

In compliance with the
Canadian Privacy Legislation
some supporting forms
may have been removed from
this dissertation.

While these forms may be included
in the document page count,
their removal does not represent
any loss of content from the dissertation.

**ROMANTIC HOSPITALITY:
THEORIZING THE WELCOME IN
ROUSSEAU, KANT, COLERIDGE, AND MARY SHELLEY**

**By
PETER MELVILLE, B.A., M.A.**

**A Thesis
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Philosophy Doctorate**

McMaster University

© Copyright by Peter Melville, June 2003

ROMANTIC HOSPITALITY

PHILOSOPHY DOCTORATE (2003)
(English)

McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario

**TITLE: Romantic Hospitality: Theorizing the Welcome in Rousseau, Kant,
Coleridge, and Mary Shelley**

AUTHOR: Peter Melville, M.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. David L. Clark

NUMBER OF PAGES: *vii*, 342

ABSTRACT

If hospitality is, as it is for Jacques Derrida, the sign of the subject's absolute unpreparedness for and disruption by the sudden appearance and arrival of difference, then what can be said about the theme of the hospitable during a period of English and European culture which is as unsettled (and, indeed, as quickened) by revolution and rapid change as the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century? A theoretical nodal point of increasing anxiety in this age of political and international uncertainty, the category of "the stranger," I argue, points less to the existence of actual alterities beyond the consciousness of the Romantic "subject" than it does to an *internal* difference which constitutes that subject's own self-dividedness. Drawing largely from Derrida's recent work on figures of hospitality, cosmopolitanism, and forgiveness, and from Judith Butler's theories of subject formation, this dissertation investigates how Romantic figures for the stranger come to operate as normative *phantasms* whose function is precisely to ground and "naturalize" the repudiative discourses by which the Romantic subject produces and sustains its own self-sovereignty—its mastery over the house of the self. Yet because the process by which "proper" hosts and guests are parsed operates as a regulatory practice based on repetition and exclusion, I argue that the texts of Romantic hospitality are invariably haunted by the very strangers that they deny. Relegated to an unintelligible domain just beyond or "outside" the space of the welcome, these *othered*

spirits return to the site of their disavowal only to reassert their constitutive priority in the hospitable imaginaries of these texts. This dissertation therefore claims that certain writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century (specifically Rousseau, Kant, Coleridge, and Mary Shelley) theorize the *failure* of the hospitable relation from a suspicion that, after all is said and done, hospitality is itself structurally impossible. In other words, I contend that for these writers absolute or unconditional hospitality must ruin itself precisely by welcoming its opposite—hostility. What intrigues me about Romantic hospitality is, finally, the fact that while this particular form of discourse founds the sovereignty of the subject through the force of exclusion, it also produces the “stranger” as an inexhaustible site of resistance and reproduction.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The first person I would like to thank is my supervisor, Dr. David L. Clark. Welcoming me into his classroom six long years ago, David has taught me many lessons on hospitality. A gifted scholar, the most giving of mentors, David continues to show me a generosity that far exceeds any possibility for restitution on my part. And yet, as a fellow reader of Derrida, David will no doubt understand my desire (my undeniable obligation) to spend my career trying at the very least to “give back” if not always to him, then to the academic community as such—the value of which he has taught me a great deal. I send to him this modest but heartfelt acknowledgment as a token of my gratitude.

I would also like to thank my readers, Dr. Grace Kehler and Dr. Sylvia Bowerbank, whose comments on the thesis and whose insight have proven to be an immense source of nourishment. I want to thank Dr. Nicholas Hamli whose guidance, assistance, and friendship have continued to bolster my intellectual interests long after his departure for Seattle. I would like to thank my friends and my family—all of whom have shown me great kindness, understanding, and support in all aspects of my life. As always, special thanks go to Kerry (my co-hostess in life) for reasons that are too numerous to list here. This thesis is dedicated to her.

I should also like to acknowledge the generous financial support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, whose Doctoral Fellowship enabled me to complete much of the research and the writing of this dissertation. I have also benefitted from the support of various McMaster Graduate Scholarships, a Marion Northcott Schweitzer Travel Bursary, and several travel grants from McMaster University’s Graduate Students Association.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: Reading the Foreign: Romantic Hospitality and the Resistance to Accommodation	1
Chapter One: Unsettling Rousseau: Hospitality in <i>Emile</i> and <i>Discourse on Inequality</i>	35
Introductory Note	35
Hostile Hermit, In-Hospitable Levite	36
Belated Welcomes: Hospitality in <i>Emile</i>	56
“ <i>l’hospitalité de Calypso</i> ”	74
The Sleepy Carib: Rousseau as Host	87
Conclusion	103
Chapter Two: The Rights of the Stranger: Peace, Nationality, and the Kantian “Bond of Hospitality”	105
Introductory Note	105
Friendships of Taste: Toward a Philosophy of the Dinner Table	107
The Politics of Eating (the Other)	117
Staging the Nation: Hospitable Performances in the <i>Anthropology</i>	128
International Hospitality and the Conditioning a Perpetual Peace	150
On the Foreigner in <i>Perpetual Peace</i>	159
Conclusion	170
Chapter Three: Coleridge and the Poetics of Hospitable Failure	173
Introductory Note	173
A Mouse in the House	173
Coleridge and the Fort-Da Game of Hospitality	187
The Case of “Christabel”	202
The Fluttering “Stranger” and the Failure of the Hospitable Imagination	212
Two Too Many Sisters: Coleridge’s Discursive Homelessness	224
Conclusion	238

Chapter Four: Uninvited Guests: ‘Visitation’ and Obligation in Mary Shelley’s <i>The Last Man</i>	243
Introduction: A Dedication to the “Illustrious Dead”	243
Visiting the Sibyl: Narrative as (the) Gift (of Death)	251
England’s Hospital: Homeland Security and the Crisis of Hospitality	279
Conclusion: Foreign Bodies/Foreign Infections	305
Conclusion: Toward a Romantic Hospitality To Come	312
Works Cited	323



INTRODUCTION:

Reading the Foreign: Romantic Hospitality and the Resistance to Accommodation

1. "o' Mice an' [Wo]Men": Hospitality and the Self-Encounter

Anna Letitia Barbauld wrote several of her poems as a guest in Dr. Joseph Priestley's family home in Leeds. Late one night, during such a visit in the summer of 1769, Barbauld steals her way into Priestley's laboratory only to discover another of Priestley's guests, a terrified mouse who has "been confined all night" in a cage by the master of the household "for the sake of making experiments with different kinds of air" (McCarthy & Kraft 36).¹ As William Turner explains, "it happened that [the] captive was brought in after supper, too late for any experiment to be made that night, and the servant was desired to set it by till next morning" (184). Witnessing what she determines to be the abusive imprisonment of her fellow lodger, and knowing all too well his unhappy destiny, Barbauld immediately fashions "The Mouse's Petition to Doctor Priestley" (1772)—a work that attempts to capture the thoughts and the voice of an animal pleading for his liberty and his life at the hands of human cruelty. The next morning, the mouse is brought to Dr. Priestley after breakfast with a note "twisted among the wires of its cage" (Turner 184), containing the following verses:

¹As McCarthy and Kraft, editors of *The Poems of Anna Letitia Barbauld*, speculate, the date given for this incident by William Turner, who recalls the tale in his piece for the *Newcastle Magazine* in 1825, is most likely incorrect. According to McCarthy and Kraft, Priestley's "major experiments on gases were not made until two years later; he describes using mice to test gases in letters to Benjamin Franklin, 1 July 1771 . . . and Richard Price, 19 Oct. 1771" (244).

Oh! hear a pensive captive's prayer,
For liberty that sighs;
And never let thine heart be shut
Against the prisoner's cries.

For here forlorn and sad I sit,
Within the wiry grate;
And tremble at th' approaching morn,
Which brings impending fate.

If e'er thy breast with freedom glow'd,
And spurn'd a tyrant's chain,
Let not thy strong oppressive force
A free-born mouse detain.

Oh! do not stain with guiltless blood
Thy hospitable hearth;
Nor triumph that thy wiles betray'd
A prize so little worth.

The scatter'd gleanings of a feast
My frugal meals supply;
But if thine unrelenting heart
That slender boon deny,

The cheerful light, the vital air,
Are blessings widely given;
Let nature's commoners enjoy
The common gifts of heaven.

The well taught philosophic mind
To all compassion gives;
Casts round the world an equal eye,
And feels for all that lives.

If mind, as ancient sages taught,
A never dying flame,
Still shifts thro' matter's varying forms,
In every form the same,

Beware, lest in the worm you crush
 A brother's soul you find;
 And tremble lest thy luckless hand
 Dislodge a kindred mind.

Or, if this transient gleam of day
 Be *all* of life we share,
 Let pity plead within thy breast,
 That little *all* to spare.

So may thy hospitable board
 With health and peace be crown'd;
 And every charm of heartfelt ease
 Beneath thy roof be found.

So when unseen destruction lurks,
 Which men, like mice, may share,
 May some kind angel clear thy path,
 And break the hidden snare. (1-48)

A kind of prisoner itself, Barbauld's poem continues to be unjustly confined to what Christine Kenyon-Jones calls a "very popular genre" of poetry and fiction in the late eighteenth century which sought to dissuade children from torturing animals by deploying stories recounted by the animals themselves (54). Dr. Priestley, the apparent addressee of the text, is certainly not a child; but, as McCarthy and Kraft remind us, Barbauld's poem did "become a set piece for children to memorize" in the late eighteenth century (245).² Julia Saunders, however, reads "The Mouse's Petition" against the history of its reception as a poem for children, championing it instead as a serious "feminine" critique of the

²In addition to Barbauld's poem, works like Catherine Jemmat's *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* (1766), Dorothy Kilner's *The Life and Perambulation of a Mouse* (2 vols, 1785), and Robert Burns' "To a Mouse" (1785) helped to make concern for the welfare of animals "a stock theme in eighteen-century educational literature" (Saunders 501). It was a theme to which even Coleridge was not immune. As we shall see in Chapter Three, Coleridge will hesitate at the thought of "assassinating" a group of mice who hold his cottage under siege.

“‘masculine’ domain of science” (501-2). According to Saunders, Barbauld was not “inimical” to scientific practices such as vivisection (which she saw as “just” in her terms), but she did wish “to inject a breath of ethical fresh air into the sealed bell-jar of the laboratory, reminding the scientist of his Christian responsibility to temper justice with mercy” (502). Read this way, the mouse’s petition no longer speaks on behalf of the particular suffering of a single mouse, but miraculously on behalf of all living creatures rendered *as* objects of scientific interest. The poem thus raises “ethical questions,” argues Saunders, in the “world of ‘objective’ scientific discovery”—questions *about* the “implications of that very objectivity” (512). Like some kind of mammalian manifesto, the mouse’s petition becomes what Saunders calls an “expression of proto-animal rights” (501).

