

Chapter 4. On an economical key. Ca la fou: constructing the oikos.

Orienting the chapter

In our introduction we presented movements as assemblages of controversies that push possibility to the very core of ontology, both in the plane of “ne on” (beings, entities, even becoming) and “logoi” (words, narratives, discourse, even reasoning). In this chapter we explore what a different approach to economics—different with respect to those ruling in most political, institutional, and academic discourse and practice—may look like.

I start with a rather synthetic diagnostic of the main, shared points of the Occupy and 15M critique to the current state of capitalism. Then it follows a section on my entry into Calafou (a “post-capitalist, ecoindustrial colony” near the Catalan town of Vallbona D’anoia, a small village an hour and a half from Barcelona by train) via 15M. Then comes an introduction to the Catalan Integral Cooperative or CIC (the wider project under which Calafou emerged) and to Calafou itself. The introduction to Calafou runs along an excursus on “transhackfeminism” and the notion of heterotopical spaces, inspired by Michel Foucault’s path-breaking piece “Of other spaces”. This meditation extends into the following section, on Calafou as “oikos”, and the “oikos” as a base on which to rethink economics. Afterwards I touch, in order, the various strata of Calafou as “oikos”: architecture, accounts of resources—economics in its more usual sense—, norms and relations, and narratives. Finally, I close with a recapitulation and posing the question of how to rethink crises and to go beyond economics and oikos.

Crisis and critique: an introduction to our critical economic condition

Although not a sufficient reason, the economic crisis sweeping Spain since 2008 was a crucial condition for the emergence of 15M. The economic crisis was the condition, which had already been named as “crisis” even by the most reluctant actors, such as then President Jose Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (El País, 2008); activist initiatives gave to the crisis a critical rendition, a framing that they also promoted, that they themselves were. This relation between crisis and critique could be put into words recurring to a well known Kantian formula: conditions without renditions are blind, renditions without conditions are empty. Against the possibility of a silent crisis being brutally “solved” by the mechanisms of the system in crisis (to put it in Klein’s 2007 terms, via “shock doctrine”, adjustment plans, silencing of exploitation and dissent, and the like—basically, the strategy of the European Union and the Spanish government, specially since the electoral victory of the right-wing Popular Party), or that of a vociferous critique disconnected from constituencies and material reality (perhaps the type of critique that allegedly has “run out of

steam”, according to Latour, 2004), otherwise, against mere crisis and mere critique, what we find, specially since 2011 is the construction of a “critical condition”: the critical rendition by many of a critical condition for many¹.

As I comment in the following section, under these critical conditions, projects experimenting with alternative forms of organizing life and things are approached in a different way. Previous peripheries come to be rendered and regarded now as the possibility of new centers, or perhaps the seeds of a decentralized or even distributed, anarchic ontology. This chapter is devoted to economics, not in general, but in Calafou, in Calafou as a heterotopia (Foucault, 1986) that casts light and shadows on our topical capitalist spaces, on the utopical spaces being summoned by social movements, as well as on the very concepts of “economics” and “heterotopies”.

In this chapter, Calafou is not presented as an ideal, as an existing perfect utopia, but rather as a project itself—at the time of my study, from mid-February to late July, 2014—in a critical condition. Crisis and controversy, and their articulation, were my entryways into the fabric of Calafou. They were so not unlike the global economic crisis, and the conflicts around it, have been entryways into the fabric of the existing socioeconomic system, for me and many others directly or indirectly affected by them. As much as it may help to imagine alternative futures (Costa, 2012), Calafou can teach much about alternative presents as well, with all their quandaries and contradictions; actually, the exploration of crises and how to deal with them in *an alternative way* is one of the most interesting aspects of my experience at Calafou. Its relation to futures as well.

15M as an entryway into Calafou

Rendering here all the criticisms launched to capitalism by Occupy and 15M would be impossible; now I can add: the point of this chapter is not to think through them but to explore a hybrid alternative, Calafou. At several points I connect it to practices in the existing system and to the criticisms they have received, but this project will remain at the core of my argumentation.

I got to learn about Calafou during the first 15M anniversary in Barcelona, in May 2012. There I listened to a fairy tale about a political alternative, told by one of its main spokespeople at the time: Didac Costa². “Fairy” here should be understood not primarily in relation to fiction “fairies”, but rather in two other possible senses of “fair”: the one tied to “fairness” and the one tied to “feast”. The setting of my first conversation with Costa was the carnivalesque space of Catalunya Square during the anniversary, where the normality of touristic rule in Barcelona was temporally suspended by the politics of the 15M multitude. It was an appropriate space to hear and listen about the rules

¹ How the crisis, the critique, and the critical condition come about and relate are issues that go beyond the topic of this chapter; the latter two have been partially addressed in other chapters 3 and 5. In those chapters we also analyze the effects of “critical affects”, before and beyond the critical rendition of crises, and their effects.

