

DERRIDA AND HOSPITALITY
THEORY AND PRACTICE



Judith Still

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Contents

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Introduction to the question of hospitality: ethics and politics

Once again, here as elsewhere, wherever deconstruction is at stake, it would be a matter of linking an *affirmation* (in particular a political one), *if there is any*, to the experience of the impossible, which can only be a radical experience of the *perhaps*.

(Une fois de plus, ici comme ailleurs, partout où il y va de la déconstruction, il s'agirait de lier une *affirmation* (en particulier politique), s'il y en a, à l'expérience de l'impossible, qui ne peut être qu'une expérience radicale du *peut-être*.)¹

We all think that we know something about hospitality – it's an everyday experience. Yet it has also been a burning topic of philosophical and political debate over the last couple of decades, and my epigraph indicates the complexity of the hinge or *brisure* between politics and philosophy here. Why has hospitality recently enjoyed a renaissance? This could be related to at least three factors. The first would be recent movements of population towards, and within, an expanded Europe: what is conceived as economic immigration and also, notably, the arrival of asylum seekers and refugees. The political reaction in the nation states of the pre-expansion European community to these newcomers is often phrased in the language of (the limits of) hospitality. In France in particular there has subsequently been a significant response, not only by political scientists or sociologists, but also from the arts and philosophy, in the face of the increasing inhospitality of the French state.² The second factor is the existence of a growing body of powerful philosophical writing, some of which pre-dates the current wave of post-colonial xenophobia, and most of which draws on the experiences of colonialism and of the Second World War as well as the stimulus of more recent events. The third factor, which is perhaps more powerful in the US and the UK than in France, but is important throughout the world, is commercial globalisation, tourism and travel – the 'hospitality business',

often perceived as destroying traditional hospitality in its last known habitats.

At first glance then, hospitality may seem to be a matter of inviting friends or relatives into your home, but it is critical also to consider the traditional question of the stranger-guest, and then, beyond moral and social relations between individuals, to recognise that hospitality can be, and *is*, evoked with respect to relations between different nations or between nations and individuals of a different nationality. In this book I shall also draw attention to a textual or linguistic dimension of hospitality, a question of reading and writing, speaking and listening, calling by name and sometimes remaining silent.

The current interest in theoretical writing on hospitality relates particularly to the work of the philosopher Jacques Derrida, the main focus of this book, and beyond and through him, to another philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas.³ Less attention has been paid to women's work in this area. This book will, however, repeatedly refer to Hélène Cixous, in explicit amicable dialogue with Derrida on hospitality (and much more besides). It will also draw on the work of Luce Irigaray – perhaps a less cosy choice in this context – but an important one if the question of sexual difference is critical to hospitality, as I believe it to be. Sexual difference features less often in discussions around hospitality than do questions of race and nationality. It is more obvious in the political debates at the turn of this century that the complex question of belonging, or being a foreigner, relates importantly to hospitality in a number of ways.

Both Cixous (born in Algeria) and Irigaray (born in Belgium) have been named French feminists by the Anglophone world, just as Derrida (born in Algeria) and Levinas (born in Lithuania) have been branded French theorists. (It is true that all enjoy, or enjoyed, French nationality.) Cixous, Derrida and Levinas are also Jewish, and all, to a greater or lesser degree, explore what that might mean in their works. What would the word 'French' signify (leaving aside the designations 'feminist' and 'theorist' for the present)? From a British or American point of view, of course, it signifies foreign, and probably strange. From a Jewish or Algerian point of view it might also suggest foreign and strange, but in a different sense. Nationality and what it means, citizenship and what it entails, national identity and what it implies – all are woven together in a complex and contested question for a Jewish thinker, such as Derrida, born in Algeria, living there throughout the Second World War (and thus temporarily deprived of French nationality), and then moving to

France to be deemed irredeemably French – at least in the Anglo-Saxon world where his work receives so much attention.⁴ Cixous, like the French and Moroccan writer Tahar Ben Jelloun, writes of the hospitality of the French language (and thus brings in the complex question of 'Francophonie'), as well as of the privilege of 'passporosity', not offered to everyone. Ben Jelloun speculates that Derrida is thinking of (South) 'Mediterranean' hospitality when he writes about giving more than you know you have, since his own experience of Moroccan (Arab, Berber, Muslim, Jewish) hospitality is that the poorest peasant would borrow heavily, if need be, in order to offer a feast to his guests.⁵ I should note that it is possible to be French *and* Moroccan or Tunisian (i.e. to have dual nationality), but not to be French and Algerian. The colonial histories with respect to Morocco or Tunisia (formerly Protectorates) are less embittered than the history of French relations with Algeria, a colony (or group of French 'departments') to which many French citizens emigrated. In this book the crossings between France and the Maghreb, but especially Algeria, will be a particular focus. This is one history of (in)hospitality (although already a multiple one as I have implied), but there are other French histories intertwined with other parts of Africa, with the Caribbean, the Pacific, Canada . . . And all of these could be sharply differentiated from the colonial histories of England or Spain, never mind the United States. Levinas loved the hospitality of France ('this hospitable France' ['cette France hospitalière'], as Derrida puts it in *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*),⁶ from a different angle. However, my decision to emphasise this one (plural) element of Algeria more than others is of course because it informs so much of Derrida's and Cixous's work – and because it is one of the most significant stories (some would say the most significant) of (in)hospitality for France and for French writing.

I shall be using the terms 'colonial' and 'post-colonial', without scare quotes, in a conventional way to designate different historical periods in respect of particular nations. This is in spite of the many problems with this vocabulary that have been raised by critics, such as the more or less recognised continuation of colonisation and colonial practices in the so-called post-colonial era. I shall also sometimes use 'Francophone' as a synonym for French-speaking, or 'Anglophone' as a synonym for English-speaking, in spite of the ideological uses and misuses of these terms. My use of 'post-colonial' is not intended to suggest that an absolute break with colonialism has occurred, but rather the opposite. It is hard to find a lexis that is not imbued with

history, and which has not been abused; I shall attempt to indicate intermittently some of the issues at stake in the words I deploy, and hope that my reader will fill in some of the gaps. Derrida points out that 'all culture is originally colonial', and 'institutes itself through the unilateral imposition of some "politics" of language' – (French) revolutionary culture at least as much as monarchical culture (MO, 39) ('toute culture est originairement colonial [. . .et] s'institue par l'imposition unilatérale de quelque "politique" de la langue' (MA, 68)). Nevertheless he does not wish that recognition to efface our sense of specific historical brutalities, particular military conquests, such as that of Algeria from 1830, and nor do I.

Hospitality is my subject for personal reasons, subjective, but also objective, and peculiarly appropriate to Derrida. This is the case not only because he wrote on, and spoke about, hospitality, but because his writing on hospitality is symptomatic of his work.⁷ Anne Dufourmantelle's contribution to *Of Hospitality* returns repeatedly to the theme of Derrida's own 'poetic hospitality', and he himself remarks in a seminar: 'Hospitality – this is a name or an example of deconstruction'.⁸ Hospitality in theory and practice relates to crossing boundaries ('Come in, come in') or thresholds (even *seuils de tolérance*⁹ sometimes), including those between self and other, private and public, inside and outside, individual and collective, personal and political, emotional and rational, generous and economic – these couples that overlap each other's territory without any one exactly mapping another. For those who attack a cartoon deconstruction on the grounds that it denies material reality or promotes some kind of endless free-play, perhaps I should say again that this question of hospitality does entail paying serious attention to the question of political frontiers where admittance or refusal may even be a matter of life or death.¹⁰ It also inevitably touches on that fundamental ethical question (since it is itself an ethical foundation) of the boundaries of the human, and how we set these up.

What is hospitality? Some definitions

Hospitality . . . The reception or entertainment of guests or strangers with liberality and goodwill. (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

I shall keep returning throughout this book to different definitions of hospitality, host, guest, stranger, or friend; in Chapter 5, for example, I shall turn to French and bilingual dictionaries. There

are two fault lines which will run throughout the discussion: (1) the fundamental nature of hospitality – whether this be the weaker claim that it is widely found or very important, or the strong claim that hospitality is foundational (of ethics, humanity, language); (2) the crucial issue of (sexual) difference and of the violence attendant upon hospitality – whether this be the weak claim that hospitality in the many source texts is constantly beset by violence, or the stronger claim that this is structural to hospitality. Hospitality, for Derrida, will be both (or neither, in a strict philosophical sense) the absolute Law of hospitality – which has caught his readers' imagination, and which I shall gloss a little in the next section – and the laws of hospitality. It is the absolute or infinite Law of hospitality which owes most to Derrida's readings of Levinas and of Levinas's tendency to make what can seem like gnomic utterances, such as: 'Le sujet est un hôte' (translated decisively, as indicated by the context, as 'The subject is a host', although the phrase could equally mean 'The subject is a guest') or 'The subject is hostage' ('Le sujet est ôtage').¹¹

I shall be paying more attention than most readers of Derrida to the *laws* of hospitality, and will briefly explain here that this sense of 'laws' denotes both the political domain of laws and rights, and also a socially situated moral code. Even in his book on Levinas, largely focused on philosophical (quasi-)absolutes, Derrida writes of the relevance of hospitality to the plight of refugees today, and, for instance, to the situation in the 'Israel' of biblical times and at the time of writing (Egypt being relevant to both). Alongside, and interrupting as well as being interrupted by, these politics of hospitality, there is the moral social code which covers a physical (embodied) practice made up of a series of gestures, and of the labour these entail. These will vary in details and in stringency between cultures and times though with many common elements (bed, board, entertainment, bathing). The code will also explicitly or implicitly refer to an affective structure – if the gestures are made without the heart then there is a transgression of the code of hospitality. Finally, the code regulates the economy of hospitality – any requirement for giving without any return, *or* for reciprocity, *or* for rights and duties. It has been argued that close attention to the (unwritten) code governing the social practice between individuals can, and should, inform the formulation of laws and practices at national or international level. For Ben Jelloun, the laws of hospitality imply both rights and duties (*French Hospitality*, 37; *Hospitalité française*, 57); the problem is that immigrants are often treated as if they are guests

who have only duties (43; 65) – to work hard, be polite and so on. He urges that the spirit of welcome should be enshrined in a legal framework for the reception of immigrants, in particular those from the former colonies.

The level and focus of analysis

The term 'hospitality' will be used flexibly in this book, as in Derrida's writing, to cover a wide range of relations, both macro and micro. The same will be true of associated terms such as host, guest, stranger, friend or foreigner.¹² Criticism is sometimes directed (sometimes from a materialist standpoint, sometimes with a self-righteous or politically outraged tone) at the use of any term to cover a range of positions or situations: Marxism's use of class and feminism's use of gender have surely been sufficiently (rightly) chastised for their blindnesses, such that we can now respect their areas of illumination. In this instance, 'stranger' is obviously a very general expression which could refer to wealthy American tourists in the Caribbean, to impoverished stateless refugees in New York, to a Parisian arriving in a small village in Brittany, to Roma travellers in rural Ireland, and so on. All are in very different positions, and yet all have something in common by virtue of being strangers. All could call the host community into question in some way (linguistically, economically, culturally, sexually, for instance) which might be perceived as positive or as threatening by their hosts. The host community may be welcoming or may respond violently to the interlopers, neither response excluding the other; the host (or guest) need neither be considered as homogeneous nor as free from contradiction. Thus *at one macro-level of analysis* it might be valid to consider all strangers together even though the differences between them (race, class, sex or nationality) might ultimately be more significant than the similarities. The same applies to the use of the term 'women' and its cognates (or 'men' in the sense of males). Although this term bundles together half the population of the world with vast differences cutting across it, I shall consider it an acceptable level and focus of analysis where appropriate. *At a different level of analysis* it might be more appropriate to consider only 'British working mothers' or to slice populations differently, for example considering specifically 'British workers of Afro-Caribbean origin'.¹³

Becoming a stranger can unsettle many of our class certainties or privileges and reduce us to the visible signs of sex or race; a woman or a black man who has a secure economic, social and political status

'at home' may be stripped of this when removed from their familiar context into one which is (potentially) hostile – even just trying to hail a taxi in the wrong part of town. A visibly (white) or audibly (upper-class) privileged person may also become a stranger – even King Odysseus might look like just another beggar when he most needs hospitality. In my view, no one level of analysis or one focus (sex, race, class or citizenship, for example), from the most global to the most specific, will ever be adequate on its own. Ultimately each needs to inform the other and there needs to be a degree of oscillation between levels and foci. I shall therefore assume a degree of patience on the part of my reader, so that, for example, where the terms 'stranger' or 'woman' are used I shall hope that the reader does not have an allergic reaction to the effect that: 'but not all strangers/women are the same' (even though that is self-evidently true).

The ethics and politics of hospitality

In so far as we conventionally divide up experience between, amongst other categories, the psychic, the social and the political, the question arises as to which is the domain of hospitality. The obvious first answer is the social: the area of inter-individual relations governed by ethical or moral concerns. However, the psychic field – intra-individual or the play of the Unconscious – is also relevant to hospitality, as is the political field of relations with the State (or between States). As well as spelling out the question of hospitality within each different domain, we also need to ask what the relations are between the domains. How does the ethics of hospitality relate to the politics of hospitality for instance? Hospitality is always about crossing thresholds – perhaps between the public and private. Hospitality can begin to seem a catch-all word, and indeed the way in which it is currently evoked does give it enormous purchase: Derrida suggests that hospitality is ethics, is the condition of humanity – for *ethos* is place:

Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic amongst others. Insofar as it has to do with the *ethos*, that is, the residence, one's home, the familiar place of dwelling, inasmuch as it is a manner of being there, the manner in which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as our own or as foreigners, *ethics is hospitality*; ethics is so thoroughly coextensive with the experience of hospitality.

(L'hospitalité, c'est la culture même et ce n'est pas une éthique parmi d'autres. En tant qu'elle touche à l'*éthos*, à savoir à la demeure, au chez

soi, au lieu du séjour familial autant qu'à la manière de se rapporter à soi et aux autres, aux autres comme aux siens ou comme à des étrangers, *l'éthique est hospitalité*, elle est de part en part co-extensive à l'expérience de l'hospitalité, de quelque façon qu'on l'ouvre ou la limite.)¹⁴

'The ethics of hospitality' is, therefore, an odd turn of phrase, albeit a necessary one, since Levinas (*par excellence* the thinker of hospitality as ethics) argues precisely that hospitality *is* ethics. As Derrida summarises it in *Adieu*: 'For hospitality is not simply some region of ethics, let alone . . . the name of a problem in law or politics: it is ethicity itself, the whole and the principle of ethics' (50) ('Car l'hospitalité n'est pas davantage une région de l'éthique, voire . . . le nom d'un problème de droit ou de politique, elle est l'éthicité même, le tout et le principe de l'éthique' (94)). Derrida's work on Levinas (who has a tendency to define one noun by another) and hospitality suggests the *complicated* force of that copula 'is'.

Derrida is concerned that the question of the *relationship* between 'an ethics as hospitality' (*Adieu*, 19) ('une éthique comme hospitalité' (45)) and a politics of hospitality or a right to hospitality (as in Kant's cosmopolitical law) is already *canonical*. To avoid jumping to conclusions and making the easy assumption that the one will found the other (ethics will ground politics), Derrida wants a suspension, a pause for analysis in any given situation (and he mentions in *Adieu* the very different situations of Israel, the former Yugoslavia, Zaire, Rwanda, and the siege of those who took refuge in St Bernard's church in Paris). The distinction between ethics and politics (or law or rights) can be made in at least two ways: first, ethics is the domain of relations between individuals while politics is the domain of relations between States or between the individual and the State. More dramatically, ethics can be seen as the realm of metaphysical absolutes (transcendentals, or, in the case of Derrida and perhaps Levinas, 'quasi-transcendentals') while politics is the realm of pragmatic compromise and of negotiated rules (see *OH*, 135, 137; *DH*, 121), both a necessity and a perversion. Hospitality *as* ethics is unconditional and unconditioned hospitality, so immediate that nothing of the guest can be known and no invitation can be made. Instead the guest arrives, a visitation, and the host is totally open. The host, in any case, being a guest of the house, of the land. This Law of absolute welcoming, in which the other is received beyond the capacity of the self (*Adieu*, 25; 55), evoked in numerous texts

by Levinas, is impossible for any nation state or any individual subject. Derrida suggests that it is perverted by (and perverts) the laws of hospitality which make hospitality possible – even as it is necessary for them, even as they are necessary for it. In my view, one of the problems with the reception of Levinas's work on hospitality is that it can encourage a self-flattering (since we readers perceive ourselves as hosts), even if guilty, focus on the host. Yet hospitality could be argued to be constructed between *hôtes* (host and guest) – you cannot have a host alone. Ben Jelloun suggests that we consider the cultural formulation that the guest fills the house; it is empty when the guest leaves. The guest satisfies the host's hunger as well as the inverse – even when the host gives unconditionally (*French Hospitality*, 2–4; *Hospitalité française*, 10–13). This need not be seen as an ethical failing on the part of the host even if it means that absolute hospitality, like any gift, as Derrida argues in *Given Time* (*Donner le temps*), is impossible on a philosophical level.¹⁵ Equally, I shall suggest in Chapter 3 that it is hard to escape the double binds either of Aristotelian magnanimity or of the fusion implied by Montaigne's ideal of friendship.

While Levinas was deeply concerned by the political realities of life, his thinking of hospitality remains silent about the way in which the ethical promise it makes can be translated into politics. It can seem as if, for him, hospitality is infinite and unconditional or does not exist at all (*Adieu*, 48; 91). Close to the end of his moving and patient analysis of Levinas's work, written soon after Levinas's death, Derrida suggests that finally that silence or hiatus gives *us* the responsibility for a response. He writes:

This relation is necessary, it must exist, it is necessary to deduce a politics and law from ethics. This deduction is necessary in order to determine the 'better' or the 'less bad,' with all the requisite quotation marks: democracy is 'better' than tyranny. Even in its 'hypocritical' nature, 'political civilization' remains 'better' than barbarism. (*Adieu*, 115)

(*Il faut ce rapport*, il doit exister, il faut déduire une politique et un droit de l'éthique. Il faut cette déduction pour déterminer le 'meilleur' ou le 'moins mauvais', avec tous les guillemets qui s'imposent: la démocratie est 'meilleure' que la tyrannie. Jusque dans sa nature 'hypocrite', la 'civilisation politique' reste 'meilleure' que la barbarie. (198))

We cannot, should not, ascribe an answer to Levinas, but we ourselves should take responsibility for analysing any particular situation and deciding what the political 'better' would be:

Ethics enjoins a politics and a law: this dependence and the direction of this conditional derivation are as irreversible as they are unconditional. But the political or juridical *content* that is thus assigned remains undetermined, still to be determined beyond knowledge, beyond all presentation, all concepts, all possible intuition, in a singular way, in the speech and the responsibility *taken* by each person, in each situation, and on the basis of an analysis that is each time unique – unique and infinite, unique but *a priori* exposed to substitution, unique and yet general, interminable in spite of the urgency of the decision. For the analysis of a context and of political motivations can have no end as soon as it includes in its calculations a limitless past and future. As always, the decision remains heterogeneous to the calculations, knowledge, science, and consciousness that nonetheless condition it. (*Adieu*, 115–16)

(L'éthique conjoint une politique et un droit; cette dépendance et la direction de cette dérivation conditionnelle sont aussi irréversibles qu'inconditionnelles. Mais le *contenu* politique ou juridique ainsi assigné demeure en revanche indéterminé, toujours à déterminer au-delà du savoir et de toute présentation, de tout concept et de toute intuition possibles, singulièrement, dans la parole et la responsabilité *prises* par chacun, dans chaque situation, et depuis une analyse chaque fois unique – unique et infinie, unique mais *a priori* exposée à la substitution, unique et pourtant générale, interminable malgré l'urgence de la décision. Car l'analyse d'un contexte et des motivations politiques n'a jamais de fin dès lors qu'elle inclut dans son calcul un passé et un avenir sans limite. Comme toujours la décision reste hétérogène au calcul, au savoir, à la science et à la conscience qui pourtant la conditionnent. (198–200))

Unfortunately, many of those who cite Derrida on hospitality focus largely on the Law of hospitality – even if they begin with a brief summary of his 'opposition' between the Law and the laws. This can lead to two problems. Some critics attempt to 'apply' the Law to a specific pragmatic situation whether in fiction or real life – since the Law is an impossible structure this is rarely successful, and to show its failure tends simply to return us to its definition since it is defined as impossible. Other critics, with or without an attempt at practical application, criticise Derrida's work for its inadequacy when faced with the political problems of today, and yet if they consider the complex interpenetration of the Law with the laws it may seem less inadequate. For instance Sara Ahmed argues that Derridean hospitality is a 'forgetting of names' and yet we need to remember.¹⁶ Richard Kearney uses selective quotation to suggest that Derrida 'seems to preclude our need to differentiate between good and evil aliens, between benign and malign strangers, between saints and psychopaths . . . If

hospitality is to remain absolutely just, all incoming others must, it seems, remain unidentifiable and undecidable.¹⁷ In this article undecidability is a problem, and Kearney seems to suggest that it would entail paralysis in decision making. However, Derrida has replied to his critics specifically on this question on a number of occasions; one example is the interview 'Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility' in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*. He says:

Far from opposing undecidability to decision, I would argue that there would be no decision, in the strong sense of the word, in ethics, in politics, no decision, and thus no responsibility, without the experience of some undecidability. If you don't experience some undecidability, then the decision would simply be the application of a programme, the consequence of a premiss or of a matrix.¹⁸

A decision in this strong sense is indeed a form of hospitality since Derrida does not propose that it can simply emanate from a sovereign subject, any more than from a programme, rather it is the other within the self which interrupts the self.¹⁹ He says of the self welcoming the other, and thus interrupting itself: 'This division is the condition of hospitality' (*HJR*, 81). But any of these criticisms of the impossible Law should also return us to the *laws* of hospitality.

The structure of hospitality

Hospitality is by definition a *structure* that regulates relations between inside and outside, and, in that sense, between private and public. Someone or ones, categorised as 'outside', as not necessarily, *by right* or legal contract, part of the 'inside', is temporarily brought within. Thus, for example, my starting point would be to say that it does not make sense to suggest that a spouse offers hospitality to his/her spouse in the home they share, or that they offer hospitality to their dependent children, or to an employee paid to live in. Again, as a starting point, it does not make sense to say that the State offers hospitality to its citizens, that the collectivity offers hospitality to itself. It is importantly *recognised* as a structure with no fixed content – this recognition did not require structuralist analysis, it is intuitively understood by practitioners. Thus, offering someone a glass of water, or a bed for the night, is *or is not* hospitality depending entirely on the *relation* between the one offering and the other accepting or refusing.²⁰

There are many 'grey areas', vestigial forms of hospitality.

Hospitality is a material structure but overlaid with crucial affective elements: the emotional relations associated with hospitality such as heartfelt generosity or sincere gratitude. These can spill over into situations technically not ones of hospitality. The psychology of hospitality and the rules of hospitality can be used as an analytic framework by which to judge situations that are not strictly speaking those of hospitality. For example, the relation between employer and employee is not to be judged by the laws of hospitality or of the gift in so far as each keeps strictly to the terms of their contract. (Of course the individuals concerned may also be old friends and offer hospitality to each other outside these terms.) But there are grey areas (say, if I, as Head of Department, invite a new colleague to dinner or to stay the night), in which an act *may* be regarded as somehow part of an unwritten contract or *may* be regarded as 'over and above' the necessary – as somehow spilling over (and excess is important here) into a gift relation such as hospitality.

Derrida has picked up Levinas's maxim that 'the essence of language is friendship and hospitality', which relates to the latter's claim that the relation to the exterior is not *secondary* but rather *integral* to self-consciousness:

To posit being as Desire and as goodness is not to first isolate an I which would then tend toward a beyond. It is to affirm that to apprehend oneself from within – to produce oneself as I – is to apprehend oneself with the same gesture that already turns toward the exterior to extra-vert and to manifest – to respond for what it apprehends – to express; it is to affirm that the becoming-conscious is already language, that the essence of language is goodness, or again, that the essence of language is friendship and hospitality. (Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 305).

(Poser l'être comme Désir et comme bonté, ce n'est pas isoler au préalable un moi qui tendrait ensuite vers un au-delà. C'est affirmer que se saisir de l'intérieur – se produire comme moi – c'est se saisir par le même geste qui se tourne déjà vers l'extérieur pour l'extra-verser et manifester – pour répondre de ce qu'il saisit – pour exprimer; que la prise de conscience est déjà langage; que l'essence du langage est bonté, ou encore, que l'essence du langage est amitié et hospitalité. (*Totalité et infini*, 282))

But Derrida has also posed the question whether the Law of hospitality, or unconditional hospitality, does not consist in suspending language and even the address to the other.²¹ Hospitality is also a way of theorising the relation between the same and the other, the self and the stranger. Language, in the broadest sense of the term (including

silence), and naming in particular, is thus a critical element in hospitality. Naming concerns names given by the state, the community and individual others as well as by the self; this will be analysed in detail in Chapter 4.