But “The Mouse’s Petition” can and *should* be read still differently or otherwise. It is, after all, a poem that utilizes (however ironically) the very trope of *welcoming* difference and otherness into one’s home—even if that trope aggressively (or inhospitably) summons the other into the familiar orbit of “kindred mind[s],” thus rendering it an expendable “object” for the poem’s critique of science. Putting words in the mouth of a mouse may lead to a call for Christian responsibility in scientific practice; but Barbauld’s deployment of mouse as mouthpiece is, I would argue, symptomatic of other desires. As McCarthy and Kraft remind us, when the *Critical Review* marshaled the poem to “chastise” Priestley for his “experiments” on animals, Barbauld defended her friend by claiming that “the poor animal would have suffered more as the victim of domestic

economy, than of philosophical curiosity" (xxiii). The victim of "domestic economy," the mouse is a victim of a failed hospitable encounter.³ Coming to the defense of her gracious host, Barbauld objects less to the fact that the mouse's "guiltless blood" will be spilled in the name of science than she does to the inhospitable cruelty of his confinement. Hence, we easily discern what we might call the parodic structure of the poem's hospitality scene, its travesty of domestic economy: a mouse is "detained" not as a guest with the rights and privileges of a friendly welcome (such as that which Barbauld herself might have received at Priestley's "hospitable hearth"), but as a prisoner who cleverly (if implausibly) appeals to the "compassion" of his captor's "philosophical mind." If the mouse's anthropomorphic complaint over being a mistreated guest ironically questions the ethical consequences of a "masculinized" domain of science, then I would argue that it also ironizes a moment of self-recognition in which Barbauld unexpectedly encounters her *own* captivity reflected in the mouse's incarceration. Read as an instance of what Tilottama Rajan calls "autonarration" ("Autonarration" 180), "The Mouse's Petition" reveals an intriguing subtextual drama in which the poet is *caught* in a peculiar hospitable bind of her own: held hostage under Priestley's host-age, Barbauld is not free to free the mouse herself.

While we receive much of the poem's (apocryphal) biographical context from Turner, Barbauld herself not only dedicates the poem to Priestley, but she also adds the following autobiographical note to the title (which I have already partly cited): "Found in

³For more on Barbauld's interest in "domestic economy," see Josephine McDonagh's essay "Barbauld's Domestic Economy" (1998).

the trap where he had been confined all night by Dr. Priestley, for the sake of making experiments with different kinds of air” (McCarthy and Kraft 36). Barbauld’s deployment of an animal speaker does not obscure so much as it emphatically (over-) determines the autobiographical circumstances of the poem. With its reference to the mouse as a “found” object, the poem’s titular note clearly inscribes its “author” as a part of the poem’s fiction: these words are obviously not the mouse’s words, but the words of a person who *finds* the mouse and who is compelled to take pity on and speak for it. As I discuss in Chapter One in more detail, Rajan deploys the term “autonarration” as a way to recognize that the “transposition” of personal experience into fiction is discursively constructed (“Autonarration” 180). What this means is that, for Rajan, the autobiographical content of an autonarrative is as much a “text” as the work itself: “autonarration,” she writes, “involves a double textualization of both the narrative and the life on which it is based” (161). Barbauld’s dedication to Dr. Priestley thus textualizes an entire narrative that is otherwise imperceptible in the poem: while one guest is graciously welcomed, comfortable in her sleeping quarters, there are always other guests locked away as if in some chamber of cruelty, imprisoned by night, tortured by day. What is more, even the guest who is welcomed, as we have seen, is not made to feel entirely at home: she too is “caged” in ways that frustrate her ability to act as a subject called upon by the other’s suffering.

“The Mouse’s Petition,” then, is as much about cruelty to animals and an obligation to give a voice to the victims of such cruelty as it is about narrativizing

Barbauld's recognition of her own imprisonment as a guest in Dr. Priestley's home. The "wiry gate" that holds her captive is the contract and conditions of her welcome. Not unlike the mouse she meets, she has little authority in the home of another; she is not entirely welcome to do as she pleases. She must respect her host's authority as head of household, which includes making decisions over the treatment of other guests. Speaking on behalf of a non-human visitor who was, properly speaking, never a "guest," Barbauld speaks on her own behalf, as though she senses in the mouse's confinement precisely the limits of her own reception and acceptance in the Priestley family home. Encountering the mouse of the house, Barbauld encounters herself in a moment of self-hospitality: she composes her poem (and in doing so *imposes* herself on the mouse on his behalf) as a means to free *herself* from an inability to act; she petitions her host to cease detaining *her*, to liberate *her* from a desire to liberate another. Caught between an obligation to act and an obligation *not* to act, the poet inscribes herself in her poem (receives or welcomes herself) as a being under siege, a guest become hostage in the home of another.

"It scarcely need be added," Turner notes, "that the [mouse's] petition was successful" (184). Priestley does set the mouse free after reading the poem that Barbauld fastens to its cage. Thus the question arises: to whom exactly does Dr. Priestley respond by emancipating this luckless mouse? To whom or to what is he being responsible? Does he liberate the mouse due to a newfound sense of obligation towards "nature's commoners" ("lest in the worm you crush / A brother's soul")? Or does he simply humour the whim of an esteemed and frequent visitor, a friend of the family and daughter

of fellow Warrington Academy tutor, the Reverend John Aikin? In a parenthetical aside, Saunders admits that Priestley releases the mouse from its imprisonment partly to reward the ingenuity of “his guest’s wit” (514). For the most part, Saunders makes this remark in regards to the poem’s clever manipulation of scientific and political rhetoric.

Accordingly, she overlooks the significance that her remark has on the subtextual hospitable drama between Priestley and Barbauld. Letting the mouse out of his cage, Priestley seems to have understood the poem for what it is, an indirect challenge to or critique of his authority as master of the home—which is to say, Barbauld’s masterful attempt to redress and/or overcome (albeit temporarily) the inequity between host and guest. If she is not free to free the mouse, then Barbauld will demonstrate that the guest is not altogether without a power of her own—that no reception can *contain* the desires and the actions of the guests it welcomes. Her poem is an expression of her resistance to accommodation.

Barbauld’s poem, then, not only emerges from a moment of discomfort (i.e., from a restriction imposed upon the actions of a guest), but its indirect request also produces an equally uncomfortable moment for the host—thus reminding us that within the hospitable event there exists what Mireille Rosello calls “hospitable inflation,” which is not a “specific law” but a “force,” an infinite “differing of equilibrium” between the guests and hosts (173). For Rosello, hospitality must constantly be “renegotiated as a series of moments” in which subjects slide interminably along the “guest-host continuum,” keeping the hospitable event “alive” and lively (173). Addressing “The Mouse’s

Petition” to Dr. Priestley, Barbauld cleverly turns her confinement into an imposition: if she cannot free the mouse, she will impose upon or compel Priestley to do it for her. She puts to Priestley a demand that he dare not refuse. It is a matter of hospitable integrity *not* to deny one’s visitors what is fully within one’s power to grant. Submitting to Barbauld’s wishes, Priestley nevertheless reaffirms his privileged position as host, as the grantor over the grantee; but the encounter testifies to Rosello’s claim that “a total absence of friction might signify that other inhospitalities (such as the usurpation of the land by colonizers, for example) have instituted a *Pax Romana* in which hosts are always hosts, where guests are always guests” (173). As Jacques Derrida emphatically states, hospitality necessarily involves “an acceptance of risk” that exposes both guest and host to the constitutive violences of their relationship (“*Débat*” 137). Both always already impose upon the other, at any given moment and with an unforeseeable and potentially compromising urgency. These risks, these impositions, are crucial to the hospitable relation, for without them, hospitality “usually hides more serious violence” (Rosello 173). Playing the part of what Derrida calls “the one who invites the one who invites, the master of the host” (*Of Hospitality* 125), Barbauld imposes the mouse’s petition on Priestley as a way to remind him of the conditions that construct his privileged position as host as well as the responsibilities *of* that position.⁴

⁴Interestingly, Saunders notes that in addition to freeing the mouse, Priestley “also concurred with Barbauld’s larger point on limiting suffering as he pioneered a method of testing for air purity that avoided the use of animals” (514). Thus, the mouse’s petition is “successful,” as Turner says, on more levels than one. Properly speaking, the poem can also be read as an expression of Barbauld’s objection to the *location* of Priestley’s laboratory. As Saunders points out: “[Barbauld’s] access to the cage emphasizes how Priestley’s scientific activities were part of

2. Reading the Romantic Foreign

As I have suggested, the mouse's petition is a kind of auto-narrativized alibi for Barbauld's (self-)encounter with the "hospitable inflation," the frictional imbalance, of her visit to the Priestley family home. According to David Perkins, there is a long-standing tradition in Romantic discourse of deploying animality as a way to address (but also to disavow) various social or "human" issues (937).⁵ This is a concern that I explore

the fabric of domestic life" (511). If science is to be practiced *in the home*, then those practices fall under the governance of a "domestic economy" that might very well preclude experimentation on living beings. How can one offer hospitality in the home when, as I have suggested, *certain* guests are refused hospitality, are imprisoned by night, tortured by day? One objection to this line of inquiry would be to question whether a mouse can really be called a "guest" in the first place. Is a mouse not an inhabitant—a sly and unmentionable inmate—who nonetheless exercises his or her own sovereignty, eating and living inside the walls of the home? In the context of Barbauld's poem, the question is complicated by the poem's autonarrative contexts. On the one hand, the poem *makes* the mouse a guest insofar as he is, analogically speaking, a mouthpiece for Barbauld's own guest-troubles. On the other hand, the mouse is *no longer* a nameless inhabitant of the home, if in fact he ever was one. As Turner reminds us, the mouse is "*brought in* after supper" (184, *emph. added*). Brought in from *where* exactly we do not know. One thing that we can say is that a being *brought in* (from the fields, from the pantry) is a being *brought under* the sovereignty of a host. Not unlike those of a guest, the mouse's movements—his comings-and-goings—are now subject to the housemaster's will. What is more, no longer sly or unmentionable, the mouse becomes a topic of great interest. If it is too late to perform experiments, then the question becomes: what is to be done with this captured mouse? How to *manage* his stay? For Barbauld, such is the hospitable crisis of the domestic laboratory. (I am indebted to Sylvia Bowerbank for posing to me this question concerning mice as guests. It is a question to which I return in Chapter Three. For more of Bowerbank's thoughts on mice, women, and science, see "Of Mice and Women: Early Modern Roots of Ecological Feminism" [2001].)

⁵Concerning Coleridge's "To a Young Ass," Perkins writes: "To call an ass 'brother' is of course offensive to humanity in general and particularly to one's own brothers, and such offense may have been one motive for the gesture. The dark side of the fraternity of universal nature is its implicit misanthropy" (935). As we have seen, Barbauld's poem also deploys a discourse of fraternity: the mouse claims to be a "brother's soul" and a "kindred mind." Barbauld's use of fraternal metaphors, I would argue, speak less to an implicit misanthropy in the poem than it does to Barbauld's recognition of her own dehumanized confinement as a (female) guest without the ability to act—a human, that is, without permission to be *humane*. Indeed, the absurdity of a mouse calling himself "brother" only ironizes the exclusion of women from such a discourse. For what is more absurd, a mouse who calls on a brotherhood that includes man *and*

further in my discussion of Coleridge, who has mouse troubles of his own as he thinks about the logics of home ownership. More broadly, I view “The Mouse’s Petition” as an exemplary preliminary “case study” for a theory of Romantic hospitality insofar as it draws out many of the themes that I explore in the chapters to follow. I have already mentioned the importance of the self-welcome, the disparity between guests and hosts, and the destabilizing “inflation” of that disparity. As a way to further reflect on these and other themes as well as to anticipate the various theses of this thesis, let me say a few things about my methodology.