² Didac Costa presents himself as a sociologist, writer and activist.

of a space where normality had allegedly been suspended permanently. In Costa's words of mouth and text, Calafou sounded like a site of permanent exception against the rules of the system, a Permanent Autonomous Zone that went beyond the Temporary Autonomous Zone of Catalonia square. The ruler of that zone was supposed to be the multitude now freed from formal representatives and rulers, assembling itself in a mixed form of anarchy and democracy, in something that in Costa's narration kept the air of a fair aimed at fairness. Other projects tried to do something similar during the celebration of the 15M anniversary, namely: to grow in numbers and name, or to be born there, to grow from and offer themselves to the assembled multitude. That is one of the possibilities performed by movement spaces: to bring together alternative initiatives and people looking for them, or running and getting interested into them, to help to redefine and cross the boundaries between what we below call isotopical and heterotopical spaces, the ignition of the openings, energies and flows that nurture those transitions.



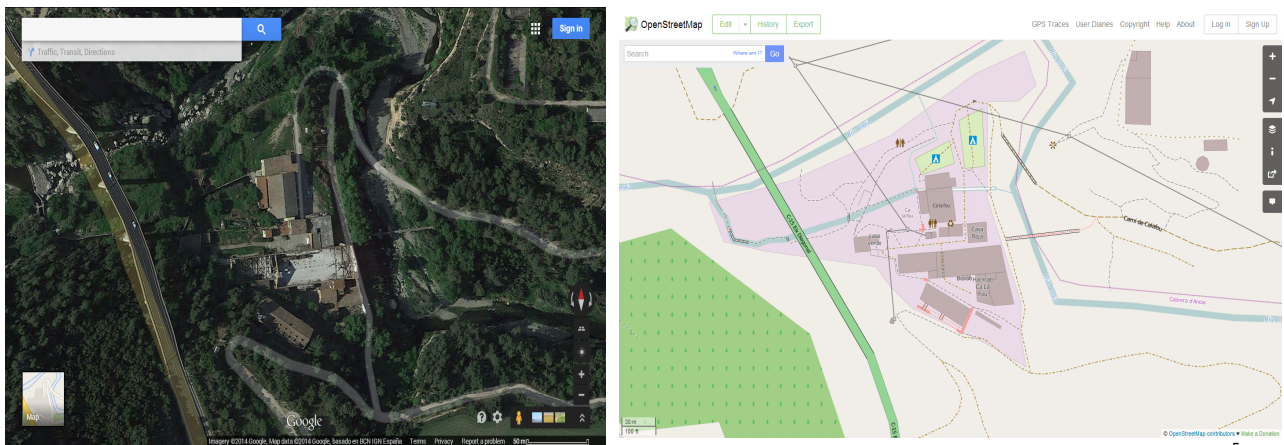
Image of the general assembly at Catalonia Square, on May 12th. My own.

According to their website, Calafou is a “post-capitalist, eco-industrial colony”, a project started in late 2011 near Vallbona D'Anoia, a small town in the Catalan countryside, 80 km east of Barcelona. The project was being developed on the site of an industrial colony first founded around 1850, operative up to the 1960s, progressively abandoned, and some of whose spaces had been ruined by fire in 2004. During 2011, a collective of political activists and theorists, cognitarians, squatters and hackers slowly coalesced and took the 28.000 sqm of the Calafou colony in a lease-buy, making an initial investment of 100.000 euro, with the expectation of owning the place after reaching 400.000, in approximately 10 years. In their wiki³, the definition of “a post-capitalist, eco-industrial colony”⁴ is justified: “Ecoindustrial [because] one of the objectives of Calafou is to be

³ The wiki is hosted by the CIC's social network, a seed of the Lorea federation. The address: https://cooperativa.ecoxarxes.cat/dokuwiki/14716/doku.php?id=resumen_de_consensos

⁴ This definition was a historic result of negotiation, with a clear political intent, although I cannot bring in here. Just as an example, in two different texts included in Costa (2012), Calafou is defined first as an “ecolony” and a “post-industrial and post-capitalist colony” (text published on May, 2011), and then as “Collectivized and postcapitalist colony” (text published on October, 2011).

a space for industrial production, sustainable goods and tools. Post-capitalist - because we are looking at the creation of relations and exchanges based in social economies, cooperativism and in favour of de-growth, exploring ways to get out of the capitalist system.” As we see, the two adjectives defining the colony connect to the sphere of production and economics. That suits the main purpose of this chapter: to rethink economics in relation to movements, in relation to a project related to them.



Calafou Image by Google Maps and Open Street Maps⁵.

