

# Hospitality and the Immigration Crisis

## We Are All from Elsewhere

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### Título / Titre / Titolo

La hospitalidad y la crisis de la inmigración. Todos somos de otra parte  
L'hospitalité et la crise de l'immigration. Nous sommes tous d'ailleurs  
L'ospitalità e la crisi dell'immigrazione. Siamo tutti da altrove

### Abstract / Resumen / Résumé / Sommario

Today's immigration responds to three motivations: economic, domestic, and political. In all cases, hospitality would be a positive recourse, for the current situation cries out for a psycho-social revolution: a return to an attitude of openness and sharing at the personal level that could then influence institutional and political beneficence. The two iconic sources of the concept of hospitality are The Bible and *The Odyssey*, both of which describe wandering and welcome. Sometime in the seventeenth century the practice of hospitality changed to focus on self and not the other, a transition facilitated by the growing domination of the mercantile and the commercial. The result is that the personal host has been largely taken out of hospitality, and with it what Derrida and Levinas propose as the ethical foundation of hospitality. The complete monetarization of modern living has caused economic considerations to dominate all others. Yet, adopting a sense of hospitality would involve exposing ourselves as brothers and sisters to the strangers, and in the process rehumanizing relationships in a world that has increasingly valued commerce over compassion and distancing over direct contact.

La inmigración responde en la actualidad a tres causas: económicas, nacionales y políticas. La hospitalidad se antoja un recurso positivo para una situación que reclama una revolución psicosocial: el retorno a una actitud de apertura y de intercambio personal tendría efectos sobre la beneficencia institucional y política. La Biblia y la *Odisea* son las dos fuentes icónicas del concepto de la hospitalidad, que describen en términos de itinerancia y bienvenida. En cierto momento del siglo XVII el foco de la hospitalidad derivó al interés individual, una transición facilitada por el creciente dominio de lo mercantil. El resultado ha sido la eliminación de la dimensión de acogida personal, que constituye, según Levinas y Derrida, la base ética de la hospitalidad. La monetarización de la vida moderna ha convertido las cuestiones económicas en predominantes. Sin embargo, la adopción de un sentido de la hospitalidad nos situaría en relación de hermandad con los extranjeros y humanizaría los vínculos en un mundo que valora el comercio sobre la compasión, la distancia sobre el contacto directo.

De nos jours, l'immigration est motivée par trois facteurs: économique, local et politique. Dans la conjoncture actuelle, l'hospitalité se présente comme une alternative bénéfique: le retour à des relations chaleureuses et à des échanges interpersonnels ne pourra que renforcer la bienveillance institutionnelle et politique. En tant que sources iconiques du concept d'hospitalité, la Bible et l'*Odyssée* décrivent celle-ci en termes d'itinérance et d'indulgence. Dans une période donnée du XVIIème siècle, le principe d'hospitalité s'est détourné vers l'intérêt personnel, provoquant la disparition de la pratique d'accueil des étrangers, qui constitue, selon Levinas et Derrida, le fondement éthique de l'hospitalité. L'influence prépondérante du matérialisme dans la vie moderne a rendu les considérations économiques prédominantes. Pourtant, l'hospitalité nous permet d'établir des relations de fraternité et de renforcer les rapports humains dans un monde qui favorise les relations mercantiles et distantes au détriment de la proximité et du contact direct.

L'immigrazione risponde nell'attualità a tre cause: economiche, nazionali e politiche. L'ospitalità appare come una risorsa positiva per una situazione che reclama una rivoluzione psicosociale: il ritorno verso un'attitudine di apertura e di interscambio personale avrebbe effetti sulla beneficenza istituzionale e politica. La Bibbia e l'*Odissea* sono le due fonti iconiche del concetto di ospitalità, che descrivono in termini di itineranza e accoglienza. Ad un certo momento del XVII secolo l'obiettivo dell'ospitalità si spostò verso l'interesse individuale, transizione facilitata dal crescente dominio del mercantilismo. Il risultato è stato l'eliminazione della dimensione dell'accoglienza personale. La monetizzazione della vita moderna ha convertito le questioni economiche in predominanti. Tuttavia, l'adozione di un senso di ospitalità ci metterebbe in una relazione di fratellanza con gli stranieri ed umanizzerebbe i vincoli in un mondo che considera il commercio più della compassione, la distanza più del contatto diretto.