If “The Mouse’s Petition” implicates the other-than-human as the potential recipient of a warm welcome (a gesture to which I will return in my discussions of Coleridge and Mary Shelley), then it is but one example of what I am alternatively calling “scenes” or “narratives” of hospitality in Romantic writing. This dissertation on Romantic hospitality performs a series of readings that focus on such “scenes” and “narratives” which are themselves scenes of reading the foreign—just as “The Mouse’s Petition” amounts to Barbauld’s reading of the “scene” of confinement and cruelty that she encounters in the laboratory of a scientific man of learning. In this way, the texts that I have gathered together for discussion in this dissertation (be they the “philosophical” works of Kant and Rousseau, or the poetical and fictional works of Coleridge and Shelley) are *literary* in nature—that is, if “literature” is to be understood here, in Thomas

animal, or the ventriloquism of a woman forced to hide behind a mouse in order to speak the language of fraternity? I will return to the philosopheme of the woman as guest at various points in the thesis.

Keenan's words, *not* as a simple "matter of novels and poems, not [as] a given body of work, but [as] a question of reading, its strategies, difficulties, and conditions" (1).⁶ My argument for a Romantic hospitality proceeds by understanding literature precisely in these terms. I argue that the texts of Rousseau, Kant, Coleridge, and Shelley not only draw themselves around various scenes of reading strangers and/or foreigners, but also participate in and theorize those scenes themselves. For example, my reading of Kant's reading of the "Asiatic Turk" in Chapter Two considers Kant's conflicted appropriation and deployment of the position of the foreigner as a way to perceive Western Europe as if with fresh non-European eyes—a self-conscious turn, I argue, that enables his text to theorize the foreigner as a figure for the nation's anxiously self-disciplinary recognition and reception of its own imagined strengths and weaknesses.

My thesis argues that Romantic scenes of reading the foreign are both invested in and critical of what Michel Foucault would call their *use* of the stranger (*Use* 249).

While Shelley's *The Last Man*, to point briefly to another example, *uses* the figure of a foreign plague as an alibi for what critics call the author's anxieties over the threat of "Oriental 'infection'" (Lew 262), the novel, I argue, is also self-consciously aware—and critical—of its own Orientalist tendencies. The texts of Rousseau, Kant, Coleridge, and

⁶One could argue, moreover, that my selections from Kant and Rousseau are already literary in nature without resorting to Keenan's inclusive definition of "literature." Rousseau's *Emile* is often thought of as a novel, and his *Second Discourse* is admittedly "hypothetical" ("let us begin by setting aside all the facts" [24]). Similarly, Kant's *Anthropology* unabashedly draws on literary and similar discourses for its study of "man": "although there are no real sources available for anthropology," Kant muses, "there are such aids as world history, biographies, and even plays and novels" (6).

Shelley, I argue, all admit to having designs on the figure of the stranger; but, in doing so, they also welcome the destabilizing singularity of that figure. They embrace the stranger's ultimate resistance to accommodation—its singular refusal to be incorporated by a text that would otherwise wish to assimilate difference into a discourse of similarity. What this means is that while these texts inevitably impose a certain violence on the others that they welcome or exclude, they nevertheless situate themselves in an “ethical” space that renders each scene of reading the foreign(er) an experience of *responsibility*. As J. Hillis Miller argues, the “ethical moment” in the act of reading is “a response to something, responsible to it, responsive to it, respectful of it” (*Ethics* 4). The ethical moment of reading, he continues, is “intimately intertwined” with the “political” moment of reading when what is read is mobilized, absorbed, or incorporated into the social or institutional realms of “what the [text] writes” (4). The ethical moment of a Romantic scene that reads the foreign, I argue, “never effaces what [its reading] buries,” to borrow a phrase from Derrida; it always keeps “within itself” the “signature” of “whatever it encrypts,” whatever it excludes or *reads* away (*Gift* 20). Calling on and responding to strangers as diverse as Caribs, Turks, “negros,” women, old men, animals, and Porlockian callers (the list goes on), the texts of Rousseau, Kant, Coleridge, and Shelley reveal to us what it means to respond *to* and to be responsible *for* the foreign. They respond to an imperative to read the foreign (thus, interpellating the stranger simply by “bring[ing] the other into the field of the law, constitut[ing] him as subject in addressing him” [Keenan 9]); while at the same time, they remain responsibly aware of the inhospitable imposition

of the imperative to read. They demand that we, as readers, attend “with care,” as Keenan says, “the noise” or “the mark or trace” to which “we respond at the beginning” (11). In a sense, this thesis performs a series of readings that pay special attention to the way Romantic scenes of reading the foreign ultimately enable the alterity of the stranger to remain *strange*—a gesture which is less an agented act of allowance than it is the effect of an obligation imposed on the text by the other whom it calls upon, demanding that alterity, difference, and/or a multiplicity of meanings circulate through and disrupt the text’s claim to closure and totality.⁷ Reading the stranger without “forgetting” that what is repressed is “never destroyed” (*Gift* 21), these scenes present hospitality as a mode of never fully embracing the stranger. Repression is, after all, just another mode of remembering what one fails to embrace: it is the way in which the subject attends to, without ever losing sight of, that which it fails to welcome.

If the subject cannot fully embrace the stranger—if it cannot do so without *imposing* on the other conditions that interpellate that other within a discourse of the same—then it must nevertheless try. “I *must* do this,” writes Miller; “I cannot do otherwise” (*Ethics* 4). It is in this way that the ethical moment in reading or welcoming

⁷To put this problematic in a way that I address more fully in Chapter Two, Antoine Berman in *The Experience of The Foreign* argues that the good translation fails to assimilate the original text entirely, preferring instead to preserve the foreignness of the original. Accordingly, I argue that to a certain extent all readings of the foreigner amount to misreadings, which is precisely why such readings are subject to conditions, laws, and politics. However, they are misreading only in the sense that they demand that reading does not stop, that one reading does not become the preferred or authoritative reading. They demand that reading be executed with caution, with care, and, most of all, with *responsibility*. Reading the foreigner demands that we read with a respect for the other’s excess; it demands that an attitude of peace be *instituted* at the border where such readings occur.

the foreign—which is to say, the moment in which the impossibility of welcoming the stranger announces itself—leads to an *act*; it leads to a decision to continue *against* the impossibility of continuing as such. For Keenan, the “subject” names a “resistance” to that impossibility. To initiate a kind of mantra that this dissertation will reiterate throughout its analysis, if the obligation to welcome the other is impossible to fulfill, it is also impossible to ignore. The subject cannot stop welcoming the other simply because it is necessarily impossible to do so without imposing a certain amount of violence. For this impossibility is precisely what makes reading and welcoming acts of responsibility.

Never losing sight of this impossible yet undeniable demand, this dissertation proposes a two-pronged thesis about Romantic hospitality. First, with regards to the subject’s interpellation of the other, the dissertation argues that the category of “the stranger” in Romantic writings of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century points less to the existence of actual alterities beyond the consciousness of the Romantic “subject” than it does to an *internal* difference which constitutes that subject’s own self-dividedness. The scene of Romantic hospitality doubles as a scene of the self-welcome. In this respect, the dissertation is indebted to Julia Kristeva’s thesis that that we are all strangers to ourselves, and that this self-estrangement is the paradigm, the condition of the possibility, for all foreign relations (34). As we see in “The Mouse’s Petition,” the other (who, in this case, is so other so as to be other-than-human) gets interpellated primarily as a screen on to which the subject plays out its own alterities: desiring to free the mouse, the poet desires to liberate herself from the confines of the guest-host relation.

The second aspect of the dissertation's two-pronged thesis considers how the other *unsettles* the subject, frustrating the subject's reception of difference as self-difference. The other always exceeds its figuration as other-than-the-self. Encountering its own internal differences in the foreign face of another, the subject is startled, surprised, by what it does not expect to find. It is a moment of irrevocable discomfort and disorientation. Throughout this dissertation we encounter scenes which demonstrate how the other astonishes the subject by revealing to it its own finitude. This exposure of the finite orientation of the subject to the infinite strangeness of the other is an "experience in the most enigmatic sense of the word," which, as Derrida says, "proceeds beyond knowledge toward the other as absolute stranger, as unknown, where I know nothing of him" ("Hostipitality" 8). Ultimately unknowable, the other represents an uncertainty "beyond knowledge" toward which the subject moves but for which it is not ready. Romantic hospitality, then, marks the sign of the subject's absolute unpreparedness for the other, its unpreparedness for seeing itself *otherwise* in the face of another. The self-encounter in the face of the stranger always occurs when one least expects it—which is perhaps why Barbauld is so moved by the mouse's detention in Priestley's laboratory. It is always a surprise visit. Unsettled, the subject is drawn temporarily out of itself (dispossessed of itself and its home) so that it questions its place in a future it can no longer foresee. Bearing the gift of difference, the welcomed other thus invites the subject to transcend its finitude by embracing its limitations, its restricted point of view. In this sense, Romantic hospitality is, as Derrida would say, a hospitality

to come that embraces its own incapacity to welcome the other without imposition, while at the same time always seeking new ways to respond to and redress that incapacity. If there is, as Judith Butler intimates, a necessary violence to the hospitable encounter—insofar as the other is always in one form or another *imposed* upon as a figure for the *self*-welcome (or self-repudiation)—then “the risk of that violation might well be followed by another in which we begin, without ending, without mastering, to own—yet never fully to own—the exclusions by which we proceed” (Butler 53). Romantic hospitality, I argue, *is* this risk. It occurs when the subject’s obligation to respond to and welcome the other is both impossible and irrepressible—that is, when the subject has no choice but to work *toward*, without ever arriving at, a reception of the other that is not yet, that will never be, that will only promise to come.

Appropriately, gathering together a variety of examples to sustain this double-pronged thesis, this dissertation attempts to work *toward* a Romantic theory of a “hospitality to come” without ever claiming to speak comprehensively of such a theory. To do so would be in contrast to the “spirit” of hospitality as such; it would be to *close* hospitality, thus turning hostile to the very openness that makes reading the stranger possible. The texts that this dissertation reads are not exhaustive but representative as a series of hospitable moments in the literary and philosophical discourses of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. In order to respect the differences inherent in each of these moments, as well as to remain open and responsive to a European Romanticism’s interests in the subject’s hospitable relation with the others that surround

it, the scope of the dissertation's analysis is both international and interdisciplinary—welcoming as it does textual material as diverse as French pedagogical fiction (Rousseau), German public lectures (Kant), and English poetry (Coleridge) and novels (Shelley). What is more, while the term “Romantic,” especially within the pedagogical structure of an English Department, continues at times to refer to what Jerome McGann calls *the* “Romantic ideology” (2) shared by the six “canonical” poets of English Romanticism, this dissertation proceeds primarily with an historical understanding of “Romantic” discourse as literary and philosophical writings written in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Traditionally, the imagined markers of this period have been the storming of the Bastille in 1789 and England's Reform Act in 1832. But as Elizabeth Fay notes, recent scholarship, aspiring to determine exactly who was writing “Romantic” texts “in or near the historical period,” has led scholars to think about a “more extensive” Romantic period covering the years 1750 to 1850—a periodization, moreover, that includes a great many of Rousseau's best-known works of philosophy and fiction.

This emphasis on an historical Romanticism is not to suggest that an ideological Romanticism is irrelevant to a thesis on Romantic hospitality. Rather, the theoretical and the philosophical often organize the dissertation's readings of specific moments *within* the historical period of Romanticism. Registering the “major characteristics” of traditional Romantic writing (including “*imagination* as a mark of the creative, *inspiration* as indicated by spontaneity, *individualism* as a new definition of the self,

radical questioning as an act of intervention, and *introspection* as a mark of self-consciousness”), Fay claims that Romanticism thus “opened up the inner as well as the outer world in a way that made it important to begin to understand the relationship between self and other” (*Feminist* 12, 5). Ideologically speaking, Romanticism can be seen as a sustained reflection on the hospitable exchanges that occur on the threshold between the “inner” and “outer worlds” of the subject—even as it questions or problematizes precisely the (im)possibility of distinguishing between such “worlds.” For as the Derridian commentary on hospitality continually reminds us, the other is always already *within* the subject, from its very inception. Indeed, this is an insight that not only describes the tenuous hospitable relation posited in the texts of Rousseau, Kant, Coleridge, and Shelley; as I will discuss in a moment, it is also an insight of which these texts are already keenly aware insofar as they actually *anticipate* the Derridian commentary.