Although Costa’s text interested me, I could not visit Calafou at the time. I had already planned a flight to the Berlin Biennale, as I was following the becoming of a project for building a digital platform named “the Global Square”. I briefly visited Calafou several months later for the Hackmeeting 2012, an annual meeting of hackers. I wanted to meet the people behind n-1, a story that I detail in chapter 7. Only in my third visit, started in mid-February 2014 and finished in August of that year did I really got to know and live there.

The CIC as Calafou's setting

From Costa's text I learned that Calafou was not being built in a void; it did not stand alone in a bare and lonely struggle against the system it rejects and renounces to. It was being built in relation to a bigger alternative initiative. Thereby, to the possibilities opened by 15M as a propitious “climate”, by its multiple networks and augmented events (see chapters 3 and 8), the strength of the Catalan okupa scene, the multiple regional eco-networks, or still other favorable conditions, when speaking of Calafou it is necessary to add, first and foremost, a project born in 2010: the

Calafou’s wiki specifies that the final definition is part of the consensus handbook, and presumably agreed in an assembly.

⁵ A “satellite” Google view of Calafou, on the left; an OpenStreetMap view, with features added by users themselves (far from the bare “Ca la fou” dot that Google “maps” display) on the right. The OpenStreetMap view and platform are the ones appearing in the Calafou website (<https://calafou.org/en/content/where>). Place, space, site, setting and the multiple ways in which they are (en)framed from different approaches, including those of online maps and databases, is a recurrent theme in this chapter.

Catalan Integral Cooperative (CIC). The CIC defines itself as a “transitional initiative for social transformation from below, through self-management, self-organization, and networking”⁶. Calafou was born as an “autonomous project of collectivized initiative” (proyecto autónomo de iniciativa colectivizada) of the CIC. It was with the support of the cooperative how the initial Calafou group leased-bought 3 square kilometers, including aged industrial spaces, green grounds, and several buildings, one of them for housing, holding 27 apartments waiting for rehabilitation. In return, Calafou was planned to be a key industrial, technological, experimental—and autonomous--hub for the cooperative.

The CIC, this legally non existing entity⁷, this network of networks, projects and people, operates in our narrative as Calafou's setting. Their relation is not primarily optical (as in a gestalt game of background and foreground) but operative, it's not a scenery in the background but an assemblage that operated and keeps operating in the becoming of Calafou, in the infinitive sense (or continuous present) of “setting”. But what is an Integral Cooperative?:

“An Integral Cooperative is a tool to create a grassroots counterpower departing from self-management, self-organization and direct democracy, and one that would help overcome the actual state of dependency on the structures of the system, towards a scenario of liberty with full awareness, free of authority, and in which everyone could flourish under equal conditions and opportunities. It is a constructive proposal for disobedience and widespread self-managment to rebuild our society in a bottom-up manner (in every field and in an integral way), and to recover the affective human relationships of proximity based on trust”.⁸

The three basic references of every alternative project are there: the existing system (the isotopia), the state aimed at (the utopia) and the forms for reaching it. The cooperative, as an transitional heterotopia, presents itself as a “tool”⁹. Some aspects of the initiative, whose definition is constructed around a set of principles of organization and action, is better expressed by the three elements included in its name: the “cooperative”, the “integral”, and the “Catalan”; these three adjectives may serve us to further sketch a presentation of it, one that may reverberate with the ones given of Calafou above and below.

The CIC defines itself¹⁰ as an initiative driven by the traditional principles of cooperativism, such as

⁶ Definition taken from the official website <http://cooperativa.cat/en/> (accessed July 10th, 2014).

⁷ The form of an “integral cooperative”, covering all that the CIC covers, does not exist in the Spanish nor the Catalan law.

⁸ Definition taken from <http://cooperativa.cat/en/4390-2/>.

⁹ For a number of reasons (Ihde, 2008), the term “tool”, although symptomatic, is a blatantly insufficient one to think what could be rather thought with notions ranging from mediator (Latour, 2005) and dispositif (Foucault, 1977)--combinable in formulas such as mediation dispositif, when we approach to the legal sides of the CIC--to ecosystem--when we approach its collective aspect.

¹⁰ The materials for defining the cooperative were extracted from a full-day practical and introductory workshop on the CIC, carried

mutual aid and self-management, “a project practicing the economical and political self-management with the equal participation of all its members. Also, because it takes the same legal form”. Even though the legal form of an “integral cooperative” does not exist neither in Spanish nor Catalan law (cooperatives are regulated by both State and regional laws), it does so in practice. It does so by informally encompassing several legal forms. As of April 2014¹¹ the CIC included five different types of cooperatives: housing, consumption, work, legal and financial. The CIC is composed as an informal network of networks, collectives, and initiatives some of which take some of the legal form of the “cooperative”, and many who don’t. Those collectives or initiatives who take “legal” form mediate as what may be called a “collectivized interface” with the State for their members, for their activities and projects. A number of periodic assemblies (weekly, monthly, annual) and a huge array of informal, rhizomatic among in many cases autonomous actors help to get together what legally appear as disjointed organizations. Thereby, the notion of “cooperation”, both as a practice as well as a category from and for practice, goes beyond any legal formalism, and operates in CIC settings¹² as a basic way of tying the collective.