Hospitality implies letting the other in to oneself, to one's own space – it is invasive of the integrity of the self, or the domain of the self. This is why it may be seen as both foundational (to be fully human is to be able to alter, to be altered – as Rousseau suggests) and dangerous. It is also perceived as potentially dangerous in economic terms because it implies sharing scarce resources, although in fact guests may be productive and may bring their gifts to the economy. The response to the potential for violence is often to impose restrictions or conditions, to limit hospitality. But limitations themselves can provoke transgression – if they are a gesture of mastery, reinforcing the imbalance of power that creates the need for hospitality in the first place. This is a key issue with (illegal) immigration. There is a historical tendency for the language and practice of hospitality to 'turn' against the guest – the focus on the generosity of the host becomes a focus on the duties of the guest, and notably the construction of the figure of the guest who not only fails to fulfil his duties (the parasite) but even betrays the host (the terrorist). Because ethics *is* hospitality:

For this very reason, and because being at home with one oneself (*l'être-soi chez soi – l'ipséité même* – the other within oneself) supposes a reception or inclusion of the other which one seeks to appropriate, control, and master according to different modalities of violence, there is a history of hospitality, an always possible perversion of the law of hospitality (which can appear unconditional), and of the laws which come to limit and condition it in its inscription as a law. (Derrida, 'On Cosmopolitanism', 17)

(Mais pour cette raison même, et parce que l'être-soi chez soi (l'ipséité même) suppose un accueil ou une inclusion de l'autre qu'on cherche à s'appropriier, contrôler, maîtriser, selon différentes modalités de la violence, il y a une histoire de l'hospitalité, une perversion toujours possible de *La loi de l'hospitalité* (qui peut paraître inconditionnelle) et des lois qui viennent la limiter, la conditionner en l'inscrivant dans un droit. (*Cosmopolites*, 43))

What kind of violence are we talking about? It may take many forms. In some cases it may be metaphorical – cultural alteration experienced as violence – things will never be the same again once the barbarians are allowed in. Hospitality obviously carries the risk of creating the

conditions of possibility for theft, assault or murder; sometimes the violence is figured, or enacted, as rape, the most invasive of crimes. While these examples may seem to be contingent, violence stemming from a failure of hospitality or falling upon it from outside, Levinas suggests that the ethical 'face to face' or the welcoming of the other, which I (with Derrida) am calling hospitality, requires a mediating *third* party for justice to be possible (see *Adieu*, 33; 66).

Hospitality is a particular form of the gift that involves *temporary* sharing of space, and sometimes also time, bodies, food and other consumables. The issue of temporality is critical. It may be possible to imagine a permanent guest, but it is also a kind of contradiction in terms, as Kant points out. Of course Kant is writing in the eighteenth century when one of the obvious cases of guests outstaying their welcome was what we now recognise as colonialism. Diderot too was exercised by the fact that Europeans were welcomed in the New World when, he argues, they should have been turned away swiftly before they destroyed their hosts.²² Now the heirs of Diderot's anti-colonialism may be more exercised by the tendency of former colonial powers to use 'guest' status, whether literally or metaphorically, as a means of making immigrants from former colonies feel insecure. Guest status in this context then has a complex temporality: definitionally short-term (like fish, a guest goes off after three days, as the saying goes), and yet maintained over such long periods of time that children can inherit the precarious position. A rather different issue of temporality is that of the time of hospitality; truly warm (ethical) hospitality should surely be immediate rather than pondered, and yet where political decisions are difficult the host and guest may need time for reflection and analysis.

Like the gift, hospitality is, strictly speaking (if we follow Derrida's logic), impossible in a pure form (remembering that it is importantly, inevitably, a breaking down of purity . . .), and Derrida refers to this necessary and impossible welcoming of the other – with absolutely no conditions attached – as the Law of hospitality. As an ontology that gives way to alterity in Levinas, it might evade the political pitfalls mentioned in that all subjects are *hôtes*. Yet the Law, even if perverted by the moral code which governs a political and social practice, *must* be translated in this way, translated into a version of what is one of the most common and crucial forms of generosity across a range of cultures. These rules of conduct of hospitality admit of two divergent possibilities in two critical respects: the first is that of reciprocity, on the one hand, or non-reciprocity, on the other. The

second presents the divergent possibilities of the relation with your peer (between friends or *within* a community), on the one hand, or with the other (the stranger in the broadest sense: the other sex, the one who does not speak or look as you do . . .), on the other hand.

Reciprocity and non-reciprocity

Derrida's hyperbolic Law of hospitality lies beyond debt, exchange or economy and thus even reciprocity, yet its relation to the laws is simultaneously one of mutual perversion and one of mutual need. As Derrida writes: 'It wouldn't be effectively unconditional, the law, if it didn't *have to become* effective, concrete, determined, if that were not its being as having-to-be' (*OH*, 79) ('Elle ne serait pas effectivement inconditionnelle, la loi, si elle ne devait pas devenir effective, concrète, déterminée, si tel n'était pas son être comme devoir-être' (*DH*, 75)). The distinction between this unconditional hospitality and the laws of hospitality is too easily assumed as an absolute fixed opposition with insufficient attention paid to the *ways in which* each interrupts the other. We read quickly, and we cut bits out. Quotations are taken like keepsakes or trophies – even fetishes which we endow with, or which assume, a life of their own. Rousseau's earlier take on this relationship between a Law and laws (drawing on classical codes of beneficence) is the magical element in the benefaction when a benefactor momentarily believes that *s/he* will get no return, perhaps not even *reconnaissance*. This *enables* the beneficiary to recognise the benefactor as a benefactor, rather than, say, an employer or a merchant who has tricked him/her into a contractual exchange, and thus to feel gratitude, and hence be on the way to reciprocating. There is thus reciprocity of intention (or sentiment) if not material reciprocity. So in one sense non-reciprocity enables reciprocity even as, in another sense, it perverts it.

Hospitality between individuals (governed by the code) is often theorised (and experienced), on the one hand, as a structure of *reciprocity* and, on the other, as an exchange *between peers*, although *non-reciprocity* and *inequality* are at least as important. (I should note that the pairings are not inevitable.) The linguist Emile Benveniste, in his great work on the vocabulary of Indo-European institutions, claims that reciprocity is inscribed at the very origin of hospitality. He divides the base word (*hospes*) into *hostis* and *potis*. *Potis* takes us in the direction of the power exercised by the master of the house.²³ *Hostis* means the stranger who has equal rights *before* it

means enemy (and the two senses lead to different analyses of hospitality). Hospitality towards a stranger who has equal rights would be an attenuated form of *potlatch*, based on the idea that a man is linked to another by the obligation to return any gift. The code of hospitality prescribes gratitude and at least the desire to reciprocate on the part of the guest. The magic of the gift for the ethnographer Marcel Mauss lies in the intimate bond between prestation and counter-prestation. Nevertheless, we should not be too hasty in contenting ourselves with the assertion that the laws of hospitality (operative in everyday or commonplace hospitality) are economic. The old chestnut of the economic versus altruism is too familiar. If we recognise an economic element throughout, it is nonetheless important to maintain differentiation within the economic (rather than flattening out). Each of the following categories has many gradations within it:

1. *Simple commerce* could be understood as the exchange of what is agreed to be equal with no temporal lag. You eat dinner in a restaurant and pay immediately after the meal. The penalties of not swiftly returning the agreed equivalent are legally enforced.
2. *More complex commerce* such as a loan structure (where penalties are legally enforced) might mean that you eat a meal in a commercial setting where there is an agreed time lag before payment (for instance, eating dinner in the hotel in which you are staying). Loss leaders are a feature of more complicated commerce without explicitly agreed equivalents, say, you eat 'free' snacks in a shop, or dinner in a casino, where it is anticipated you will spend, or 'lose', considerable sums of money – here there is no legal penalty if you do not return an equivalent for what was offered as complimentary. Commerce can mimic non-commercial structures; even in (1) above, mints may arrive with the bill, you may be offered a free 'digestif'. Why? Is it because it is good business in the sense that I (the vendor) make more money because of the positive affective charge for you, the customer, and/or for my workers in the hospitality industry who therefore work better for their wages? And/or it is a preferred, more civilised way of doing business: there is a positive affective charge for the vendor, who feels more human. A typically ambiguous example would be the 2006 advertisement put out by the Cyprus Tourist Office, showing a buxom woman with outstretched arms offering bread, with a bowl of fruit on the table in front of her. Under the headline 'Love Cyprus', it has the following rubric 'I invite you to an

island where people's hospitality shines all year long, day and night. Experience the warmth of "kaplaste", the local invitation for a delicious meal, a drink, a simple conversation.' I shall argue that it is far from irrelevant to the question of hospitality that the invitation is proffered, or rather *mediated*, by an attractive woman, one who is as maternal as she is sensual. (Youthful sex selling holidays involves a different structure, a different appeal.)

3. *Direct social exchange*. I invite you to dinner – you will probably invite me back after an appropriate time lag. There are many differences: are we colleagues, friends or kin? Are we roughly equals or is there, say, a significant age or professional seniority gap? What are the penalties for not reciprocating? (And what is the relationship between the 'I' who invites and those who perform the material and emotional labour of hospitality? To whom should you reciprocate? The host 'I', the host couple, the host family . . . If 'you' are plural then who is responsible for reciprocating?)
4. *Indirect social exchange*. I invite you to dinner – you eventually invite someone else equivalent to dinner and/or someone else in a similar situation eventually invites me to dinner (for example, in a modern academic context, as opposed to traditions amongst nomads, guest speakers or external examiners may be invited to dine in my home rather than in a restaurant). Here there is a kind of circle, but with significant possible disjunctions over time, space, and the individuals concerned. Are there any penalties for the guest who does not reciprocate; what are the benefits for the host?
5. *Invitation without reciprocity*. You are perceived as 'without' means (home, money, contacts) and I invite you to dinner without the expectation that you will eventually do the equivalent either for me or someone else or that I will ever be in your situation where someone could do the same for me. Here there could still be different kinds of payback: whether on the religious or charity model (reward in heaven), or in terms of affective or psychological reward (I feel good). One key element of differentiation: is there an imaginative recognition of similarity (as in some Enlightenment theories of pity)? I *could* be in your position even if it is not likely; if I ever were in your situation then I would want to be treated thus. Hence the possibility of common 'humanity' as similarity alongside difference. Or is the structure rather one of assertion/affirmation of fixed hierarchical difference: I am defined

by my means (I would not be 'I' if I were without), and you are without means, not (quite) a man?

6. *Hospitality to animals.* (This will form the meat of Chapter 6.) I give dinner to my dog. I put seed out for wild birds. Affective payback and services rendered are both possibilities, but does that sum it up? What is the structure in terms of recognition of similarity and difference on the part of host and guest? What are the boundaries?
7. *Absolute hospitality?* The door is open – even, there is no door, but rather perfect openness. Anything, however alien, can come in and take what it likes, do as it likes. Who and what is at risk?

Derrida has coined the portmanteau term 'hostipitality'. Sometimes (*contra* Levinas) social commentators take hostility to be a relationship *prior* to hospitality (a relationship that hospitality perhaps seeks to mitigate, but may work to exacerbate), for instance in the notion that traditional hospitality, the offer of salt, holds enmity in suspense. However, the delicate confusion of economic and what we may want to believe are non-economic relationships can breed hostility where none previously existed, and Derrida's intermingling of enmity and generosity in his *mot-valise* points up that complexity or con-fusion.

Cultural difference

Hospitality can (and does) cement the bond between those who are broadly culturally similar – the homosocial structure (containing difference, thus violence and desire) – but may also be used, where *hostes* becomes enemy rather than equal, to ward off the danger of violence (and desire) between those who are different. Cultural difference is here taken to include differences of class, race, nationality, sexuality, generation . . . The French term *l'étranger* (as in Camus's novel of the same name) denotes a stranger *and* a foreigner, a problem for translators, as Rachel Bowlby points out in her Translator's Note to *Of Hospitality* (OH, ix). We should remember the French Republican tendency to universalism, and against identity politics or *communitarismes*; there is resistance even to the keeping of statistics on ethnicity. This is a different paradigm to the one fostered by 'equal opportunities' in the UK or the melting pot of the USA, which still allow hyphenated identities more happily than France does. If we ask 'Who is the stranger?' Julia Kristeva responds in terms of nationality.²⁴ Here I prefer Derrida's broad definition:

In the broad sense, the language in which the foreigner is addressed or in which he is heard, if he is, is the ensemble of culture, it is the values, the norms, the meanings that inhabit the language . . . A passing remark: without speaking the same national language, someone can be less 'foreign' to me if he shares a culture with me, for instance, a way of life linked to a degree of wealth, etc., than some fellow citizen or compatriot who belongs to what used to be called (but this language shouldn't be abandoned too quickly, even if it does demand critical vigilance) another 'social class'. As Levinas says from another point of view, language *is* hospitality. Nevertheless, we have come to wonder whether absolute, hyperbolic, unconditional hospitality doesn't consist in suspending language, a particular determinate language, and even the address to the other. (OH, 133, 135)

(Au sens large, la langue, celle dans laquelle on s'adresse à l'étranger ou dans laquelle on l'entend, si on l'entend, c'est l'ensemble de la culture, ce sont les valeurs, les normes, les significations qui habitent la langue. . . . Soit dit au passage: sans parler la même langue nationale, quelqu'un peut m'être moins 'étranger' s'il partage avec moi une culture, par exemple un mode de vie lié à une certaine richesse, etc., que tel concitoyen ou compatriote appartenant à ce qu'on appelait hier (mais il ne faut pas abandonner trop vite ce langage, même s'il appelle une vigilance critique) une autre 'classe sociale'. . . . Comme le dit d'un autre point de vue Lévinas, le langage *est* hospitalité. Il nous est toutefois arrivé de nous demander si l'hospitalité absolue, hyperbolique, inconditionnelle, ne consiste pas à suspendre le langage, un certain langage déterminé, et même l'adresse à l'autre. (DH, 117, 119))

The question of language is critical – forcing the other to speak my language even as they ask for asylum is hardly hospitable. The reader may see immediately how the question of hospitality to *étrangers* (foreigners) relates to language. It also impinges on the question of education – do we offer education only to those who speak the same language that we do? Education is of course a *route* to learning to speak the same language, yet a route that some systems bar to those who are not already insiders via a range of direct and indirect forms of selection. This differentiation through language also impacts on justice in a narrower sense, as many have demonstrated – from Socrates on trial, who declares himself like a foreigner with respect to the language but without the rights of a foreigner (*xenos*) (see OH, 15; DH, 21), to Barthes's account of the notorious trial of Gaston Dominici in 1950s France.²⁵ Dominici was a peasant farmer convicted of triple murder in a case where there was little material evidence and so the prosecution relied heavily on psychology. There

were numerous misunderstandings, written up in the press reports, between the old farmer and the representatives of the legal apparatus because their languages were mutually impenetrable. Barthes comments:

Naturally, everyone pretends to believe that it is the official language which is common sense, that of Dominici being only one of its ethnological varieties, picturesque in its poverty. And yet, this language of the president [Presiding Judge of the Assizes] is just as peculiar, laden as it is with unreal clichés; it is a language for school essays . . . These are in actual fact two particular uses of language which confront each other. But one of them has honours, law and force on its side. (*Mythologies*, 50)

(Naturellement tout le monde feint de croire que c'est le langage officiel qui est de sens commun, celui de Dominici n'étant qu'une variété ethnologique, pittoresque par son indigence. Pourtant ce langage présidentiel est tout aussi particulier, chargé de clichés irréels, langage de rédaction scolaire . . . Ce sont tout simplement deux particularités qui s'affrontent. Mais l'un a les honneurs, la loi, la force pour soi. (*Mythologies*, 52))

The question of the name, and the possible policing of names, is also important in this context, and raises a number of general issues relating to identity, legitimacy, inheritance, signature and indeed plagiarism (see Chapter 4).

Codes of hospitality suggest that the host will entertain the (usually his) guest, and an unwritten contract guards them both from harm. However, the possibility of a breakdown may not be contingent but structural, lying in the relation or non-relation between the Law and the laws as well as in the specificities of personal, sexual and socio-political contingencies such as in the cases cited above. Difference exists in a difficult relationship with inequality. Justice is notoriously fragile between non-equals; generosity is equally vulnerable, and what should be a dynamic, at least temporary, diminishing of inequality may instead work to fossilise if not increase it. The breakdown of hospitality (which is a cementing of human interdependency) can then easily spiral into terror (the rejection of mutual dependency to the point of mass destruction). If we can work through some of these issues – either by closer attention to the code and practice of hospitality and/or by the evocation of the superabundant Law of hospitality – we are still left, I would suggest, with the importance of sexual difference. That remainder may be uncannily important for the whole.

Sexual difference

While Derrida asserts the importance of sexual difference in the structure of hospitality, it is either disembodied Levinasian hospitality, or hospitality in relation to racial, ethnic or cultural difference, that has captured the imagination of most interlocutors. The importance of sexual difference in relation to hospitality includes historical and material questions, and also requires consideration of an *imaginary* of the female body (and Luce Irigaray's works will help in analysing this). Via Cixous, as well as Derrida, I shall also be considering more or less hospitable writing economies which are named masculine or feminine.

While much will be made of the reversibility of the French term *hôte* in this book, the reader should bear in mind that it is not so true for women as for men since *hôte*, as host (but not as guest), splits into two with the feminine form *hôtesse*. Host and guest are traditionally marked as masculine; hostess is a generally denigrated term in both French and English. It has overtones that are commercial, including the commercialisation of sex. In dictionary definitions 'hostess' has a range of professional meanings (such as air-hostess) that tend to take precedence over any equivalence to host – and this is to some extent true of *l'hôtesse*. If not commercial, the hostess implies hospitality offered by the master of the house,²⁶ the true host, *by means of* his woman, the hostess. Her authority is thus only a delegated one, and she is an intermediary, her body (and mental and emotional faculties) a means for two or more men to communicate and bond.

I shall be arguing in Chapter 3, however, that there is an erotic and maternal quality to hospitality even as it is dispensed by *le maître de céans* (as Derrida calls him, after Pierre Klossowski). The female body is uniquely hospitable, and that erotic, reproductive and nourishing specificity is a potent source of fantasy and acts inspired by it. At the same time that hospitable specificity of the female body (for example, the fact that women carry children) implies male interest in inheritance, both the genetic inheritance and the legitimate (or illegitimate) transmission of names and property. That interest entails policing, and also gives an opportunity for transgression. Policing and transgression come together in the culture and economy of sexual violence. Susan Brownmiller has controversially argued that rape is structurally intrinsic to patriarchy's economy of sexual difference with its virgin-mothers who are taught that they must be protected, and its whores (who may be the same women in a different

context).²⁷ In Chapter 5 in particular, I shall return to the question of the violence attendant upon hospitality in relation to the three great monotheistic religions that Derrida brings together (following a certain tradition) as Abrahamic. All three prize hospitality as fundamental, but all three also stage the control of (women's) bodies as critical to social order. The Old Testament stories of Lot and of the Levite of Ephraim are emblematic in this respect. Greek tales of *rapt* (such as Paris' seizing of Helen) and Roman stories of rape (such as Tarquin's violation of Lucretia), specifically in the context of hospitality, are also retold and reinterpreted in many different ages and contexts to be suffused with the meanings of the day. The masculine economy of hospitality (as opposed to the masculine economy more often known as the market) is a patriarchal one – aristocratic or pastoral. It assumes power even as it may choose temporarily to abdicate it. The body is the first sphere of hospitality, before the home, the city, the nation state or the cosmos, and inhospitality is often narrativised as rape. Without analysing these matters in any detail in the work published so far, Derrida often uses the term *viol*, sometimes translated as 'rape' and sometimes as 'violation', for intrusion into the domestic space of hospitality – for example by the State, which makes the possibility of surveillance and punishment a condition of its protection of the *chez-soi* from other invaders (see *OH*, 65; *DH*, 61).

While Irigaray's comments on hospitality have been little studied, her work is critical to the re-insertion of the question of sexual difference more forcefully into the debate.²⁸ She takes an uncompromising stand on the distinct nature of men and women, and opposes any apparent solution to the oppression of women that involves embracing sexual sameness (and it is, she argues, precisely an imaginary of sexual sameness that allows oppressive structures of *opposition* between men and women as much as complementarity or identity).²⁹ This makes her work important to engage with when we consider that men and women have historically had (and, I would argue, continue to have) very different experiences of hospitality both as hosts (more often hostesses) and as guests. There are two other reasons for evoking Irigaray's writing; the first is that I should like to put forward the argument that it is a particular imaginary of the female body and of the feminine that marks our cultural understanding of hospitality in many ways, and that relates both to our desire for the experience of hospitality and to our sometimes violent reaction against it. The second is that when we turn to questions of ethnic,

national or cultural difference, Irigaray's work continues to be interesting as a strong statement in favour of celebrating cultures of difference and encouraging dialogue between differences, yet questioning the often hierarchical sexed structure of cultural groups and, most of all, challenging, in affirming, ourselves.³⁰

It is unsurprising that, particularly in the current macrocosmic political situation, we are concerned by issues of ethnicity and migration. However, Irigaray alerts us to the danger that patriarchy subsumes an apparent plurality of 'races' into a kind of uniformity; she argues that only attention to micro- and macro-cosmic sexual difference can prevent the slide into sameness that is characteristic of our mono-culture.³¹ Paying due care to the real difference that is closest to us and attempting to build what she terms a culture of two subjects, will, she argues, improve other kinds of relations in difference, including cultural difference.

Certain historical factors might seem more important to us than treating the difference of the sexes: those tied to the migrations of our age, for example. Now these migrations risk carrying us off toward an increasingly disturbing neutralization and phantomization of the environment and of the individual, accompanied by an authoritarian guardianship that surrounds or integrates the multiple and the foreigner. The recent paternalist era claims to be plural, but it is a plural often remaining inside the closure of the patriarchal world.

(Certains facteurs historiques peuvent nous sembler plus importants que le traitement de la différence des sexes: ceux liés aux migrations de notre époque, par exemple. Or celles-ci risquent de nous entraîner vers une neutralisation et une fantomatization de plus en plus inquiétantes de l'environnement et de l'individu, s'accompagnant de tutelles autoritaires pour encadrer ou intégrer le multiple et l'étranger. La dernière époque paternaliste se dit au pluriel, mais un pluriel restant souvent à l'intérieur de la clôture du monde patriarcal.)³²

While Derrida is widely cited in work on hospitality, and reference is often made to Levinas, women writers such as Cixous or Irigaray are rarely mentioned – they are kept in the ghetto of feminism or women's studies, more easily to be dismissed. Irigaray is at least recognised as a *feminist philosopher*, in particular outside France thanks to the translation of *Speculum* in 1985, although we should not underestimate the attacks she has suffered from feminists or the degree to which she has been ignored by mainstream (and male-dominated) philosophy.³³ Cixous, above all a creative writer, is a more complicated case, and even less happy to be placed within

what she would understand as feminism. She constantly reminds her reader of sexual difference, but just as constantly unsettles our certainties about it. She first came to the attention of an Anglophone public with 'The Laugh of the Medusa', published in English relatively early (1976), and then *The Newly Born Woman*, not translated until the mid eighties.³⁴ These texts, perhaps unfortunately, gained her a reputation as a proponent of *écriture féminine*, a term sometimes mistranslated either literally or conceptually as women's writing. Feminists in university departments of literature in the USA and the UK had made it one of their priorities, at least from the 1970s onwards, to retrieve from obscurity a number of women writers who had been consigned by a masculine critical orthodoxy, from the nineteenth century onwards, to the dustbin of history. Feminist academics sought both to reappraise women writers from the earliest periods (and to get them republished) and to make sure that contemporary women writers were treated with the seriousness they deserve. This important and difficult project, swiftly tagged 'political correctness' the better to belittle it, contributed to a certain confusion with regard to Cixous's rather different questioning of established orthodoxies. All the same, I should note that the rediscovery of 'women's writing' could certainly be related to hospitality – of the institution, the canon, the critical orthodoxy, pedagogic practices – even though not the same project as Cixous's.

'Writing the body' is less of a 'mistranslation' of *écriture féminine* although it immediately begs the question 'whose body?' In Chapter 6 I shall consider how the question is posed not only to the opposition between the masculine bodily economy of scarcity and feminine economies of abundance, but also to the boundary between human and animal. But even the sexed opposition (which Cixous's critics seem so sure about) might need to be questioned: a writing economy could be across male and female. When read in this way, Cixous would part company with Irigaray's certainties. Peggy Kamuf carefully (seriously *and* lightly) analyses some famous 'vertiginous' passages in Cixous, showing how her phrase 'writing is woman's' assigns each term's meaning to the other, but then 'advances through *contradiction*' ('To Give Place', 77).³⁵ Later in the same passage Kamuf refers to, Cixous writes: 'Femininity and bisexuality go together . . . It is much harder for the man to let himself be traversed by some other'; Kamuf's analysis shows how this claim in fact unsettles any identity, or even non-identity, of both the term *femininity* and the term *man*. Yet it never settles into a would-be neutrality or neuter. Cixous's

openness is a particular kind of hospitality in Derrida's terms. The body described in Cixous's 'Coming to Writing', with its breath and blood,³⁶ is a hospitable body, characterised by 'a having without limits, without restrictions, but without any "deposit," a having that doesn't withhold or possess, a having-love that sustains itself with loving, in the blood-rapport' ('Coming to Writing', 4) ('Un avoir sans limites, sans restriction; mais sans aucun "dépôt", un avoir qui ne détient pas, qui ne possède pas, l'avoir-amour, celui qui se soutient d'aimer, dans le sang-rapport.' ('La Venue à l'écriture', 12)).