Simply by including texts like German lectures and French pedagogical novels, moreover, one challenges a certain notion of “Romanticism” that privileges the literary over the philosophical, poetry over prose. In this respect, the dissertation sympathizes with Fay’s argument for widening the scope of Romanticism to include not only genres other than the “ode,” but also writers who wrote in or around the time of the Romantic period, but who are not always included as a part of Romanticism. Fay’s motive for doing so is to render Romanticism more inclusive of the great number British women writers who were writing poetry, fiction, and drama in late eighteenth- and early

nineteenth-century England, and whose works, she argues, mounted a massive critique of the masculinist ideology of the so-called “High Romantics” (*Feminist* 7).⁸ I raise the issue of Fay’s “inclusive” Romanticism in order to deflect possible bemusement over my inclusion of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the late works of Immanuel Kant in a thesis on Romantic hospitality. While Rousseau may not need qualification in this regard (enjoying, as he has, a long history of association with English Romanticism as a kind of precursory figure of this period),⁹ a few words about Kant are useful, if not necessary.

First, if what characterizes “Romantic writings” is not a formal similarity, as Steven Bygrave argues, but an “historical juxtaposition” insofar as these texts engage contemporary debates which, for the most part, “arose around the French Revolution” (“Versions” 69), then Kant’s late writings certainly appear to fit this description. As I discuss in Chapter Two, Kant’s interests in an international hospitality, as it is expressed in the *Anthropology* and in *Perpetual Peace*, reflect his own growing anxieties over the French Revolution’s destabilizing impact on the integrity of the borders and the national characters organizing Western Europe. Second, and perhaps more convincingly, Rajan argues that while “Kant’s thinking on culture marks him very much as a figure of the

⁸As Fay claims, “a standard collection of High Romantic works would not begin to represent the wealth of writing and art produced during this period” (*Feminist* 22). With the various divisions within the High Romantic circle between First and Second generation poets—not to mention the various divisions *within* this division between things like radical and conservative-reactionary phases—a “standard collection” of High Romantic works could barely manage to represent even itself.

⁹See, for instance, Huntington Williams’ *Rousseau and Romantic Autobiography* (1983); Thomas McFarland’s *Romanticism and the Heritage of Rousseau* (1995); Gregory Darts’ *Rousseau, Robespierre, and English Romanticism* (1999); and Eugene L. Stelzig’s *The Romantic Subject in Autobiography: Rousseau and Goethe* (2000).

Enlightenment, anxious to close off the Romantic openings that his philosophy creates,” there is also a certain strain in Kant’s thinking, especially in works like the *Anthropology* (which Rajan calls “a strange hybrid of the popular and the philosophical”), that “opens up knowledge” to “the romantic development” of forms that allow for “reflection upon an idea from more than one disciplinary perspective” (“Without Reserve” par. 4, 10).¹⁰ This hybridization of discourse exposes Kant’s work to a kind of unreserved Romantic knowledge that Rajan characterizes as *other-than* that of the Enlightenment. As a hybrid of “world history, biographies, and even plays and novels” (Kant, *Anthropology* 6), the *Anthropology* embraces otherness; it welcomes forms of thought that are otherwise thought to be *estranged* from Enlightenment philosophemes such as reason and rationality.

Nevertheless, looking primarily to an understanding of Romanticism as an historical period of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, this dissertation investigates how Romantic figures for the stranger come to operate as normative *phantasms* whose function is precisely to ground and “naturalize” the repudiative discourses by which the Romantic subject produces and sustains its own self-sovereignty—its mastery over the house of the self. Yet because the process by which “proper” hosts and guests are parsed operates as a regulatory practice based on repetition

¹⁰Rajan remarks, moreover: “Kant’s philosophy has been radicalised by French theorists such as Lyotard and Deleuze, who see his late work as ‘the foundation of Romanticism.’ Deleuze argues that if Kant allows for a contest of faculties under the rule or regulation of one faculty at a time, then ‘it must follow that all together [the faculties] are capable of relationships which are free and unregulated’” (“Without Reserve” par. 4).

and exclusion, I argue that the texts of Romantic hospitality are invariably haunted by the very strangers that they deny. Relegated to an unintelligible domain just beyond or “outside” the space of the welcome, these *othered* spirits return to the site of their disavowal only to reassert their constitutive priority in the hospitable imaginaries of these texts—thus frustrating the logics of accommodation and the subject’s self-sovereignty as master, host, or head of household. I argue that the texts of Rousseau, Kant, Coleridge, and Shelley theorize the *failure* of the hospitable relation from a suspicion that, after all is said and done, hospitality is itself structurally impossible. In other words, I contend that for these texts absolute or unconditional hospitality must ruin itself precisely by welcoming its opposite—hostility. While this particular form of discourse founds the sovereignty of the subject through the force of exclusion, it also produces the “stranger” as an inexhaustible site of resistance and reproduction.

3. Impossibility of Hospitality and the Resistance to Accommodation

My emphasis on the structural impossibility of hospitality is indebted to what I call “the Derridian commentary” on hospitality. While I am indebted to it, I wish also to extend the commentary by historicizing and contextualizing it within the Romantic period. Part of my interest in Romantic hospitality is to question the extent to which it can not only be read through Derrida’s particular critical model of deconstruction, but also, more importantly, how Romantic hospitality anticipates and even exceeds the Derridian commentary insofar as it already problematizes its own impossibility.

Accordingly, before proceeding to describe the specific concerns of the dissertation's four chapters, it is important to consider some of the concerns motivating Derrida's interests in the question of hospitality—interests that have generally been ascribed to his so-called “ethical turn” (as though his work were somehow not always already engaged with the ethical from the start).¹¹

In his writings on hospitality, Derrida often implicitly asks: if hospitality has a history, where and when does it begin? The difficulty in answering such a question, he claims, lies in the fact that we do not know what hospitality *is*, that hospitality as such is never present-at-hand. We seem to possess a certain pre-comprehension of the vocabulary and the laws of hospitality: we speak of warm welcomes, of invitations, and of hosts and guests. But our concept of hospitality is, at best, a self-contradictory figure that deconstructs or “auto-immunizes” itself as soon as it is put into practice (“Hostipitality” 5). For Derrida, hospitality is possible only “on the condition of its impossibility” (5). This performative contradiction is, perhaps, best explained with another: if the goal of hospitality is to dispel the strangeness of the stranger—to make the stranger feel at home—then it paradoxically works toward its own effacement. One cannot finally bring the guest home, so to speak, without rendering the guest-host relation void.

¹¹Simon Critchley's *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas* is generally regarded (perhaps falsely) as having first recognized this so-called “turn” as early as 1992. Specifically, Critchley considers Derrida's career-long engagement with Emmanuel Levinas (a figure whose influence is also palpably evident in this dissertation)—an engagement that Critchley traces back as far as Derrida's first published paper on Levinas, “*Violence et métaphysique*,” which first appears in *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 69.3 (1964). Since the publication of Critchley's text, Derrida has produced a number of works that are expressly interested in re-reading, re-articulating, and/or deconstructing traditional ethical philosophemes such as friendship, death, gift-giving, forgiveness, cosmopolitanism, and hospitality.

The very inequity which makes the relation and the welcoming gesture possible in the first place would be annulled. One would never be able to tell who welcomes whom—except in some distant memory of a past no-longer-present—or why the welcome was issued in the first place. According to Jim Vinh, “once hospitality presents itself, it no longer presents itself and it is only through this disappearance that we can verify if a true hospitality event has taken place” (par. 24). But how exactly would this disappearance *take place*? How could we verify a “true” hospitality (whatever this means) when, if it occurs at all, it does so always in the past and never in the present? How to locate this (non-)event, this withdrawal of the guest’s history as a guest? Contradictorily, the history of the guest’s welcome (as Vinh sees it) begins with the *end* of this history, when it no longer exists—when it is no longer possible. Hospitality, if it succeeds finally in making the guest feel at-home, cancels its own history. It covers up its tracks—disappearing *without a trace*.

But *la trace* is precisely what this dissertation is after. If hospitality does have a history, it is precisely because every welcome, every invitation and embrace, is doomed to fail. Each of these acts protects or “auto-immunizes” itself by housing the very thing which destroys it, its own opposition. These acts are *opposed* to themselves. In a remarkable turn of phrase, Derrida cuts to the self-contradictory heart of the matter: “hospitality is opposed to what is nothing other than opposition itself, namely hostility” (“Hostipitality” 4). Opposing itself to opposition, hospitality performs the very thing it aims to exclude. In order to take place—that is, in order for it to occur in a world in which

a host faces all sorts of threats and takes all sorts of risks—hospitality invests itself in more than one opposition. First, it founds itself on a certain inequity between the guest and host, an inequity for which the “generosity” of a welcome both guarantees and aims to resolve. For a postcolonial critic like Rosello, a host’s forgetting or repression of this initial inequity—i.e., the very “condition that constructs” the host *as host*—amounts to the inhospitable *par excellence* (173). For hospitality to have a chance, for it to remain an open possibility, the host must never forget (he/she must *impose* upon him/herself never to forget) the opposition which constructs his/her place of welcome, and which continues to maintain his/her hierarchical authority over the guest. An effect of a disparity over ownership and territorial rights, the act of hospitality is not only born out of an opposition between guest and host, but also it can never overcome this disparity without guaranteeing it—simply by acting, by bestowing upon the guest a generosity from a place of privilege.

The inability of the hospitable act to recuperate from its constitutive oppositions and inequalities reveals that the host is not so much the agent or “actor” of the welcoming gesture so much as he/she is “acted upon” by the act itself. Not unlike a guest, the host *receives* the inconceivability of the hospitable act—the impossibility finally to release the inequity of the situation being the one thing that the host cannot own, grasp, or give away. A radical hospitality always releases itself from such possession. Absolutely free for itself, it releases itself insofar as it gives itself away invariably, welcoming all things, even its opposite—that is, even the original disparity which it is meant to relieve. This

distinction between hospitality and its opposite is difficult to maintain, as we shall see, even in a thesis which aims to draw out this very distinction. One always finds oneself losing one's grasp—the idea of a radical hospitality always withdrawing itself, always escaping the hand that would pin it down. A thesis on the radicality of hospitality would not be true to itself if it were not conflicted by this struggle over speaking of the host as hospitable agent and the host as recipient of the act itself. If hospitality welcomes its opposite, then to write about hospitality (Romantic or otherwise) would mean contending, on a discursive level, with the impossibility of completing such a project. After all, a doctoral project that promises to deliver a survey of Romantic hospitality always already points to an academic afterlife beyond the scope of a PhD thesis.