Then, the “integral” in the definition comes in: cooperation, and the cooperative as informal net-work, is oriented to “cover all basic human needs”, it tries “to bring together all the basic elements of an economy such as production, consumption, funding and a local currency. And at the same time, because it wants to integrate all the activity sectors necessary to survive: food, housing, health, education, energy, transport...”. This “integrality” gives orientation and purpose to the organization.

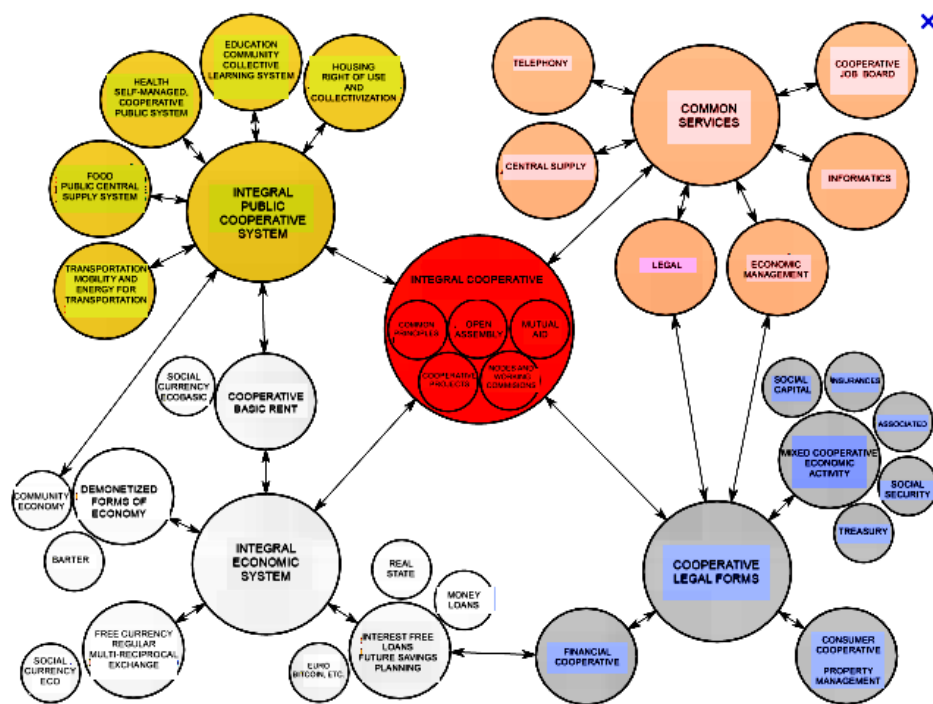
Finally, according to facilitators in introductory courses, the “Catalan” adjective of the name is a Geo-juridical criterion¹³. Although people from outside Catalonia can participate in it, the cooperative laws in the Spanish State make it easier to define it within the boundaries of a region. The image below portrays an ideal conception of CIC's functional structure.

out in Vallbona D’anoia on April 19th, 2014, as well as from the wiki of the cooperative, wiki.cooperativa.cat.

¹¹ As the facilitators of the April 2014 workshop underlined, the legal forms may change across time.

¹² Manifestly, in texts that go from Costa's (2011, p. 90) to the 2014 initiation courses.

¹³ Debates coming from the Catalan nationalist sphere were left out of the picture in their presentation, and will be mostly left out of my analysis of Calafou as well. For the time I spent in Calafou, I barely had or witnessed an exchange where this was an explicit matter of concern. Ultimately, a number of factors, from the composition of Calafou, with people coming from South America (Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, etc.), Europe (UK, France, Italy, Turkey), and other regions of the Spanish state (as X, a member of the colony, pointed out once, “we [catalans] are a minority here”) to the traditional anarchist suspicion of strong “identities”, specially when constructed in relation to “nations”, surely played a role there.



Ideal-schematic structure of the CIC¹⁴

As we see, at the core of the structure, in orange, there are references to the main organizational structures (open assembly, cooperative projects, nodes, and working commissions) and principles (common principles and mutual aid). On the upper right, there are the common services offered (telephony, supplies, informatics, legal assessment, economic management and a cooperative job board).

On the lower right, there are the legal forms (the consumer cooperative and the property management cooperative, the mixed cooperative for economic activity—which includes memberships, and helps to manage members' insurances, social security, treasury and the capital of the cooperative—and, finally, financial cooperatives).