While Cixous's body is named *feminine* with all the contradictions that supposes, it also has qualities related to ethnicity or to the lack of a national identity, and her work has considerable relevance to hospitality in relation to cultural or national difference. Cixous and Irigaray both experience exile and (in)hospitality in different ways. Cixous names herself Jewwoman (*juifemme*); and the reader should note that the word insists on sexual as well as cultural difference in a way that would be read blindly in the normal French gendering of Jew ('juif') as Jewish woman ('juive'). She is 'not at home' (writing) in French; she needed to knock before entering:

Everything in me joined forces to forbid me to write: History, my story, my origin, my sex. Everything that constituted my social and cultural self. To begin with the necessary, which I lacked, the material that writing is formed of and extracted from: language. You want – to Write? In what language? Property, rights, had always policed me: I learned to speak French in a garden from which I was on the verge of expulsion for being a Jew. I was of the race of Paradise-losers. Write French? With what right? Show us your credentials! What's the password? Cross yourself! Put out your hands, let's see those paws! What kind of nose is that?

I said 'write French.' One writes *in*. Penetration. Door. Knock before entering. Strictly forbidden.

'You are not from here. You are not at home here. Usurper!'

'It's true. No right. Only love.' ('Coming to Writing', 12–13)

(Tout de moi se liguaient pour m'interdire l'écriture: l'Histoire, mon histoire, mon origine, mon genre. Tout ce qui constituait mon moi social, culturel. A commencer par le nécessaire, qui me faisait défaut, la matière dans laquelle l'écriture se taille, d'où elle s'arrache: la langue. Tu veux – Ecrire? Dans laquelle langue? La propriété, le droit me gendarmaient depuis toujours: j'ai appris à parler français dans un jardin d'où j'étais sur le point d'être expulsée parce que juive. J'étais de la race des perdus de paradis. Ecrire français? De quel droit? Monte-nous tes lettres de créance,

dis-nous les mots de passe, signe-toi, fais voir tes mains, montre tes pattes, qu'est-ce que c'est que ce nez-là?

J'ai dit 'écrire français'. On écrit *en*. Pénétration. Porte. Frappez avant d'entrer. Formellement interdit.

– Tu n'es pas d'ici. Tu n'es pas chez toi ici. Usurpatrice!

– C'est vrai. Pas de droit. Seulement de l'amour. ('La Venue à l'écriture', 20))

She is in some respects a guest and in other respects treated inhospitably as an usurper, and yet there is also love – if only for/in language. Her love for what she elsewhere calls the *hospitable* French language is as complicated as any other kind of love: some critics would see her writing style as an assault on the spirit and form of this (neither quite maternal nor paternal) tongue.³⁷ Others would see her (and vision is important here) as replenishing the language, and even, ironically, as defending it against the most invasive cultural threat: 'An infectious homonymy would be the guardian . . . of a French language whose idiom could not be better protected against translation's blood-transfusion than by untranslatable homonymy' ('Une homonymie contagieuse sera la gardienne . . . d'une langue française dont l'idiome ne saurait être mieux protégé contre l'ex-sanguinotransfusion de la traduction que par l'intraduisible homonymie').³⁸

Writing the body could be set against two traditional kinds of writing: writing the mind, which might involve the transmission (as clearly and transparently as possible) of ideas; and writing the world, which might involve the recording or analysis of facts. Realist fiction would then be an imitation of the scientific writing the world, where verisimilitude takes the place of falsifiability as a criterion of judgement. Writing the body, on the other hand, would operate at a different level of hospitality – closer to the body crossed by drives or the body of the unconscious where the principle of non-contradiction does not apply. This possibility, of the co-existence of what might seem to a more 'flat-footed' reader to be mutually exclusive meanings, is crucial in Cixous's writing. And the French language lends itself to a generic gender play, for example, *elle* can refer to he/him (say, referring back to *la personne*) or it (say, referring back to *la mer*) as well as she/her as a translator might expect. Derrida comments: 'in her general poetics, each genre remains itself, at home, while offering hospitality generously to the other genre, to the other in any genre that arrives as a parasite, as a ghost or to take its host hostage, always following the same topodynamics of the smaller bigger than the bigger' ('Dans sa poétique générale, chaque genre reste lui-même,

chez lui, tout en offrant une hospitalité généreuse à l'autre genre, à l'autre en tout genre qui vient le parasiter, le hanter ou tenir son hôte en otage, toujours selon la même topodynamique du plus petit plus grand que le plus grand') (*Genèses*, 28). This formulation hints that genre could be understood in more than one sense – and this is quickly made explicit: 'Grafting, hybridisation, migration, genetic mutation multiplies and cancels at once genre and gender differences, literary differences and sexual differences' ('La greffe, l'hybridation, la migration, la mutation génétique multiplie et annule à la fois la différence du genre et du *gender*, les différences littéraires et les différences sexuelles') (*Genèses*, 28–9). The texts signed Derrida also of course work at the border between genres; as he comments on *The Post Card*, which some critics have tried to place *within* literature:

I think it is an attempt to blur the borders between literature and philosophy, and to blur the borders in the name of hospitality – that is what hospitality does, blur the border – by writing some sentences, some undecidable sentences, which put in question the limits of what one calls philosophy, science, literature. I try to do this performatively, so to speak. This gesture, to the extent that it is successful, does not belong to philosophy, to literature, nor to any genre. (*HJR*, 73)

Looking back at hospitality

Hospitality is a topic that has consistently been considered important over long periods of time, and over wide tracts of the globe. Our conviction of its *universality* is indeed critical to our understanding of its structure. Nevertheless, like most other forms of human relationship, its significance varies to some extent over time and space. Different cultures have different modes of hospitality, and, as we look to the future, we should think about constructing new modes suitable to a new historical moment. One of the things that interests me about our formal and informal discussions of hospitality is their *intertextual quality* – how elements from a range of earlier or otherwise distant theories and practices are introduced and transformed in the present. How we are haunted by the past, and how we fashion those ghosts in the present. It is hard to find a starting point where discourse about hospitality does not lament a decline in standards. It may ring true when Ben Jelloun writes:

Some people are more hospitable than others: generally speaking, they are those who have remained close to the soil and live in the wide open spaces, even if they are poor. The industrialized countries, obedient to a

cold rationality, have had to unlearn hospitality. Time is precious and space limited. There's a shortage of accessibility, or in other words of generosity and freedom, because everything is calculated and measured. Doors are shut, and so are hearts. (*French Hospitality*, 37)

(Certains peuples sont plus hospitaliers que d'autres: généralement ceux restés plus près de la terre et qui vivent dans les grands espaces, même pauvres. Les pays industrialisés, obéissant à une rationalité froide, ont dû désapprendre l'hospitalité. Le temps est précieux; l'espace, limité. Il y règne un manque de disponibilité, c'est-à-dire de générosité et de liberté, car tout est calculé, tout est mesuré. Les portes se ferment. Les coeurs aussi. (*Hospitalité française*, 57))

However, we can find similar words in pre-industrial France; in the *Encyclopédie*, for example, D. J. (the Chevalier de Jaucourt) writes in his entry for 'Hospitality':

We are no longer familiar with that fine bond of *hospitality*, and must admit that time has brought about such great changes amongst different peoples and above all amongst ourselves, that we are much less obliged to the respectable and holy laws of that duty than the ancients were. . . . The spirit of commerce, while uniting all nations, has broken the links of beneficence between individuals; it has done much good and much evil; it has produced countless commodities, more extensive knowledge of things and people, easy access to luxury and love of self-interest. That love has taken the place of the secret movements of nature, which used to bind men together with tender and touching attachments. Wealthy travellers have gained the enjoyment of all the pleasures of the countries they visit, joined with the polite welcome given to them in proportion to the amount they spend. They are viewed with pleasure, and without attachment, like those rivers which fertilize to some extent the lands through which they pass.

(Nous ne connaissons plus ce beau lien de l'*hospitalité*, et l'on doit convenir que les temps ont produit de si grands changements parmi les peuples et surtout parmi nous, que nous sommes beaucoup moins obligés aux lois saintes et respectables de ce devoir, que ne l'étaient les anciens . . . L'esprit de commerce, en unissant toutes les nations, a rompu les chaînons de bienfaisance des particuliers; il a fait beaucoup de bien et de mal; il a produit des commodités sans nombre, des connaissances plus étendues, un luxe facile, et l'amour de l'intérêt. Cet amour a pris la place des mouvements secrets de la nature, qui liaient autrefois les hommes par des nœuds tendres et touchants. Les gens riches ont gagné dans leurs voyages, la jouissance de tous les agréments du pays où ils se rendent, jointe à l'accueil poli qu'on leur accorde à proportion de leur dépense. On les voit avec plaisir, et sans attachement, comme ces fleuves qui fertilisent plus ou moins les terres par lesquelles ils passent. (316))³⁹

The debate on hospitality in France today draws on a multitude of textual strands, including Arab hospitality, the mythical political hospitality of the French Revolution, and pastoral traditions. Of course, travellers' tales of any place perceived as 'simpler' than our own may tell of relatively abundant hospitality; the ethnographer Daphne Patai phrases the anthropologist's dilemma when she tells of the offer of chocolate cake from a Brazilian woman who cannot afford it, but whose offer cannot be refused.⁴⁰ But North African traditions of hospitality (sometimes termed Mediterranean traditions) are particularly relevant in the light of French colonial history and consequent patterns of immigration into France. In this book the additional strands on which I shall focus are those of 'Homeric hospitality', biblical hospitality (which feeds into the Islamic tradition of course), and the classical discourse of friendship (Chapters 2 and 3).

I should like to say a little more here about the French context, and why the language of hospitality might be appropriate for the public and political domain in France in a way that is less obvious elsewhere. France can and does (like other nations) draw on many traditions to inform its deployment of the language of hospitality. I am using the term 'tradition' as a 'portmanteau' to cover historical reality, cultural memory, myth and so on. Examples of diverse traditions important for hospitality include tales of the Greeks, Romans, Arabs, and the Hebrews as narrated in the Bible, distant ethnographic reports and local rural practices (including notably Corsica). Any of these will of course be understood and experienced differently by different sections of the community. Here I shall briefly focus on the myth of the Revolution to ask what is at stake in the language of hospitality – if we assume that language is not separable from reality, a veil to be lifted, but rather shapes and is shaped by *ethos*.

Hospitality is a key element of the rhetoric, and sometimes the practice, of the French Revolution; and there is a myth of revolutionary hospitality that still exercises a powerful influence today. In Ben Jelloun's biting critique of 'French hospitality' towards immigrants cited above, he still admires the French reception of political refugees which stands out relative to other European countries and which 'remains true to the principles of the 1789 Revolution' (*French Hospitality*, 38) ('reste fidèle aux principes de la Révolution de 1789' (*Hospitalité française*, 59)). The most influential analysis of this that I have come across is by Sophie Wahnich.⁴¹ Like much of revolutionary culture, there is a will to originality (the trope of the *tabula rasa* evident in 'Year 0' rhetoric) in the discourse of openness

to strangers, at the same time as the evident need to select from (the best of) the past. There is a process of self construction through narratives. Hospitality is, in any period at any time, evoked as something that has declined relative to some past moment. However, in the early days of the Revolution there is a political determination to reinvent it as asylum from tyranny and oppression. Thus Condorcet, in December 1791, can produce an Address to be sent to foreign peoples assuring them that 'the principle of hospitality' will not be put in question by war. Revolution is to be universalised, and the right to equality and freedom should be universal; deserters from the armies of those who attack France can become citizens after three years. The tone of this appeal is notably different from the one taken by politicians in 1950s France or England, who encouraged immigration for economic reasons – because foreigners' labour power was *needed*. As Anne Gotman points out in *Le sens de l'hospitalité*, the story in 1791 is that the state has something to *bestow* (rights); of course that could be reinterpreted as revolutionary evangelism, even imperialism, yet perhaps we should not be too hasty to judge it so.⁴²

However, *la nation hospitalière* still had to think about 'security', and foreigners in fact quickly became assimilated into the category of spies or counter-revolutionaries. The generous and expansive state, that wishes to extend universal rights not dependent on birthplace, becomes the nation state that defines itself *against* others.⁴³ Again Wahnich traces this trajectory: she follows the fates of certain famous foreigners in France such as Anacharsis Cloots, who points out what a barbarous expression the very word 'étranger' is. By 6 September 1793 a decree suspends public hospitality and expels foreigners born in those countries at war with France. Foreigners have to be policed so that the State can turn out 'those who betray the hospitable nation that protects them' (cited in Wahnich, *L'Impossible Citoyen*, 31). Even long-term residents have to apply for a *certificat d'hospitalité* (though the plan to make them wear tricolor armbands bearing the legend *hospitalité* was dropped) and give proof of loyalty. This required the testimony of a native French person who thus acquired a degree of power over the 'guest'. These two brief vignettes show the language of hospitality deployed for both hospitable and what might seem quite inhospitable purposes – both to welcome the foreigner in and to protect the purity of the state from undesirable foreigners. These should have obvious resonance for contemporary debates in France as some on the Left use the language of hospitality

to underline solidarity while some on the Right use it to emphasise the gulf between the host and the guest who will never be more than a guest.

Contemporary echoes

I should like to point out the insistence/persistence of the figure of *l'hôte* in contemporary French politics. Although hospitality can be evoked from across the whole political spectrum, with those hostile to immigration or immigrants emphasising the precariousness of the *guests'* position, I argue that it should not be analysed 'out', but rather we should seek to work out the ways in which it can still mobilise a radical interrogation of exclusion and hostility towards strangers. This necessitates recognition of its fragility whether as generosity or as reciprocity, and includes the necessity of demystifying as well as celebrating the Revolution and its inheritance.

Immigration today is commonly thought under three broad headings relating to its motivation: economic (immigration for work); domestic (immigration for family reasons); and political (immigration for asylum). The economic modelling of 'hospitality' follows the distribution of goods and people, while the sphere of politics is concerned with rights and responsibilities in particular as regards the individual or group in relation to the nation state, or between one nation state and another. The (global) economy and nation states are of course interdependent – each impacts upon and relies upon the other. But while economic analysis is often viewed as outside the sphere of morality, politics draws it into the realm of ethics. Human rights are often taken to be innate and certainly supra-national. But we need languages and moral codes in which to formulate ethical relations, and these need to be constantly rethought. There is a long tradition of referring to the code of hospitality in order to negotiate relations with 'visitors' in all senses. (I feel I need to fall back on a very clumsy formulation such as 'being in a country which you, and/or the natives, perceive as not your own' to cover the range of situations in question.) It is of course crucial that we do not accept the notion (used rhetorically, strategically, by those who police immigration) that economics, politics, and ethics (notably hospitality) are watertight categories. Accommodation (and subsistence) of immigrants is a major issue feeding into immigration policies as well as the response of the so-called host-community or nation. This can of course exist in a vicious or virtuous circle with work, but can

also be a question of state benefits in kind or cash, and/or within the domestic broadly understood. French law demands an *attestation d'accueil* (an official proof of residence) for visitors on a visa – and there is a proviso for inspecting the quality of the lodging offered to these guests.

Whenever there is a law that appears to attack immigrants or asylum seekers there is a degree of protest in France from the Left, and sometimes even beyond, as suggested by this quote from an editorial in *Le Monde*: 'What good are speeches about defending freedom throughout the world if, at the same time, we refuse hospitality to men and women who, at home, risk death, torture or prison because of their ideas?' ('A quoi bon les discours sur la défense des libertés de par le monde si, parallèlement, l'hospitalité est refusée à des hommes, à des femmes qui, chez eux, risquent, pour leurs idées, la mort, la torture ou la prison?')⁴⁴ There was, however, a particularly striking mobilisation of opposition to the *projet de loi* brought to the French parliament by Jean-Louis Debré in December 1996.⁴⁵ It has been argued that part of the reason for this was the way in which the restriction of public hospitality inherent in any such bill was combined with an attack on private hospitality that made its inhospitality stand out. On 4 February 1997 Jacqueline Delthombe was found guilty of harbouring a friend and her partner from Zaire who did not have the correct papers.⁴⁶ The Bishop of Clermont-Ferrand wrote: 'Hospitality still has something sacred about it. It comes out of those unwritten laws which we know every individual and even the State should obey' ('L'hospitalité a gardé quelque chose de sacré. Elle relève de ces lois non écrites dont nous savons qu'elles s'imposent à toute personne et même à l'Etat').⁴⁷ Like the representatives of the Church, Etienne Balibar, again in *Le Monde*, makes an appeal to those higher unwritten laws such as 'respect for the living and the dead, hospitality, the inviolable nature of the human being' ('le respect des vivants et des morts, l'hospitalité, l'inviolabilité de l'être humain') and so on.⁴⁸ Hospitality (a higher law) is thus used as a justification for civil disobedience. Hospitality is presented as integral to humanity, just as it was in the eighteenth century.⁴⁹ When Chevènement's attempt to regularise the situation of some of the *sans-papiers* (note the difference from one possible translation, 'illegal immigrants') is seen as too narrow in scope, an editorial in *Libération* asks for greater generosity inspired by 'the spirit of French hospitality inherited from 1789' ('l'esprit de l'hospitalité française hérité de 1789').⁵⁰ In summary, the French clampdown on illegal immigrants mobilised intellectuals, and

was debated in terms of hospitality, in a way that is quite foreign to us in the UK.⁵¹

More recently these debates have inevitably been overshadowed in the press by the aftermath of 9/11, the invasion of Afghanistan and then the Iraq war. However, it is still possible to find passionate articles about the spirit and laws of hospitality occasioned by any attempt by the French State to criminalise hospitable behaviour. I shall take just two examples, the first relating to Corsica. Corsica is a region particularly rich in its tradition and myth of hospitality; the arrest of Frédéric Paoli, shepherd and town councillor, for giving shelter to a Corsican nationalist accused of murder in 2003 gave rise to a series of demonstrations and articles in the press around the theme 'hospitality is not a crime'. The lyrical accounts of Corsican hospitality went back many centuries, paused particularly on the period of the Second World War, but also reported that a number of young Algerians were sheltered at the beginning of the 1990s when they fled from repression in Algeria and sought asylum in Corsica.⁵²

My second example relates to Calais, particularly affected by the bulldozing of the Sangatte camp at the end of 2002; this did not prevent the arrival of significant numbers of refugees without any means of support, but it did leave them with nowhere to stay. A number of citizens of Calais distributed food and clothes and offered other kinds of help including short-term accommodation. Before long, two teachers (Jean-Claude Lenoir and Charles Frammezelle) were accused of 'aide au séjour irrégulier d'un étranger en France' (aiding a foreigner to stay in France without the necessary permits), a clause in a law dating from 1945; these do-gooders were then pursued in law as if they were people traffickers. Smain Laacher and Laurette Mokrani wrote: 'These two ordinary citizens, like thousands of others in our country, have done no more than obey the laws of hospitality', going on to quote Edmond Jabès on the relationship between responsibility, solidarity and hospitality.⁵³

If we were to seek wider political resonance, we could think further about hospitality on an international level, for example the situation of refugees and asylum seekers. Derrida has addressed the theme of hospitality as asylum, notably in the short piece, *Cosmopolites de tous les pays, encore un effort!*, in which he promotes the notion of the city of refuge (*ville-refuge*).⁵⁴ This originated as an address to the International Parliament of Writers (IPW) in Strasbourg in 1996, which aimed to set up a network of cities of refuge particularly for writers who seek asylum.⁵⁵ Derrida's analysis of the decline

in hospitality (in France in particular) towards refugees builds on Kant, Arendt and on Levinas.⁵⁶ In Kant's 'Third Definitive Article for a Perpetual Peace: Cosmopolitan right shall be limited to conditions of universal *hospitality*', from *To Perpetual Peace* (1795), the Enlightenment produced a key reference point for cosmopolitan theories of the need for nations to unite together and to offer hospitality to the citizens of other nations (even if Kant elsewhere expresses views that today we would regard as racist).⁵⁷ Asylum is dependent on, and controlled by, the law; it is a matter of rights. Asylum here is a relation between the State (or local government) and a certain category of persons (defined by law whether loosely such that anyone who asks for asylum should be granted it, or much more tightly). The progressive narrowing of the understanding of asylum on the part of the nation state – so that France, for example can demand that refugees derive no economic benefit from living in France, an almost impossible demand which denies any possibility of social integration, say, through employment – encourages the turn to the city. The specific term 'city of refuge' comes from the Old Testament; it contains a kind of paradox in that these are cities that offer temporary refuge to those who have accidentally killed someone and are pursued by the victim's family intent on revenge. Derrida returns to this question in his more extended analysis of Levinasian hospitality in which he calls for, or suggests that refugees and homeless people throughout the world call out for: 'another international law, another border politics, another humanitarian politics, indeed a humanitarian commitment that *effectively* operates beyond the interests of Nation-States' (*Adieu*, 101) ('Un autre droit international, une autre politique des frontières, une autre politique de l'humainitaire, voire un engagement humanitaire qui se tienne *effectivement* au-delà de l'intérêt des Etats-nations' (176)). This notion of granting asylum to the one who is considered (elsewhere?) as a criminal resonates rather differently in the case of the most dangerous guest of our contemporary *geist*: the terrorist, a figure both hyperbolically masculine and totally feminised. In the case of the terrorist we are brought back to Homeric precedents for the spectacular revenge taken on the guilty guest or those deemed to be his people . . .

Today, with our appropriately guilty focus on immigrants and asylum seekers trying to break into so-called 'Fortress Europe' or knocking on the wall between Mexico and the US, we writers on hospitality tend to emphasise Kant's strictures on the limitations of hospitality as if he were a good model in so far as he urges us to be

hosts, but also not so good in that he limits the right of hospitality quite considerably. A guest has no right of residence according to Kant, only a right to visit; the former has to emerge from a treaty between States. He is not proposing philanthropy, but a natural right that should be enshrined in law. At the end of the eighteenth century, however, when Europeans were far more likely to be (abusive) guests abroad than hosts at home, Kant's claim that a guest has no right to outstay their welcome seems rather different, especially if we continue this familiar quotation beyond the point where it is usually cut:

As in the preceding articles, our concern here is not with philanthropy, but with *right*, and in this context *hospitality* (hospitableness) means the right of an alien not to be treated as an enemy upon his arrival in another's country. If it can be done without destroying him, he can be turned away; but as long as he behaves peaceably he cannot be treated as an enemy. He may request the *right* to be a *permanent visitor* (which would require a special, charitable agreement to make him a fellow inhabitant for a certain period), but the *right to visit*, to associate, belongs to all men by virtue of their common ownership of the earth's surface; for since the earth is a globe they cannot scatter themselves infinitely, but must, finally, tolerate living in close proximity, because originally no one had a greater right to any region of the earth than anyone else . . . [Natural right] extends the right to hospitality, i.e., the privilege of aliens to enter, only so far as makes attempts at commerce with native inhabitants possible. In this way distant parts of the world can establish with one another peaceful relations that will eventually become matters of public law, and the human race can gradually be brought closer and closer to a cosmopolitan constitution.

Compare this with the inhospitable conduct of civilized nations in our part of the world, especially commercial ones: the injustice that they display towards foreign lands and peoples (which is the same as *conquering* them), is terrifying. When discovered, America, the lands occupied by the blacks, the Spice Islands, the Cape etc., were regarded as lands belonging to no one because their inhabitants were counted for nothing. (*Perpetual Peace*, paragraph 358, 118–19)

In *Adieu*, Derrida suggests that Kant's argument is almost the reverse of Levinas's account of hospitality as pre-originary; for Levinas violence supposes, arises from, bears witness to, hospitality; even the torturer supposes hospitality – which is a more frightening thesis than Kant's (*Adieu*, 95–6; 167–8). Kant's universal hospitality is a right because men originally had common ownership of the earth's surface; it is a right, and also a *response* or solution to the hostility and violence that he observes (or reads about) in the world.