Beyond opposing the guest to host, hospitality finds itself on yet another opposition—namely, the opposition between one guest and another, between the desired and the undesired visitor. The possibility of welcoming one stranger always necessarily contains within it the impossibility of welcoming another. As Derrida puts it quite simply, “the welcomed guest is a stranger treated as a friend or ally, *as opposed to* the stranger treated as an enemy” (“Hostipitality” 5, *emph. mine*). While it is an emblem of good nature and benevolence, the friendly reception of a friendly face also enacts a defensive gesture against the risk of being open—even if that risk occurs only for a moment, just prior to closing the door to let the stranger through. Without radical exposure (an exposure, that is, which leaves one utterly vulnerable to visitation, be it in the form of a friendly greeting or a home invasion), a welcome only confirms its

constitutive exclusionary violence. Wherever there is a door, there is always a politics of reception; there is always a rule of the household which *imposes* upon its guests and visitors the conditions of hospitality. Some are let through; others are denied. The door, which is itself a limit dividing the inside from the out, the private from the public, enforces itself *as a limit* by guaranteeing that there is and always will be an outside, and that what and whoever is permitted to pass through will be sheltered from the storm, so to speak—which is to say, concealed, guarded, and protected from what and whomever is imagined to pose a threat to the safety and integrity of the household. Even the so-called “open-door” policy forever remains precisely what it is: a policy, the expression of a certain politics which is never fully open because the very promise of its openness conceals (closes itself to, hides) the conditions and the authority which makes it possible. More importantly, in order to remain “open,” an open-door policy must continue to *announce* itself. The “open” door must invariably open itself; it must continue to do so even as it is already open. It must declare its openness—dis-close, reveal and un-cover itself—time and again to each stranger who happens to arrive and stand hesitantly before it. Forever producing itself in an undisclosed act of disclosure, the “open” door advertises its own impossibility. It must forever speak and re-open itself.¹²

As this dissertation endeavours to show, the impossibility of welcoming both the one stranger who is (or who is *deemed* to be) friendly and that other stranger with whom

¹²Rosello has this to say on the figure of the “open-door”: “closing the door on supposedly undesirable strangers is clearly inhospitable; but an open-door policy may be the different side of the same coin if the host forgets about the condition that constructed him or her as a potential host. The repressed may be that the land was here before the host, that recent wars and spoliation may have legitimized current forms of ownership” (173).

one chooses not to associate reveals the conditions of an exclusivity which extends even to the stranger one permits to pass. For a household never fully accepts even the guest which it welcomes with open arms. The guest is never made to feel entirely at home (just as the host him/herself is never made to feel at home—always the guest, the other, of him/herself). It is as though there were always, figuratively speaking, a door or a passageway through which the guest is finally unable to pass. Opposed to, as well as born out of, opposition, hospitality is structurally impossible.¹³ There is always a negotiation at play between hospitality and opposition—a negotiation, moreover, which makes the welcoming gesture a meaningful one. While the obligation to welcome the other is ultimately impossible to fulfill, it is, as I have suggested, an obligation that is impossible to ignore. One *must* answer the call of the other; one *must* welcome the other, even if it is impossible to do so.

I receive, welcome, and embrace the idea of a “hospitality *to come*” from Derrida’s *Specters of Marx*. Welcoming the other despite the impossibility of doing so means remaining dangerously open to and unprepared for its arrival; it means

¹³To put this another way (as well as to anticipate a line of argument to which I will return), hospitality is impossible because, in its most radical and absolute mode, it is hospitable even to the very thing that destroys it, hostility. It gives shelter to its opposite precisely by *opposing* it. In other words, in order to realize itself and to exclude the hostile as such, hospitality must deploy the unfriendly and exclusionary force of its opposite; indeed, it must *become* its opposite. In a certain sense, then, we might say that despite the rule of the household, the undesirable (the oppositional or hostile guest) *always* arrives; it visits regardless of (indeed, because of) any attempt to exclude it. By the same token, *inhospitality* is also structurally impossible. For instance, notwithstanding the host’s concerted effort to treat mice with absolute hostility (trapping them, caging them, refusing them entry), there always remains the possibility of *other* mice who will come and go as they please, who will accommodate themselves without permission, who will welcome themselves to the provisions of the home.

“responding to that which must be absolute hospitality, the ‘yes’ to the *arrivant(e)*, the ‘come’ to the future that cannot be anticipated—which must not be the ‘anything whatsoever’ that harbors behind it those too familiar ghosts, the very ones we must practice recognizing. Open, waiting for the event *as* justice, this hospitality is absolute only if it keeps watch over its own universality” (*Specters* 168). Again, a hospitality *to come* is the *process* through which one works *towards* an unanticipated horizon—that is, a process that constructs and de-constructs the present as a way of working towards (without ever positing *as such*) the other that is the future. It is an unreserved way of enabling and welcoming the arrival of the future as something other-than what we know, expect, or hope for. It is an historical process, so to speak, by which the promise of hospitality *to come* continually enables (even contains) its own revision insofar as it compels us to think about the limits and impossibilities of hospitality, about how hospitality can be different or other than it is—about how it is different than itself. In this vein, my thesis aims to prove that various texts and pre-texts of Romantic discourses on hospitality produce a theory of hospitality that is sensitive to the fact that there are no differences without self-differences. What is more, I suggest at various points throughout the thesis that the “others” embraced by a Romantic hospitality “talk back,” as it were, insofar as they unsettle the Derridian commentary by anticipating (within their own singular contexts) a great many of its insights—thus rendering the Derridian commentary itself as a strange (and distorted) moment of self-recognition and self- welcome.

4. *Topography of the Thesis*

If hospitality is structurally impossible, then this dissertation is concerned with how the structural failure of a welcome gets uniquely expressed in *singular* failures of the hospitality scene—which is to say, a *plurality* of failures each different from the other, each the other of itself. If a structural impossibility is what makes hospitality *meaningful*, then it is the historical or contextual singularity of particular instances of such failure that *are* the meaning. A “Romantic” hospitality, for instance, is not simply a demonstration of the impossible structure of an unconditional hospitality—a demonstration, that is, that would be no different than any other demonstration, such as what Rosello calls a “postcolonial” hospitality (17). Rather, each failure of the hospitable event expresses itself within a unique set of historical, social, and psychological conditions. Each failure is indeed an “event,” and as such is invariably distinct and unforeseeable. The *conditioning* of these singular failures of the hospitable event produce a discernable yet ultimately unassimilable history of the welcome. Even a series of failures that get marshaled within a discourse of similarity that categorizes them as “Romantic” are indisputably unique in their singularity. Always open to the im-possibility of a Romantic theory of hospitality, then, I offer the following detailed topography of the thesis.

Romantic Hospitality: Theorizing the Welcome in Rousseau, Kant, Coleridge, and Mary Shelley traces the curious passage of the category of the stranger—or better, of strangers—through representative texts of English Romanticism, while also considering some of the philosophical “pre-texts” of this tradition. Chapter One focuses primarily on

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile; or, On Education* [*Émile; ou de l'Éducation*] (1762) and his *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* [*Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité*] (1755).

These texts, I argue, set the tone of Romanticism's engagement with the difficulties of thinking through the reception of alterity. Reading *Emile*'s initial encounter with Sophie, for instance, as a belated (mis)recognition of difference in the face of the other, I argue that the text's unresolved theory of the welcome illustrates how irresolution is in fact constitutive of the very meaning of the term hospitality insofar as hospitality *as such* is less a concept than it is an *experience* of disruption (between inside and out, between identity and difference). Moving from *Emile* to the *Second Discourse*'s evocation of the Carribean aboriginal as the incomplete substitute for "natural man," Chapter One continues to theorize Rousseau's struggle to come to terms with an experience of alterity which disrupts his text, thus *showing* rather than *telling* his readers, as Judith Still would say ("La Nouvelle" 45), that in the end it is not the subject who welcomes the other, but the other who welcomes the subject to question itself, its own possibility, and, most importantly, its responsibility to difference.

Continuing the dissertation's emphasis on scenes of reading the foreign, the strange, and the excluded, Chapter Two focuses primarily on three such scenes in the late writings of Immanuel Kant. In the first scene, drawn from *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* [*Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*] (1798), Kant imagines the mental and intestinal distresses of the solitary eater, a figure whose refusal to offer hospitality when it eats is (for Kant) both irresponsible and unhealthy. I argue

that Kant's disavowal of this solitary creature throws into sharp relief the rigorously monitored technologies of social ingestion which Kant prescribes for the subject who would eat as well as it thinks. Scene two, also drawn from the *Anthropology*, deals with another of the text's objects of abjection, namely, the Asiatic Turk, whom Kant (mis)appropriates as a kind of conduit for gazing upon the nations of Europe from a foreign perspective, thus enabling himself to declare Germany the most hospitable nation on earth. Treating this gesture with due suspicion, I contend that for Kant the reception and welcome of the stranger in fact plays itself out as the nation's troubling recognition of its own internal strangeness, i.e., its inability punctually to "be" itself. The third scene that I read centres around the "foreigner" of the "Third Definitive Article" of *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* [*Zum ewigen Frieden*] (1795), where Kant lays out the laws and the limits of the stranger's rights of visitation and welcome in the lands of others. I argue that a kind of (auto)deconstructive thread runs through these three scenes of hospitality insofar as each scene contains its own impossibility. There is, I contend, always another other who is forcibly disavowed in the welcoming gesture, but who nevertheless returns to the scene of the welcome only to reassert its constitutive priority in the hospitable imagineries of Kant's texts.

Chapters Three and Four turn specifically to English Romanticism as a way to measure how Kant's production of the figure of hospitality is then reconfigured by the poetry and fiction of Coleridge and Mary Shelley. Chapter Three argues that there exists a certain *pattern* in Coleridge's writing that anxiously and reiteratively tropes scenes of

hospitality in a poetics of failure. I argue that this pattern attests to Coleridge's intuition that there lies at the heart of every hospitable event a constitutive competitiveness that renders the unconditional welcome structurally impossible. Using Freud's model of the Fort-da as a figure for the subject's desire to empower and "avenge" itself by repeatedly reinventing an emotionally charged situation that is beyond its control, I argue that by representing the various failures of the hospitable event, Coleridge's poetry theorizes the subject's failure to master the conditions of (im)possibility of welcoming others.

Performing readings of "Pity," "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," and "Kubla Khan," this chapter continues to explore this complex problematic in a sustained reading of "Christabel" (1816), a poem whose strange landscapes and figures of *other*-worldliness, I argue, barely cloak its anxious construction of the hospitable relation as a figure for Romanticism's *self*-encounters. Christabel's unexpected *rendezvous* with the "Lady Geraldine," I argue, presents itself as an allegory for the fact that figures of alterity and difference will *always* resist attempts at integration, and that the subject's self-denial in the face of the other is but a mere analogue to the regulatory or managerial practices of personal identification by which the self reproduces and polices itself as self-divided, remaining forever a stranger to itself. The chapter then applies the poem's insights into the nature of self-welcoming to some of Coleridge's other poems, including "Frost at Midnight" and "To Two Sisters," as well as to parts of the *Biographia Literaria*.

Finally, Chapter Four questions the place of the stranger in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826), a novel which chillingly imagines a time when there are in fact no more

strangers at all—its narrator writing his tale as the sole survivor of the human race. As Anne McWhir points out, the mysterious “plague” which moves “from east to west” on its course to annihilate humanity is associated throughout the novel with “the foreign” and “the alien” (“Introduction” xxviii); and while other critics read *The Last Man* as a testament to Shelley’s specifically “Romantic anxieties” about the “dangers of Oriental ‘infection’” for the body politic in an age of imperialist expansion (Lew 262, Cantor 194), my thesis argues that Shelley adapts the genre of apocalyptic writing precisely to examine the nature of such fears and to question the nation’s responsibility to others in times of impending catastrophe. Representing England, for instance, as a nation preparing to fortify itself against the foreign threat of pestilence, the novel also illustrates how England opens itself up (in an oddly doubled gesture) to become an asylum “filled even to bursting” (186) with strangers seeking refuge from the plague. I argue, then, that *The Last Man* offers a uniquely self-deconstructive vision of Romantic hospitality as a figure for the contradictory responses of a subject who both fears *and* sympathizes with spectres of alterity and difference.



