is critical of Latour's idea of a parliament of nonhumans "not only because this is one of the very limited forms of politics humans have ever invented but also because it is the most humanist of all" (Papadopoulos 2018: 114). For him, "the point is not to create the correct assembly but to act with the neglected and invisibilised forms of existence in order to alter the very conditions of inclusion" (2014: 75). As he puts it succinctly, "When ontological politics goes to the parliament, politics of matter goes to the everyday" (2014: 77). Papadopoulos therefore focuses on concrete practices that create alternative worlds and alternative ontologies, which are embedded in *more-than-social* movements: AIDS activism, maker culture, hacker communities, migration activism. These movements are "more than social" because their activism does not only target recognized social and political institutions but actively engages with techno-scientific nonhumans to create new, more durable and more generous "infrastructures." These infrastructures change "the conditions of knowledge production by engaging with the *actual* making of knowledge in a specific subfield of technoscience" (2018: 205). Rather than simply opposing power, they create "alternative conditions of existence that make just forms of life emerge: alterontologies" (2018: 159). This is specifically achieved through craft understood here as DIWY (do it without yourself) where craft is less about making things and more "about leaving yourself aside for the sake of viably coexisting with other things and

beings" (2018: 23). This is what he calls "compositional politics," in which humans are co-constituted with nonhumans through specific practices embedded in collective, *more-than-social* movements and together create alternative environments for existing.

A TURN TO HABITS?

In this chapter, I have focused on selected approaches to politics, frameworks that attempt not only to integrate nonhumans into political practice, but also to provide settings that would eventually allow for a creation of embedded habits: habits of democracy, habits of care, habits of collective co-crafting of alternative worlds. What becomes clear is that politics is about daily practices of shifting perspectives and directing our attention to nonhumans. It is about praxis of response and care that is always attuned to other entities. Elsewhere, I have argued that anarchism is one way to think about political practice that is predicated on acts of cooperation with and support for entities that remain unintelligible from within a given status quo, those that do not "count" (Janicka 2017). I called these entities "singularity" and I proposed a concept of "solidarity with singularity" that allows for the coming together of diverse activist movements that undertake concrete practices of solidarity with animals, plants, the environment, women, minorities, LGBTQ+, or refugees, that is, whoever is in the position of oppression or unintelligibility. Central to my proposition is the concept of "habit," and how these practices of solidarity are being maintained and transmitted in anarchist housing projects, co-operatives, and autonomous zones. Our interrogation then becomes less about humans and nonhumans, and instead about nonhumans and habits. Could nonhumans such as objects or plants ever possess habits (Sparrow and Hutchinson 2013: 2)? What would be the relationship of these habits to world-building practices? How could we conceptualize habits from a posthumanist perspective? This offers another way, one of many, to approach the question of politics and its practices in the context of nonhumans, a rich territory of inquiry yet to be fully mapped.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

Posthuman Feminist Ethics: Unveiling Ontological Radical Healing

FRANCESCA FERRANDO

In this chapter, we[1] will contend that posthuman feminist ethics may offer the means to live responsibly in the twenty-first century, and this is no easy task. Living an ethical life while being part of a society that, although partaking in the geological rise of the Anthropocene, is still enchanted with the philosophical promises of the European enlightenment,[2] is very challenging. Philosophical posthumanism, new materialist feminism, as well as feminist activism, and a feminist approach to mindfulness, will bring some precious insights on how to pursue an ethical way of living which can bring radical changes and new visions to space-time. This chapter is not about how we could change our society tomorrow; instead, it is a realistic call to do it now, in this moment, starting from the self. As second wave feminism has evocatively phrased it: "the personal is political." The ways we live, we think, we act, constitute part of the shifting material networks of our agency—which is comprehensive, multi-layered, plural, and all-encompassing. More clearly, the way we live and interact in this world is the most powerful manifestation of the political and ethical praxis that we,[3] as posthumanists, are promoting; such praxis dynamically comprehends each detail of the ways we exist, in the world(s) we inhabit. In order to develop mindful ways to embrace this existential attitude, we will delve on the integral meanings of three notions: "posthuman," "feminist," and "ethics." More specifically, the concept of the posthuman will be accessed through the understanding of philosophical posthumanism (Ferrando 2019), and thus it will be defined as a post-humanism (i.e., the realization that the human is a plural notion), as a post-anthropocentrism (the perception of the human not as superior to other species, but in relation to them), and as a post-dualism (the gained awareness that existence does not unfold in dualistic modes).

[1] Here, the use of "we" refers to the dynamic assemblage of human and nonhuman reader(s), and the author.
[2] The European enlightenment refers to a specific mindset developed, more clearly, in Western Europe in the eighteenth century, which emphasized the symbolic relevance of reason and progress as pivotal in the cultural development of the "human"—a notion that, within this tradition, has been approached as singular and universal. We will criticize this neutralization, from a post-humanist standpoint, in section 3 of this chapter.
[3] I am including myself in this group as I define myself as a posthumanist. Posthumanism, in fact, has helped me reach deeper layers of understanding of existence.

As our idea of the human has faced increasing challenges—from technological change, medical advances, the existential threat of climate crisis, and from an ideological decentering of the human, amongst many others—the "posthuman" has become a more and more central topic in the Humanities. Bringing together leading scholars from across the world and a wide range of disciplines, this is the most comprehensive available survey of cutting-edge contemporary scholarship on posthumanism in literature, culture and theory.

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