While this limited welcome falls far short of the Law of hospitality, I shall argue that it needs just as careful attention in my analysis.⁵⁸

Plan of the book

Chapter 2 includes analyses of the *Odyssey* and of episodes from the Books of Genesis and Judges as ur-texts of hospitality, which bring out the working of sexual difference within it. It also takes up the question of intertextuality more generally. This is important not only because hospitality can be used as a model for the experience of reading and writing, but also because discourses about hospitality (political or personal) often refer to the text of the past. Derrida's readings (and he stands out as a philosopher whose writings are almost always explicitly readings) have sometimes been read as violent and intrusive or sneaky and illegitimate. However, I would argue that, like Cixous and Irigaray, he typically reads others, whom he respects, in order to expand generously on what is always already there. Derrida is quick to point to the presents others bestow: for example Levinas, whose first gift to his host country is to introduce phenomenology (Husserl) and ontology (Heidegger) to France in the 1930s, and whose second gift, causing a second philosophical tremor, is to displace that same axis (*Adieu*, 10 ff; 22 ff). This pedagogical *sharing* or nourishing is a critical form of hospitality for Derrida (as he explains in "Eating Well", or the Calculation of the Subject', analysed in Chapter 6). Chapter 3 will be devoted to sexual difference and friendship, friendship traditionally being conceived as a relationship between men, just as hospitality has traditionally been conceived as a relationship between men, although supported by women's labour. Analysis of friendship and reciprocity moves us away a little from the focus on the subject-host which can result from a certain reading of Levinas. The final section will turn from fraternal friendship to an alternative maternal model of hospitality. Chapter 4 takes up the specific issue of names, (not) asking for a name, calling by name, or naming as a way of exploring problems within hospitality especially in the colonial context of French Algeria, where Europeans were uninvited visitors who took upon themselves the position of mastery. Chapter 5, on Gods and cultural difference, focuses on a specific area of political intervention in the post-colonial world, which remains inhabited by colonialism in so many senses. It evokes the dream and the dangers of hospitality today. Arrivals, many (although not all) from former colonies, may imagine that they

are in some sense invited, or indeed that they are at home – while their status as 'guests' is inhospitably emphasised. Chapter 6 takes up the liminal subject of hospitality to animals in order to ask about the boundaries we place around the human, an ethical and political question with relevance to sexual, ethnic and class differences. It raises the issues of companionship with living beings, of co-habitation in the world, and of 'eating (well)'. The question of the human (of what is human) subtends all ethical (and thus all political) questions. Finally Chapter 7 attempts to bring together 'the rest', the questions that remain.

A final vignette – returning to Algeria

To bring together in a concrete form a number of the points outlined above, I shall turn to a touching two-page spread in *Le Monde*, 'Pieds-noirs Retour à Alger', that describes one of the 'pilgrimages' made by the French who were born in Algeria and lived there before the War of Independence (about 60,000 have travelled in the last two years, and the number is growing).⁵⁹ Until recently it would have been very difficult and dangerous for them to return to visit what they perceive as their homeland. Now an association, France-Maghreb, has been set up to rehabilitate Christian cemeteries and also organises these tours to 'retrouver vos racines' (find your roots). According to the article these former colonials are received with the warmest hospitality: "Welcome, make yourselves at home", they are told at the main Post Office, in Bab El-Oued, in the Casbah and so on' ("Bienvenue, vous êtes chez vous!", leur dit-on à la Grand Poste, à Bab El-Oued, à la Casbah ou ailleurs'). We might note that the set phrase of hospitality: 'vous êtes chez vous', which literally translates as 'this is your home' (and which I have allowed to slip into an equivalent cliché: 'make yourself at home'), has a particular resonance in this context.

'Why did you leave?' the visitors are asked (presumably a rhetorical question). We need you! In return some French visitors set aside their long-held anger and resentment, wish they had never left and confess that they 'had never cut the umbilical cord with Algeria' ('n'avoir jamais coupé le cordon ombilical avec l'Algérie'). The maternal metaphor slips in unnoticed; Algeria is usually feminine. They explain that they were certainly not welcomed when they had arrived in France forty-four years earlier. "In Marseilles and Toulon they called us 'repatriates', but that's nonsense! We were immigrants.

Here, today, in Algeria, we are repatriates” (“A Marseille et Toulon, on nous appelait ‘les rapatriés’, mais c’est une ineptie! Nous étions des immigrés. C’est ici, aujourd’hui en Algérie que nous sommes des rapatriés”). One visitor carries a love letter to Algeria and a lock of hair from her elderly mother, with the mission to leave them behind somewhere in Algiers. Another woman says to Algerians who smile at her: “Khuya! [my brother]” before adding the aside: “I know them, they’re my blood” (“Khuya! [mon frère]” avant d’ajouter en aparté: “Je les connais, c’est mon sang!”). A particularly emotional scene shows Pierre daring to knock on the door of the flat where he used to live, amazed to find so little has changed (the new inhabitants liked the style). Even the beverages offered and accepted have their colonial and post-colonial histories. Over ‘a glass of Hamoud Boualem lemonade, the pieds-noirs’ favourite drink – alongside Selecto, a kind of local coca-cola’ (‘un verre de limonade Hamoud Boualem, la boisson favorite des pieds-noirs – avec le Selecto, sorte de Coca-Cola local’), the new friends swap addresses: “Come back with your family and have a week’s holiday in the flat” the master of the place insists when his guests say good-bye’ (“Revenez, en famille, passer une semaine de vacances dans cet appartement”, insiste le maître des lieux quand ses hôtes prennent congé). A neighbour calls out: “This is your home” (or ‘make yourself at home’) (“Vous êtes chez vous”). The dispassionate reader may reflect that even the ability of a native Algerian to say to a French-Algerian ‘this is your home’ contrasts vividly with the realities of a colonial situation in which the French made themselves at home at the expense of native Algerians regardless of the lack of any invitation. But the emotion of the moment leaves Pierre naturally in tears, and Jean-Paul comparing himself to the prodigal son. This harmonious description has only the occasional sour note – the son (a night-club owner from Toulouse) of a Jewish *pied-noir*, who says: “the Arabs here aren’t like the scum we have in France” (“les Arabes d’ici, c’est pas comme la racaille qu’on a en France”), to be told by his father, who is delighted at his welcome: “These are ours!” (“Ici, c’est les nôtres!”). Even a former OAS member, who now lives in America, and is horrified at how dirty things are these days, confesses: “I have to admit that I’ve never seen such hospitable people” (“je dois reconnaître que je n’ai jamais vu des gens aussi hospitaliers”).

This raises a whole range of issues including the French conceptualisation of Arab hospitality, of course, and Algerians’ self-understanding as hospitable. In *French Hospitality*, Ben Jelloun

re-tells a ‘true story’ of a French television crew who, following an immigrant returning home, were royally entertained in an Algerian village for a week – at huge cost in particular to the father of the subject of the documentary. The old man then makes the mistake of taking literally the return invitation made by the director to visit him in Paris, and simply turning up on his doorstep six months later (*French Hospitality*, 3; *Hospitalité française*, 12) – a kind of error in translation. Mireille Rosello rightly points out that this anecdote of clashing cultural codes could be interpreted in a number of ways, and argues that Ben Jelloun’s work has a tendency to universalise hospitality as a value to which some (for example, in the Algerian village) adhere more closely than others (for example, in the Parisian bourgeoisie), rather than investigating the need for negotiation between different understandings of hospitality (*Postcolonial Hospitality*, 170–1). I would argue that Jelloun’s account is a little more open than Rosello suggests – the city-dwelling reader is free to identify with the Parisian who is confused by a sudden knock on the door one night, and does not immediately recognise the old man whom he had last seen in such a different context. Ben Jelloun apparently uses the story in an unpublished novella (‘The Invitation’), and we do not know how the readers of that novella would be invited to respond. However, it is important to note that in *French Hospitality* Ben Jelloun is, amongst other things, using the tale as an allegory relating to Maghrebian immigrants who hoped that France would welcome them.

The huge question of colonial power and exploitation is not raised in the article in *Le Monde*; it is the elephant in the room. An accompanying interview with the historian Benjamin Stora (a respected expert on the Algerian war) is quite neutral in tone, although it does mention with respect to the ‘nostalgie’ of the visitors that native Moslems did not have the right to vote under French rule (unlike immigrants to Algeria from, say, Italy or Spain, who were given French citizenship). What is a motherland? What is immigration? *Pieds-noirs* say that they should have been regarded as immigrants, but what does this mean? Does this mean they enviously feel that immigrants are better treated when they come (not *back*) to France, or is it only a point about where their home truly is/was. They were seen as returning home, but they were not welcomed in France. How do they feel about other immigrants in France, notably those from the country they are saying is/was their home too? The only example is the highly tendentious term ‘scum’ from the nightclub owner, and

we might note that the notorious difficulty of gaining admittance to clubs if you are recognisably 'Arab' is a recurrent complaint for young men from the *banlieues*. 'La racaille' was also notoriously used by Nicolas Sarkozy (then the right-wing French Minister of the Interior) to describe the rioters in the North-African dominated *banlieues*.

Nostalgia suffuses the article's suggestion that relations were harmonious before war broke out. There is also a sensual, material quality of nostalgia for the physical environment, imbued with special memories of, say, food and drink that was difficult to get in France. *Nostalgia* (*Heimweh* in German) comes from the Greek and enters both the French (as *nostalgie*) and English languages in the eighteenth century. It combines *nostos*, the return home, and *algos*, pain. Even today, the OED privileges the meaning of 'homesickness': 'A form of melancholia caused by prolonged absence from one's country or home', as does the French Dictionary *Petit Robert*, rather than a later meaning of 'regret for earlier times', as we most often use it today. The French dictionary particularly associates the meaning of the word with émigrés and exiles – those most in need of hospitality.

Is there any lesson to be learnt from the example of Algerian hospitality extended to the visiting *pieds-noirs* and children of *pieds-noirs*, those formerly uninvited guests, returning to what they call their motherland, calling their Algerian hosts 'brothers', using the Arab term? Of course many contradictory lessons could be drawn, including a revisionist one that (Arab) terrorism is evil, that it ought never to be conceived as a fight for freedom, and that the French should never have been forced out of or have agreed to leave mother Algeria, which was, or could have been, a land of brothers, fathered by France. Camus might have subscribed to that, but the history of colonial exploitation is against him. Another reading could insist on the benefits of liberalisation, the free market, commercial hospitality, and the need for Algeria (rich in oil and gas, I note) to be 'opened up' for its own good (and ours, of course). But I shall close on a third double reading: let us be able to welcome with warmth and offers of food and shelter even those who *might* be suspected (on the past record) to be less than well-behaved guests. Yet, the shadowy double to this point is that, in order for the hosts to be able to say 'make yourselves at home', they do need to be masters of their own houses in some sense. I have not emphasised sexual difference, perhaps because it is so often an alibi in Western intrusion in the East. Did we invade Afghanistan to help Afghan women? The numerous images

which illustrate the *Le Monde* article focus on one particular male *pied-noir*, and on food as much as palm trees; Algerian women are totally absent. They do appear briefly in the text, making gestures and speeches of welcome, feeling pity for their guests; but interestingly veils are conspicuous by their absence, *unlike* many articles in the press that deal with the 'problem' of Muslims in France, women in the *banlieues* and so on. Perhaps there is a desire not to spoil the picture of commonality and brotherhood. I shall return frequently to the sexing of hospitality in the chapters to come.

Notes

1. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, translated by Peggy Kamuf, with an introduction by Bernd Magnus and Stephen Cullenberg (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), p. 35; Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx: l'état de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), p. 65.
2. See Mireille Rosello, *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), in particular the Introduction and Chapter 1; and Anne Gotman, *Le sens de l'hospitalité: Essai sur les fondements sociaux de l'accueil de l'autre* (Paris: PUF, 2001); both cite numerous examples including key texts such as Didier Fassin, Alain Morice, Catherine Quiminal (eds), *Les lois de l'inhospitalité: Les politiques de l'immigration à l'épreuve des sans-papier* (Paris: La Découverte, 1997). See also René Schérer, *Hospitalités* (Paris: Economica, second edition 2004); *L'étranger*, edited by Rosine Pinhas-Delpuech, special issue of *JIM. Journal intime du Massif Central*, 8 (Editions du Bleu autour, 2004); Sonia Dayan-Herzbrun and Etienne Tassin (eds), *Citoyennetés cosmopolitiques*, special issue of *Tumultes*, 24 (Paris: Kimé, 2005).
3. I shall not give an exhaustive list of the work on hospitality inspired by Derrida, but a few examples would include John D. Caputo (ed.), *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), which includes a section on 'Hospitality' (pp. 109–13); Mustafa Dikeç, 'Pera Peras Poros Longings for Spaces of Hospitality', *Cosmopolis*, special issue of *Theory, Culture and Society*, 19:1–2 (2002), pp. 227–47; Clive Barnett, 'Ways of Relating: Hospitality and the Acknowledgement of Otherness', *Progress in Human Geography*, 29:1 (2005), pp. 5–21. William Tregoning interestingly introduces an aboriginal Australian dimension via the work of Margaret Somerville (Margaret Somerville, *Body/Landscape Journals* [Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 1999]) in 'It

- Feels Like Home: Hospitality in a Postcolonial Space', *Text Theory Critique*, 7 (2003), no pagination. Just these few examples show the disciplinary range of the responses to Derrida on hospitality – from philosophy and literature to urban planning and geography. Of course, many more will be cited in the course of the book.
4. For Derrida's own analysis of the complexities of French nationality for those born in Algeria see Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, translated by Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 141ff; Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *De l'hospitalité: Anne Dufourmantelle invite Jacques Derrida à répondre* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1997), pp. 125ff. See also Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of the Origin*, translated by Patrick Mensah (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Jacques Derrida, *Le monolinguisme de l'autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1996). For a French account of Derrida's role in the United States, see François Cusset, *French Theory: Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Cie et les mutations de la vie intellectuelle aux Etats-Unis* (Paris: La Découverte, 2003); the term 'French Theory' is in English in the title to show that it is an American invention. I should note that Cusset does not include feminist theory within 'French Theory' to any significant extent.
 5. Tahar Ben Jelloun, *French Hospitality: Racism and North African Immigrants*, translated by Barbara Bray (New York: Columbia University Press, [1984, 1987] 1999), p. 3; Tahar Ben Jalloun, *Hospitalité française: Racisme et immigration maghrébine*, second edition (Paris: Seuil, 1997), p. 11. Of course a neo-classical economist might argue that your borrowing capacity is part of 'what you have', but we must not allow economism to flatten things out too quickly. There is a difference between the prudent gift and the risky gift.
 6. Jacques Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, translated by Pascal-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 10; Jacques Derrida, *Adieu à Emmanuel Lévinas* (Paris: Galilée, 1997), p. 23. In emphasising how Levinas loved the hospitality of France, Derrida also places weight on how very, very much France owes to Levinas.
 7. As well as Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, cited above, see, for example, Michael Naas, *Taking on the Tradition: Jacques Derrida and the Legacies of Deconstruction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), Chapter 9. Naas writes: 'deconstruction is itself a kind of hospitality and hospitality, as an open question, always a kind of deconstruction' (p. 155), which seems right to me although these very general statements out of context can seem rather empty.
 8. Jacques Derrida, 'Hostipitality', in Gil Anidjar (ed.), *Jacques Derrida: Acts of Religion* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 356–420, p. 364. Not yet published in French.

9. 'Threshold of tolerance' is the expression used by French politicians to express the view that there has to be a limit to immigration.
10. See Geoffrey Bennington, 'Derrida and Politics', in *Interrupting Derrida* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 18–33 for a masterly response to the suspicions about deconstruction, as well as the hopes, demands and expectations (particularly in English-speaking countries) that Derrida should state unequivocally his political allegiances.
11. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, translated by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), p. 299; Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totalité et infini: Essai sur l'extériorité* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, [1971] 1980), p. 276. Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, translated by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998), p. 112; Emmanuel Lévinas, *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), p. 142. The reader has to struggle with the question whether these two phrases contradict each other, inform each other (both relating to the subject's fundamental responsibility for the other), or apply in different circumstances. For Derrida's analysis, see *Adieu* (pp. 55; 102–3).
12. Caren Kaplan, amongst many others whom she cites (many less judicious than herself), attacks contemporary theory and other cultural artefacts that use notions of travel or mobility or the nomad in an ahistorical and universalised fashion, the most famous example being Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's 'deterritorialisation'. See Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1996). I shall not repeat these arguments; Peter Hallward's recent book, *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* (London: Verso, 2006), already does a fine job of showing the metaphysical underpinning of 'nomad thought'.
13. For more on the question of definition and level of analysis see my 'Can Woman Ever be Defined?', in Andrea Cady (ed.), *Women Teaching French: Five Papers on Language and Theory* (Loughborough: University of Loughborough European Research Centre, Studies in European Culture and Society 5, 1991), pp. 29–37; and 'A Feminine Economy: Some Preliminary Thoughts', in Helen Wilcox, Keith McWaters, Ann Thompson and Linda Williams (eds), *The Body and the Text: Hélène Cixous, Reading and Teaching* (Brighton: Harvester, 1990), pp. 49–60.
14. Jacques Derrida, 'On Cosmopolitanism', in *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, translated by Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 16–17; Jacques Derrida, *Cosmopolites de tous les pays, encore un effort!* (Paris: Galilée, 1997), pp. 42–3.

15. Jacques Derrida, *Given Time. I, Counterfeit Money*, translated by Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992); Jacques Derrida, *Donner le temps. I, La fausse monnaie* (Paris: Galilée, 1991).
16. Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 151. Ahmed argues that: 'The model of hospitality based on "welcoming the stranger" is to welcome the unassimilable; it hence conceals how that very act of welcoming already assimilates others into an economy of difference. In order to problematize such a model of hospitality we need a double approach: first, *we need an analysis of the economies of differentiation that already assimilate others as strangers* (which is economic in the precise sense of involving circuits of production, exchange and consumption); second, we need an analysis of how encounters with others who are already differentiated in this way *can move beyond the economic by welcoming, or being open or hospitable to, that which is yet to be assimilated*' (pp. 150–1). Her proposal seems excellent to me – but I do not consider that Derrida's texts that refer to 'welcoming the stranger' conceal the inevitable assimilation that the act of welcome entails – surely he makes this point on many occasions even if he does not repeat it every time that he uses the term. Her critique is, however, quite valid in reference to a number of other writers on hospitality.
17. Richard Kearney, 'Aliens and Others: Between Girard and Derrida', *Cultural Values*, 3:3 (1999), pp. 251–62, p. 260.
18. Jacques Derrida, 'Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility: a Dialogue with Jacques Derrida', in Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (eds), *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 63–83, p. 66.
19. This point about the decision is clear in the interview cited, and is related to the structure of the very term most associated with Derrida, *différance* (HJR, p. 77); it is analysed in some detail in Bennington, *Interrupting Derrida*, for instance pp. 24ff. Derrida also tackles in the discussion the strange claim that 'undecidability' would be a synonym for 'indeterminacy', which it is not (HJR, p. 78).
20. Although it is important to relate this to the sense of *home*. Home too is a structure or construction of dwelling. Is it having a sense of being at home that permits the offer of hospitality to the other or in some sense vice versa? This is a question of the psychoanalytical, philosophical and socio-cultural sense of self and home – whether this is *definitionally* about me feeling at home or me feeling I can invite the other in.
21. Derrida quotes Levinas's point about language in *Adieu* (p. 10; pp. 22–3) in relation to his love of France. His question is posed in *Of Hospitality* (p. 135; *DH*, p. 119).
22. See, for example, Abbé de Raynal's collaborative work, *Histoire philosophique et politique des deux Indes*, edited by Yves Benot (Paris:

- La Découverte, [1981] 2001). In the article 'Les Hottentots' Diderot exhorts the peoples of South Africa not to welcome the 'Barbares Européens' (a reversal of 'barbarian' that is typical of critics of colonialism since at least Montaigne), but to fight (*Histoire philosophique*, p. 49). The fact that it is unwise to welcome Europeans is reinforced in the section on 'Les Natchez'. When the French first arrived in Louisiana 'they were warmly welcomed by the savages and supported in the establishment of the plantations they wanted to set up' ('ils furent accueillis favorablement et soulagés par les sauvages dans l'établissement des plantations qu'ils voulaient former') (p. 292). The friendship between the two nations seemed sincere, Diderot tells his reader, until the greed of the French colonists got the better of them. See my *Enlightenment Hospitality: Cannibals, Harems and Adoption* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2011), especially Chapters 2–3.
23. When Benveniste ponders how *potis*, one of the base elements of hospitality, can incarnate mastery and self-identity, he elaborates as follows: 'For an adjective meaning "himself" to develop into the meaning "master" there is one necessary condition: there must be a circle of persons subordinated to a central personage who assumes the personality and complete identity of the group to such an extent that he is its summation: in his own person he is its incarnation' (Emile Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society*, translated by Elizabeth Palmer [London: Faber and Faber, 1973], p. 74) ('Pour qu'un adjectif signifiant "soi-même" s'amplifie jusqu'au sens de "maître" une condition est nécessaire: un cercle fermé de personnes, subordonné à un personnage central qui assume la personnalité, l'identité complète du groupe au point de la résumer en lui-même; à lui seul, il l'incarne' (Emile Benveniste, *Le Vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes*, I [Paris: Minuit, 1969], p. 91.)) His example is the master of the house.
 24. Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, translated by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Julia Kristeva, *Etrangers à nous-mêmes* (Paris: Fayard, 1988).
 25. See Roland Barthes, 'Dominici or the Triumph of Literature', in *Mythologies*, translated by Annette Lavers (London: Paladin, 1973), pp. 48–52; Roland Barthes, 'Dominici ou le triomphe de la Littérature', in *Mythologies* (Paris: Seuil, [1957] 1970), pp. 50–3.
 26. In her major study of hospitality, Gotman suggests getting over the ambiguity of the term *hôte* in French by using the term *maître de maison* (*Le sens de l'hospitalité*, pp. 9–10) – this tells us something about the ingrained nature of the gender issues here. Derrida frequently uses the term but in a rather more pointed fashion.
 27. See Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1975) for the thesis that both the

practice and the threat of rape are integral to the functioning of patriarchy, providing the need for 'protection' and the possibility of punishment.

28. It is important to note Irigaray's engagement with Levinas (Luce Irigaray, 'Questions to Emmanuel Levinas: On the Divinity of Love', in *The Irigaray Reader*, edited and with an introduction by Margaret Whitford [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991], pp. 178–89) as well as Derrida's (dating from Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, translated with introduction and additional notes by Alan Bass [London: Routledge, 1990]; Jacques Derrida, *L'Écriture et la différence* [Paris: Seuil, 1967]); both point out the problem of sexual difference. There have been a number of critics who have analysed this encounter including Tina Chanter, *Ethics of Eros: Irigaray's Rewriting of the Philosophers* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995). For Levinas sexuality is secondary to a transcendental humanity; the human paradigm is neutrality 'in all its masculinity' as Cathryn Vasseleu nicely puts it in *Textures of Light: Vision and Touch in Irigaray, Levinas and Merleau-Ponty* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 111. Self-realisation is ultimately a relationship of proximity between father and son, while he does not allow for the possibility of an ethical relationship between, say, mother and daughter as sexed beings . . . It is hard to say to what extent the legacy of Levinas has encouraged a certain would-be ethical focus on the Law of hospitality that is (to me, perversely) absolutely disembodied.
29. For a clear explanation of this, and other aspects of Irigaray's work, see Elizabeth Grosz, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989). For the meaning of 'sexual sameness', see pp. 105–10.
30. See Penelope Deutscher, *A Politics of Impossible Difference: The Later Work of Luce Irigaray* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2002), for interesting analysis of the advantages and problems of developing Irigarayan theory with respect to cultural difference. Deutscher raises some particular material cases such as that of the struggle of aboriginal peoples in Australia (which she approaches via Fanon), and discusses the key issue of the temporality of difference (past, present or future); see in particular Chapter 3.
31. When asked about 'diversity' in an interview with Andrea Wheeler (Andrea Wheeler, 'About Being-two in an Architectural Perspective: An Interview with Luce Irigaray', *Journal of Romance Studies*, 4:2 (2004), pp. 91–107), Luce Irigaray replies: 'To promote only diversity, as is often the case in our times, runs the risk of remaining in an unchanged horizon with regard to the relations with the other(s). We then entrust this problem to customs, moral rules or religious feeling without questioning our culture about its capability of meeting with

the other as such. Furthermore we are unable to open ourselves all the time to others different from us. We need to return to ourselves, to keep and save our totality or integrity, and this is possible only in sexuate difference. Why? Because it is the most basic difference, this one which secures for each bridge(s) both between nature and culture and between us. It is starting from this difference that the other sorts of otherness have been elaborated. And if someone would raise here the problem of races or generations, it could be answered that races and generations do not prevent sexual attraction and that the behaviours with respect to them result from an elaboration, or non-elaboration, of sexual attraction. This attraction is stronger than the difference between the bodies. And it is more spiritual in a way. It also arises firstly between the two. It is more initial and fundamental than diversity and can explain it, while the contrary is not true. Diversity is a means today to escape the question of sexuate difference and to reduce or merge women's liberation in a past world in which woman had not yet discovered and affirmed her own cultural values' (p. 93).