CHAPTER ONE

Unsettling Rousseau: Hospitality in Emile and Discourse On Inequality

The wandering life is what I like.

—*The Confessions* (167)

Introductory Note

Exploring three “scenes” of hospitality in the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, this chapter argues that for Rousseau hospitality is an experience of disruption, and that encounters with others unsettle the subject, “disabusing” it of what Bonnie Honig calls its “fantasies of identity” (196). Exposing the subject to the limits of its own finitude, the singular unpredictability of Rousseau’s various figures for the stranger places the subject in question, forcing it to ask: who is the other that is me? In the first section that follows, I read *Le Lévitte d’Ephraïm* as an (auto)narrative that reveals not only Rousseau’s identification with the Old Testament’s figure of the Levite, but also the various disavowals, repressions, and (gendered) violences by which such identification proceeds. The chapter then turns to *Emile; or On Education* [*Émile; ou de l’Éducation*] (1762) in order to further explore the subject’s reception of others that continue to resist identification. Specifically, I argue that Emile’s belated recognition of Sophie (“O Sophie! Is it you whom my heart seeks?” [414]) performs a kind of violence whereby the stranger is held hostage to the authority of a name that seeks (but ultimately fails) to render it familiar. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion of Rousseau’s reception and

use of the figure of the Carib in *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* [*Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inégalité*] (1755). I argue that *Le Lévite*, *Emile*, and the *Second Discourse* demonstrate (each in their own way) the fact that while Rousseau is made uneasy by his encounters with others, it is precisely this uneasiness that calls him to responsibility. If his texts inevitably continue to impose a kind of violence on the other, then Rousseau's call to responsibility nevertheless leaves its "signature" in that violence, as Derrida would say—thus demanding that we, as readers, remain "responsible to it, responsive to it, respectful of it" (Miller, *Ethics* 4). Such is the demand of this chapter.

Hostile Hermit, Inhospitable Levite

Rousseau lived much of his life enjoying (but also regretting) the hospitality of others. Not unlike his own itinerant hero Saint Preux, he too was a "wanderer, with no family and almost no country" (Cranston, *Solitary* 58). Motherless, fatherless, homeless, Jean-Jacques would fall in and out of favour with a virtual host of patrons, including his dear "*maman*" Mme de Warens, Mme d'Épinay, the Luxembourg's, and Pierre-Alexandre Du Peyrou, whom Rousseau would come to call "my dear Host" (Cranston, *Solitary* 125).¹ He was a "Citizen" of no place, a foreigner perpetually abroad claiming birth rites from a country to which he no longer belonged—his Geneva being simply an elsewhere, an alternative ideal which no longer existed and perhaps never did and

¹Rousseau's mother died of a "puerperal fever" only a few weeks after his birth; his father deserted him at age ten; and, at the age of fifteen, Rousseau abandoned his native Geneva in order to escape the bonds of apprenticeship (Cranston, *Jean-Jacques* 13, 28, 41)

probably never will. Always the guest, Rousseau found it difficult to maintain the continued blessings of a host. While jealousy over fellow lodgers vying for a benefactress's attention placed great strains on his prolonged visitations (as was especially the case with Mme de Warens), it was his fearful protests that his friends and patrons were conspiring against him that ultimately led him time and again to overstay his welcome. Despite an addiction, as it were, to being received as *hôte*, as the welcomed one, Rousseau suffered a peculiar allergy toward the obligations engendered by another's beneficence. Forever suspicious of the motives and the politics of Parisian *politesse* (a subject to which I will return), he was loathe to receive gifts of any kind and in time became infamous for refusing them, the most notable of which was his rejection of Louis XV's offer of a royal pension.

For Rousseau, there was evidently something profoundly *unsettling* about his hospitable encounters, as though these *rendezvous* had a way of reminding him that he would never find himself at-home, that he would indeed be forever estranged, uneasy about his place in the world.² At once desirous and resentful of his abiding patronage,

²As I will discuss later, this problem of never feeling at home has much to do with the constitutive impossibility of hospitality. Jim Vinh explains: "Hospitality seeks to dispel the strangeness or foreignness of the guest by making the guest a familiar member of the household. Once this happens, however, there is no longer a guest to which the hospitality event can be addressed. Paradoxically, it is precisely at this point when hospitality must necessarily disappear. If the aim of hospitality is to subsume the guest into the home, then hospitality seeks out its own effacement by seeking to eliminate the foreignness of the guest upon which every hospitable event must rely" (par. 24). And yet while Vinh argues that "it is only through this disappearance that we can verify if a true hospitality event has taken place" (par. 24), Rousseau's experience suggests that the fulfilment (i.e., the effacement) of hospitality is unpracticable, that the discomfort of the guest-host relation is something that he was either unable or unwilling to surpass. It is precisely this inability, as we shall see, which comes to haunt and deconstruct Rousseau's depictions of hospitality in his work.

Rousseau was never entirely at ease in his relations with others; a warm welcome was as pleasing to him as it was stifling—this tension ultimately turning him hostile against his many benefactors. “[M]ore alone in Paris than Robinson [Crusoe] in his Island” (*Dialogues* 826, cited in Strong 50), he became a hermit, a notorious recluse who, in his old age, expressed more hospitality toward his dog Turc than toward his friends and neighbours (Cranston, *Noble* 336). Preferring a good book to a table companion (*Confessions* 255), Rousseau was the consummate solitary eater—a distinction which renders him an ironic counterexample to my discussion of Kant’s “dinner party” in the following chapter.

In this chapter, I want to explore Rousseau’s aversion-attraction to the protocols and manners of hospitality as it relates to his writings. I want to consider the theories of hospitality that Rousseau entertained. What sorts of welcome does this theme of the *hôte* receive from a thinker who would prefer visiting to hosting, who would refuse a gift for fear of having to return the favour? What does Rousseau offer to a discussion on Romantic hospitality? While conflicting answers to these questions inevitably arise, my purpose is not simply to weigh one possibility against the other, as though this chapter were simply a matter of reconstructing a dominant theory of hospitality in Rousseau at the expense of many others. Rather I am primarily interested in suspending such judgement, for I believe that the place of the guest-host relation in Rousseau’s work is as troubled—indeed, as *unsettled*—as was his own personal experience with hospitality. Such an analysis must, of course, recognize that “personal experience” points not to the spotless

recovery of a lived life but “to something that cannot quite be represented either in the text or the public life of the author” (Rajan, “Autonarration” 161). Understanding that the “life writing” of a text like Rousseau’s *Confessions* is irrevocably complicated by what Rajan calls “autonarration,” this study will treat the “transposition” of personal experience into fiction as discursively constructed (180). “Work” and “life” are figures of discourse—neither of which escapes the generative process of textualization, especially in a writer whose life and work are so complexly intertwined. Whether we choose to speak of Rousseau the “writer” or Rousseau the “man,” we are dealing with a text *in-process*—which is to say, a text that continues to produce and re-produce itself in an endless play of articulation and dis-articulation. One way or the other, we encounter “Rousseau” as he continues to engage and dis-engage himself with a theory (or many theories) of hospitality. In what follows, I intend to rehearse some of these engagements while paying particular attention to their repressions, avoidances, and logical lacunae. As for determining how a Rousseauian theory of hospitality might look, all we can say is that, if such a theory does exist, it is fundamentally unresolved. What is more, I want to argue that this irresolution is constitutive of the very meaning of the term hospitality, a meaning which suggests that hospitality *as such* is not so much a concept but an *experience* of disruption and unsettlement (between inside and out, between identity and difference) occasioned by an encounter with otherness.

The autonarrative interrelation between Rousseau’s life and work is, perhaps, nowhere better articulated and problematized than in the specific (auto)narrative in the

Confessions concerning the instantiating circumstances that led Rousseau to compose his posthumously published prose poem, *Le Lévitte d'Ephraïm*. For this reason, I wish briefly to introduce and explore the various hospitality scenes of this interrelation before moving on to a more sustained reading of the hospitable dilemmas of *Emile*. An extended retelling of the biblical tale of a foreign Levite in the Benjamin town of Gibeah who sacrifices the life and body of his concubine in payment for his “unlawful” accommodation in the home of another stranger, *Le Lévitte* aroused mixed feelings for Rousseau: “if [it] is not the best of my works it will always be my dearest” (*Confessions* 541).³ Part of Rousseau’s attachment to this text, as the *Confessions* lead us to believe, is that by writing it he was able to “completely forget” the miserable circumstances surrounding the warrant for his arrest after the scandalous publication of *Emile* and the *Social Contract* [*Du Contrat Social*] in 1762 (541). This admission of a kind of calculated forgetfulness, which for Susan K. Jackson represents Rousseau’s atypically guarded attempts to renounce any connection between the *Lévitte* and his personal life,⁴ is corroborated by the *Second projet de préface* to the *Lévitte*: according to this preface, the poem’s composition became for Rousseau a glorious kind of escape from or “substitute”

³For discussions which appraise the connections of this “minor” work to the body of Rousseau’s other “major” works see Thomas M. Kavanagh’s “Rousseau’s *Le Lévitte d'Ephraïm*: Dream, Text, and Synthesis” (1983), and Aubrey Rosenberg’s “Rousseau’s *Lévitte d'Ephraïm* and the Golden Age” (1979).

⁴As Jackson writes: the “self-serving *Confessions* make a ceremonial display of removing every last vestige of autobiography from *Le Lévitte*. The prose poem is thereby prepared for sacrifice, in the name of autobiography, as the quintessential last gasp of literature in Rousseau’s lifetime” (189).

for other more distressing “daydreams” (cited and translated in Kavanagh 146).⁵ While it is amusing (not to say, disturbing) to think that Rousseau might find an agreeable distraction in choosing to retell one of the Old Testament’s most gruesome tales of violence and retribution, it is important to remember that, from a Freudian perspective, Rousseau’s various denials of the autobiographical conditions of the *Lévite*, rather than obscuring its connections to his life (as though the tale were *simply* a distraction), form a clear, if unconscious, recognition and acceptance of those very elements residing *within* the text. As recollected in the *Confessions*, the *Lévite* involves the complicated transposition of the author’s own representation of the events and experiences in his life into a text which, in this case, scarcely cloaks its reconstruction of Old Testament brutality as a figure for the subject’s feelings of persecution and grief—a subject who, given the severity of the public outcry concerning the publication of *Emile*, is quite literally “on trial.” As Thomas M. Kavanagh points out, Rousseau’s tale of the Levite is “in the fullest sense of the term, a return of the repressed” (148). To better appreciate the tale’s psychic significance for Rousseau, we must turn in more detail to the external circumstances of its production—and to Rousseau’s account of those circumstances in *The Confessions*.

⁵From the “Preface”: “It [the Levite’s tale] offered me a kind of intermediary between the state I found myself in and the one I wished (was able) to achieve. When from time to time I surrendered to my somber humor, *I would substitute a more pleasant subject for it* and, as soon as that subject allowed it, I would write” (cited and translated in Kavanagh 146, *emph. added*). “Pleasant subject” is, of course, an odd description of the Levite’s tale. Furthermore, in a classical repressive gesture Rousseau writes: “I am much more upset by injustices to which I am a witness than by those of which I am the victim” (cited and translated in Kavanagh 146).