### Keywords / Palabras clave / Mots-clé / Parole chiave

Hospitality, immigration, materialism, narcissism, Bible, *Odyssey*, La Fontaine, Derrida, Levinas

Hospitalidad, inmigración, materialismo, narcisismo, Biblia, *Odisea*, La Fontaine, Derrida, Levinas

Hospitalité, immigration, matérialisme, narcissisme, Bible, *Odyssée*, La Fontaine, Derrida, Levinas

Ospitalità, immigrazione, materialismo, narcisismo, Bibbia, *Odissea*, La Fontaine, Derrida, Levinas

«Hospitality is the highest form of virtue»  
Aristotle

«A stately Frontispiece of Poor  
Adorns without the open Door;  
Nor less the Rooms within commends  
Daily new furniture of Friends»  
Andrew Marvell, «Upon Appleton House», II, 65-69.

The recent debate in the United States over the wisdom of «Sanctuary Cities» for undocumented immigrants has once again cast the spotlight on the multiple crises caused by immigration, whether forced or not. The reactions have been strikingly different at the national and international levels. Because the responses are from governments and, therefore, political in nature, they have been contradictory and unsatisfactory. The situation cries out for a return to a belief in and practice of an attitude of welcoming and sharing at the personal level that could then influence institutional and political beneficence. John S. W. Park (2013: 1) points out the trite and true of the situation, «(...) when people born in poorer countries want to migrate to a wealthier one to change their circumstances, the reaction at the other end is often not neighborly».

The fundamental fact remains that there are no foreigners, because we are all foreigners. (The pilgrim and the stranger both bear the same name in Latin: *peregrinus*.) If we can raise the level of debate about immigration above the viscerally political, we can place it in the context of the positive need for a global understanding of hospitality in its long and diverse history and appreciate as well its potential contribution to current discourse.

There has been a recent renaissance of interest in hospitality owing to, as Judith Still explains in her masterful book on *Derrida and Hospitality* (2010: 1-2) «economic immigration and also, notably, the arrival of asylum seekers and refugees...powerful philosophical writing ... which draws on the experiences of colonialism and the Second World War; ... commercial globalism, tourism and travel—the ‘hospitality business’, often perceived as destroying traditional hospitality in its last known habitats». One of the many forms of the last iteration is

the Hospitality Tent at golf tournaments, with the players welcomed inside. This hierarchy exists in flagrant contradiction to the laws of reception that sustain the code of hospitality.

It is difficult to imagine to what degree the principle and the practice of hospitality have been transformed in the course of centuries such that, at best in most circumstances, we accept strangers rather than welcoming them. It once was that a stranger seeking shelter was greeted positively. What could be more inherently human, it was thought, than the open reception of a traveler who, tired from the trials of the trip but still pursuing his itinerary, can feel reassured that, at each resting place, there would be a house whose doors would open for him? His voyage was taken with a feeling of security because he knew that a warm welcome was inscribed in a code of hospitality that was itself anchored in noble ideas about sharing and protection that much of the modern world seems to have cast aside as irrelevant.

This rejection has allowed, indeed encouraged an attitude toward immigration that undermines attempts to display humanity in times of crisis. Some, it is true, do heed the call of permitting the refugee, the exile, the outcast to occupy a place, that principal component of post-modernity’s twin passions: space and fragmentation. For example, the country of Jordan has over two million refugees in camps within its borders. Yet, while the United States counts eleven or twelve million illegal immigrants in its population, it has yet to authorize a policy of granting legal space to them and to the thousands of Central American children who have trekked to the US border last year and who, as Pope Francis said on July 14, 2014, «continue to be the subject of racist and xenophobic attitudes». While deportation seems to be the preferred solution, a glance back at what was the norm for treating the stranger might suggest other remedies worthy of civilized societies.

First, some definitions are in order. Since hospitality always implies a relationship, you cannot have either a guest or a host alone. This simple equation is complica-

ted by the terms for guest and host in languages other than English. (In French the same word means both he who receives and he who is received: *l'hôte*.) The word for guest in Greek, *xenos*, also means «stranger». In Latin one finds the source of the consequent complexities, for *hospes* means both guest and host and, early on, it also appropriated the sense of *hostis* as enemy. A semantic chain can be extended, therefore, from the enemy to the guest, who may first be a stranger –with the potential for violence– and then by means of the code of hospitality, a visitor, perhaps even rising to that special status of a friend.

