

HOLLOWS IN HOLLOW MATERIALS

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COPY. LATEX. I imagine you as a building material. Standardised in size, between one and a half and two metres long (or the length of the mouth-anus tube). Your inlet is coupled to the mouth of the tap, your outlet to the toilet siphon. Thousands of devices like you form part of this grid that begins in a stream and is discharged, endlessly, into the Atlantic Ocean. Inside you circulates clean water that flowed down to the dam, was guided along a canal, rose chlorinated to the reservoir and circulated under the asphalt until brought up under pressure through a copper pipe when you turned on the key, as you kissed the tap while drinking directly from it. You are a cyborg connected to a huge network of pipes that urbanise what lies beyond the city. You are an imbalanced Frankenstein the size of Gaia¹; what you discharged you have already drunk and now forms part of the molecules that compose you and with which you have intervened on the world.

COPY. COLOPHONY. Four houses were submerged beneath the waters of this reservoir: the shepherd's, a barn, Marcelina's and another barn. Fewer than usual. Electrical power is transmitted from the dam and travels on cables. Crows perch on the cables. Her house is on Calle del Río, River Street, and the water comes from the river, before it is dammed. The water then flows out and, since some houses are not connected to the sewage grid in these areas, there are overflowing catch basins like deep bellies and the black water seeps into the black earth. In her house, one day, the connection to the sanitation grid —branch line, urban drainage system, wastewater treatment plant— becomes blocked. She does not know whether, after passing through this system, barely described in its most obvious elements, the water goes back to this river from which the whole city drinks, despite the fact that she tries like crazy to unravel the course of this water, which carries its shit with it, as if it were Ariadne's ball of thread. The sanitation network is, ever since she began to think of it, a rotten piece of her perverse, sadistic, rationally irrational body, closely entangled with other companions who live with us, but to whom she has never spoken.

MOULD. Rejection of the "Modern Mould", of "the precocious unification of the multiverse" (that is to say, rejection of the unification of the "world", that multi- natural space of coexistence of the planes of immanence drawn by the innumerable groups that travel around it and give it life). Rejection of the pre-eminence of fact over value, of what is given over what is built, of nature over culture. I reject the policing power attributed to science as the exclusive authorised intermediary with "those who are me"². I reject the enlistment of that which is named as Other as a capitalisable good; I reject technical mediation with them, who are my sisters, based on in their assumption as an available resource, their socialisation by the market, of "socio-economic processes of domination, exploitation, subordination and repression", of them, of the environment (which is not subject to law) that feeds capitalist urbanisation.³ If "inhabiting does not exist in a separate way from building",⁴ how do we inhabit?

COPY. ALUMINIUM. In the 1950s, roofs began to be built using the design concept of a cavity containing the energy systems, making it possible to create an artificial interior climate and in this way make the interior independent of the exterior. Functional adequacy was replaced by a principle of homogenisation of the space in which flexibility was the priority.⁵ Built projects and architectural utopias imagine and create isotropically equipped universal spaces. A supposed principle of infrastructural democracy persuades us that to inhabit is to connect. With the development of electronic technology, another multi-energy membrane was added, the floor, which is also hollow now. Buildings open up like sponges, their membranes become porous, poriferous almost, and from the concentrated vertical hollow that mediates with what is known as urbanised nature, they take on a skin of a thousand elements that contains the systems, the main structure and the walls. The city is an ocean of contain- ers as generic as they are strange; silver assemblages inserted into black boxes.

COPY. PLASTER. “We don’t leave pyramids”, hollow stones like sponges. “We leave a space connected through the air conditioning,”⁶ holes made with hollow materials, deployed in a non-interrupting infrastructure, from one building to the next, like those that they were going to build at PDU Granvia-Llobregat. The last vegetable garden in L’Hospitalet, Cal Trabal (in Marina), was almost turned into 27 skyscrapers and a park, provided by grace of the “liberal principles of security, morality and the free movement of people and goods”.⁷ Instead of artichokes, oleanders. I imagine the 27 skyscrapers like 27 loaves of pan bread, each one the same as the next, all made from the same mould, brought to the Fira Europa trade fair hub on giant trailers from another industrial estate in Barcelona. Giant mechanised loaves like enormous Hansel and Gretel houses that you can eat bite by bite. We are starving and we bite them with yellow teeth. They come into contact with our tongues, rough and dry, tasteless, but we don’t stop; they circulate in our digestive tubes, nourishing our cells with wheat and sugar, yeast, vegetable oil, iodised salt, monocalcium phosphate, calcium propionate, mono- and diglycerides, wheat gluten, sodium stearoyl lactylate, diacetyl tartaric acid esters, enzymes, potassium sorbate and soy lecithin. All that biting has turned us into pan bread loaves, air conditioning, aluminium tubes, plastered ceilings, clear chlorinated water that comes from we know not where.

¹ “Gaia then is thus more than ever well named, because if she was honored in the past it was as the fearsome one, as she who was addressed by peasants, who knew that humans depend on something much greater than them, something that tolerates them, but with a tolerance that is not to be abused. She was from well before the cult of maternal love, which pardons everything. A mother perhaps but an irritable one, who should not be offended. And she was also from before the Greeks conferred on their gods a sense of the just and the unjust, before they attributed to them a particular interest in our destinies. It was a matter instead of paying attention, of not offending them, not abusing their tolerance.” Stengers, Isabelle, *In Catastrophic Times. Resisting the Coming Barbarism*, published in Spanish as *En tiempos de catástrofes. Cómo resistir a la barbarie que viene* by Futuro Anterior Ediciones and NED ediciones, Barcelona, 2017, pp. 40-41.

² The ideas that Bruno Latour expounds on in *Investigación sobre los modos de existencia* (Paidós, Buenos Aires, 2014), cited in Danowski, Déborah and Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo, *¿Hay mundo por venir? Ensayo sobre los miedos y los fines*, Caja Negra, Buenos Aires, 2019, p. 163.

³ “According to Heynen, Kaika and Swyngedouw, the modern and post-industrial capitalist industrial city establishes a form of technical mediation with nature based on the assumption of it as an available resource, which is socialised by a series of socio-economic processes of domination, exploitation, subordination and repression of the environment that feed capitalist urbanisation. Moreover, there is a mobilisation of resources, always subject to the market. Market dynamics, for their part, tend to make certain power relations invisible and to favour the image of a paradoxical disconnection between nature and the city, as if they were not co-modified entities”. Fogué, Uriel, *Ecología política y economía de la visibilidad de los dispositivos tecnológicos de escala urbana durante el siglo XX. Abriendo la caja negra*, Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Madrid (ETSAM), Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM), Madrid, 2015, p. 268.

⁴ “Building is not only the way (means) to inhabit (purpose). Because inhabiting does not exist independently from building. It does not pre-exist the action of building, because all construction operations conform to and mobilise a particular way of inhabiting. But inhabiting is not a consequence of building, either, as if inhabiting were a result of building. We do not inhabit because we have built, says Heidegger.

In short, neither building nor inhabiting can exist one without the other and, therefore, cannot be thought of separately.” *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁵ Abalos, Iñaki and Herreros, Juan, *Técnica y arquitectura en la ciudad contemporánea, 1950- 2000*, Nerea, Hondarribia, 1992, pp. 133-167.

⁶ Koolhaas, Rem, *Espacio Basura*, GG Mínima, Barcelona, 2008, pp. 7-8.

⁷ Fogué, Uriel, *op. cit.*, p. 362. I would like to give special thanks to Uriel Fogué, as reading his thesis was fundamental to preparing this text.

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