32. Luce Irigaray, *Between East and West: From Singularity to Community*, translated by Stephen Pluháček (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 16–17; Luce Irigaray, *Entre Orient et Occident: De la singularité à la communauté* (Paris: Grasset, 1999), p. 28.
33. In the English-speaking world, Margaret Whitford's work has made a major contribution to the recognition of Irigaray's work as both feminist and philosophy; see Margaret Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* (London: Routledge, 1991).
34. Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*, translated by Betsy Wing, foreword by Sandra Gilbert (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; Theory and History of Literature Series, Vol. 24, 1986); Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, *La Jeune née* (Paris: 10/18, 1975); Hélène Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa', translated by Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, *Signs*, 1:4 (1976), pp. 875–93; Hélène Cixous, 'Le rire de la Méduse', *L'Arc*, 61 (1975), pp. 39–54. Peggy Kamuf comments on the slight corpus in translation in the 1970s on which Cixous's reputation amongst non-French speakers was established (Peggy Kamuf, 'To Give Place: Semi-Approaches to Hélène Cixous', in Lynne Huffer (ed.), *Another Look, Another Woman: Retranslations of French Feminism*, special issue of *Yale French Studies*, 87 (1995), pp. 68–89).
35. The quotation is taken from Hélène Cixous, *Entre l'écriture* (Paris: Des Femmes, 1986), p. 85.
36. Hélène Cixous, 'Coming to Writing' and *Other Essays*, with an introductory essay by Susan Rubin Suleiman, edited by Deborah Jenson, translated by Sarah Cornell, Deborah Jenson, Ann Liddle and Susan Sellers (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 10;

- Hélène Cixous, 'La Venue à l'écriture', in Hélène Cixous, Madeleine Gagnon and Annie Leclerc, *La Venue à l'écriture* (Paris: 10/18, 1977), p. 18.
37. Cixous calls halt to some complicated play with the words: 'I don't want to ruffle the feathers of those easily made nervous and hostile by the philosophicomic, philosophical resources of language', my translation; Hélène Cixous, *Dream I Tell You*, translated by Beverley Bie Brahic (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006); ('je ne veux pas hérisser les adversaires trop vite effarouchés des ressources philosophiques, philosophicomicques de la langue' (Hélène Cixous, *Rêve je te dis* [Paris: Galilée, 2003], p. 13)).
 38. Jacques Derrida, *Genèses, généalogies, genres et le génie: Les secrets de l'archive* (Paris: Galilée, 2003), p. 39, my translation.
 39. Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert (ed.), *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, 35 volumes (Paris: Briasson, David l'Ainé, Le Breton and Durand, 1751–80)
 40. Daphne Patai, 'Ethical Problems of Personal Narratives, or Who Should Eat the Last Piece of Cake', *International Journal of Oral History*, 8:1 (1987), pp. 5–27. Patai raises more generally the profit the ethnographer reaps from, or the use she makes of, the subject who has entertained her.
 41. See Sophie Wahnich, *L'Impossible Citoyen: L'étranger dans le discours de la Révolution française* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1997).
 42. See my *Enlightenment Hospitality*, Chapter 7, for further analysis of Revolutionary hospitality in the light of Enlightenment questioning of hospitality, and for the situation of women and slaves.
 43. Ali Behdad has pointed out that in the narrative of nationalism the state of siege tends to be the rule rather than the exception. See Ali Behdad, 'Nationalism and Immigration in the U.S.', *Diaspora*, 6:2 (1997), pp. 55–78.
 44. 'Inhospitalité occidentale', a noteworthy entitled editorial in *Le Monde*, 8 January 1996.
 45. Although the notorious Pasqua laws introduced by Charles Pasqua in 1993 had already set the scene. Foreign workers had been 'welcomed' officially (and those without official papers had been 'welcomed' unofficially) when labour was in short supply during the period of post-war reconstruction and throughout the period of economic growth known as the 'trente glorieuses'. In 1974 Giscard d'Estaing was among the first to try to 'close the door' in the face of an economic downturn.
 46. See Rosello, *Postcolonial Hospitality*, pp. 36 ff, and Gotman, *Le sens de l'hospitalité*; both give a number of references, a small number of which are reproduced here. This trial coincides with Debré's attempt to introduce a bill with a clause that made it mandatory to declare the departure of a guest on a visa. The uproar that greeted this was

- in part a retrospective protest at the *certificats d'hébergement* that had been introduced almost unnoticed in 1982 as a prerequisite for gaining a visa. These had led to intrusive inspections of hosts' accommodation – supposedly in order to ensure decent conditions for guests. In December 1997 these were abolished and replaced by Chevènement with *attestations d'accueil* which did not need verifying in the same way.
47. *La Croix*, 21 February 1997.
 48. Etienne Balibar, 'Etat d'urgence démocratique', *Le Monde*, 19 February 1997.
 49. Gotman cites Rousseau, *Le sens de l'hospitalité*, p. 44.
 50. Joffrin, Editorial in *Libération*, 31 May 1998. This has continued, although not to the same extent; for example: an editorial in *Le Monde* entitled 'Les lois de l'hospitalité', 29 July 2000, is partly economic in inspiration for growth requires immigration – but also contains an appeal to *solidarity between rich and poor nations*.
 51. Rosello, in *Postcolonial Hospitality*, emphasises the range as well as extent of intellectual mobilisation including the *Collège des médiateurs* (p. 2) and the manifesto of the 59 film directors (pp. 43–6).
 52. Two passionate articles were published in *Le Monde* under the broad titles 'hospitality is not a crime' (*Le Monde*, 10 and 19 July 2003).
 53. Smaïn Laacher and Laurette Mokrani, *Le Monde*, 26 June 2004, p. 19. Philippe Lioret's 2009 film *Welcome* tackles this situation.
 54. The translation combines this with an essay 'On Forgiveness', which is another example of Derrida's engagement with international political (as well as ethical) problems – in that instance the question of the public or private forgiving of crimes such as those committed recently under Apartheid or in Algeria, or in the Holocaust.
 55. This is an organisation, which first met in 1994, co-founded by Pierre Bourdieu, Derrida, Edouard Glissant, Toni Morrison and Salman Rushdie. It was based in Strasbourg, one of the first cities (with Berlin) to declare itself a city of refuge, until 1998 when it moved to Brussels. The network of cities of refuge has been one of its first and most important projects, and a number of important European, and then American, cities have taken up the challenge of acting as host to persecuted writers or artists, including Barcelona, Copenhagen, Salzburg, Valladolid, Venice and Vienna. Others have hesitated, and some have joined then withdrawn, sometimes citing economic grounds. The IPW was disbanded after the European Commission and the French Ministry of Culture amongst others withdrew their support (i.e. funding) following a visit to Palestine by the IPW in 2002. The International Network of Cities-Asylum has taken over much of the work.
 56. See Emmanuel Levinas, *Beyond the Subject: Talmudic Readings and Lectures*, translated by Gary D. Mole (London: Athlone, 1994);

Emmanuel Lévinas, *L'au-delà du Verset: Lectures et discours talmudiques* (Paris: Minuit, 1982), Chapter 3 on cities of refuge.

57. See Paul Gilroy, *Between Camps: Race, Identity and Nationalism at the End of the Colour Line* (Harmondsworth: Allen Lane, 2000), Chapter 2, 'Modernity and Infrahumanity', for Kant on the black 'race' and its inferiority. Gilroy takes off from Ronald A. T. Judy, *(Dis)forming the American Canon: African-Arab Slave Narratives and the Vernacular* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), Chapter 4, section 3, 'Kant and the Critique of Pure Negro'. The Kant text which most notoriously uses a raciological model is 'Of National Characteristics, so far as They Depend upon the Distinct Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime', section 4 of Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, translated by John T. Goldthwait (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960). Interestingly Kant quotes the 'Swiss' Rousseau on French women as part of his consideration of national characteristics and of feminine hospitality in France (p. 102). Section 3, 'Of the Distinction of the Beautiful and Sublime in the Interrelations of the Two Sexes', would also be relevant to my concerns here. 'To Perpetual Peace' is in Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, translated by Ted Humphrey (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983).
58. I analyse Kant on hospitality at greater length in my *Enlightenment Hospitality*, Chapter 7.
59. 'Pieds-noirs Retour à Alger', *Le Monde*, 16 May 2006, pp. 26–7.

Patriarchs and their women, some inaugural intertexts of hospitality: the *Odyssey*, Abraham, Lot and the Levite of Ephraim

If the readability of a legacy were given, natural, transparent, univocal, if it did not call for and at the same time defy interpretation, we would never have anything to inherit from it. (Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 17)

(Si la lisibilité d'un legs était donnée, naturelle, transparente, univoque, si elle n'appelait et ne défiait en même temps l'interprétation, on n'aurait jamais à en hériter. (Derrida, *Spectres de Marx*, 40))

This chapter will not attempt to trace the history of the concept or the practice of hospitality, which would require at least a book, better several books, in itself. I have analysed aspects of eighteenth-century hospitality, as a particular pressure point, in *Enlightenment Hospitality*. Here I shall give space to an analysis of some very particular key texts relating to hospitality which seem to haunt the present, or which act as nodal points crossed by the tensions that still beset us today, episodes from the *Odyssey* and from the Books of Genesis and Judges in the Old Testament. I shall go on to discuss briefly the nostalgic relationship of discourses about hospitality in general to the (text of the) past (a form or structure) which means that the past anxiously inhabits the present text. This past can equally be figured as an 'elsewhere', which can be found for instance in praise for (nomadic) Arab hospitality. Finally I shall argue that intertextuality can be understood in terms of textual hospitality, and thus also inhospitality, just as much as discourses about hospitality self-consciously refer to a legacy. What is it to be a reader, to *read*, not just in the simple sense of casting your eye over words and turning the page, but to be *formed* as a reader by a text – to be host and guest with respect to a text? Letting it welcome you in and give you sustenance, warmth and shelter – and welcoming it reciprocally, without prejudice, into your heart. As much as we may write on Derrida, we must also feel that he wrote on us; he marked our work and thus ourselves. Via other texts. In *Politics of Friendship* (Chapter 10), he quotes Kant who suggests

that adopting forms of words, gestures or practices – politeness, good behaviour – may be an illusion, like paper or even counterfeit money. Yet over time these habits of thought and deed become part of us and thus virtuous gold. Education relies upon this, including maternal education. What are ‘legitimate’ emotions in public and political contexts? And when reading in private, when your best friend is a book? Cixous gives us an extraordinary account of the passions aroused by books in ‘Coming to Writing’, for instance: ‘I beat my books: I caressed them. Page after page, O beloved, licked, lacerated. With nail marks all around the printed body. What pain you cause me! I read you, I adore you, I venerate you, I listen to your work, O burning bush, but you consume yourself! You’re going to burn out! Stay! Don’t abandon me’ (‘Coming to Writing’, 23) (‘J’ai battu mes livres: je les ai caressés. Page à page ô bien-aimé [*sic*], léché, lacéré. A coup d’ongles tout autour du corps imprimé. Quelle douleur tu me fais! Je te lis, je t’adore, je te vénère, j’écoute ta parole, ô buisson ardent, mais tu me consumes! Tu vas t’éteindre! Reste! Ne m’abandonne pas’ (‘La Venue à l’écriture’, 30)).

Homer¹

Homer’s *Odyssey* is one of the key intertexts for thinking about hospitality in the Western world; hospitality has always, apparently, declined since the days of Homer. In the *Odyssey*, war is over, there is peace or at least the aftermath of war.² Although Odysseus has great physical prowess and bravery, men are not judged first and foremost by those criteria in the *Odyssey*, but rather by hospitality, the virtue of peace-time – particularly necessary in the aftermath of war, a time of travel, perhaps of home-coming. Different episodes in the *Odyssey* can be interpreted along a continuum from a hospitality of excess to bonds of mutual protection for chieftains or heads of household, bearing in mind that these rationally agreed compacts are sealed with feasting and gift exchange that always has the possibility of slipping into sacrificial superabundance. At the same time the details of the Homeric text are sufficiently complex and ambivalent to cover a range of failures of hospitality as well as hospitality itself.³ In the first book of the *Odyssey*, for example, there are three representations of hospitality. While Telemachus’ welcome of Mentès (Athene in disguise) seems to fit the paradigm perfectly, the focus throughout this first book is more on the abuse of hospitality. The background is Odysseus’ fate as the unwilling guest of the nymph Calypso, and the

foreground is the situation of Penelope and Telemachus as unwilling hosts to the horde of suitors, who are the epitome of badly behaved guests. While the virgin and motherless goddess *disguised as a man* (and peer) receives appropriate treatment from her male host, in both of the other cases we have open sexual difference and desire – and abuse.

The narrative of the home-coming Odysseus or Ulysses has been evoked in a wide range of contexts since Homer first sang of his experiences, and the re-tellings themselves (most obviously Joyce, a favourite for Cixous and Derrida) get re-told, re-analysed. I shall start with a quotation from Cixous’s ‘Sorties’ taken from a passage regarding her identifications, and refusals to identify, with the heroes from both sides of the Trojan War. The context is her memories (a complex genre) of childhood in inhospitable Algeria, a site of conflict even before the ‘real war’ comes, where it could be hard to know which side you were placed on, and whether you could displace yourself. While the bisexual and brave lover Achilles appeals to her, with his angry outbursts against authority, Odysseus seems to epitomise the typical masculine, circular, nostalgic journey back to the origin:

‘Silence, exile and cunning’ are the tools of the young man-artist with which Stephen Dedalus arms himself to organize his series of tactical retreats while he works out in ‘the smithy of his soul the uncreated conscience of his race.’ A help to a loner, of course. But I didn’t like to catch myself being Ulysses, the artist of flight. The Winner: the one who was saved, the homecoming man! Always returning to himself – in spite of the most fantastic detours. The Loaner: loaning himself to women and never giving himself except to the ideal image of Ulysses, bringing his inalterable resistance home to his hot-shot little phallic rock, where, as the crowning act of the *nostos* – the return, which was so similar, I said to myself, to the Jewish fantasy (next year in Jerusalem) – he produced a remarkable show of force. (Cixous, *The Newly Born Woman*, 74)

(‘Le silence, l’exil, la ruse’, *silence, exile and cunning*, instruments de l’artiste jeune homme, dont Stephen Dedalus se munit pour organiser sa série de retraits tactiques, cependant qu’il élabore dans ‘la forge de son âme la conscience encore créée de sa race’. Secours de l’isolé, certes. Mais je n’aimais pas me surprendre à être Ulysse, l’artiste de la fuite. Le ‘gagnant’, l’épargné, l’homme du retour! Toujours revenant à lui-même –, malgré les plus fantastiques détours. Prêteur: se prêtant aux femmes ne se donnant jamais qu’à l’image idéale d’Ulysse, rapportant son inaltérable résistance à son fameux petit rocher phallique, où couronnement d’un *nostos* tellement semblable, me disais-je, au fantasme juif (l’an prochain à

Jerusalem), il mettait en scène une démonstration de force singulière. (*La Jeune Née*, 135–6))

For Cixous, Ulysses is a winner, *gagnant*, both economically and militarily – the play on the masculine economy is even clearer in the French. *Le retour* (translated nicely as ‘homecoming’) also has the sense of repetition, of exchange, of annulling the gift (when the recipient dies, the *droit de retour* returns the donation to the original possessor). Ulysses saves (himself) rather than giving (himself). I would add that this is particularly clear in the case of Nausicaa, the princess whom he allows to believe for a while that he might be a suitor in order that he might secure suitable hospitality. He lends himself, or the dream of a future with himself, to her and gets a significant return. Cixous makes a link between Ulysses’ attachment to his ideal home and a Jewish dream of Jerusalem – no longer to wander, a nomad guest of others’ hospitality, but to have a fixed place, the self-same. The crowning act of his return is spectacular violence – killing all the guests who have even dared to establish themselves as hosts in his (the master’s) place, with a bow which was, appropriately from his perspective, a hospitality gift. This marries with the violent revenge exacted in the Old Testament on those who betray hospitality.

If we go back to the origins of the modern colonial era: in the Early Modern period, the Old World, including Africa or the East, could be defined by the knowledge of Greek and Rome; and the New World, although unknown to classical antiquity, still had to be understood via that optic. Odysseus once again proved his gift for translation/being translated, particularly for sailors with their awareness of the perils of the sea. Adventurers or explorers setting out from Europe to discover new lands often see themselves as Odysseus when they wash up on unknown territory in need of the hospitality of the inhabitants of these foreign lands – whether they are on the journey out or back. Of course in some cases they turn these more or less hospitable environments into new homes, New England, New France – whether they rewrite, edit out or exalt the hospitality of the earlier inhabitants of the ‘virgin’ soil, making them into cannibals like Polyphemos, lovelorn princesses like Nausicaa or lotus eaters, but usually not industrious farmers husbanding the land.⁴

Aimé Césaire’s *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* (1939) is a new Odyssey of the colonised son returning to his (the colonisers’) motherland. However, as Mireille Rosello comments: ‘This new Ulysses

affirms in fact that Paris is not Ithaca and that the hospitality of the motherland was a lure’ (‘Ce nouvel Ulysse affirme en effet que Paris n’est pas Ithaque et que l’hospitalité de la mère patrie était un leurre’).⁵ Paris is not the true destination but a dangerous staging post:

Césaire suddenly makes us see that Paris is a nymph, a seductive and welcoming Circe, or perhaps even a siren whom you should escape when it becomes clear that her charms are dangerous. The frontiers of France, that welcoming, hospitable land for all individuals ready to embrace the contract dreamt up by the Revolution, were thus also defined by what colonialism considered its own, as proper, or as native.

(Césaire nous fait soudain envisager que Paris est une nymphe, une Circée séduisante et accueillante ou peut-être même une sirène dont il faut s’éloigner lorsqu’il devient clair que l’enchantement n’est pas sans danger. Les frontières de la France, terre d’accueil, hospitalière à tous les individus qui sont prêts à embrasser le contrat imaginé par la Révolution, étaient donc aussi définies par ce que le colonialisme considérait comme sien, comme propre ou bien comme indigène.) (Rosello, ‘Frappier aux portes’, 61)

Rosello points out the number of other important Francophone writers from the Antilles who have played with these Homeric tropes – one could add Anglophone examples, such as the St Lucian poet Derek Walcott’s 1990 epic *Omeros*, the Greek Homer, although, like Cixous, Walcott prefers to translate Achilles.

Exiles and refugees forced out of their homelands may also relate themselves or be related to Odysseus. David Farr’s adaptation *The Odyssey: A Trip Based on Homer’s Epic* (produced at the London Hammersmith Lyric in 2005) had the General Odysseus (wanting safe passage back to his kingdom) stuck in a detention centre for would-be asylum seekers alongside a number of homeless Trojans, forced to flee after the Greeks sacked Troy. The spectator has to ask what makes a refugee (something brought home, for example, in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide) – is the victor or perpetrator as worthy of asylum as the vanquished or the victim? Cixous too makes the link to our present situation: *Le dernier Caravansérail* is subtitled *Odyssées* in the plural. After a reference to the Trojan War and the return journeys chronicled by Homer she writes:

Today new Wars throw out on to our planet hundreds of thousands, millions of new fugitives, fragments from shattered worlds, trembling shards from ravaged countries whose names no longer signify birthplace

as shelter but rubble or prison: Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Kurdistan . . . , the list of poisoned countries is growing longer every year.

But how can we tell of these countless odysseys?

(Aujourd'hui, de nouvelles Guerres jettent sur notre planète des centaines de milliers, des millions de nouveaux fugitifs, fragments de mondes disloqués, bribes tremblantes des pays ravagés dont les noms ne signifient plus abri natal mais décombres ou prisons: Afghanistan, Iran, Irak, Kurdistan . . . , la liste des pays empoisonnés augmente chaque année.

Mais comment raconter ces odyssees innombrables?) (*Le dernier Caravansérail*, n.p.)

She is asking how we can remember these important stories, enabling them to be told and recorded. This is only made more difficult by the demand from immigration authorities that asylum seekers sing (the right song) for their supper – as an economic condition of entry, or means of restricting entry.

When we speak of Homeric hospitality, it could be argued that the expression is merely a vague indication, a figural wave of the hand in the direction of an ancient Greek past, any details of which are long forgotten. I shall claim that in fact the details of the Homeric text we read would repay close observation. I shall be focusing on the text we read today, as literary critics often do (for aesthetic purposes), without paying the attention to its origins that a classical scholar might find necessary. Yet it is the representation, and implicit theorisation, of social and economic relations in the text that interest me. Until the middle of the last century, the Homeric text, probably 'composed' at the end of the seventh or beginning of the eighth century BC, was usually considered to represent the Mycenaean civilisation (which collapsed around the end of the thirteenth century BC); this is the period during which the Trojan War is imagined to have taken place. It was the work of Moses Finley, alongside new archaeological discoveries, that convinced the contemporary academic community that the situation was more complex. While many details such as place names or the enumeration of treasures do relate to the 'Mycenaean world', Finley argued on the basis of comparative anthropology and the 'coherence criterion' that the culture and institutions represented by Homer relate to the (early) Dark Ages that followed. He draws on the work of Mauss to analyse the complex system of total gift exchange that created personal bonds in societies less bureaucratic, centralised and fixed in their hierarchies than those that either preceded or succeeded the Greek Dark Ages. This story

of the forgetting, and remembering, of archaic gift practices is highly pertinent to the analysis of the representation and theorisation of hospitality.

The *Odyssey* is the classical text of hospitality *par excellence*; it could be argued that hospitality is the major articulation of this text, and that the key form of relationship in the *Odyssey* is the one between guest and host. Hospitality is a prime motor of the text: hosts detain Odysseus and hold him back from returning home as he would wish, while scandalous guests (the suitors) create the narrative interest on the home front. Furthermore the social and moral code of hospitality is the chief means of distinguishing between men in ethical terms. Virtuous and wise men follow the code of hospitality, most particularly as hosts but also as guests, whatever their social status. I should add that following the code is not a simple matter since it prescribes not obedience to a letter, but rather a spirit of generosity that might be understood as simultaneously natural to a good man and cultivated by a virtuous man, but has a fantasmatic relationship to femininity.

While Irigaray has not, to my knowledge, written extensively on Homer, she has insisted in a number of texts on the crucial importance of Greek mythology to our understanding of sexual difference. Margaret Whitford writes with reference to comments in Irigaray's *Le Temps de la différence, Je, tu, nous* and *Sexes and Genealogies*: 'Irigaray sees the Greek myths as figurations of a struggle between matriarchy and patriarchy in which patriarchy finally won. There is some suggestion that she sees the struggles as being in some sense still with us . . . Only now instead of a struggle for dominance she sees it more as a struggle for the maternal principle to return to the light of day.'⁶

Although there are many ways in which hospitality can prove devastating, including the case of the murderer-guest (and the suitors do try to kill Telemachus), it is *smothering* hospitality that is critical for father and son in the *Odyssey*. The rational social code of hospitality should prevent excessive hospitality between men – and Menelaus explains to Telemachus how the laws of hospitality dictate moderation, although he seems unable to follow his own dictates. The letter of the laws is never enough – the unbounded spirit is both necessary and dangerous. Menelaus is, of course, of all the men in the *Odyssey*, the closest to the dangerous feminine principle as it is encapsulated in his wife Helen.

In the *Odyssey*, female *hosts*, by which I mean relatively

autonomous hosts who are also female, are characteristically amorous and thus liable to hold our hero back – the two examples par excellence are the nymphs Circe and Calypso. None of the human women who engage in hospitality have this degree of autonomy (instead they are hostesses), and the majority of them (Helen, Nausicaa [and her mother Arete], Penelope) are perhaps presented as wiser and more generous than the nymphs – less threatening. At any rate they have less power to detain a guest even if they wish to do so. Nevertheless, in all three cases, though in three completely different ways, amorous passion and deception are significant elements inflecting hospitable relations.⁷

There are many examples of hospitality in the *Odyssey*, about which a great deal could be said. Steve Reece has devoted a book purely to the analysis of hospitality scenes in Homer – although without focusing on questions of sexual difference.⁸ I refer/defer to him for a number of thorny issues, for instance, regarding the establishment of the text. One of the particular problems for those professionally concerned with Homer as a poet is that ‘conventional’ or ‘type’ scenes may be considered as particularly likely to have had elements or phrases interpolated. As Reece points out, hospitality scenes are normally composites of smaller type-scenes (such as arrival, reception, seating, bathing, feasting, gift-giving) all composed in formulaic diction and in a relatively fixed order. Scribes who left us the many different manuscripts of the *Odyssey* may have been particularly likely to make concordance additions in scenes where convention dictates certain components (for instance, Circe’s feast preparation). For the purposes of my particular concerns, issues of attestation are interesting but less vital than for those concerned with Homer the poet and the internal consistency or otherwise of his text. Historical *expectations* of hospitality scenes, and versions of Homer that have been read by and have influenced later generations, are of at least equivalent interest to me.

In the *Odyssey* the hospitality narrative can be divided up into three major strands: Odysseus as guest, Telemachus as guest (and host), and the suitors as guests and hosts. Odysseus as guest is of course the major interest – it is his hosts’ desire to detain him that in an important sense provides the rationale for the whole story of his prolonged home-coming. The ‘hosts’ he encounters run the gamut from Polyphemos who eats his ‘guests’ and the sirens whose entertainment means destruction, to, say, Alcinous and his family who provide clothes, bath, food, shelter, music, gifts and finally a

ship to take him back to Ithaca. In between the two poles there are those nymphs who tend him lovingly and provide for all his sensual needs *but* will not willingly release him to continue his journey as he wishes. It would, however, be over-simplistic to suggest either that the hosts can easily be evaluated according to whether they meet the standards of hospitality – many readers have judged Alcinous and his fellow Phaeacians as distinctly lacking in hospitality in spite of the facts briefly summarised above – or that Odysseus and his men always play the part of good guests.