On the lower left side of the picture are the basic elements of the “integral economic system”, starting with the interest free loans and the savings plans offered by the financial cooperatives, which cover money loans and real state in bitcoins (an other cryptocurrencies), euro and other currencies. Closer to the core there is multi-reciprocal exchange using free and social currency, while there are also spaces of demonetized economy, such as community economy and barter.

¹⁴ Modified and translated image based on the one included in the independent fanzine “Rebeláos”, published on March, 2012, accessible at

<https://www.rebelaos.net/sites/rebelaos.net/files/Publicaci%C3%B3n%20REBELAOS%20%28Baja%20Resoluci%C3%B3n%29.pdf>

Finally, there is the cooperative “basic rent”, that guarantees to a number of people in the cooperative (specially, families with children in monetary hardship) a basic income in “ecos” (the CIC’s social currency) to obtain supplies and services within the CIC’s circuits.

On the upper left half there are the spheres of the integral, public, cooperative system, which includes transportation, food, health, education, and housing.

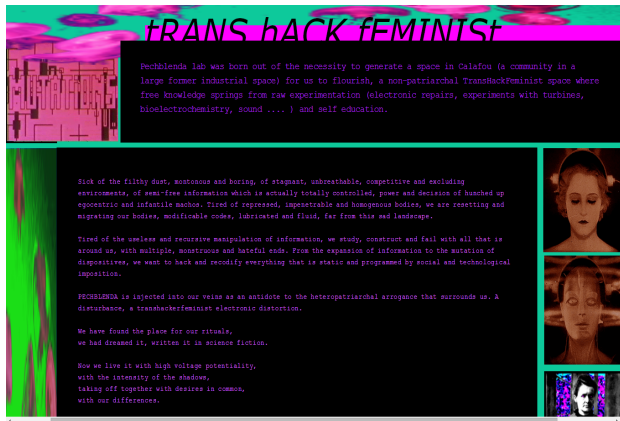
I cannot touch upon each of those spheres in detail. The cooperative will enter into our picture as setting, in ways that will clarify some aspects of it, but without that being the key concern. The primary purpose will always be to clarify different moments or aspects of Calafou. Nevertheless, it is relevant to point out that, as of Summer 2014, many of the “spheres” in the picture either are not operative or are limited in scope. Moreover, after three years of fast growth (doubling the size of its economic activity with more than 3000 participants) the CIC was in financial distress.

Calafou as transistor and teleidoscope: a conceptual and aesthetic walk

As we have already mentioned, Calafou is a collectivized autonomous initiative, networked with and within a wider alternative project. What interests us now is to dig into a discussion on some of Calafou’s “views”. As we see in chapter 5, “On a political key”, the 15M’s majoritarian political trajectories evolved from opposition, protest and aggregation of usually disperse grievances and demands to the proposal of and the work on alternatives, including the irruption into the political system. A key aim was to change the that system, more in the mode of revolt and reform than full-blown revolution, specially when it comes to its violent aspects; otherwise, the aim was to infuse something into and fuse with the system, to change it to increase aspects such as personal and social autonomy (Castoriadis, 1997). In Costa’s texts, Calafou offers the possibility of a more radical relation, not only of relative autonomy or even self-management, but of relative autarchy with regard to the system, as well as the possibility of staying in permanent opposition and alternative to it. Part of the objective is to generate assemblages that may potentiate those possibilities.

In spite of their inspirational relationships (Costa, 2012), initiatives such as the CIC and Calafou clearly differ from more institutionally friendly initiatives such as the “Transition towns”, which appeal more to a symbiotic and progressive logics in their narrative relations to the system than to one of opposition. Much of Calafou’s edge is connected to anarchist ideas, practices and struggles, well rooted in the history of Catalonia; Calafou is not only about resilience, but also about resistance, not only about sustainability (in practice, as we will see, it hardly could pretend to be so), but also about struggle. For most project participants, the “trans” prefix does not first evoke (Costa’s 2012 indications on the contrary notwithstanding) a more or less smooth transition to a

new balance with Nature, our ecosystems, or Gaia, but rather to transhackfeminism, a n-1 version of Haraway's (1987) cyborgs and their upheaval of any neat Nature, of any mother earth before technology. Just a look at two "trans" websites give us a hint—a non-representative one—of what we mean.



On the left, an image to the self-presentation of Pechblenda lab, at Calafou¹⁵; On the right, one of the Transition Network

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At Calafou, many of the inhabitants come from the combative Barcelona Okupa, hacker and queer scene, from the alterglobalization movement or, more recently, from 15M. In that sense, more than a transitional space looking for some linear or quantum, holistic or synergistic trajectory beyond capitalism, Calafou is more akin to a hacked transistor, a multi-(non)-linear switch and amplifier linking integrated circuits of possible paths, in and out the system, connecting (from the ruins of an old industrial colony and with scarcity of means) at different speeds various pasts, presents and futures.