Feeling “more wakeful than usual” on the night of 8 June, 1762, Rousseau finds himself reading the Book of Judges and becomes “greatly moved” by the story of the Levite of Ephraim (*Confessions* 535). Struggling with his persistent insomnia, Rousseau has what he calls a “sort of dream” in which he only half-consciously ponders this tale of a woman who is brutally raped and sacrificed to spare the integrity of the guest-host relation (535). Not unlike the Levite who is roused by a throng of Benjaminites demanding to “know” him, as the Book of Judges puts it (Jud.19:22), Rousseau is abruptly summoned to consciousness by Thérèse (his life partner) and M. La Roche, the latter of whom tells Rousseau not to be alarmed by the intrusion before handing to him a letter from Mme de Luxembourg. This letter contains another letter within it which the Luxembourgs had only moments earlier received from Rousseau’s friend and supporter, the Prince de Conti. Rousseau transcribes the contents of this second letter in *The Confessions* as follows:

The excitement is very high. Nothing can avert the blow. The court demands it, the magistrates desire it. At seven O’clock tomorrow morning the warrant will go out, and they will send immediately to arrest him. I have obtained an assurance that if he makes his escape he will not be pursued; but if he persists in courting arrest, he will be arrested. (535-6)

The pronoun “he,” of course, refers to Rousseau, for whom the Luxembourgs had for nearly four years provided a home in the village of Montmorency, and the “excitement” refers to the public ban of *Emile* and the anticipated prosecution of its author.

Interestingly, the Prince de Conti's actions to ensure for his friend the possibility of an escape may have been motivated from a desire to protect Rousseau, but, technically speaking, the letter performs another, more ulterior function—one which the court and magistrates had no doubt foreseen: in addition to portending the arrival of an arrest warrant, the Prince's letter becomes *part* of that warrant itself. For what is the purpose of a warrant for an arrest (or, *prise de corps* [seizure of the body], as it is written in the French) that promises to seize the body if, and *only* if, that body is graspable (which is to say, found where it is supposed to be), if not to ensure precisely that the body *will not* be there—that it *will not* be able to hold itself accountable and, more importantly, that it *will not* be able to represent and thus confirm the *authority* of the book it writes? What better way to execute such a warrant than to forewarn the body and implore it to remove *itself*—to make itself disappear? Arriving *before* it arrives in the form of a forewarning, the warrant guarantees its success: without the body of its author, *Emile* will be discredited for having no authority whatsoever.

Well used to public censure, Rousseau knew only too well the costs of fleeing the state, namely, that his escape would tarnish his reputation and the reputation of his book—that the warrant and its forewarning would succeed in their purpose literally to evacuate the author and the authority of *Emile*. Properly speaking, he *would* have remained to face his accusers and to salvage his honour had he not felt the brunt of a certain obligation to his hosts, the Luxembourgs. In a spectacular hospitality scene which renders Rousseau's retelling of the story of the Levite as a complex and conflicted wish-

fulfilment fantasy, the *Confessions* recall Rousseau's encounter that night with Mme de Luxembourg, whom we remember had been Rousseau's benefactress for the four years preceding his nocturnal expulsion:

when I saw her I ceased to think of myself and thought only of her, and of the sad part she would play if I allowed myself to be caught. For although I felt possessed of sufficient courage to tell nothing but the truth, even if it should injure or ruin me, I did not credit myself with enough presence of mind, or adroitness, or even perhaps with enough firmness, to avoid compromising her, if I were hard pressed. This decided me to sacrifice my reputation to her peace of mind and to do for her, on this occasion, what nothing would have induced me to do for myself. (536)

Confronted by the image of his hostess, Rousseau is painfully reminded that as a guest he has a reciprocal responsibility to defend *her*; that is to say, he is obliged to shelter *her* from the clamour, as it were, of the approaching storm. As far as *he* can remember, he does not stay to greet *les huissiers* the following morning, not for his own sake, but for the sake of the Luxembourgs. If Rousseau was only “sort of dreaming” about the Levite just moments prior to this encounter, we might say that, in a certain sense, he remains only “sort of” or “half” awake. For, according to the *Confessions*'s narrativization of the event, his dream life and waking life are, at this moment, remarkably similar—so similar in fact that Rousseau seems to be literalizing the contents of a tale and a dream which continue to move and haunt him in the obscure bustle of his nocturnal disruption.

Whereas the Levite sacrifices the body of his concubine to “defend his host and his host’s family,” as Judith Still reminds us (“*Levite*” 24), Rousseau must flee and thus sacrifice his reputation and honour in order to protect his hosts from the humiliation and disgrace of harbouring a man (a “criminal”) whose arrest, as Kavanagh puts it, “has been ordered by legitimate civil authority” (143). This substitution of a man’s honour for the rape and death of a concubine is, of course, difficult to digest, but it only highlights the hidden motives of an autonarrative that literarily *repeats* the sexual violence of the Levite’s tale. For is this not the structure of the *Confessions* recollection of Rousseau’s nocturnal expulsion? If the concubine is sacrificed for the “good” of the Levite and his host in the Book of Judges, then is she not sacrificed yet again in the *Confessions* so that Rousseau can fancy himself repeating the Levite’s sacrificial gesture in order to spare the Luxembourgs the embarrassment that his *prise de corps* would cause? Does he regard his *reputation* as the (literary) equivalent of a woman’s life? In a kind of comical aside, Susan Jackson quips: “Rousseau may really have wished to throw Thérèse to the wolves in his stead, or thought guiltily to have done so by leaving her behind at Montmorency” (197). In any event, purposely structuring its remembrance of the author’s final moments at Montmorency within the sacrificial framework of an Old Testament myth, the *Confessions*’s substitution of reputation for concubine certainly self-justifies and even celebrates what Rousseau no doubt saw as the nobility of his decision to flee; but in doing so, it throws into question what we might very well read as the *Confessions*’s unconscious desire not only to erase the violence of the Levite’s tale, but also to obscure

the violences, expulsions, and sacrifices constitutive of hospitality *per se*.⁶

Not surprisingly, Rousseau will not let his sacrifice go uncelebrated. If he is to execute the gesture and suffer the humiliation of exile for his hosts, then he will certainly demand recognition for it. In his first act as fugitive, Rousseau turns to Mme de Luxembourg and informs her of his intentions:

The moment I came to my decision I informed her of it, having no wish to spoil the value of my sacrifice by selling it at a price. I am certain that she could not have mistaken my motive. But she did not say a word to show that she was grateful, and I was so shocked by her indifference that I even considered changing my mind. But the Marshal came on the scene, and some minutes later Mme de Boufflers arrived from Paris. They did what Mme de Luxembourg *should have done*. I allowed myself to be flattered.
(*Confessions* 536, emph. added)

We might very well ask ourselves, is this a confession, or is Rousseau's transcription of this event an act of vengeance—on the state, on Mme de Luxembourg? (Perhaps Rousseau's substitutive erasure of the violence of his sacrificial gesture [replacing authorial integrity for abused female victim] is meant also to repress the violence of writing itself—the violence of narrativizing this scene in the first place.) Despite his protestations, Rousseau does sell his sacrifice at a price. He will not do it for nothing. If he is to forsake his reputation as author of *Emile*, he demands compensation in the form

⁶For a sustained reading of sacrifice and its relation to gender and sexual difference in *Le Lévi* see Susan K. Jackson (187-229).

of a recognition of his reputation *as a guest*. He demands restitution. His sacrifice, then, is not so much a sacrifice as it is a form of exchange. If sacrifice involves what René Girard characterizes as a substitution through which violence is turned away from those whom society wishes to protect and onto a victim who will *not* be avenged (118), then Rousseau's sacrifice of his reputation is contrarily requited insofar as he reaps the rewards of an unreciprocated gift, namely, the debt he bestows upon the Luxembourgs.⁷ Endeavouring to master the circumstances of his nocturnal expulsion, Rousseau seeks to master his masters—the host and hostess to whom he has been obliged for the gift of residency. He does so by staging his sacrifice as a gift for which there is no return. His payment for his patronage is to render his hosts indebted. His sacrifice aspires to exceed his own debts, as though the warrant and Rousseau's nocturnal expulsion were simply alibis for his desire to shorn himself of an obligation to his hosts. What is more, if, as Girard points out, sacrifice stages the elimination of difference between the innocent and the guilty (13), Rousseau's self-sacrifice eliminates, as we have seen, the sexual difference that renders the Levite's sacrifice of his concubine so violent and brutal. Rousseau is, of course, nobody's concubine. Unlike the concubine in the Levite's tale, he

⁷It is interesting to note that, in this Girardian sense of the sacrifice, the courts and magistrates sacrifice Rousseau: he becomes a scapegoat onto whom the violence of a *prise de corps* falls insofar as this violence, it is hoped, will preempt the violence that the revolutionary educational theses of *Emile* threaten to unleash on society. Taking matter into his own hands, however, Rousseau characterizes himself as sacrificing *himself* in order to prevent the violence which would befall the reputation of the Luxembourgs. His self-sacrifice enacts a certain vengeance upon his being made the sacrifice of the court. Or, at least, this is I argue one of the motivations of the *Confessions*'s recollection of Rousseau's rationale for fleeing Montmorency: the appropriation of the sacrificial gesture as a *self*-sacrifice enables Rousseau to substitute the object of that gesture (his reputation for his body).

has the power and opportunity not only to thwart the violence of an impending *prise de corps*, but also, more importantly, the *voice* to redress that violence by re-writing it in the confessional mode of autobiography.

Sans papiers, as it were, Rousseau thus flees France to seek asylum elsewhere. During his three-day exodus, he writes “the first three cantos” of *Le Lévitte* (*Confessions* 541). (He finishes the fourth and final canto at Motiers.) With the exception of the first canto’s superfluous elaboration of the Levite’s love affair with his concubine and the addition of a conclusion in canto four, Rousseau’s *Le Lévitte* is rather faithful to the Old Testament tale it retells—even if, as Jackson observes, the violence of the tale is somewhat exaggerated in parts (191). That Rousseau turned to this dreadful tale of vengeance from the Book of Judges is interesting indeed. As I have said, the poem manifests itself as a kind of wish-fulfilment fantasy, compensating not only for the “ingratitude” of the unimpressed Mme de Luxembourg, but also, more generally, for his disappointment over the fact that, as Jackson speculates, his hosts, unlike the Levite’s, do not take significant measures to protect *their* guest from a warrant that demands that his body be surrendered to the people (194).

More than a cloaked (autonarrative) fantasy for the irresolution of his hospitable situation in Montmorency, however, *Le Lévitte* is also primarily a tale through which Rousseau desires to avenge his persecution as the author of *Emile vis-à-vis* teaching humanity at large a lesson about hospitality: “Mortals,” he begins the poem, “respectez la beauté, les mœurs, l’hospitalité; soyez justes sans cruauté, miséricordieux sans faiblesse; et

sachez pardonner au coupable plutôt que de punir l'innocent" (*Oeuvres*, II, 1208, emphasis mine).⁸ Both Rousseau's and the Old Testament's tales of the Levite begin with a violation of the code of hospitality. Seeking hospitality in the Benjamin town of Gibeah, the Levite is offered welcome by an old man who is not himself of the tribe of Benjamin. Like the Levite, he too is a foreigner in the town, originally from Ephraim. "Thus," writes Judith Still, "to some extent both are guests in the town, and the long-term guest has taken it upon himself to offer hospitality to another stranger for the night" ("*Levite*" 23). Such is the scenario of the violation. The Benjaminites of the town argue that the old man (the Levite's host) transgresses their code of hospitality because, as a foreigner himself, he has no right to offer asylum to another stranger: "Livre-nous ce jeune étranger," they argue in Rousseau's version, "que sans congé tu reçois dans nos murs, que sa beauté nous paye le prix de cet asile, et qu'il expie ta témérité" (1213).⁹ It is an interesting problem, this giving hospitality without the possession of a home, without the legal authority of a host. The residence of a landed alien, the old man's house exists in-between, or within the aporia of, the distinctions *chez-soi* and *chez-l'autre*. Whose house is this? On the one hand, there is a whole town full of hosts who do not actually live within and inhabit the home; on the other hand, there is this guest who, in the

⁸Translation: "Mortals respect beauty, manners, hospitality; be just without cruelty, merciful without weakness; and know forgiveness of the guilty rather than punishment of the innocent." With the exception of translations of the *Second projet de préface* (which I cite as translated by Kavanagh), all translations of *Le Lévitte d'Ephraïm* are my own.