The ‘Telemachy’ sub-plot is considered by Reece to be particularly powerful in the way in which it establishes practical and emotional parallels between father and son. In this respect it is homosocial hospitality par excellence. The son has grown up without a father – the story takes place as he reaches manhood and begins to attempt in a rather muddled way to establish some authority over his beleaguered mother. His journey from home to attempt to find (news of) his father reinforces his belief in his paternity – hosts comment on his resemblance to Odysseus and he hears tales of his father’s prowess. At the same time he undergoes, in a minor key, experiences that will help him to mature and to understand his father’s story. He learns of the ambiguity as well as the value of hospitality, and what it is to be a guest detained. In this respect the sub-plot involves the education of the son, a particular aspect of ‘filiation’, as discussed by Derrida in *Glas* with respect to Hegel’s account of the founding of the family.⁹ Both Nestor and his family and Menelaus and Helen are very helpful to Telemachus, but neither set of hosts are straightforwardly so. This complex experience helps to bond him to his father.

The suitors’ sub-plot is more obviously integral to the main narrative, creating the tension that makes a difference exactly when Odysseus returns home, and it makes his home-coming excitingly dangerous in a way that spectacularly reveals both his trademark cleverness and his physical strength. What is of particular concern to me is the fact that the unfolding of this sub-plot is entirely bound up with the transgression of hospitality. The suitors’ wickedness is established (and this is necessary for listeners to rejoice at their destruction) chiefly by showing them to be overbearing and exploitative guests, and dreadful hosts, rather than by the mere fact that they are courting the unwilling Penelope. Social and economic relations *between men* are thus foregrounded, and even the wise Penelope may simply be sent away by her son.

A great deal can be, and has been, said about all this without

particular reference to sexual difference. I shall now try briefly to elaborate on some of the ways in which attention to sexual difference opens up the text. The first, perhaps obvious, point to note is that women do not travel in the *Odyssey* – women are not guests. 'Nomads conquer their territory against the familiarity of the first site, against the sedentary, against the more maternal, more feminine values. They create a culture of between-men, who are enemies or accomplices, for which the divinity is instead patriarchal, God-the-Father' (Irigaray, *BEW*, 13) ('Les nomades conquièrent leur territoire contre la familiarité du premier site, contre les sédentaires, contre les valeurs plus maternelles, plus féminines. Ils créent une culture de l'entre-hommes, ennemis ou complices, dont la divinité est plutôt patriarcale, le Dieu-Père' (*EOO*, 24)). Irigaray's comment here applies equally to the Old Testament and to Homer. When the goddess Athene, the Father-god's virgin daughter, plays the role of a guest in the *Odyssey* she disguises herself as a man. Women are at home, and must be at home, even if, as we shall see, they are not really *at home*. The traditional feminine sphere is the domestic one: women should be inside by (if not actually tending) the hearth. Outside the house in which they live they are particularly vulnerable – and patriarchy might instruct us that they are particularly vulnerable to being shamed, to rape for example. Furthermore women *are* home – they are home for men in a number of ways. 'The family, like woman, moreover, is simultaneously overvalored and devalored, colonized' (Irigaray, *BEW*, 14) ('La famille, comme la femme d'ailleurs, est à la fois survalorisée et dévalorisée, colonisée' (*EOO*, 25–6)).

But if we turn to women as hosts or hostesses, then we might note that in some senses women might not be 'at home'; that expression implies a sense of comfort, of feeling at ease in your own environment; it also implies being willing to receive guests. Women might be in someone else's household (their father's or their husband's or even their brother's or son's) and thus their power to act as hostess would be delegated and secondary. They are particularly vulnerable to rape. Susan Brownmiller would argue that patriarchy plays on that vulnerability to keep women in their place and feeling in need of patriarchal protection. Should the master of the house ever be absent (like Odysseus), what might women do to protect themselves from unexpected guests? Freud picks up in a strangely perverse way on the cultural association between women and weaving – he sees this as a technology that protects their modesty, hiding what they

do not have.¹⁰ Women can weave clothes, cloth acting as a shield between men and women. Penelope's weaving, and unweaving, is only the most famous example of the very act of weaving being used for apotropaic effect.¹¹ The apotropaic shield *par excellence*, the Medusa's head (borne by Athena) that petrifies men, reminds us how patriarchy plays on women's vulnerability in part because, as patriarchal mythology shows us, women are not only desired but feared for their sexual power. This imagined power is lethal: the power to be unfaithful to a husband threatens the father's immortality through his descendants who might not be his after all; sexual power is also a power to lure men to their deaths as the sirens do, transform them into beasts as the nymph Circe does, entangle and destroy them like Clytemnestra and her lover. I shall now look briefly at four categorisations of women in the *Odyssey*: the siren or nymph, the prize wife or mother, the servant, and the father's virgin daughter.

Sirens and nymphs suggest to the listener women as sexually entrapping to a greater or lesser extent – bringing men to their doom or simply imprisoning them. This is how women are – in men's dreams. On the human plane this is played out in a vestigial sense with Nausicaa who immediately looks upon Odysseus as a potential husband. More complicated still is the older generation – in particular the figure of the beautiful Helen. In the episode when Menelaus entertains Telemachus, on the one hand Helen is presented, and *presents herself*, as wise, caring, sensitive, helpful beyond her husband. On the other hand, we are reminded of the number of men who lost their lives because of her enchantment by the guest Paris, or by Aphrodite – or was it Helen who was the enchantress? The poet reminds us too of Clytemnestra – a tale of feminine adultery, deception and murder – Agamemnon killed in the bath, the bath which is a key element in so many hospitality scenes. Helen tells Telemachus (and us) a tale of her help to her guest Odysseus, disguised as a beggar, reconnoitring in Troy prior to the building of the horse. Without directly contradicting this story Menelaus counters it with his own story of how Helen, accompanied by her *second* Trojan husband (as if one were not bad enough), sought to make the Greeks hidden in the horse betray themselves by calling to them in the voices of their wives. This tale embodies the layers of deception associated with Helen and the perils of containment or enclosure. One of the ways in which Helen entertains Telemachus and his companion is by giving them an Egyptian drug which makes them forget their sorrows – to the point that they could hear songs of the destruction

of members of their families and not weep. It helps them sleep well and could be seen as entirely benign – even if magical – like the sleep that overcomes Penelope thanks to Athene. But it also evokes other episodes such as the visit to the dangerously beguiling land of the Lotus eaters, and Helen's powers, like those of the nymphs who entertain Odysseus, may not be entirely benign.¹²

The woman as prize wife, to be won by the strongest or cleverest as her nearest male kinsman dictates, returns via Penelope (and perhaps lurks underneath the story of Nausicaa and the Phaeacian games). Penelope – usually summarily remembered for her wisdom in keeping the suitors at bay by weaving and unpicking a shroud for Laertes – is treated a little less favourably in the detail of the text. Both Athene and Telemachus treat her with less than perfect respect, seeking to keep her in a woman's place, apart from men. When Athena first appears to Telemachus (disguised as Mentès), s/he tells him:

as for your mother, if she is set on marrying, let her go back to her father's house. He is a man of consequence, and the family will provide a marriage feast, and see that she has a generous dowry, as is only right for a daughter they value. . . . You are no longer a child: you must put childish thoughts away. Have you not heard what a name Prince Orestes made for himself in the world when he killed the traitor Aegisthus for murdering his noble father? You, my friend – and what a tall and splendid fellow you have grown! – must be as brave as Orestes. Then future generations will sing your praises. (*Odyssey*, 28–9)

Matricide is buried in this speech; Orestes' only crime, here in fact an *exploit*, is killing Aegisthus – his mother is not even mentioned. Similarly the sacrifice of the daughter (Iphigenia) by her father is often 'forgotten' as a motive for Clytemnestra's crime. We modern readers might remember from the *Oresteia* that Orestes (only temporarily mad, unlike his sister and co-conspirator Electra who *remains* mad) is redeemed for his matricide by the motherless and chaste Athena and by Apollo, the lover of men.¹³ Here Telemachus is urged to renounce his mother too in order to become the man he already is. This is the particular paradoxical structure of masculinity. Reaching physical manhood with respect to age or biology he is a man naturally (and it is important to cling to this conviction), but also must become a man culturally (striving or struggle is necessary to manhood).¹⁴ Irigaray points out how frequently women are assimilated to nature, and sexual difference treated as analogous to

the nature/culture opposition; for her it is urgent that both sexes cultivate both their nature and their cultural becoming. While Telemachus will refuse to send Penelope away from 'his' house, shortly afterwards he acts out the expulsion in a lesser form saying to his surprised mother: 'go to your quarters and attend to your own work, the loom and the spindle, and tell the servants to get on with theirs. Talking must be men's concern, and mine in particular; for I am master in this house' (31). Penelope's situation (position and location) is an ambiguous one while her lord and master is away. She is disempowered as hostess in the absence of Odysseus not only vis-à-vis the suitors' wolfish rapacity but also in relation to the series of beggars who exploit her desire to hear news of her husband. Her ways of keeping things going are always suspect; she is imagined at fault and made guilty by the men around her. When Telemachus complains in the public Assembly about the unwelcome guests who are eating him out of house and home, the suitor Antinous replies: 'It is your own mother, that incomparable schemer who is the culprit.' At this Assembly of Ithaca's leaders, Antinous (the least hospitable of the suitors) replies to Telemachus' charge that they are frittering away his wealth by explaining how Penelope deceived them for nearly four years by pretending to be weaving a shroud for Laertes, and advises Telemachus:

Send your mother away and make her marry the man whom her father chooses and whom she prefers. She must beware of trying our young men's patience much further and counting too much on the matchless gifts that she owes to Athene, her skill in fine handiwork, her excellent brain, and that genius she has for getting her way. In that respect, I grant she has no equal, not even in story. . . . Yet in the present case Penelope has used these wits amiss. For I assure you that so long as she maintains this attitude that she has been misguided enough to adopt, the Suitors will continue to eat you out of house and home. She may be winning a great name for cleverness, but at what expense to you! (36–7)

Telemachus replies:

It is quite impossible for me to cast out the mother who bore me and who brought me up, with my father somewhere at the world's end and, as likely as not, still alive. Think, first, what I should have to pay Icarius if I took it into my head to send my mother back to him. Again, when that father of hers had done his worst to me, the gods would step in and let loose on me the avenging Furies that my mother's curses would call up as she was driven from home. And finally my fellow-men would cry shame

upon me. . . . If a feeling of shame has any place in your own hearts, then quit my palace and feast yourselves elsewhere, eating your own provisions in each other's houses. But if you think it a sounder scheme to destroy one man's estate and go scot-free yourselves, then eat your fill, while I pray to the immortal gods for a day of reckoning, when I can go scot-free, though I destroy you in that house of mine. (37–8).

Naturally everything is the woman Penelope's fault.

The female servants in the master's house often play a key and intimate role in hospitality – for example bathing the guest. (Nestor's hospitality is marked as particularly warm and informal by the fact that his daughter, rather than a servant, bathes Telemachus.) While Odysseus is away from his house the position of the female servants is a difficult one and many of them have sexual relations with the suitors. This is referred to as rape. Odysseus says to the suitors: 'You ate me out of house and home; you raped my maids; you wooed my wife on the sly though I was alive' (339).¹⁵ However, the women are still deemed unfaithful and disloyal – Odysseus orders that they should be killed by the sword. Telemachus, who has also been obliged to consort with the suitors, does not, however, want the maids to have such a clean death; thus in Book XXII they are given a deliberately degrading punishment, and *hanged* for their crime.¹⁶ Modern readers may recall how women's sexual 'collaboration' in Occupied France was punished in a range of humiliating ways after the Second World War – of course French men who, as prisoners in Germany, had succeeded in forming sexual relationships with German women could be viewed in a more heroic light.

The final category I shall briefly evoke is that of the motherless Athena who sprang fully-formed from Zeus' head, as we know from other sources.¹⁷ Irigaray comments briefly on her appearance in the *Oresteia* in 'The Bodily Encounter with the Mother'; and argues that this mythology underlying patriarchy has not changed:

Here and there, regulation Athenas whose one begetter is the head of the Father-King still burst forth. Completely in his pay, in the pay of the men in power, they bury beneath their sanctuary women in struggle so that they will no longer disturb the new order of the home, the order of the polis, now the only order. You can recognise these regulation Athenas, perfect models of femininity, always veiled and dressed from head to toe, all very respectable, by this token: they are extraordinarily seductive [*séductrices*], which does not necessarily mean enticing [*séduisantes*], but aren't in fact interested in making love. ('The Bodily Encounter with the Mother', 37)

(Encore lieu aussi que surgissent de-ci de-là, les Athénas de service engendrées par le seul cerveau du Père-Roi. Tout à sa solde – soit à celle des hommes au pouvoir – et qui enterrent les femmes en lutte sous leur sanctuaire, pour qu'elles ne troublent pas l'ordre des foyers, l'ordre de la cité, l'ordre tout court. Ces Athénas de service, modèles parfaits de féminité, toujours voilées et parées de la tête aux pieds, très dignes, vous les reconnaitrez à ce signe: elles sont extraordinairement séductrices (ce qui ne veut pas dire forcément séduisantes), extraordinairement séductrices mais que faire l'amour, en fait, ne les intéresse pas. (*Le Corps-à-corps avec la mère*, 17–18))

Athena, like her father Zeus, is a patron of hospitality (*xenia*). René Schérer argues that Zeus is known as 'hospitable' not because he is shown as a host in the various legends, but rather because he might be disguised as a guest and therefore requires human hospitality.¹⁸ The same might be said of Athena, who arrives as an unexpected visitor (Mentes) for Telemachus at the beginning of the *Odyssey*. We might note that the visitation is almost always in masculine form.¹⁹

It could be argued that the *Odyssey* as we know it tells two stories about women. It presents to us Penelope who is wise, strong and loyal; it also gives us Penelope who is sent to her rooms by Telemachus and ordered not to speak, Penelope about whom Athene warns her son. It introduces Nausicaa as an interesting and clever princess who is a key factor in the hospitality offered to Odysseus by the Phaeacians, and then drops her from the narrative of Odysseus' stay with the Phaeacians altogether. The Nausicaa episode is also the only instance of a (brief glimpse of a) happy mother–daughter relationship. Most striking to the contemporary reader is the representation of Helen. As she plays hostess to Telemachus in a generous and sensitive way she tells him of one of her memories of Odysseus – a memory of her cleverly outwitting the master of disguise in order to play host to him in Troy. But this is set against reminders of Helen's overarching role in the Trojan War – cause of the loss of so many lives thanks to her rapt by the ungrateful and deceitful guest, Paris. Menelaus' tale perhaps shows her lethal siren deceitfulness, her infidelity, *and* her being outwitted by Odysseus. These are two contrasting interpretations of the past (the husband's and the wife's), and the text we have inherited simply allows both to stand. On the other hand, no such doubt is cast over the setting in the present. It reveals a particular sexual inequality when it comes to vertical relations, to descendants. When Telemachus arrives, Helen and Menelaus are 'celebrating' a double wedding – we might note that the son who is

marrying is the son of one of Menelaus' mistresses – Helen is now barren we are told. Helen's only child, a daughter, is being married to Achilles' son, the result of a battlefield bargain between the fathers. While sons bring their wives home, the daughter's marriage means her exile to a distant and unknown land. There are echoes here – distantly the echo of Demeter and her daughter Persephone exiled in Hades, more closely that of Iphigenia, lured to her death with the promise of marriage to Achilles, and Clytemnestra who kills Agamemnon in revenge.

I shall briefly sum up some of the points in these episodes. The first concerns horizontal inequality: sexual infidelity, even if involuntary, of women should by rights be punished; it is a kind of magic that makes Menelaus forgive Helen; the serving women get their just desserts. (This magic may cover an issue of land ownership or Menelaus' right to the kingdom that originally came to him through his marriage to Helen.) It is normal for chieftains (Agamemnon, Menelaus and even Odysseus) to have concubines. The second point concerns vertical inequality: the pleasure of a good relationship between mother and daughter, and the pain of losing a daughter for a mother, is present but elided. Men bond through the father's gift of a daughter to her husband. Fathers pass on material and cultural inheritance to their sons. And the father should be able to sacrifice the mother's daughter unpunished; Athene, the daughter who is not born of a mother, but of a father, serves the patriarchal cause. The third point is the structure of enclosure: women are dangerous and should be contained (nymphs on their islands, wives and mothers in their quarters with their beds and their weaving) or even expelled from the text – although the repressed of course returns.

For men, hospitality functions as a test of proper virtuous manliness – some are shown to be good, some bad. Zeus is the god who presides over hospitality while some inhuman male hosts (notably Polyphemos) are the antithesis of hospitality. Hospitality as a test of masculine virtue is a difficult one, and while many perform well they could do better; it is hard to find exactly the right ground between falling short (being insufficiently welcoming) and going beyond (being excessively officious), between the laws and the Law. We might ask whether it is a mythical feminine hysterical economy of abundance that haunts good old Nestor and Menelaus in their retention of guests. Women meanwhile do not have a place of their own. Nymphs and sirens show listeners what can happen when females do have their own place: they enslave their male guests to their senses. It

is not that women are portrayed as stupid, passive, purely sensual or emotional creatures in Homer, as they will be in so many later texts. On the contrary they are wise, active and rational as well as sensual beings. The problem lies in their interaction with men, their effect on men being often revealed as a lethal one – bringing men to oblivion, if not to death, singly or indeed in multitudes. Irigaray's point that men project fears and phantasms (in particular castration anxiety) onto women as other of the same – deceivers – is here writ large. The effect of female hosts is sticky – leading to stasis, entropy, the forgetting of the project. That could indeed be (listeners might feel) the effect of hostesses like Helen or Nausicaa or even Penelope were they not more or less successfully disempowered. Women must be contained in the home to be no more than hostesses as handmaidens to the master of the house.

Genesis: Abraham and Lot

Derrida writes of hospitality: "This is a conjugal model, paternal and phallogocentric. It's the familial despot, the father, the spouse and the boss, the master of the house who lays down the laws of hospitality. He represents them and submits to them to submit the others to them in this violence of the power of hospitality, in this force of ipseity" (*OH*, 149) ('Il s'agit d'un modèle conjugal, paternel et phallogocentrique. C'est le despote familial, le père, l'époux et le patron, le maître de céans qui fait les lois de l'hospitalité. Il les représente et s'y plie pour y plier les autres dans cette violence du pouvoir d'hospitalité, dans cette puissance de l'ipséité' (*DH*, 131)). He then goes on to discuss two biblical tales of threatened sodomy and the substitution of women: the stories of Lot and of the Levite of Ephraim. In both cases the host is himself a guest in the community rather than a native, and in both tales the host's house is under siege from those who want to rape his guest(s); to save the male guest from sodomy a woman is sacrificed. Hospitality is 'set up' as a relation between men, between the master of the house and his guest, but it is suffused with fantasies of (sexual) vulnerability, and open to many forms of abuse, not only in relation to host and guest, but in relation to third parties, for instance 'womenfolk' (Lot's daughters or the Levite's concubine) – part of the household, if not the goods, of the master or his guest, and sacrificed to consummate the sacred bond of shared consumption between men.

Thus in the final paragraphs of *Of Hospitality* (151–5; *DH*, 131–7), Derrida re-tells two violently shocking stories from the

Old Testament, that of Lot (Genesis 19) and that of the Levite of Ephraim (Judges 19–21), as an indication of a tradition we have inherited where the law of hospitality is not only co-extensive with ethics but is placed above a certain ethic (such as family obligations). Lot offers hospitality to ‘two angels’ at the gates of the city of Sodom (in present-day Jordan), and refuses to give up his two guests to the Sodomites who wish to ‘penetrate’ them (Derrida uses André Chouraqui’s translation *pénétrer*, other translations use ‘know’), and instead offers his two virgin daughters. The Sodomites do not accept the substitution of Lot’s daughters, and threaten him, an alien, as well as his guests – they are about to force his door when the angels strike them with blindness. When the Lord destroys Sodom with fire only Lot and his two daughters are saved – his (prospective) son-in-laws do not believe that there is any need to flee and his wife is turned into a pillar of salt because she looks back. The second bloody episode is in the Book of Judges in which a Levite and his concubine are forced to seek hospitality with an old man living amongst the Benjamites. He, like Lot, refuses to give up the Levite to the Benjamites’ ‘unnatural’ desires, and offers his virgin daughter as a substitute.²⁰ The Levite instead offers his beloved concubine who is repeatedly raped throughout the night and expires at dawn. Vengeance is then repeatedly wreaked upon the Benjamites until only six hundred men remain.

Many evocations of hospitality over the centuries have made positive reference to the exhortations to hospitality in the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, and to the hospitable behaviour of the patriarchs – although there has also long been a practice of attacking the ‘Jewish Bible’ for its inconsistencies and examples of bad behaviour (not least during the French Enlightenment). Derrida is less interested in praising or blaming than in analysing a patriarchal tradition that still inflects behaviour today. I shall begin my own analysis slightly earlier in Genesis with Lot’s uncle and patron Abraham – also a key figure for Derrida and for many writers on hospitality (or on sacrifice).²¹

Hospitality in the Old Testament has a great deal in common with the pattern noticed in Homer – the ritual washing of the guest as well as the meal and shelter, the reception of the stranger without demanding his name. I would argue that the (unconditional) offer of hospitality is used as a measure of virtue in the Old Testament as it is in Homer. This is true even for women – when Abraham sends a servant to find a wife for his son Isaac amongst his kinfolk,

the test of her suitability is that she gives the servant water from the well, and then offers water to his camels (Genesis 24). Jean Chardin, reflecting on travelling in late seventeenth-century Persia, argues that Abrahamic hospitality functions as a model for Muslims:

The Persians say in praise of hospitality that *Abraham never ate without a guest*, and that that fortunate encounter with the three angels, of which it is spoken in the Scriptures, happened to him one day when, since no-one had arrived by dinner time, he went out of his tent to see if some acquaintance, or someone worthy of an invitation, would pass by. So, in their homes, everything is eaten, as I have observed, without anything being kept for another time, and the remainder is given to the poor, if there are any.

(Les Persans disent à la louange de l’hospitalité, qu’*Abraham ne mangeait jamais sans hôte*, et que cette heureuse rencontre des trois anges, dont il est parlé dans l’Ecriture, lui arriva un jour que, n’étant encore venu personne à l’heure du dîner, il sortit de son pavillon pour voir s’il ne passerait point quelqu’un de sa connaissance, ou qui fût digne d’être invité. Aussi on mange tout chez eux, comme je l’ai observé, sans garder jamais rien pour une autre fois, et on donne le reste aux pauvres, s’il y en a.)²²

Here the Protestant Chardin enacts textual hospitality as he praises the generosity of his erstwhile hosts.²³ He subtly links the ethical open-door hospitality of Persians (present-day Iranians), which includes the humble with the great, with an Abrahamic tradition. Abraham goes out to invite in (almost) any stranger, in this instance, angels. This ties together Jews and Christians with Muslims in a potentially positive tradition of hospitality – quite a different tack from that of, say, Voltaire, whose Old Testament examples usually function negatively (Abraham as child-killer rather than host). Religious (in)tolerance is a key aspect of State or collective (in)hospitality. I would also note the consumption of all the food (rather than saving for the morrow) – while this can be ideologically linked to profligacy, here it is associated with generosity and attention to those who have less. It is also positively associated with sobriety, by which Chardin means not eating (or drinking) to excess – something he much admires for health reasons, but also, here, because it means that there is enough for a larger number of people.

Chouraqui, the celebrated scholar of both the Jewish and the Christian Bible and also the Koran, writes in his commentary on Genesis, which he translates from the Hebrew as *Entête*, of ‘the generosity proper to Abraham and his passion for hospitality’ (‘la

générosité propre à Abraham et sa passion de l'hospitalité').²⁴ When Abraham welcomes the angels (Genesis 18, ii–v), Chouraqui notes:

A typical tableau of the rituals of hospitality; the guests remain at a respectful distance from the opening of the tent. The master of the house demonstrates his great desire to receive them: he *runs* . . . *Prostrates himself*, he insists and describes in advance all that he is ready to offer them. The guests only accept when the rituals reassure them about the sincerity of the quality of invitation that is being made to them.