I want to start to disentangle some of this by opening up that very word "transhackfeminist", by essaying a recursive reading of the formula. By recursive I mean that the three morphemes do not merely add up to each other. For instance, "feminism" is not here the severely limited liberal interpretation of it: adding the "woman factor" or "equality between men and women" to every field of social life. Rather, in "transhackfeminism" each new morpheme shifts the meaning of the previous ones and is pre-configured by them. Take the first "trans" in a basic sense: it first appeals

¹⁵As they state on their website (http://pechblenda.hotglue.me/?transhackfeminism_en), "Pechblenda lab was born out of the necessity to generate a space in Calafou (a community in a large former industrial space) for us to flourish, a non-patriarchal TransHackFeminist space where free knowledge springs from raw experimentation (electronic repairs, experiments with turbines, bioelectrochemistry, sound) and self education." Accessed August 2nd, 2014

¹⁶As they state on their website (<https://www.transitionnetwork.org/about>) "Transition Network is a charitable organisation whose role is to inspire, encourage, connect, support and train communities as they self-organise around the Transition model, creating initiatives that rebuild resilience and reduce CO2 emissions. Ultimately it's about creating a healthy human culture, one that meets our needs for community, livelihoods and fun. We're here to support you. ". Accessed August 2nd, 2014.

to the existing system, out of which the project want to start a transition. In texts such as Costa's (2012), this displacement is read in terms of the model of the transition towns, appealing to permaculture, de-growth, and sustainability. In Calafou, these ties can be seen in practice in the cultivation of hens, chicken, or goose near the common kitchen compost, it can be seen in the use of a dry bath, in the recycling of food, in the adobe techniques used for insulating some houses, in the cultivation of nearby fields through permacultural techniques, etc¹⁷.

Then the next element of the formula comes in: the “hack” connects to practices of hacker culture and technologies (Kelty, 2008), in a recursive way—a typical “hacker” gesture—, it shifts the sense of the “trans”. In Calafou we can find work on and under notions such as that of “technological sovereignty”, promoted by Alex Haché (2014)¹⁸. Haché, a core Calafou member, is a hacker, EU evaluator and feminist who suggest to substitute “food” for “technology” and “peasants” for “tech developers” in the traditional definition of “food sovereignty”. She aims at and works for a “technology by the people for the people”. Given the role of the technological, and particularly, information technologies in contemporary capitalism (Castells, 1996), this slight “hack” has wider implications than one may imagine. As a result of it, the “transitional” path is not towards “simpler” forms of living (in the traditional hippie fashion), it is not backwards, perhaps closer to a retrojected, new aged Nature, but rather forward into post-cyberpunk landscapes populated by mutating technologies and hybrid beings. In its three years of life, Calafou has hosted multiple tech, software, and hacking related events¹⁹, software development projects for alternative social networks such as n-1 (the preeminent alternative—finally complement—to commercial social networks such as Facebook and Twitter during 15M) and ecoxarxes (the CIC's social network)²⁰, or cryptocurrencies such as bitcoin²¹. That has made of it a reference in the hacker scene in Spain.

Finally, the “feminist” morpheme hacks and puts into transition both the “trans” and the “hack” by “engendering” them. The “trans”, then, can be recursively connected to transexuality and trans-gender notions, subjectivities, practices and projects, which have been prominent in Calafou. On the other side, the “hack” becomes itself destabilized and hacked insofar as it is exposed to critiques concerning the clear white, male, technophile model that still predominates in relation to it (in both qualitative and quantitative terms). As we will see, these critiques were actually performed and embodied during my stay in Calafou, where a core group of “hackers” left the project out of

¹⁷ I do not suggest this is the whole story. As many within the project complain, there is much in Calafou that is not “eco”, much less permacultural.

¹⁸ This Dossier of works by many national and international activists include several works by Calafou inhabitants. It can be downloaded free at <https://calafou.org/es/content/dossier-soberan%C3%ADa-tecnol%C3%B3gica>

¹⁹ Various examples, such as the hackmeeting 2012, the hack the biblio on 2014, periodic workshops on digital security, cryptography, etc. More info at <https://calafou.org/>

²⁰ As stated in Calafou's “support us” section <https://calafou.org/en/content/support-us> and as I have been able to learn through different interviews with some of the m

²¹ <http://www.wired.com/2014/04/dark-wallet/> <http://www.newyorker.com/business/currency/dark-wallet-a-radical-way-to-bitcoin>

tensions not unrelated to this.²².

s. After this recursive excursus on definitions, bibliography and words, I turn off the computer and look through the window of the flat I am staying in, on the base floor of the housing building. I can hear the arrhythmic beat of the highway passing over the small valley, and, simultaneously, as a counterpoint, I listen to the continuous rumor of the river, the Anoia, which runs below it, today, with the strength of the last Spring rainfalls. I see a green mass around, crossed by electricity lines.