In most instances, the visitor is the unknown who nonetheless becomes a sacred friend with whom one seals bonds through the exchange of gifts. Over the centuries the notion of exchange has assumed important proportions in the rite of hospitality. This, of course, supposes the ability to reciprocate. The primordial question then becomes: is reciprocity possible in a world populated by millions of refugees who have little or nothing? It is clear that one of the threats to hospitality today is that its locus is most often a non-place, a camp, for instance, where the best one can do is to survive if not live. This physical/geographical situation, along with time and resources, are the constraints for any effective practice of welcome in our world that must exist in the zone between reception and rejection.

One of the modalities of rejection flows from the desire to control, whence the practice of «Contrôle de Passeports» and the verification of identity. This constitutes a betrayal of the fundamental concept of hospitality that calls for reaching out to the Other for better understanding and for assuming the transcendence of the violence inherent in any relationship with a stranger. Hospitality can be intrusive, transgressive, and, as its origin in *hostis* suggests, hostile. Yet, deriving from *hospitalitas* through the verb *hostire* (to recompense), it calls for equality, which is often difficult to attain since everyday life is based on exclusion and mistrust. Hospitality was instituted as a necessary gesture of compensation in the face of evident disparities of the status of the giver and the receiver.

The foundational sources of the western concept of hospitality are the two iconic narratives of displacement: the Bible and the *Odyssey*. The Old Testament tells us that Eden offered the scene for the first act of (divine) hospitality that permitted man to eat without work. The Bible opens, therefore, on hospitality that is given then betrayed. This original note of deception is sounded throughout the scriptures as we, «dispossessed kings of the earth» (Pascal's *Pensées*), are condemned to stray through earthly existence, the «valley of tears,» until the Father performs the ultimate act of hospitality to his children in the parousia, the Second Coming of Christ.

During the wanderings that fill the Old Testament the Jew must ever recall the lesson of Leviticus, 19, 33-34: «And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt». This concept is often threatened by a concern for purity (no exogenous marriage, for example) that undermines the whole edifice of hospitality. Indeed, could one not propose that the threat of the outsider forms the frame of the story of Christ who came to reveal the truth but the world refused him hospitality? His treatment is the direct opposite of that extended to the prodigal son whose tale is a veritable hymn to sympathetic hospitality.

The act of generous welcome is, in the Scriptures, a pious practice that must be applied to the weak in imitation of «The Lord who watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow» (Psalms 146, 9). Its rites, depending on the situation, consist in signs of deference, the reception at the threshold, the ablutions –especially the washing of the feet (as Pope Francis I did to inmates in a juvenile detention center in 2013)–, the breaking of bread, and the exchange of presents. The act of hailing the visitor opens and closes hospitality. To offer drink is one of the first preoccupations of the master of the house. Then comes the meal that often presents opportunities for strategic thinking about invitations: exclusivity or inclusivity, sharing the staff of

life with a stranger or celebrating the hospitality of the return of a cherished son.

The exchange of gifts within the rules of hospitality is a matter of some ambiguity when it transcends the offer of food and shelter. While it may sometimes seem forced to have to recognize the generosity of the host with presents, it can also be a way of acknowledging homage and respect for the host, as in the story of the Three Magi who brought gold, incense, and myrrh to the cradle of the infant Jesus (Matthew 2, 11). This scene celebrates the beginning of life, but death can also be viewed as hospitable if it delivers the Just from the torments of this world, as Job concludes: «If the only home I hope for is the grave, . . . if I say to corruption, “You are my father,” and to the worm, “My mother” or “My sister,” where then is my hope. . . . Will it go down to the gates of death? Will we descend together into the dust?» (Job 17, 13-17).

The notion of hospitality crosses all the boundaries of the Scriptures. Opening on a rebellion against divine hospitality with irremediable consequences, the Bible ends on a reconciliation of the divine and the human, of the physical and the spiritual, of the Other and the self. Christians should «Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality» (Romans 12, 13).

The other foundational narrative of exile, *The Odyssey*, demonstrates that the adventures of the Greeks are a series of variations on the theme of hospitality under the sign of Hermes, the god of passage. His rituals can be both positive and negative in the same incident. Ulysses's wanderings, the stuff of the poem, are subject to the whims of the gods. His travels begin with a negative example of hospitality, as he visits the nymph Calypso who suffocates visitors through an excess of hospitality, a practice rarely discovered these days.

