

Of Other Potentialities: The Inhabitable Inhospitable Object p.4–5

by Becky Beasley

The hospitable is a quality generally understood. It is to welcome another into the inside of the thing that is yours. It is the product of an assertion, a willingness on the part of the host, equal in aggression to its opposite, the inhospitable. A number of preliminary questions may be raised. The first being what that *thing* is. The second, what the nature of *what is yours* is.

To be hospitable is to make the one who is not oneself feel at home. It is offered to friends and strangers alike. It can be given and withdrawn with equal energy. As a quality, it can be employed to distinguish oneself from another. The hospitable effect can be produced in any place, and home-ownership is not necessarily essential for producing the effect. One can always welcome another into one's corner, although it is generally understood that people who sit in corners do not wish to be disturbed. On the other hand, the one in the corner is probably one's best bet when in need.

According to the novelist William T. Vollmann, the most hospitable people in the world are non-Fundamentalist Muslims. Catholic mothers can also be very welcoming of complete strangers into the family home, sometimes for long periods of time, at the end of which one is still no clearer as to whence they came nor why. The home is no longer so hospitable to the non-Catholic father now that it is full of the strangers so welcomed without his consultation by his wife. He withdraws to his corner, no longer fully inhabiting his home. He tolerates the situation mutely by watching television. When his wife comments on the television, he engages in learning activities with the strangers as a way of getting something out of their free board and lodging. Over the years he has learned, amongst other things, how to build computers, install software, repair bicycles and cars, purchase and sell things on the internet, operate a digital camera purchased on the internet, play new songs on his guitar, bits of other languages, how to properly care for the dying. When they

leave, he waves and smiles and sighs with relief. Sometimes he signs death certificates before the bodies are driven away.

The habitable is another feature of the hospitable. Its passive aspect, however, is revealed in the relation between the *hospitable* and the *inhospitable*—which are different and active—and the *habitable* and the *inhabitable*—which are the same and essentially passive. What then of an object that appears inhospitable, but that nevertheless engenders in one a feeling of being potentially inhabitable?

Necessary features:

an orifice or hole of some kind for entry, the most minimal being the pin-hole (re. photo/dark room) or the chink (question of the split or crack, as in the design or in the wear), the most visible being the window (re. images/architecture) or door (open or closed; potentially openable or ajar; also *the barely open door*, which is, of course, a closed door); or the threshold (which ranges from those so grand they are hardly recognisable as still being thresholds, to those so infra-thin as to be barely perceptible as being a threshold at all—the differences between being inside and outside in both the small and the vast are, despite appearances, quite indistinct)

an interior (not necessarily inflated, or rigid) (qualities of the vessel)
an exterior (not necessarily beyond the physical space of the object, but perhaps somewhere about the surface; see threshold or skin); sides (which replace the concept of the wall but retain the thing; graspable as thing if only by appearing to be held together by air or by being on the verge of falling apart) (neither necessarily rigid nor visible)
resistance that is open (an exterior that is resistant to penetration but nevertheless in some way porous; a simultaneity of open-ness and closed-ness) (see also sides and an exterior)

materialness (rather than *materiality* which is inherent) A fabricness, something which, even when built, retains a quality of being potentially *buildable-with*. (e.g., the over-size cardboard box that one imagines flattening and reconstructing smaller or differently, or the same) (Materialness as this specific *buildable-with-when-already-built* quality).
potential for re-use (see materialness)

Holes in forcefields are key to the possibility of the inhabitable inhospitable object. Through the chinks in the aggressive forces of the hospitable and the inhospitable, the passive nature of habiting and inhabiting spaces finds its agency. However, in conclusion, it would appear that it is the potential for re-construction or development that is the main attraction. The hospitable is founded on a future. *He who dies in your arms is, alas, your brother forever.*

Feather Block p.6

by Becky Beasley

The hole stinks. Having been blocked for quite some time, the release of the plug, the flood of light in, the blinking of bewildered eyes.

A block of this kind, once examined, breaks down into a series of elements; feathers mainly, large, once glossy, black Cock's, dulled and lack-luster, fixed along the metal spine with an assortment of strong black threads and wires.

Peeling from the interior walls' conical spaces, a rubber (grey) skin, 6mm, fairly bouncy, protective, pierced only in places by the fiercest attacks. A small bicycle repair kit is eventually recovered from inside the feather block's construction.

*Said Cock feathers' tips curl in toward the centre, producing a soft hole about the size of x if penetrated by the hand.