(Tableau typique des rites de l'hospitalité; les hôtes se tiennent à distance respectueuse de l'ouverture de la tente. Le maître de maison manifeste son vif désir de les accueillir: il *court* . . . *Se prosterne*, il insiste et décrit par avance tout ce qu'il est prêt à leur offrir. Les hôtes n'acceptent que lorsque les rites les rassurent sur la sincérité de la qualité de l'invitation qui leur est faite.) (*Entête*, 138)

Abraham instructs Sarah to use three measures of flour to make cakes; Chouraqui remarks that three *séah* is about forty litres: 'Abraham is not skimping on anything. The meal will be prepared, according to nomadic custom, with the best of what there is in the camp' ('Abraham ne lésine sur rien. Le repas va être préparé suivant la coutume des nomades avec ce qu'il y a de meilleur dans le camp' (*Entête*, 138)). Lot, while still exemplary, is a little more cautious – rising to meet his unexpected visitors but not *running* to greet them – perhaps simply because he is not quite Abraham or (Chouraqui speculates) because his hospitality is slightly tarnished thanks to his sojourn amongst the wicked people of Sodom. Chouraqui points out that Lot inverts the order of the typical offer for the guests to wash their feet and then to spend the night – perhaps, he wonders, knowing the Sodomites, Lot would like to be able to point to the dust on his visitors' feet to indicate that they have only just appeared. His attention to the detail of the Biblical text allows both for the allegorical interpretations and for a historical-cultural one; both have considerable purchase on traditions to come.

One twentieth-century example of the association, made in the Enlightenment by Chardin, of Abraham's hospitality with religious tolerance comes from Louis Massignon (1883–1962), cited by Derrida on a number of occasions including in the closing paragraphs of *Of Hospitality*. Massignon is particularly interested in Abraham's attempt to intercede with God on behalf of the people of Sodom, which occurs between Abraham's entertaining the three angels to which Chardin refers (Genesis 18, i–xv) and Lot's entertaining two

of the angels in Sodom. At Christmas in 1956, Massignon is in the Middle East trying to intercede between two terrorisms; he says that his spark of faith is kept alive more by the condemned criminals and Muslims than by those 'bon vivant', 'bien pensant' 'Christians' and 'Jews' who pursue and torture them.²⁵ Evoking 'our Father Abraham', he writes of his Muslim brothers:

For these, who are abandoned, there is only one work of mercy, Hospitality; and it is by this alone, not by legal observance, that we cross the threshold of the Sacred: Abraham showed us the way.

Let us seek thus with Abraham, in [the home of] the Muslims whom we are driving into the most atrocious despair, in the Accursed City where we are pushing them – the City of the essential Refusal, of the Denial of Hospitality, asked of Lot, – that final spark of Faith.

(Pour ces délaissés, il n'y a plus qu'une oeuvre de miséricorde, l'Hospitalité; et c'est par elle seule, non par les observances légales, qu'on dépasse le seuil du Sacré: Abraham nous l'a montré.)

Cherchons donc avec Abraham, chez les musulmans que nous acculons au désespoir le plus atroce, dans la Cité Maudite où nous les poussons – Cité du Refus essentiel, du Reniement de l'Hospitalité, demandé à Lot, – cette ultime étincelle de Foi.) (*Parole donnée*, 285)

Abraham asks God if he will spare the Sodomites if there are fifty good men in the city, and finally barter him down to but ten (Genesis 18, xxiii–xxxiii). Massignon concludes:

Formerly Abraham, the Friend of God, had objected to Him that there could be ten sparks of Faith still burning, ten believing hosts living in Jordanian Sodom, to save it from the Fire; – no doubt it is from the depths of the spiritual Sodom, from the Hell of 'Il Primor Amore', where Jesus went down to re-ignite the extinguished fire of hospitality that the salvational Indignation of the Judge will spurt forth.

(Abraham, l'Ami de Dieu, Lui avait objecté jadis dix étincelles de Foi encore brûlantes, dix hôtes croyants habitant la Sodome jordanienne, pour la sauver du Feu; – c'est sans doute du fond de la Sodome spirituelle, de l'Enfer d'Il Primor Amore, où Jésus est descendu rallumer le feu de l'hospitalité éteinte que jaillira l'Indignation salvatrice du Juge.) (*Parole donnée*, 285)

A key issue is sexuality – for many readers what is at stake in the story of Lot is the sodomy of the Sodomites, considered as an illicit sexual practice, sometimes translated by mystic or Gnostic readers into 'sterility'.²⁶ Yet it may be argued that the divine test is not whether or not consensual sodomy is practised, but whether the laws

of hospitality (which Abraham has just followed in an exemplary fashion, and his nephew follows too) are observed. The laws of hospitality do not permit raping a guest of either sex – and this is made clearer in the tale of the Levite where the substitution of a woman for a man is accepted by the predators, but does not save them from excessive revenge. One of the aspects that interests Derrida is the question of competing moral codes – does the duty to shelter a guest (stranger) trump everything else including any responsibility for the safety of your own family (and this relates to Kant's argument that the duty to tell the truth takes precedence over the duty of hospitality)?

Alongside homophobic concentration on the sins of Sodom, there is a certain tradition of celebrating the hospitality of the Sodomites as a particular way of embracing the foreigner. Schérer cites Guy Hocqenghem's *La Beauté du métis*²⁷ (and I could add Jonathan Dollimore's *Sexual Dissidence*²⁸) in support of the argument that 'homosexuality' (*avant* or *après la lettre*) is particularly receptive to cultural or class difference; and for Schérer, the reversibility of homosexuality mirrors the reversibility of the *hôte* – he specifically rejects any move into active host and passive invited guest (*invité*) (*Zeus hospitalier*, 148, 206–9). While Schérer's nostalgia for a Golden Age of erotic hospitality does not necessarily exclude women (he criticises Odysseus for his failure to respond to Nausicaa), he is unsympathetic to female figures who exercise caution. He refers to Penelope as: 'Odious shrew, a bourgeoisie *avant la lettre*! That bitch Penelope with the locked heart!' ('Odieuse mégère, bourgeoisie avant la lettre! Salope Pénélope au coeur fermé!' (170)). This comment pays no attention to any political or economic reading of the suitors' behaviour.

I argued with respect to Homer that (human) women cannot safely act as hosts or guests in their own right – they are deemed to need the protection and authority of the master of the house. Although sometimes that fails, as in the case of Paris' theft of Helen, revenge is then exacted by a band of brothers – and when Menelaus duels with Paris he calls on Zeus to help him avenge the betrayal of hospitality. In the Old Testament it could be argued that the homosocial bond of hospitality goes beyond Homer in its explicit willingness to sacrifice women. The patriarch does not protect his women in the stories to which Derrida draws our attention – he abandons her to sexual predation to save himself or his male guest.

Homer, and his later interpreters, tell us two stories about women

– one that seems more empowering (sometimes helped by the range of goddesses and female demi-deities) and one which shows the abuse of women as daughters, concubines or servants. The Old Testament presents respected wives (Sarah or Rebecca) as well as expendable daughters and concubines, and yet even Sarah and Rebecca are sacrificed by the patriarchs when they find themselves economic refugees in potentially hostile territory. When Abraham flees from famine, he grows very rich in Egypt because he presents the beautiful Sarah as his sister and she is taken as a 'wife' by the Pharaoh.²⁹ The Lord intervenes, striking the Pharaoh and his household with disease until they send Abraham away with Sarah, and the cattle, silver and gold he has accumulated (Genesis 12). Abraham repeats the trick in Gerar (Genesis 20) – much of his wealth as a migrant is earned by Sarah's body.

Abraham's son Isaac is, in some respects, a product of hospitality – a miraculous birth that occurs more or less a gestation period after Abraham and Sarah have entertained the three strangers. Just as the story of Telemachus is a minor parallel to Odysseus' noble adventures, but shows the son learning of his father in a visceral fashion, so Isaac's tribulations seem less than those of Abraham. Yet Isaac too is a nomad, fleeing from famine and taking refuge with a people who might do him harm, and so, like his father, he insists that his beautiful wife is his sister (in spite of the probable consequences for her) so that he is not killed for her sake (Genesis 26). I shall return to the conception of Isaac in the next chapter.

Judges: the Levite of Ephraim

The story of Lot (never mind the stories of Abraham) has received a great deal of cultural commentary and re-writing over the centuries. This is less true of the later story, in the Book of Judges, although Rousseau turns it into a fascinating prose poem.³⁰ It has a number of clear similarities with the tale of Lot, but also some important differences. Amongst these is the intriguing element that the story begins with, or is framed by, excessive hospitality. If not as extreme as the sort Odysseus encounters, this does again show anxiety about smothering or sticky hosts – in the context of general praise of hospitality. The Levite's nameless concubine (or wife, depending on the interpretation) has run away from him in a fit of anger, and returned to her father in Bethlehem. After about four months the Levite has come to take her home to Ephraim. He is very well entertained by her father,

and the Bible narrative tells convincingly how each successive day they are persuaded first to have something to eat and drink, and then to stay the night because it has got late. On the fifth day they again accept the feasting, but the Levite refuses to stay yet another night. This need to escape the over-generous hospitality of the woman's father means that they are forced to spend a night en route near Jerusalem – and this is the context of the tragedy. Another difference is that while Lot takes in total strangers (the classic divine visitation), the old man who takes in the Levite and his mistress is from the hill county of Ephraim like the Levite. The Levite's general identity has been established, and thus it is not quite unconditional hospitality at the outset as is Lot's or Abraham's for the angels.

The old man is a stranger amongst the Benjamites, but they are all Israelites – the Levite has chosen to stay in Gibeah rather than in a strange town where the people are not Israelites. Thus the violence that occurs is in a sense between cousins, if not brothers, unlike the Sodomites' threatened violence towards Lot. Although it is true that in both cases the reader is presented with a structure in which it seems as if the resident stranger takes in passing strangers, and is effectively punished by the host community for his boldness, the vengeance subsequently wreaked on the Benjamites is experienced rather differently (with belated anxiety) than is the punishment of the Sodomites.

Both stories concern the substitution of one locus which, by the local cultural convention, should not be penetrated (the anus – here doubly sacrosanct since in the case of Lot we are dealing with angels, and in the case of the Levite, a priest) with another locus (the hymen-protected vagina) which may be penetrated only by invitation – by paternal invitation. But in the second story the guest reciprocates his host's generosity, presenting his concubine as substitute for the daughter. A *chain* of substitutions is put in play.

In his grief at his concubine's fate the Levite dismembers her body and sends a piece to each of the tribes of Israel (in what Rousseau presents in his *Essai sur l'origine des langues* as an outstandingly effective example of silent rhetoric³¹). The body becomes the matter of writing, and provokes a war machine. When, after much slaughter, only six hundred men (and no women) remain of the Benjamites it seems clear that the tribe will die out. Faced with this possibility – with the contradiction of a kind of fraternal genocide or auto-immunity – the Israelites decide to wipe out the men of another city (Jabesh-Gilead) who, for fraternal reasons, did not participate in the

attack on the Benjamites. They also kill all the women of the city who have had intercourse. The virgin women of Jabesh-Gilead can then be given to the remaining Benjamites as wives. Thus we have passed from target number one (the Benjamites who protected the perpetrators of the atrocity) to target number two (the men of Jabesh who were just not sufficiently on side, and their wives). As the virgins of Jabesh number only four hundred, an old man suggests that the last Benjamites be allowed to ravish the virgins participating in a religious festival. These women are then the third target – and a further sanctioned *rapt*. What is striking is the lack of a female voice or name in the series of deaths and rapes – in a text which is full of proper names. The re-settling of the Benjamites occurs at the very end of the Book of Judges, and the final phrase has a degree of ambiguity: 'and every man did what was right in his own eyes'.

Rousseau's version does not conclude in the same way – the seizing of the anonymous virgins on a pilgrimage to Shiloh is not satisfactory for him. As a degree of mayhem ensues, opening up the possibility of further bloodshed on the part of unhappy fathers, a solution is finally found in the example of one girl (whom he names Axa): the daughter of the old man who proposed the authorised rape responds to her father's and her people's need, and offers herself as willing victim. This *hostia*, the repetition of the female sacrifice, is one of the many interesting motifs in the retold tale. The woman is the sacrificial object par excellence – both dispensable, substitutable and over-valued. Rousseau moves us from the biblical patriarchal sacrifice (Abraham sacrificing Isaac is the best remembered, but I have focused on the more frequent sacrifice of the daughter or wife/concubine) or Homeric sacrifice (Agamemnon offering Iphigenia) to self-sacrifice. Axa's example is imitated by the other young women, and Rousseau's concluding phrase can be 'il est encore des vertus en Israël' (*Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 2, 1223).

Hospitality has led to terror. And if we look at events prior to the night of horror, it was the excessive hospitality of the concubine's father that has caused a delay leading to the need to spend the night in the Benjamite city. The role of old men or patriarchs as fathers, hosts and political or moral leaders is notable. Rape of the stranger-guest as punishment, control or 'because we can' by the Benjamite barbarians (as Rousseau calls them) provokes a response in the form of collective if not yet 'state' violence which is completely incommensurable with the original crime, horrible as it was. Moral outrage at an individual crime has fuelled the near-extinction of a tribe. In

Rousseau's tale the mass-destruction machine is brought to a halt only by the willing feminine victim – in the original by a sleight of hand which escapes the letter of the covenant made not to give a wife to a Benjamite. Derrida writes: 'One can imagine the desire to efface such an event or, at the very least, to attenuate it, to make up for it, and also to disclaim it. But whether the desire is fulfilled or not, the traumatism will have taken place, with its indefinite consequences, at once destructuring and structuring' (*MO*, 55) ('Le désir d'effacer un tel événement, ou à tout le moins de l'atténuer, de le compenser . . . Mais que ce désir s'accomplisse ou non, le traumatisme aura eu lieu, avec ses effets indéfinis, déstructurants et structurants à la fois' (*MA*, 92)). In this context Derrida is referring to the situation of Jews in colonial Algeria, as a disintegrated community cut off from a mother tongue and history, forced to speak the language of their 'host(s)'.³² However, the words seem even more appropriate to this foundational tale of hospitality, inhospitality and (self-)mutilation.

The two episodes of hospitality, Lot's and the old man's, raise the question how far you should go for a guest (including betraying other ethical obligations). The duty to a guest can of course bring hospitality into conflict with the law. The aftermath of the two transgressions of hospitality raises the issue of the law again, and of the collective (or divine) punishment for an act that strikes at what is regarded as the heart of civilisation. The tale of the Levite, and of the collective response to an act of brutality which has undermined the possibility of hospitality and thus mobility, inspires reflection on hospitality on an international level: including the situations of refugees, asylum seekers and aeroplane travellers. Not only the host, or the host community (and the Israeli Benjamites and Jordanian Sodomites are certainly figures of Terror), but also the guest can be terrifying. The terrorist is a figure both hyperbolically masculine and totally feminised, the most feared arrival of our day. Terrorist action has been met with spectacular revenge on entire peoples who apparently refuse to give up the perpetrators of a crime.

A sexual dimension to terror should not be forgotten. Rape is still deployed as an instrument of war in modern times, for example in Rwanda or the former Yugoslavia. It is used not only to subdue feminised territory and populations, but also to fertilise the land and, after a partial genocide, to repopulate, mixing the blood and genes of the conquerors with the conquered. The foetus follows the penis as uninvited guest. Abortion and the suicide of rape victims, pregnant or not, are other domains where a woman may not choose to be a

host – or where the patriarchs of her community may decide that she is no more than the instrument of their refusal or acceptance of a certain law.

As we have seen, in *Perpetual Peace*, a text which proposes a kind of United Nations *avant l'heure*, Kant includes a section on universal hospitality. This, for Kant, is a right because men originally had common ownership of the earth's surface and 'since the earth is a globe, they cannot scatter themselves infinitely, but must finally tolerate living in close proximity' (358). In this era of globalisation, we have returned to Kant's sense of limited space – we have passed through the false lure of colonialism which re-conceived of the territory of others as virgin land to be husbanded. Post-colonially, hospitality seems all the more necessary – and yet it is not simple and never will be – in particular, where there are extreme imbalances of power and we cannot find Irigaray's solution (even on an Imaginary or Symbolic level) of separate co-existence or creating a new world together. At *best* we offer a grudging invitation to the other to enter our house on our terms. It is not clear that the evil which then befalls host and guest is accidental rather than structural (an allergic reaction). And, post-Marx, we seem to have lost our sense of structure. I have focused on the evil shadowing the good of hospitality as the figure of rape – a real evil but also a figure for the outrage that shames the master of the house even as he invites it. For Levinas, hospitality is (feminine) vulnerability (see Derrida's analysis in *Adieu*, 53–4, and notes; 100). However terrible an outrage is committed against this (very limited) openness, we should beware of spectacular revenge; the Levite's story (and perhaps that of Lot) suggests that a killing machine has its own momentum – once set in motion, in a reversal of cause and effect, it will generate its reasons to kill. On a global rather than local scale we cannot be sure that any 'feminine' act of sacrifice would be grand enough to break the chain.

Reference to the past or to another place – forgetting the violence

Although there has been a recent resurgence of interest in it, hospitality is a topic that has *consistently* been considered important over long periods of time, and over wide tracts of the globe, as these stories show. Our conviction of its *universality* is indeed critical to our understanding of its structure: hospitality is traditionally defined as a universal (even *the* universal) human virtue – as I have suggested

in the Introduction, even definitional of humanity for Levinas. While termed (human) virtue in general – hospitality is traditionally offered and accepted by men, and in some contexts is what reveals the virtue, the manliness, the humanity of the man, and thus Abraham deserves to become Father of the chosen nation in the logic of the narrative. Women meanwhile very often perform the labour of hospitality, whether Sarah preparing huge quantities of cakes or Penelope's unfortunate maids who are hanged because of the 'hospitality' forced from them by bad guests.

While we may recognise, and even celebrate in television documentaries, museums or books, a *variety* of exotic hospitable customs, our conclusion tends to draw them together on a continuum of fundamental similarity. In his analysis of an American exhibition of photographs from around the world, 'The Family of Man', shown in Paris as the *great* family of man 'La grande famille des hommes', Barthes suggests how easily we pass from marvelling at the range of human practices of birth, marriage, death rites and so on, in different cultures, to an assertion of essential humanity – the danger in what can be a metaphysical move is that history and economics are evaded (*Mythologies*, 107–10; 173–6).³³ Once the continuum is established, then, according to most rhetorical evocations, it is clear how hospitality is practised 'more faithfully' at certain times or by certain peoples, often peoples who have (or are perceived to have) a stricter division between the sexes.³⁴ The virtuous Sarah stays in Abraham's tent while the guests are present. The violence attendant on so many ancient tales of hospitality – whether rape, fire and brimstone, or massacre, is 'forgotten'.

René Schérer opens his book in praise of hospitality with the assertion: 'Intolerance towards strangers does not date from yesterday, but from right now. . . . Yes, hospitality has really gone out of fashion! . . . it is only a question, in France and just about everywhere in the world, of restricting it, from the right to asylum to the laws on nationality!' ('L'intolérance à l'étranger ne date pas d'hier, mais d'à présent. . . . L'hospitalité, oui, est bien passée de mode! . . . il n'est question, en France et un peu partout dans le monde, que de la restreindre, depuis le droit d'asile jusqu'au Code de la nationalité!') (*Zeus hospitalier*, 11–12). He implies a former Golden Age when borders and hearts were (relatively) open. Discourse on hospitality frequently refers explicitly or implicitly to a past time period when conduct is deemed closer to the essence of generosity or reciprocity. Sometimes cultures which are spatially and/or culturally distant,

for instance the Arab culture of nomadic hospitality, are used as a proxy for temporal distance. Schérer puts it succinctly: hospitality 'reminds the imagination of an other era and an elsewhere' ('rappelle à l'imagination un autrefois et un ailleurs') (19), something he both observes and enacts. One example of a typical anecdote to demonstrate nomadic Arab hospitality runs as follows. Michael Asher, 'desert explorer and author', writes:

Travelling by camel in the Western Sahara, my wife and I ran out of water. Temperatures were in the fifties Centigrade, and we had seen no one for ten days. We knew we could only last about another twelve hours. Then we spotted a nomad tent in the distance. A boy came running out with a bowl of water, took us to his camp, where the nomads helped unload our camels, and drew us into the shade.

They passed us a huge bowl of fresh camels' milk, and after sunset killed and roasted a goat in our honour. They fed our camels with their own precious grain, and insisted on giving us their rugs to sleep on. In the morning, the boy walked six miles in the blazing sun to show us where we could get water. After helping us to water the camels, he walked another two miles to set us on the right path. These nomads had almost nothing. I have never felt so humbled.³⁵

This is typical in its account of superabundant generosity: giving more to a guest than the host can afford. Its elements are classical: the offer of water to a thirsty stranger whose name you do not know; the feast; the giving up of the host's own bed; setting the travellers on their way. However, I should note in passing that almost all these idealised practices from long ago or far away exclude or repress women, and that exclusion/repression echoes with us here and now.

To take what may at first seem a rather different example, in *French Hospitality* Ben Jelloun writes in praise of Moroccan hospitality, as part of *all* Moroccans' tradition and cultural identity; but for Rosello 'the concept of hospitality remains a somewhat monolithic and generalized one' in his work (*Postcolonial Hospitality*, 26). She acknowledges that there may be a certain rhetorical strategy granted the political questions (notably French racism towards North-African immigrants) he is addressing, but of course the case can be made that a less absolute notion of hospitality is more helpful to negotiating the resolution of these tensions. Rosello argues that, rather than allowing for ambiguity, Jelloun tends to idealise Morocco and gloss over any inner tensions – following the pattern of a kind of traditional ethnographic discourse (as in the example I have cited above). I would add that this pattern relates to our sense

of what is *natural* – even though hospitality is obviously a social relation. However, it is hard to escape. As Paul de Man remarks:

The deconstruction of a system of relationships always reveals a more fragmented stage that can be called natural with regard to the system that is being undone. Because it also functions as the negative truth of the deconstructive process, the ‘natural’ pattern authoritatively substitutes its relational system for the one it helped dissolve. In so doing, it conceals the fact that it is itself one system of relations among others, and it presents itself as the sole and true order of things, as nature and not as structure. But since a deconstruction always has for its target to reveal the existence of hidden articulations and fragmentations within assumedly monadic totalities, nature turns out to be a self-deconstructive term.³⁶

The intertexts of other (more natural) locations always function rhetorically in the analysis of hospitality here and now, and, more specifically, of the *failure* of hospitality today (whenever and wherever today is).

One problem which can be related to this is the idealisation of nomadic mobility, the most famous example being Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s ‘deterritorialisation’ – or the way in which it is taken up by their most enthusiastic readers. The nomad is set against the sedentary just as the rhizomatic is against the arborescent, or the minor against the major literature, as configurations that tend to break up (being out of the world) or consolidate (being in the world). Peter Hallward comments on what he considers to be the metaphysical underpinning of ‘nomad thought’:

The relation between the nomadic and the sedentary cannot be understood, according to Deleuze and Guattari, in terms of any sort of historical development. ‘The nomads do not precede the sedentaries; rather, nomadism is a movement, a becoming that affects the sedentaries, just as sedentarism is a stoppage that settles the nomads’ (TP, 430). No more than the sedentary state-politics that oppresses them, nomads do not evolve or develop but spring immediately into being. The nomad is incompatible with any notion of ‘development’. Strictly speaking, then, ‘the nomads have no history; they have only a geography’ [TP, 393. ‘Nomadology is the opposite of a history’ (TP, 23)]. As far as history or actuality are concerned, Deleuze and Guattari are quite willing to accept that ‘the defeat of the nomads was such, so complete, that history is one with the triumph of States’ (TP, 394). But as far as philosophy is concerned, this defeat is of no more consequence than are the actual politics of such states. No more than you might ever see an ‘actual’ schizo, no more than any process of becoming as such, you will not find these virtual nomads in history. (*Out of This World*, 101)³⁷

A rather different example of ‘Arab’ hospitality, one which draws attention to the tensions at play rather than glossing over them, occurs in Cixous’s programme notes to the play *The Last Caravanserai* (*Le dernier Caravansérail*, first produced at Le Théâtre du Soleil in 2003) in which a Sufi tale of hospitality is reproduced. It begins by telling how the people of Turkistan are famed for their generosity, pride and love of horses; and ends with the impoverished Anwar Beg feeding his beloved, and extremely valuable, horse to the guest who had wanted to buy it from him, saying: ‘hospitality comes before everything else’ (‘l’hospitalité passe avant tout’). As in Ben Jelloun’s work, this citation of absolute hospitality has an obvious meaning in the context of Ariane Mnouchkine’s and Cixous’s critique of French inhospitality; but it also has a more complex side of violent sacrifice: as in the Old Testament tales of Lot and the Levite of Ephraim the most beloved object is given up (and destroyed) for the *hôte*. The Sufi tale comes close to cannibalism, and, while meeting the physical need for food and psychological need to be welcomed of the guest in general (the guest function), denies the emotional desires of this particular guest (to own the living horse, but also to help the horse’s owner) in order to fulfil the position of the host. Derrida reminds us at the close of *Of Hospitality* of the patriarchal structure by which the master of the house makes the laws of hospitality, represents them and bends to them in order to make others bend to them; this is the violence of ipseity in the power of hospitality. The universal absolute of hospitality can clash with the demand to make guests feel at home, which needs to negotiate with particularity – awareness of their difference, and of the differences within hospitality.