The next telling episode, concerning the Cyclops Polyphemus, is a turning on its head of all the conventions of hospitality. In Book IX, Odysseus says to the Cyclops: «We assume you'll extend hospitality or suffer the wrath of Zeus, protector of guests.» To which the giant replies: «Zeus? We Cyclops are stronger than Zeus. I'll show you hospitality.» Polyphemus later as-

ures Ulysses, in an ironic spirit of deference to the stranger, that the Greek will have the honor of being the last to be eaten. This is, of course, a cynical parody of the gift in the context of hospitality.

Although there are positive examples such as the generous reception of Telemachus by Nestor at Pylos and then at Sparta by Menelaus, what we learn early on in the *Odyssey* is that negative examples are often more didactic than positive ones. The conclusion of the epic seems to be that hospitality, once disrespected by the Suitors, has been restored, and in the process order too. This happens once the wandering ceases. However, the epic is basically devoted to displacement, and it operates largely through metamorphosis. As a consequence, questions of identity will be central and they will play a major role in theoxenic versions of the hospitality theme throughout the ages, prominently in the Amphitryon tales, where gods assume the appearance of mortals.

If scholars such as Steve Reece (1993), Alain Mon-tandon (2002), and Julian Pitt-Rivers (1977) have explored the anthropological and sociological spectacles of hospitality, especially as they are manifested in narrative, one has to add Saint Benedict as the major source of the Christian concept of hospitality, if we are to understand the nature of domestic reception of the Middle Ages.

*The Rule of Saint Benedict* from the sixth century AD constitutes the most influential document in the entire history of western monasticism. Benedict is very clear about the treatment of guests: «All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ» (ch. 53.1), and «Great care and concern are to be shown in receiving poor people and pilgrims, because in them more particularly Christ is received» (ch. 53.15)<sup>1</sup>. For Benedict hospitality, especially if it leads to friendship, is a spiritual gift, an opening to the mystery of the Other. At the basis of genuine Benedictine hospitality lie the concepts of honor, courtesy, love, and trust, combined with the practice of balance or what we might call

<sup>1</sup> *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, ed. T. Frye, O.S.B. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1981). The two quotes are found on p. 257 and 259.



symmetry in the relationship between the giver and the receiver.

Because food is one of the gifts offered in the rite of hospitality, it has occupied a prominent place in the process of civilization. Bakhtin reminds us that «Food and drink partake of a nature that is social or, more often, family—all generations and age-groups come together around the table» (1981: 227). If the ideal meal is characterized by a spirit of communion—following the example of the Last Supper—it also encourages everyone at table to enjoy fellowship and good will—and truth-telling, as the title character says in Ivan Goncharov's 1859 novel, *Obломov*: «[At table] Everything is to one's liking! Everybody looks and says what is in his heart». Let's recall that the French phrase «se mettre à table» means both «to come to table» and «to speak openly, intimately».

The central contribution of commensality in hospitality has often been noted, but perhaps no more globally than Heidegger. He has famously written that «there is no hospitality without the possibility of offering a meal.» He indicates the benefits of breaking bread with the guest, since a meal supposes the cultivation of crops, which, in turn, depends on planting and harvesting the fruits of the earth. Such a cycle is of the essence of humanity (Schérer, 1993). This point is so crucial to the development of civilization that one can interpret certain memorable myths as parody. The prime example is the story traditionally known as the «horrible feast», in which Atreus welcomes his brother Thyestes by inviting him to a banquet whose ingredients are Thyestes's own dismembered sons.

Without question, throughout the centuries hospitality can be used and abused. It would surely be naïve to suggest, for example, that everyone in Europe before modern times held to the dictum that Felicity Heal (1990: 8) has found in the mid-seventeenth-century: «Noble housekeepers need no doors.» Yet, the notion of 'linkage» that the etymology of obligation and religion proposes in *ligare* speaks eloquently for the mainstream conception of the various duties of the high toward the low. As someone of noble birth endowed with a sense

of Christian charity, one participates in a display of reciprocity and the exchange of gifts that does not include money. As Heal has noted, «Largesse was essential to the noble, and largesse implies the giving of rewards without immediate return» (*id.*: 10).

However, the tide of self-interest seems to have washed over Europe sometime in the seventeenth century, if one can judge from several indications, including the prominent example of Jean de La Fontaine's fable, «Le Loup et le chien» («The Wolf and the Dog», Book, I, V). In a little-noticed but pregnant line, one reads:

The Dog: «Follow me and you'll have a better fate.»

The Wolf: «What will I have to do?»

«—Almost nothing, said the Dog; chase away people with walking sticks and beggars.» (my translation)

This constitutes a comment on a practice of (non-) hospitality that is at odds with the traditional, charitable manner of receiving strangers and the infirm. Studies show that, up until the Renaissance, travelers and pilgrims could expect a welcome, however modest at times, from the Lord of the house; the poor and the sick were supposed to be received in the same manner.