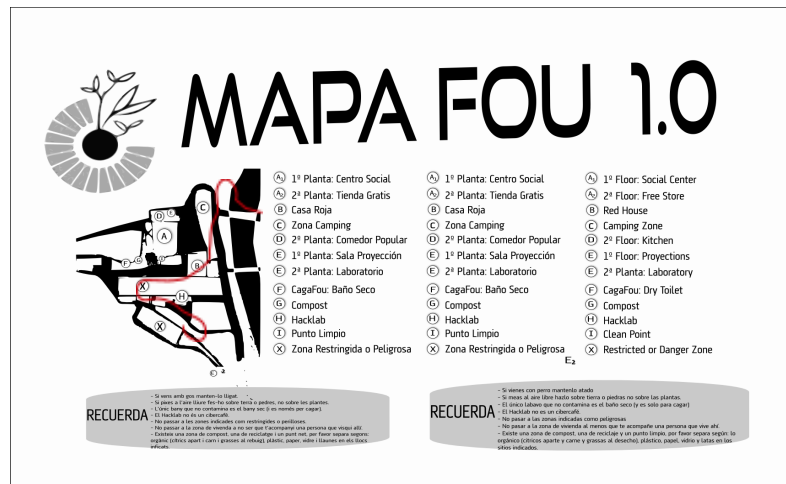


Two pictures of Calafou before the beginning of the rehabilitation. The housing building is the one at a higher altitude in both pictures²³.

What to make of the high tension? A possibility is to play with a “multistable” perception, so much spoken about after Gestalt theory, and in relation to technology (Ihde, 2012): one can focus on and bring the highway (and civilization) to the foreground, pushing the surrounding trees (and nature) to the background, or vice versa. Through that gestalt switch one may attune herself to the shifting and irresolvable interplay of perspectives, of nature and civilization.

²²To know more about the project: <http://transhackfeminist.noblogs.org/>

²³ The image, with a copyleft license, is available at <https://mutangerlab.wordpress.com/2012/04/11/galaxias-paralelas/>



Map of Calafou, in Spanish and English. My route in this sketchy narrative, marked in red, goes from the “X” zone in the bottom side of the image right out of the colony, after crossing the river, which appears in white, as the buildings, on the right side²⁴.

And yet, as I walk out and talk to people around, I cannot remain in that sort of calm multiplication of stability, of fixed, exchangeable (id)entities. As Calafou dwellers will tell you, the river is itself contaminated by years of industrial sewage and incipient ecological recovery; it is fully and dystopically cultured. Symmetrically, the rhythm and sounds of the highway go up and down with a regularity closely resembling the natural cycles of the traditional (at least, ancient) view. Thereby, after the first multi-stabilization step, next comes destabilization. As I walk down through the path between the housing building and the rest of the colony (a path that only much work of dozens of collaborators was able to clear from grass and trees) I looked around to the old, semi-ruined or just rebuilt buildings more than 100 years old, hosting cutting-edge 3D printers and autonomous routers, watched over by goose of unloving grace. Spuriously crossing Haraway and Shakespeare: these are the naturecultures post-cyberpunk dreams are made of.



On the left, Tati, one of the Calafou core members with one of the aggressive geese of the gang; on the right, one of the two spaces of the burnt warehouse, the other “X” in the Calafou map above²⁵.

²⁴ Interestingly, since this map was designed for general visitors—and who else may need a map?— the housing building, who is for residents and their visits, is marked with an “X” of “restricted or danger zone”. The map is available, with a creative commons license, at <https://calafou.org/>.

²⁵ The image, with no mention of author and with a creative commons license, is part of the Calafou Crida, a project of documentation and call for proposals to reconstruct the burnt warehouse. Available at <https://crida.calafou.org/en/galerias>

As I approach to the river I get across the icon on the main entrance. Perhaps the design of Calafou's logo suggests an aesthetic-semiotic mediation to what we were just commenting.



Icon at the main entry of Calafou and elsewhere, reading “Calafou, postcapitalist, ecoindustrial Colony”²⁶.

The black and white of the plant and the earth, typical colors of computer screen and keyboards, contrast with the green of the polygons surrounding them, as if a biotechnology was protecting and supporting a technolife. And yet, further in the direction we were headed to, as an intuition transistor²⁷ Calafou also points elsewhere. Because it displays itself not as a reconciled and unified order of nature and culture, as in Hegel's, Marx's or Andrew Feenberg's dialectic (usually provisional) resolutions, but rather as an assemblage of multiple versions of them. Only 3 years old, Calafou cannot appeal to a well established--by gods, history or sociocultural practice and evolution--state of relations between what Aristotle called realities “kata techné” and those “kata phusin”. Different patches and perceptions---the hacklab, the red house, the housing building, Pechblenda, the burnt warehouse-- sketch different alignments, accumulations, stratifications or constellations of features and motives of transition towns and permaculture, hacking and technologies, gender and transbodies. As we show in later sections, each of them performs differently, and yet resonates with the rest, as heterotopical zones within a wider heterotopical site. To keep the ancient thread of this narrative going, as I walk through the burnt warehouse I recall Anaxagoras' idea that “everything is in everything”, but also out of it, in different interplays and interferences (“interference”, another frequently metaphor around the Pechblenda lab).

