ResisTerra Symposium

Burning, Biting, Blooming

Rethinking Politics Across the Range of More-Than-Human Struggles

Charles University, Prague, Czechia
5 - 6 November 2026
Keynote: Cymene Howe

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

From animals in captivity striking back against their trainers to hard-to-reach terrains complicating their own governance by making it impossible to know them with scientific accuracy. From alliances between weeds and locals in confronting expansive plantations to coalitions with so called endangered species in blocking construction projects. These are only a few of many knots and perplexities created by more-than-humans that have been tracked in recent years in anthropology, environmental humanities, and related disciplines. The scale of such subversive activities becomes quite robust. It ranges from elementary unruliness and refusals defying modern plans, via revolt and resistance of other-than-humans pushing against containment, domestication and exploitation, to more-than-human resistance in which humans and other-than-humans forge coalitions, partnerships, or otherwise collaborate to oppose domination.

Studies of myriad forms of other-than-human or more-than-human struggle are on the rise. What remains side-stepped or under elaborated in most of this work, we see, is the question of politics; that is when and how relations become political in such struggles. There are no easy answers to these questions. Especially when we search for them from continental Europe where thousands of pages were written in the last centuries – from Aristotle, via Thomas Hobbes to Hannah Arendt – to define political behavior as a praxis exceptional to (some) humans, that is through excluding non-humans from it. Neither will we get far from tempting revision of the popular New Left claim “everything is political” by simply ascribing all environmental processes to it.

Thinking through it, for instance, with the concept of resistance, we see three reasons for not pursuing this latter path. First, not every relationship of resistance, we believe, is political. Just think of an adolescent rebellion against parents or fighting back out of a situation of being hunted during predation. Second, we do not want to raise any context-independent, universal grand narratives about the anthropocenic Earth being political by default - narratives that are more engaged than analytical. Third, we do not want to lose the conceptual edge of tracing how, when, and by whom resistance becomes political and what that entails. This edge, we believe, is crucial. Just recall an older debate over the concept of infrapolitics. Is poaching the economic strategy of survival, or, additionally, an act of political resistance? James C. Scott suggested evidencing normative beliefs and values in such peasant practices to be able to qualify it also as the latter case. Or recall more recent works by Elizabeth A. Povinelli or Marisol de la Cadena documenting how Indigenous people fight hard and often fail to have accepted by governing powers their perspectives on the listening rocks or the montane Earth beings as political entities and subjects and not as technical problems, environmental objects or cultural beliefs about Nature. It is the politics itself and who gets to count as

political, what's being contested. But how to keep this edge sharp when analyzing other-than-human or more-than-human struggles?

The workshop aims at centre-staging precisely these neglected troubles with figuring out politics in relations of resistance, refusal, unruliness, recalcitrance, activism, contention, disobedience, subversion, rebellion and other forms of other-than-human and more-than-human struggles. The central workshop question asks: How do such relations become political? What, where and when is politics in these myriad forms of more-than-human or other-than-human struggles? We decided not to provide any normative definition in advance but rather invite participants to dispute what is political and how relations become political through their empirical materials. We welcome ethnographically driven as well as more theoretical contributions from anthropology, environmental humanities, and related disciplines. We invite up to 300-word proposals of a paper, a roundtable, a workshop, a video essay, a film screening, a performance, an exhibition, or a book talk, among others. To break the central questions up, possible themes include (but are not limited to) answering queries like:

- What counts as politics, political practices, and political relations among other-than-human and more-than-human entities? Who, how and against whom authorizes that?
- How do environmental elements, processes and materials struggle to become political, remain political and resist strategies of de/politicization? How can other-than-humans become mobilised as political actors beyond being only economic resources, technical objects, or cultural symbols?
- How do the meanings of the non/political change when extended beyond humans? Are there local meanings of politics in other-than-human worlds? How are political and non-political relations and activities distinguished? How are division lines between political and non-political practices policed and by whom?
- What political theories can be operationalized and how to disentangle political dimensions in such cases?
- How to approach and redefine political intentionality beyond the human? How is politics negotiated and deliberated across more-than-human lines in the myriad cases of contention? How is political subjectivity being established, and what does it mean?

Send your proposal with your name, affiliation and a few sentences about you to info@resisterra.org or bob.kurik@fhs.cuni.cz until the 15th of May 2026. The symposium has a small budget to assist contributors who cannot cover travel or accommodation expenses. Support will be prioritized for those with limited access to institutional funding and with economic or structural barriers to attending in person. Please let us know if you would like to be considered for support.The official language of the venue is English. There is no registration fee. We prefer on-site attendance, but we are also open to hybrid participation.

Researching Resistant Politics across
More-Than-Human Worlds
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