However, starting with the seventeenth century, these obligations were less frequently assumed by the European nobleman, such that it was the Church that almost exclusively provided the needed assistance. Traditional, personal hospitality fell into a decline and disappeared in the eighteenth century. The goal of hospitality was transformed. It was no longer a question of helping the unfortunate, but rather of allowing the host to enjoy a convivial pleasure. Charity is replaced by potlatch as wealthy families seek to show themselves as superior in a materialistic display. And so, sometime in the seventeenth century the practice of hospitality changed to focus on self and not the other, a transition facilitated by the growing domination of the mercantile and the commercial. It then became normal to employ the distancing device of giving money instead of food and shelter. In the entry on «hospitalité» the *Encyclopédie* considered it to have once been a powerful force that

was now of little relevance, since «all of Europe travels and does business» (Heal, *id.*: 398), thereby minimizing the need for assistance to the few homeless.

Felicity Heal reiterates this point when addressing the transition from private to public relief: «It is in this area of the duty of hospitality to the needy that it is easiest to speak with confidence of change in early modern England.... Beneficence, by the late seventeenth century, routinely and rationally used the mechanisms of money-exchange and institutional structures as the means of achieving its objectives» (*id.*: 392-98). And this is where we are today with the result that the personal host has been taken out of hospitality. Today's immigration responds to three motivations; economic, domestic, and political. In all cases, hospitality would be a positive recourse. However, «Our twenty-first century may well have no Ulysses» as Mireille Rosello points out (2004: 1516). She wonders if there will be leadership or examples that allow us to respond to the crisis of the reception of strangers trying to make sense of regulations that separate the insider from the outsider, the individual from the collective, the private from the public—which is one way of defining the code of hospitality. Clearly, the definition of hospitality depends on the way one delineates the context in which it is practiced. The current situation is so intellectually challenging and emotionally charged that it has attracted a great deal of prose on the multidisciplinary nature of hospitality as it affects the nation and the citizen and the role of those who arrive from foreign lands. For example, one of the thorny issues in this respect touches on the chain of reciprocity that is broken when the outsider cannot possibly recompense the host or host nation. What is to be avoided is creating a situation where the hospitable power of the nation is ironically responsible for putting foreigners in a position of continually needing and asking for aid.

Without necessarily agreeing on which ideology of hospitality one adopts, one can support the idea that both the nation and the individual citizens that form it must do more. We have to transcend the stultifying exchange of views that limit the discussion to either we

are not hospitable enough or that we do it, but badly. Nations are evidently torn between an ideal of hospitality and the argument that we cannot open doors to the wretched of the earth who, it is claimed, add nothing to our civilization.

But there is much evidence that the latter view is misguided. Immigration has offered us—once again—many gifts in terms of diversity. As Kwame Appiah points out (2005) past immigrants «brought a language and stories and sayings in it; they transplanted a religion with specific rituals, beliefs, and traditions, a cuisine of a certain hearty peasant quality, and distinctive modes of dress; and they came with particular ideas about family life.» They also put great emphasis on education. The latest wave of immigrants in the United States, the Latinos, has shown that one can pass from the semi-literate stage to a college degree in one generation. New arrivals bring a drive for acceptance in the new country but also replenish our nostalgia, our longing for the old country, as Pete Hamill has noted («Immigration: The Lessons of New York», *Voices Series*, University of California TV, Santa Barbara, October 17, 2007). How many have not encountered a New York taxi driver who has not spoken warmly of his «country»—meaning Pakistan, Haiti, Turkey, or Tunisia—while assuming extra hours to earn the funds necessary for fuller participation in the American Dream? Of course, for this scheme to work America must keep its promise of a welcome to a better life, one focused less on unachievable goals and more on building the human capacity to produce positive environmental and social outcomes. For such a task, who better than a foreigner, Bonnie Honig asks in *Democracy and the Foreigner* (2001) to afford «the perspective of an outsider [to] represent the departure or disruption that is necessary for change»?