²⁶ The image, with a creative common license, is available at <https://calafou.org/>

²⁷ Daniel Dennet (2013) has spoken of “intuition pumps”. I believe Calafou is full of them, not always verbally formulated, but still full of materialized propositions for (narratives and arguments for) intuitions.



On the left, a view of the entry to the Pechblenda lab²⁸, on the right, an image of the inside of the hacklab²⁹.

As I try to show in this chapter, ready-made political, economic, existential categories do not merely dissolve or are circumvented (two possible readings of “posmodernity” and “non-modernity”) but rather crisscross indefinitely, upwards and downwards, from the chemical composition of a drop of the Anoia's river water, up to the 3 acres of DNA and asbestos based formations. Thereby, Calafou can be provisionally seen (and the “seen” should be underlined here) as a categorical kaleidoscope: as a combinatorial machine, where threads of bodies, ideas, practices, and spaces unequally and contradictorily combine and perform the principles and patterns of queer and feminist activism, hacking, permaculture, industrial productivism, as well as various forms of anarchism or marxism. So, rather than as an image-concept, it is better to provisionally think Calafou as a machine for producing them³⁰.

That said, not all kaleidoscopes are created equal. And here I am thinking on one of them: the teleidoscope³¹. As I show in later sections, Calafou does not simply provide a shifting inward looking image, it also points towards the world outside, it fractalizes it, changing along its circumstances, showing them in new ways. In this sense, it is an ideological machine—in the Greek sense of “eidos” as “aspect”, the “view” that something offers. In following sections I try to show how this teleidoscopic space³² is constructed, what it shows of itself and what it may show of the

²⁸Calafou Crida.

²⁹The image, by David Gómez, is available under a creative commons license at <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:HackLabCalaFou.JPG>. As the hyper-image indicates, the figures on the wall are John Draper (Captain Crunch), Grace Hopper, Alan Turing, and Ada Lovelace.

³⁰ A kaleidoscope, something tilting between the fractal structure and the black hole, a black and white and colorful multiple form, a recombination of existing and new elements coming from various sources and topoi, into new forms, and according to idiosyncratic—and changing—rules. As it is expectable, tensions, already insinuated in its self definition as “post-capitalist, eco-industrial colony”, run high there.

³¹An invention by John Burnside, also known by his role in the counterculture and gay movement in the San Francisco area since the 60s.

³²Think the origin, the power and the implications of the “kaleidoscopic” metaphor. Several potential objections: 1-too optic; 2-too miopic because it doesn't allow to see through, although that could be true of the current state of calafou, that it speaks less and less

worlds we either live or may live in.

At this point, a step further in this conceptual and aesthetic walk through Calafou requires to stop walking and talking and start working with those living there, those who may give a different meaning to Hegel's, Marx's or even Latour's "mediations", those who get concrete and try to rebuild the colony, try to clean the river³³, try to make the internet connection work. Because in spite of all we just mentioned, Calafou appeals not only to discourse or the imagination, to words or images, but also to many other practices, to practice—although never "purely" or "simply" to it. Calafou is an interesting space to see an ideological (not an ideal) life, the various aspects of economic practice and the practice of other economic ideas, in their limitations and combinations³⁴. In this brief walk I wanted to essay a first break with the binary logics –the logics of "the same" and "the other"—sometimes emerging around the notion of "heterotopies". A first hint of their conflicted multiplicity, which in turn brings about the question of the multiplicity of isotopical, utopical, and dystopical spaces and spatial practices³⁵.

Further sections (partially developed):

From researched to practiced

Calafou and other currencies: a new sense of economics

Building houses and homes

Facilitating conflicts, relations and subjectivities

Projecting the collective: coding practices and ideas

What beyond the oikos: from ecopolitics to cosmopolitics (scaling things up)

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of anything other than itself; 3-too irenic, not connected to struggle and conflict, inwards and outwards; 4-too static, with rules or factors more or less fixed and not so much tied to transformation.

³³ For example, <https://calafou.org/es/content/interference-contaminaci%C3%B3n-rio-anoia-diy-hardware>

³⁴ The relation between talk and walk of life, between talk and act, is at a core thread of this chapter, but so it is the view of the talk and the act, and their relation.

³⁵ Although they cannot be separated, they can be distinguished, in most cases, by their flagrant tension and conflict.

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