The rhetorical triangle of self-critique (‘if only we could do as well as they did’) I have identified here, between ourselves or our nation as *hosts*, others or strangers who are potential *guests*, and those who were or are *better hosts*, usually safely long ago or far away, is not, however, the only critical triangle. Another relevant structure is the self-*justifying* comparison (‘we’re not as bad as them’) so often drawn between ourselves in our real or potential relation to incomers, immigrants, refugees and other nations, competitor nations, with respect to their relation to subalterns. The British press (or even British sociologists) smugly cite the French Islamic headscarf controversy (‘l’affaire du foulard’) or disturbances involving young people of North-African descent, as if British institutions have never tried to police clothing which has religious significance and Britain has never known race riots.³⁸ While this condemnation of others may be

sincere and well-meant, it can also serve as exculpation for internal or external border policies at home. Equally there is the liberal rhetorical figure Barthes calls inoculation, introducing criticism of what seem minor contingent problems to ward off radical overthrow of the system: 'One immunizes the contents of the collective imagination by means of a small inoculation of acknowledged evil; one thus protects it against the risk of a generalized subversion' (*Mythologies*, 164) ('On immunise l'imaginaire collectif par une petite inoculation de mal reconnu; on le défend ainsi contre le risque d'une subversion généralisée' (238–9)). Thus a particular incident – the French police chasing after someone to check their papers ending in a horrific accident; Father Christmas refused entry to a British refugee detention centre – can catch the public imagination as a scandal while the principles underlying immigration policy in general remain unchallenged.³⁹

Intertextual hosts and guests

The reference to some other place or time, some other text, when hospitality is discussed is rarely simple. Thinking about hospitality after Derrida also involves thinking about reading and writing, about hospitable texts and texts of hospitality. The ethical (and political) imperative of hospitality is double: the immediate and unconditional welcome of the Law of hospitality; the time of reflection and analysis of the laws which are always conditional. I would argue for an openness of reading and writing, along with political openness (at the level of the State) and ethical openness between individuals. Openness of reading (what I, with others, have elsewhere called maternal or feminine reading) brings the self into question as it struggles with the foreign text, and can be immensely pleasurable as well as painful. Openness of writing does not, for me, only concern avant-garde texts (sometimes termed *écriture féminine*) or the experiments and play we find in Cixous, Derrida and Irigaray at their most 'difficult'. The reader can help to open up even a text that may seem already fixed in its meaning, whether on account of style or on account of a canonical interpretation. Derrida has joined in many conversations, including those between Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Montaigne on friendship (which I shall turn to in the next chapter), and added to the feast. This example helps to show that welcoming other voices does not mean being overwhelmed or submerged by them – there are always *conditions* on our reading and there is always a need for patient reflection and analysis.

I have suggested that one of the striking features of discussions of (in)hospitality is their particular *intertextual quality* – how elements from a range of earlier or otherwise distant theories and practices are introduced and transformed in the new context. Conversely, hospitality can also be a useful way of thinking about our relationship to texts, in the broadest sense, as opposed to the many other models of reading-writing that have been explicitly or implicitly privileged over the years (scientific or agonistic, to mention but two). Since our readings and narration of ourselves and others are part of our social and political relationships, this is by no means purely a debate within literary criticism. When Derrida was reproached on the grounds that 'if we practise close reading we will never act', he, unsurprisingly, refused the opposition, remarking that 'to read events, to analyse the situation, to criticize the media, to listen to the rhetoric of the demagogues, that's close reading, and it is required more today than ever. So I would urge politicians and citizens to practise close reading' (*HJR*, 67). *Absolute* hospitality to texts is of course impossible (and undesirable, as Derrida's examples show); we consciously (as well as unconsciously) select which elements we will allow into our narratives. Complete openness to the exterior we would probably understand as equivalent to complete insanity. However, respectful and responsible readings are, I would argue, modes of conditional hospitality. Analysis of both Levinas's maxim that *language is hospitality* (a coded relation to the other), and the question of the (impossible) suspension of language, enriches various theorisations of intertextuality whether or not these draw explicitly on the figure of hospitality (and related parasitical tropes). The *tour de force* essay by J. Hillis Miller, 'The Critic as Host',⁴⁰ is an impeccable starting point for thinking about intertextuality and hospitality, although it precedes Derrida's major publications on hospitality. Sexual difference also suffuses the representation of intertextual relations.⁴¹ Revisiting intertextuality via hospitality involves threading the questions of passion and of sexual difference (or the phantasm of sexual differentiation) through the various theories – the 'poet's' struggle to be a man (a divine man who gives birth to himself) and his *fear* and *desire* of being 'a woman'.⁴² I shall begin the (re)visit by asking some questions about literary hospitality: Is the guest or the host in the position of mastery? Would there be aggressivity on the part of the host (or guest)? Who is the host and who is the guest/parasite in intertextual terms? Is the guest welcome(d)? Would different models of hospitality lead to different understandings of intertextuality? For example:

1) The laws of hospitality which govern the culturally sanctioned role of host as master of the house would fit with the sense of the author as master of his work. As author I would choose to invite in suitable guests who will behave appropriately – not attempt to take over, infiltrate, invade, rob, violate. I would select those who are like me, my peers, who speak my language, and whom I could honour with quotation marks and the use of their proper names. This would fit a theory or figuring of citation or reference as ornamentation: choice jewels or flowers which decorate or embellish the master's house.⁴³ I would hope not to be *betrayed* by my reference points. On the other hand:

2) There is the singular and absolute Law of hospitality – 'wild' hospitality – where the text would be criss-crossed by the words of others. There would be others' words in my mouth, 'dirty' improper (not *propre*) words, which have already been in the mouths of others (as Bakhtin suggests). Invasions by barbarians, whose names I do not know, whose language I do not speak, who do not obey my rules, my grammar, my code, my law. Possible violence: passion in both senses. Love of books, words. Going to bed with a book (as Cixous suggests) and being ravished by another's tongue. My loss of control might be so great that I do not even know I have been invaded – by secret guests, parasites, even viruses.⁴⁴

Are these models of writing or models of reading – and can we so easily distinguish between the two? I shall briefly return to Harold Bloom's categories and his use of psychoanalysis – the Oedipal agon. This will prove particularly useful for a model of critics' reading. Bloom writes:

A poetic 'text' . . . is not a gathering of signs on a page, but is a psychic battlefield upon which authentic forces struggle for the only victory worth winning, the divinatory triumph over oblivion . . . Few notions are more difficult to dispel than the 'commonsensical' one that a poetic text is self-contained . . . [P]oems are not things but only words that refer to other words, and *those* words refer to still other words, and so on, into the densely overpopulated world of literary language . . . A poem is not writing, but *rewriting*.⁴⁵

And again:

Any poet (meaning even Homer, if we could know enough about his precursors) is in the position of being 'after the Event', in terms of literary language. His art is necessarily an *aftering*, and so at best he strives for a selection, through repression, out of the traces of the language of

poetry; that is he represses some of the traces, and remembers others. This remembering is a misprision, or creative misreading, but no matter how strong a misprision, it cannot achieve an autonomy of meaning, or a meaning *fully* present, that is free from all literary context. . . . The caveman who traced the outline of an animal upon the rock always retraced a precursor's outline. (*Poetry and Repression*, 4)

I should like to juxtapose Bloom's assertion with the case of intellectual property rights and the laws against plagiarism.⁴⁶

In his now classic article, in a collection with Bloom, Derrida et al., Hillis Miller asks:

Is a citation an alien parasite within the body of the main text, or is the interpretive text the parasite which surrounds and strangles the citation which is its host? The host feeds the parasite and makes its life possible, but at the same time is killed by it, as criticism is often said to kill literature. Or can host and parasite live happily together, in the domicile of the same text, feeding each other or sharing the food? ('The Critic as Host', 217)

He points out that deconstructive criticism is said to be parasitical on the 'obvious or univocal' reading.⁴⁷ Commenting on images of oak and ivy in Hardy and Thackeray, he explains:

That ivy is somehow feminine, secondary, defective, or dependent. It is a clinging vine, able to live in no other way but by drawing the life sap of its host, cutting off its light and air . . . Such sad love stories of a domestic affection which introduces the parasitical into the closed economy of the home no doubt describe well enough the way some people feel about the relation of a 'deconstructive' interpretation to 'the obvious or univocal reading'. . . . The alien has invaded the house, perhaps to kill the father of the family in an act which does not look like parricide, but is. (218)

Hillis Miller wonders, however: 'Is the "obvious" reading, though, so "obvious" or even so "univocal"? May it not itself be the uncanny alien which is so close that it cannot be seen as strange, host in the sense of enemy rather than host in the sense of open-handed dispenser of hospitality?' (218). Thus he turns back on the critics of deconstruction the charge of being foreign (and so potentially treacherous) bodies. But at least he does not openly call them girls. The polemical feminisation of deconstruction as parasitical on the sturdy masculinity of, not only the strong poet who has fought his predecessors, but even the strong critic, is not surprising. But effeminacy is not a simple insult in these boys' games; it is an important element of the unconscious and conscious agon. Finally, we should remember Hillis Miller's words:

The poem, in my figure, is that ambiguous gift, food, host in the sense of victim, sacrifice. It is broken, divided, passed around, consumed by the critics canny and uncanny who are in that odd relation to one another of host and parasite. Any poem, however, is parasitical in its turn on earlier poems, or it contains earlier poems within itself as enclosed parasites, in another version of the perpetual reversal of parasite and host. If the poem is food and poison for the critics, it must in its turn have eaten. It must have been a cannibal consumer of earlier poems. (225)

Derrida's writing and speaking is peculiarly hospitable, beautiful, sometimes angry, sometimes lyrical, sometimes dense in a way that momentarily collapses the poetic and the philosophical *without* ever collapsing itself or indeed bringing about the chronic collapse of the categories that get stretched to and around their limits. Difficult, yes, often of course – and sometimes a kind of difficulty that makes some readers respond with anger or despair, others with a kind of eager mimicry, a kind of faithful following that maybe in the end resembles betrayal as much as fidelity. Derrida is for me the archetypical Bloomian strong poet – it is desperately hard to write strong poetry in his wake. Derrida's writing is hospitable in that it gives the reader great sustenance, food for thought. However, readers need to be careful what and how they eat. We could remember the Lotus Eaters in the *Odyssey*; eating their food means becoming soporific, losing your critical faculties and your independence of mind, becoming more like (pale imitations of) your hosts. As the reader enters the spaces of Derrida's writing it is possible to become overwhelmed by the riches around her or him, and simply want to have the same. And so many words are spectrally inhabited by Derrida (*différance*, supplement, hymen, grief . . .), his *legs*, our sense of inheritance, his gift.⁴⁸ In this context: 'hostipitality'. There's a thin line between love and hate. Derrida gifted us so much. Receiving a gift means being put under an obligation.

When the text, like the *Odyssey* or the stories of Abraham, Lot and the Levite, is 'about' hospitality (and inhospitality) as well as enacting hospitality to its reader then it has a special relationship to the history of practices and discourses of hospitality. The various scenarios are re-worked in a range of historical conjunctures, taking on different significations with the different political or social contexts.⁴⁹ The embedding of sexual differentiation into such a work is inevitable yet also revealing, and certainly creates an opportunity for the reader to analyse the complex knots of sexed hospitality and attempt to refigure these for the future.

Notes

1. This section was given at 'Luce Irigaray and the Greeks', University of Columbia (New York), 2004; see E. Tzelepis and A. Athanasiou (eds), *Rewriting Difference* (New York: SUNY Press, 2010).
2. In the *Illiad* two warriors (the Greek Diomedes and the Lycian Glaucus) recognise each other in the thick of battle: their grandfathers had a compact of guest-friendship, and therefore they throw down their weapons and agree not to fight each other. This is a practical contract more than an emotional tie – after all Diomedes and Glaucus had never met before. This shows the power of such bonds of *xenia* although it is a rare moment in that text. See Arthur W. H. Adkins, "Friendship" and "Self-Sufficiency" in Homer and Aristotle', *The Classical Quarterly*, 13:1 (1963), pp. 30–45.
3. In *Taking on the Tradition*, Naas evokes the *Odyssey* in a chapter on hospitality; he raises the key questions of threshold and the name, and makes some very interesting points although he does not quite follow the details of the text – for instance he implies that Polyphemos invites Odysseus in as his guest which is not the case (pp. 155–6). He then uses the story of Polyphemos as a parable for states with (fierce) border controls and close inspection of passports, but I am not sure that that works (pp. 156 ff). By the time Odysseus is asked his name the Cyclops has already killed four and eaten two of his crew; it is not clear that the others would have been spared, whatever name/passport had been given, see the *Odyssey*, Book IX. I shall refer to book numbers (in Roman numerals) for ease of comparison between editions. For quotations I shall refer to *The Odyssey*, translated by E. V. Rieu (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1946).
4. See Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1797* (London and New York: Methuen, 1986) for numerous examples; for instance he quotes George Sandys in Jamestown 1621–25 comparing West Indians to Polyphemos (p. 154). Abandoned princesses or nymphs can be seen in the retold tales of Pocahontas or Yarico. See also my *Enlightenment Hospitality*, especially Chapters 2–3 on the New World.
5. Mireille Rosello, 'Frappier aux portes invisibles avec des mots-valises: la *malgériance* d'Hélène Cixous', in Lise Gauvin, Pierre L'Herault and Alain Montandon (eds), *Le dire de l'hospitalité* (Dijon: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2004), pp. 61–74, p. 61.
6. Margaret Whitford, 'Irigaray, Utopia, and the Death Drive', in Carolyn Burke et al. (eds), *Engaging with Irigaray* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 379–400, p. 388. On Homer, see 'The Return' in Luce Irigaray, *Teaching* (London and New York: Continuum, 2008), pp. 219–30.

7. See Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover. Of Friedrich Nietzsche*, translated by Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Luce Irigaray, *Amante marine* (Paris: Minuit, 1980), e.g. the section 'Veiled Lips' for a number of pertinent remarks on the representation of woman as foreign to truth. See also Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles. Eperons: Les Styles de Nietzsche*, translated by Barbara Harlow (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1979).
8. Steve Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome: Oral Theory and the Aesthetics of the Homeric Hospitality Scene* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993).
9. Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, translated by John P. Leavey, Jr and Richard Rand (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1986); Jacques Derrida, *Glas* (Paris: Galilée, 1974).
10. Freud's essay 'On Femininity' suggests that weaving is the one art invented by women – and that they invented it out of feminine modesty – to hide their lack of penis. But it is more of an imitation (of natural pubic hair) or an extension of nature than an invention. See Derrida, 'A Silkworm of One's Own. Points of View Stitched on the Other Veil', in Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida, *Veils*, translated by Geoffrey Bennington (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); 'Un ver à soie. Points de vue piqués sur l'autre voile', in Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida, *Voiles* (Paris: Galilée, 1998).
11. There are of course many analyses of this – I shall just cite one salient one: Peggy Kamuf, *Signature Pieces: On the Institution of Authorship* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), Chapter XIX, 'Penelope at Work', especially pp. 145–7. Kamuf starts by pointing out that Telemachus twice sends his mother away to weave and spin – leaving men's work such as 'discussion' to him. At the same time metaphorically weaving and spinning is seen as crucial to men's poetic language. Women's work and the domestic interior is veiled to men – imagining Penelope in bed at night when in fact she is undoing her weaving.
12. Helen can be read as the figure of the poet – this is figured most strikingly in the *Illiad*. She is weaving when the reader/listener first encounters her – a story cloth in purple telling of the Trojan War. See Kathryn Sullivan Kruger, *Weaving the Word: The Metaphorics of Weaving and Female Textual Production* (Selingsgrove: Susquehanna University Press/London: Associated University Presses, 2001).
13. I am using a great deal of shorthand here (as Irigaray does in her discussions of Athena and Apollo). Athena is not quite motherless – although she is born motherless. According to myth, her father, Zeus, swallowed her pregnant mother the Titaness Metis for fear that she would eventually give birth to a son who would kill him as he killed his own father (Cronus) who had killed his grandfather (Uranus).
14. See Judith Still and Michael Worton, 'Introduction' in *Textuality and*

- Sexuality: Reading Theories and Practices* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).
15. An alternative translation is equally clear: 'You wasted my house, and lay with the maidservants by force, and while I was still alive covertly courted my wife' (Homer, *The Odyssey*, translated by A. T. Murray, revised by George E. Dimmock [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998], p. 347).
 16. One of the most interesting of recent rewritings of *The Odyssey* is Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2005) which has the hanged maids as a chorus.
 17. Joanna Hodge points out how 'the motherless Athena and her brother, Apollo, triumph over the chthonic gods and the relation between mother and daughter – between Clytemnestra and Iphigenia – is erased' in her comments on matricide drawing on Irigaray's 'The Bodily Encounter with the Mother', in *The Irigaray Reader*, pp. 34–46; *Le Corps-à-corps avec la mère* (Montreal: Les Editions de la pleine lune, 1981), pp. 11–32. See Joanna Hodge, 'Irigaray Reading Heidegger', in Burke et al. (eds), *Engaging with Irigaray*, pp. 191–209, pp. 192–3.
 18. René Schérer, *Zeus hospitalier: éloge de l'hospitalité* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 2005 [1993]), pp. 150–2.
 19. There are exceptions, for example an old woman can be perceived as a relatively sex-less form – and Athena visits Arachne as an old woman to engage her as a weaver.
 20. It is not clear whether he offers the Levite's concubine too – it is a question of the translation/interpretation of the Hebrew. Derrida (and Kamuf) follow Chouraqui who is closer to the original Hebrew than the standard English versions which take a more logical (in terms of the succession of substitutions) line that has the old man offering 'only' his daughter and the Levite 'only' his concubine.
 21. In the confines of this chapter I shall not focus on Abraham as Father of nations or on the sacrifice of Isaac. Derrida writes at length on the Hegelian interpretation of Genesis in *Glas*; see in particular pp. 40–45; pp. 49–55. This includes the figure of Abraham as the chosen one (and thus slave), and circumcision as an apotropaic simulacrum of castration.
 22. Jean Chardin, *Voyages du Chevalier Chardin en Perse et aux autres lieux de l'Orient*, ed. L. Langlès (Paris: Le Normant, 1811), Vol. 4, p. 58.
 23. For more detail on Chardin's account of Oriental hospitality, see my *Enlightenment Hospitality*, Chapter 4.
 24. *La Bible*, translated and edited by André Chouraqui (Paris: Jean-Claude Lattès, 1992), Vol. 1, *Entête*, p. 138. Chouraqui, like Derrida, was born in Algeria and then moved to Paris.
 25. Louis Massignon, 'A la limite', in *Parole donnée* (Paris: Seuil, 1983), pp. 284–5.

26. Schérer cites the various interpretations of Abraham and Lot by Philo of Alexandria, which transform women into virtues for example.
27. Guy Hocquenghem, *La Beauté du métis* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1979).
28. Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).
29. In *In the Time of Nations (A l'heure des nations)*, Levinas refers to *Deuteronomy* (23, viii): "thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian, because thou wast a stranger in his land" ("n'aie pas l'Egyptien en horreur, car tu as séjourné dans son pays") as an example of hospitality taking precedence over the imposition of alterity (quoted by Derrida in *Adieu*, p. 69; p. 125). Derrida shows how these kind of discreet allusions to Israel and Egyptian hospitality (even where it also ended up in slavery) have a contemporary resonance in the Middle East (e.g. *Adieu*, pp. 70–84; pp. 131–52).
30. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Le Lévitte d'Ephraïm*, in his *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond, 5 vols (Paris: Pléiade, 1959–95), Vol. 2, pp. 1205–23. See my 'Acceptable Hospitality: From Rousseau's Levite to the Strangers in our Midst Today', *Journal of Romance Studies*, 3:2 (2003), pp. 1–14, based on my Inaugural Lecture at the Institute of Romance Studies. Thanks also to audiences in Leeds and Lyons. See also Peggy Kamuf's analysis of Rousseau's text as representation of writing in her *Signature Pieces*; Thomas Kavanagh, *Writing the Truth: Authority and Desire in Rousseau* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); and Jean Starobinski, 'Rousseau's Happy Days', *New Literary History*, 11 (1979), pp. 147–66.
31. Rousseau, *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 5, pp. 371–429, p. 377.
32. He cites Franz Rosenzweig – who takes the analysis of the Jewish diaspora back to the immigrant Father (Abraham).
33. See Diana Knight, *Barthes and Utopia: Space, Travel, Writing* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 98–100, for some details on how Barthes's analysis is just as relevant to the American packaging of the exhibition. Barthes asks his readers what the parents of Emmett Till (an African-American killed by white Americans) or North-African workers in the poorest areas of Paris think of the great family of man.
34. For example, see Rousseau's praise of hospitality in the Valais area of present-day Switzerland in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 2.
35. Michael Asher, 'Escape', *Observer*, 27 November 2005, p. 4.
36. Paul De Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 249.
37. The abbreviation TP refers to the translation of Deleuze and Guattari's *Mille Plateaux*. See also Jeremy Lane, 'Deleuze In and Out of this World', *Paraglyph*, 30:2 (2007), pp. 109–16.

38. Since writing this the French government under Sarkozy has gone further in its attempt to impose Republican universalism, opening up a debate on national identity which has proved a gift to the Front National, and setting up an inquiry into the burkha which is considering banning it from the streets of France – since Western identity apparently involves the visibility of the face.
39. This is not to deny the potential power of the seemingly marginal example, which can sometimes have an effect seemingly disproportionate – at an overdetermined moment perhaps. On a daily basis, however, newspaper readers can consume examples that horrify them, and the criticism of those practices does not lead to a demand for radical change.
40. J. Hillis Miller, 'The Critic as Host', in Harold Bloom, Paul De Man, Jacques Derrida, Geoffrey H. Hartman, J. Hillis Miller, *Deconstruction and Criticism*, (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 217–53.
41. This would be an addendum to the Introduction to Judith Still and Michael Worton (eds), *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), pp. 1–44.
42. Poet is used here (as in a number of works on intertextuality, albeit with the notable exception of Bakhtin) to mean writer or creator.
43. Of course any of these figures can be made less comfortable. If we take flowers for example, Hillis Miller analyses the way in which Shelley, in his own precursor texts to the *The Triumph of Life* (such as *Queen Mab*), refers to parasite flowers.
44. The trace of a secret guest might be some kind of catachresis or ungrammaticality, as Michael Riffaterre puts it.
45. Harold Bloom, *Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), pp. 2–3.
46. The issue of originality obviously relates to property rights: 'any claim of originality seeks to protect its fruits as being (on) private property. If no one else has thought quite the same thought, nor written it down in the same way, then the thought and its fruit, the text, must be protected – so, at least, runs the logic. The trouble (one of many) is that an idea cannot be owned since it partakes of human thought and language, which belongs to everyone' (Françoise Meltzer, *Hot Property: The Stakes and Claims of Literary Originality* [Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994], p. 1). My thanks to Ziva Ben Porat for pointing out this work which has a number of thought-provoking analyses relating to questions of plagiarism.
47. One of his examples is M. H. Abrams citing Wayne Booth ('Critic as Host', p. 217).
48. See Marian Hobson, *Jacques Derrida: Opening Lines* (London and

New York: Routledge, 1998), for a very strong reading of Derrida and language that goes beyond these lexemes (as she calls them) to look at other distinctive features and repeated patterns of articulation of his text. This critical refusal to divorce style and substance in philosophical writing is exemplary both in helping us to read Derrida but also in understanding some of the reading responses to his writing. It also helps us to phrase the tension between respecting the precise context in which these 'thematizable terms' (p. 3) are first produced, and dealing with their necessary afterlife.

49. Ian Donaldson, *The Rapes of Lucretia: A Myth and its Transformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), is a model of the historical tracking of the re-working of an ur-text in different historical contexts.

Friendship and sexual difference: hospitality from brotherhood to motherhood and beyond

Why introduce friendship into hospitality?

Critical work on hospitality in the wake of Derrida has usually focused – befitting certain political exigencies of our unequal globalised world – on the other 'stranger', the guest who arrives and who is unknown. Yet this other, however foreign, is welcomed according to the laws of hospitality as *mon prochain* ('my neighbour' as it is sometimes rendered in English), and the model of the one who is close to me (*mon prochain*) is the brother-friend. In this chapter I shall begin by focusing on friendship, most often understood as a spiritual fraternity, and the tensions even *within* friendship between the difference or strangeness of any other (even a friend) and the sameness and proximity of the friend. I shall then unsettle this a little by introducing women, sexual difference, into that masculine bond.

Both Levinas and Derrida often refer to friendship (*amitié*) alongside hospitality, each mutually reinforcing the other. While the arrival of the stranger is recognised as a critical limit situation, our everyday experience of hospitality is most often with kin or friends. In *Eloge de l'amitié*, Ben Jelloun evokes friendship and hospitality intertwined in his friend Edmond:

His friends are his patrimony; his friendship for them is a complete gift. Everything takes place around the table. Sharing meals is essential; especially as Edmond is a very good cook. Eating good food, drinking good wines under the tutelage of good humour and laughter, that is how Edmond cooks his friendship. It is flavoured with rare and sought-after spices, washed down with vintage wines and simply presented: his affection is visceral. We only need to see each other, talk to each other and tell our stories to each other as often as possible. . . . This is typically Moroccan friendship, greedy and possessive. 'If you don't eat up this food I've made for you then you can't be that fond of me. If you're not hungry then you don't care for me anymore.' That is a little schematic,