Felicity Heal proposes that there are five elements that characterize a culture deeply committed to open hospitality:

—«an evolved perception of the naturalness of the relationship between host and guest;

—a belief that the outsider was deserving of special generosity because of the ambiguity of his status;  
 —an aristocratic or élite ethos in which honour accrued to acts of beneficence and shame to forms of avarice;  
 —an associated ideology of generosity to all comers;  
 —and finally a social system in which gift-exchange transactions had not been wholly superseded by those of commodity-exchange.» (*id.*: 389)

These points all involve rejecting a Stoic view of the world, unusually prevalent in our time (see Luc Ferry, 2014) according to which we should accept that life is unfair and out of our control. Rather, we should actively pursue the improvement of the condition of the «marginals», as they have been called ever since the Middle Ages, and to accuse the twin ills of our time —materialism and narcissism— for the unfortunate state of the displaced and the homeless.

The problem today is that being a pilgrim, which was a value in the Judeo-Christian and Muslim traditions, no longer has any positive signification. The complete monetarization of modern living has caused economic considerations to dominate all others. Since hospitality appears to be an unproductive expense, it poses a problem for contemporary society.

To start to change individual attitudes we could recognize the simple fact that hospitality in theory and practice relates to crossing boundaries or thresholds. The ambiguity of immigration is that there is no moral basis for those on one side of the fence excluding those on the other. Chance has decided who happens to be born in the desirable space. Nonetheless, as Judith Still concludes, «the 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. It also inevitably touches on that fundamental a question . . . of the boundaries of the human, and how we set these up» (*id.*: 4). In like manner, Jacques Derrida and Emmanuel Levinas claim that hospitality is essential because it is the basis of ethics (see the discussion on page 8 of Still), while Tahar Ben Jalloun (1999)

adds that the spirit of welcome should be inscribed in whatever legal code is established for the acceptance of immigrants.

These statements imply that, when we conceive laws, we create obstacles that can be formidable challenges to granting a welcome. As Jules Brody (2014: 17) wisely argues, «The very concepts of law as barrier, bond, obstacle, may be taken as evidence of an ancient, universal intuition into the adversative relationship between our actual desires and the institutions we create to bridle and inhibit them.» If we recall the etymology of *obligation*, *religion*, and *legality*, we envision law as a bond that, in the case of the immigrant, punishes those who cross over into a territory that is forbidden. The law protects «us» from «them»—and from ourselves who often share with the immigrant the repressed desire to break the bond(s), to react against the strictures of civilization. But once this momentary lapse of control has passed, we feel vulnerable. We erect barriers and especially walls, which have proven to be ultimately ineffective, from Hadrian's Rome to Communist Berlin.

Yet adopting a sense of hospitality would involve turning our inside out, exposing ourselves as brothers and sisters to the strangers, and in the process rehumanizing relationships in a world that has, since at least the seventeenth century, valued commerce over compassion and distancing over direct contact. To say the very least, this will not be easy in the midst of globalization because mobility has always been the enemy of hospitality that requires time to know and grow. Hospitality can then become a fragile link between two worlds: a world in the economy and a world outside of it. Fragile or not, let us not forget that, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle associates hospitality with friendship, surely the most desirable of all human attachments because it is the most enduring.

What, finally, are the lessons that the tradition of hospitality can offer to us in this age of global displacement and misery?

—the experience is not always positive, but one learns more from negative examples: there is always risk;

- there is a better, more humane solution to the refugee question than deportation or fences;
- reciprocity, as in the exchange of gifts, may no longer be possible in most instances, but the contributions of new members of a society are compensatory in that respect;
- the hospitable ideal of equality should be the ideal in democratic societies;
- the Bible calls for hospitality at every turn: the goal is integration into the larger unit;
- hospitality is capable of restoring order, as The Odyssey counsels;
- the rite of hospitality often calls for communion and conviviality, food-sharing and celebration;
- money was not a part of the conception of hospitality for centuries;
- the turn from the individual host to the collective agency has been so radical that we now have lots of philanthropy and little hospitality.

In modern times societies have adopted the practice of distancing to separate themselves from unpleasant realities, like acknowledging the tolls of war or the close existence of the out-casts, the out-siders, the out-laws, the out-liers, the out-of-«bounds», those who are, as the proverb goes, «Out of sight, out of mind» —or, as the French version has it more poignantly, «Out of sight, out of heart.»

Let us close where we began, with a quote from S. W. Park. Writing about the obligatory relationship between law and the necessity of sympathetic immigration, he strikes the same note that could be sounded about hospitality: «Yet to recover any possibility of the rule of law anywhere in the United States, Americans must begin with a thick, unwavering commitment to human dignity and equality above all else, a commitment to *see* (sic) the fundamental humanity of every person of every color on every side of every border» (*id.*: 195).

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