La Caníbal Mondothèque

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Translated by Jara Rocha

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Paul Otlet was a bearded man who, from pre-World War II Belgium, worked on the design of a sophisticated knowledge-switching infrastructure or radiated library system which he named "Mundaneum". With an explicitly universalist and therefore Euro-andro-antropocentric perspective, Otlet prototyped the Mondothèque:

> (an) intellectual machine: at the same time archive, link generator, writing surface, catalogue and broadcast station. Thinking of the museum, the library, the encyclopaedia and classification language as a complex and interdependent web of relationships, Otlet imagined each element as an entry point for another. (...) The dreamed capacity of his Mondothèque was to interact scales, perspectives and means at the intersection of all these different practices[1].

In 2016, the Brussels-based association Constant developed and released a project (semantic wiki[2] and self-published book[3]) by identifying an urgent struggle at the level of cultural infrastructures: the Otlet machine has been reinterpreted[4] by Google since 2009, taking advantage of the Belgian heritage desire as an opportunity to inject capital and imagination and thus, on the one hand, build a history in the region (the Mundaneum has been renamed "the Google of paper") and, on the other, establish the largest data centre in Europe[5]. The publication of Constant is part of its editorial line "Books with an attitude" (made with open tools and published under free licences[6]). It is entitled "Mondothèque: a radiated book" and is a collective exercise of attention to the infrastructures of the common in turbulent times, in which "the reproduction of life is notably glitched by a structural transition" (Berlant, 2016). This is the infrastructural transition of the technocolonial turbocapitalism. *Fuck Off Google* (Invisible Committee, 2015). The forms of Constant's publication mix fiction with facts and urgency with archivistics. They deal with pointing out some semiotic-material hierarchies and certain operational hegemonies that are entirely active in the cultural structures of the not-only-digital present.

Perhaps "Mondothèque:: a radiated book" is not present but is undoubtedly latent in La Caníbal[7], a barcelonian bookstore which, through its situated and daily practices of textual logistics, is evidenced as a stupendous case through which to affirm the power of reclaiming the read-write

infrastructures for the anti-universalist cultural forms of a sufficiently common world (Haraway, 2016). In the second volume of "Soberanía Tecnológica" (Padilla, 2017), Marga Padilla recalls a definition by Antonio Rodríguez de las Heras: "technology is the body of culture". In La Caníbal the common is practiced on the basis of not rigidly or definitively taxonomizing but of putting in common cultural corpus with specific texts and local corpo-realities (encounters of bodies with texts, texts with texts, texts with corpus, corpuses with corpuses, corpuses with bodies). That is why it is not so much a question of just listing the presences and absences, on and off or in and out[8]... but of trying to understand the latencies and the relations to come.

A trans*feminist infrastructure implies a non-identitarist semiotic-material composition in a rigid sense, non-authorial in a finalist sense, non-privative in a lucrative sense, non-exclusive in a radical sense, non-productivist in an active sense, not scalable in a universal sense, not probable in a possible sense and not closed in a basic sense. The publication of Constant is latent, even between the lines, in each cannibal gesture of problematizing mediation with what Paula Pérez Rodríguez (Pérez, 2017) calls "the regime of literacy and the consummated state of knowledge" and I perhaps simplify by naming it the regime of *textual logistics,* based on multiple forms (indexes, catalogues, tags, headings, metadata... but also discussions, memories, affinities, word of mouth, secrets, intuitions, spellings, glances or diagonal readings). "The formal and the informal are completely mixed in the infrastructure" (Bowker and Leigh Star, 1999).

Reading-writing as a semiotic and material community practice takes different forms in this neighborhood mondothèque. Some that I can share from my situated experience there are: the beginning of an assembly process of Ladyfest Barcelona in 2016[9], "Libera tu alien": a feminist sci-fi workshop[10]; a reading club and translation of the Chthulucene Manifesto[11], the presentation with oral reading of the textual manifestation of a poetic work of audiotext[12], a series of *booklogies* (ad hoc curatorship of the funds of the bookshop, in charge of Jesús Arpal) to accompany a process of learning and research on the politics inscribed in infrastructures[13]. Each of these situations invokes, resonates with, or provokes towards what could be called the Each one of these situations invokes, resonates with or provokes towards what could be called bibliographic resistances or (even better) bibliographic self-defense, not necessarily contestatory but clearly affirmative.

I could tentatively say that La Caníbal mondothèque is an affirmative and situated infrastructure of commutation of read-write practices, that carries out mundane operations of text logistics through which it invokes, resonates and provokes trans*feminist signals and problematisations of the regimes of

production of truth, distribution of knowledge, monoculture of writing, flattening of the modes of experience, gassing of presence. It facilitates a space-time to the present and latent read-write practices for the *dispossession of the canon* brought in text logistics imposed by the razors of totalitarian innovation that plan to settle in the city they say to investigate so-called fake news[14]. Fuck Off Google. Fuck Off Amazon. Fuck Off Facebook. In times of post-veridic[15] boasts and mechanical Turks[16] directed by the cultural conglomerate of GAFAM[17], La Caníbal (with Otlet but not as Otlet) understands librarianship as a complex and interdependent network of relationships and simply prototypes semiotic-material conditions of possibility for what places, placed, will place or would place us in common here-now.

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Notes

[1] Mondotèque. (Pag.12)

[2] http://www.mondotheque.be/wiki/index.php/Main_Page

[3] Full book in pdf: http://www.mondotheque.be/wiki/images/6/61/Book.pdf

[4] http://www.mondotheque.be/wiki/index.php/Google_Cultural_Institute

[5] https://www.google.com/about/datacenters/inside/locations/st-ghislain/

[6] http://www.books.constantvzw.org/

[7] http://www.lacanibal.net/

[8] This review shall be part of a collection of studies yet to be made, titled "The Extitutional Annals".

[9] Self-managed feminist culture festival: https://ladyfestbarcelona.wordpress.com/

[10] Workshop "Libera tu alien" with Orit Kruglanski & Helen Torres:
https://libera2alien.wordpress.com/2017/05/30/primera-entrada-del-blog/

[11] https://laboratoryplanet.org/es/manifeste-chthulucene-de-santa-cruz/

[12] Launch of *Hacía un ruido. Frases para un film político*, by María Salgado (Contrabando, 2016):
https://www.edicionescontrabando.com/presentaciones.php?id=257

[13] "Librologías" ("Booklogies") of Jesús Arpal of/for/with Infra-: http://i--n--f--r--a.tumblr.com/librologias

[14] Settlement of Facebook in Glòries, Barcelona:
https://www.thinkspain.com/news-spain/30487/facebook-fake-news-office-opens-in-barcelona

[15] II Congress Interface Politics, "After Post-Truth" organized by Bau, Centro Universitario de diseño de Barcelona in 2018: http://www.gredits.org/interfacepolitics/es/

[16] Amazon Mechanical Turk: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_Mechanical_Turk

[17] https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/GAFAM