⁹Translation: "Give up that young stranger whom, without permission, you receive within our walls, so that his beauty pays us the price of his refuge and atone for your rashness."

absence of his hosts, violates their codes of hospitality by welcoming another guest to stay for the night. But if this is the circumstance of a violation, then who, if anyone, can claim the right to offer asylum at all? Under such a law, could anyone really own a home, or the right to share that home with others, when warrants and orders can be signed to override one's authority as host or even to annul one's authority over one's own person as a subject free to enjoy the hospitality of a nation? How could a host, under these circumstances, possibly fulfill his or her obligations to protect the guest?

In any event, Rousseau's Benjaminites permit themselves to enter the house of the Levite's host against his wishes: "Ah," he protests to no avail, "ne faites pas ce mal devant le Seigneur; n'outragez pas ainsi le nature, ne violez pas la sainte hospitalité" (1214).¹⁰ The logic of their transgression is convoluted; but as Still argues, there is good reason for this. The Benjaminites are intent on violating the Levite himself, demanding that he be surrendered to their homosexual desire.¹¹ While they have a certain respect for the codes of hospitality ("un reste de respect pour le plus sacré de tous les droits" [1214]), they honour these codes precisely by *not* offering the Levite welcome. Were they to welcome him, they would be obliged to protect him, when in fact they wish to rape him. Harboured in the house of an illegitimate host, however, the Levite is fair game. The old

¹⁰Translation: "Ah, do not do this wrong in front of the Lord; do not thus outrage nature, nor violate holy hospitality."

¹¹Jackson points out that the intersection between the Book of Judges' account of a Benjaminite desire to "seize" the Levite's body and the *Confessions*' anecdotal account of an ensuing *prise de corps* is fraught with intense homophobic anxiety: "An act in which Rousseau inscribes the several perversities of unwanted homosexual advances, gang rape, and necrophagia gives menacingly literal and nonjuridical meaning to the term *prise de corps*" (196).

man's violation of the law allows them to invade the house of the foreigner on their own authority.

Besides the Benjaminites' manipulation and abuse of the law, Rousseau's prose poem continues to give expression to what Derrida, in a slightly different context, calls "a sort of hierarchy of the guests and hostages" (*Of Hospitality* 155)—a hierarchy which is, not surprisingly, based primarily on gender. As the story goes, the Levite's host honours his duty to protect the guest by offering the Benjaminites the use of his daughter as a substitute: "pour racheter son hôte aux dépens de son propre sang" (1214).¹² As Still observes, "host and guest share food and the roof over their heads; this engages them in a series of duties towards each other which temporarily supercede duties towards families" (*"Levite"* 24). The irrepressible violence of this (in)hospitable contract posits women not as sharing such duties but as shared *by* these duties, swapped like so many provisions and/or other hospitable amenities. When the host's offer is refused, the Levite (his own duties as a guest temporarily superceding his duties to his concubine) submits not himself but his mistress to the townsfolk, who then accept the substitution and proceed to rape the woman all night long, leaving her to die outside the door of the house.¹³ Responsibility

¹²Translation: "To redeem his guest at the expense of his own flesh and blood."

¹³Still reminds us that in both Rousseau's and the Old Testament's narratives, the Levite and his "concubine," who are not of the same tribe, are unable to marry because she has no brothers: "it would be considered wrong for her father's inheritance to pass outside her tribe" (*"Levite"* 21). While she is not recognized as properly "belonging" to the Levite in a familial sense, the concubine does have value, which the Levite "chooses to put on her," as Still insists (21). This circumstance only further demonstrates that hospitality, like politics and democracy, is (as Derrida says) founded on a "canonical" or "androcentric" model of friendship that excludes women (*Friendship* 13). Duties between guests and hosts, especially here in Rousseau's tale of the Levite, continue to refer, first and foremost, to the duties between two men.

for the old man's violation of the Benjamin codes of hospitality is thus deferred, sliding along the chain of guests, ultimately falling on what can only be described as the sub-guest, the Levite's concubine who, being deemed the guest of the guest's guest, is sacrificed to the rule of law. And while male guests and hosts remain intact, there is vengeance to be had. Devastated by the death of his mistress (and perhaps even by his own authorization of the murder), the Levite severs her corpse into twelve, and sends pieces to each of the twelve tribes of Israel, who respond without hesitation by almost annihilating the entire tribe of Benjamin. The story is gruesome and brutal in its recollection of a seemingly endless circle of retribution and retaliation, leaving the reader to wonder with Derrida, who has much to say about the Book of Judges, "Are we the heirs to this tradition of hospitality" (*Of Hospitality* 155)?

Aubrey Rosenberg argues that the sacrifice and murder of the Levite's concubine is for Rousseau "the symbol of an age that is coming to an end, an age that is to be destroyed through man's inhumanity to man" (171). And while it is the end of an age of innocence and the birth of something like inhuman cruelty and violence, it is also paradoxically the dawn of a hospitality *to come*. For Rousseau, the crisis of violence and retribution in the tale speaks to a future benevolence. True, there is "no going back," says Rosenberg (172), but in a world of violence and hostility, hospitality manifests itself as the spectre of what *should be*. Rosenberg is right to point out that *Le Lévite* is "just a beginning" (172). Hostility is the beginning of hospitality—its first gesture. An atrocity, a real tragedy of inhuman violence, calls out for benevolence, for a new way of relating to

the other. As a response to a nation that turns suddenly hostile to *Emile* and its author, *Le Lévitte* calls out for a new day, for a lesson to be learned on the ethical demands of hospitality—a “lesson,” moreover, that pointedly ignores (but nevertheless retains the signature of) the *gendered* violence at the heart of the tale it tells, the sacrifice of women for the welfare of men. For Rousseau, women are the price of transgression, even as they *are* the transgressed. After all, the “first” hostile gesture of Rousseau’s tale is not the murder of the Levite’s concubine. This violence is one repetition (albeit a gruesome one) in a ritual of violations which begins with the host’s sacrifice of his daughter and which is repeated by the Levite who places his concubine in his stead.

Rousseau’s lesson on hospitality, then, does not arrive without disrupting the place of the subject; it is a lesson which the subject *cannot* learn without the unsettling exposure of its own finitude—without its exposure to the (gendered) violences by which it proceeds. While John Koenig (a Christian thinker of hospitality and ethics) criticizes what he calls “romanticist views of the stranger” for giving “insufficient weight to the fact that close encounters with ‘the other’ usually tend to disorient us” (5), I will argue throughout this Chapter (indeed, throughout this entire thesis) that just the opposite is true. For disorientation is not one characteristic of Romantic hospitality among many, but its most exemplary origin and effect. Throughout Rousseau’s writings we encounter episodes which attest to the fact that the other unsettles the subject by revealing to it its own finitude. This is, I will argue, a Romantic notion that does not oppose but rather confirms what Thomas Ogletree (another Christian ethicist) describes as the

transformative effects of strangers who “invite us” to witness “the relativity [and, I would add, the impositional *violence*] of our own orientation to meaning” (3). This exposure of the finite orientation of the subject to the infinite unfamiliarity of the other is an “experience in the most enigmatic sense of the word,” which as Derrida says, “proceeds beyond knowledge toward the other as absolute stranger, as unknown, where I know nothing of him” (“Hostipitality” 8). The other is the unknowable, uncertain “beyond” of knowledge toward which the subject moves but for whom it is not prepared. Not unlike John Caputo’s notion of ethical “accidentalism,” hospitality marks the sign of the subject’s absolute unpreparedness for the other—its inadequate and often abusive anticipation of the stranger.

To begin thinking about hospitality, then, one would do well to follow Caputo’s advice and begin simply where one is: within the accident—the event—of obligation. The subject is obliged to an other who happens as an accident, or better yet, as a co-incidence. The co-incidence of the self and other, the sheer surprise of this accidental union, is an experience unanticipated, unintentional, and disorienting. To welcome the other does not mean simply that the subject exercises a certain authority through which it chooses to welcome one thing and to exclude another. Rather, as Caputo argues, “true hospitality”—if such a thing were even practicable—would “involve a certain unconditionality in which one is prepared for anything, which means that one is not prepared” (*More Radical* 41). To think otherwise about hospitality—which is to say, to think of Romanticism as being other than a naively complacent theory of the stranger—is to prepare oneself by being

unprepared for *the accident of the other*. The other (in Rousseau, in any discourse) occurs unexpectedly—a predicament, moreover, which finds its first expression in the Greek verb *xenizein*, which, in addition to meaning to “receive as a guest,” also denotes a “surprise” and hence the act of presenting “someone or something as strange” (Koenig 8).

The arrival of the other is always a surprise visit. It occurs without our having foreseen it, without us having been prepared to offer it refuge. The result is a jarring effect which unsettles the subject, drawing it momentarily out of itself (dispossessing it of itself and its home) so that it questions its own finitude, its place in the world.

Welcoming the other without forethought means, above all else, greeting the arrival of the other *within* one self, an other which enables the self to see beyond itself. Bearing the gift of difference, the other whom one welcomes invites the self to transcend its finitude by recognizing itself and its impositions, its limits and limitations, its restricted (and restricting) point of view. And while this experience reconstitutes the self—enabling it to re-place itself and to re-establish a home for itself in a world which is suddenly much larger—the experience is one of sheer anxiety, to speak in Heideggerian terms. It leaves the subject at once cautious and hopeful with regard to the unexpected encounter with otherness. There is always this doubled experience of apprehension and desire. In the event of the greeting, that which is hostile (or is feared to be hostile) and that which is welcome are at first indistinguishable. Is the other friend or foe? An inability to distinguish between the two is the primal condition of the subject who continues to greet the other as though always for the first time. The other happens like an event determining benevolence and animosity only after the fact.

Belated Welcomes: Hospitality in *Emile*

With all his troubles in relation to hosts, it is not surprising that Rousseau loved to recall images of the traveller well received. Perhaps the most detailed account of such a reception occurs in Book Five of *Emile*. Pining for a lost sense of welcome, Rousseau's narrator (i.e., Emile's mentor) relates his and Emile's "sad" and "dreamy" travels as they flee Paris (that "city of chatter") and wander the countryside searching for Sophie and (especially for the time being) a place to rest their weary feet (410).¹⁴ Having strayed one day "more than usual in valleys and mountains where no path can be perceived," the two travellers happen upon a peasant who welcomes them to his cottage and offers them a "meager dinner" which they devour with "great appetite" (412). The peasant (whose desire to be hospitable reaches well beyond his meagre means), directs them to another house on the "other side of the hill;" for the people there (while not "better-hearted" or more "charitable" than he) are wealthier and thus better able to receive strangers in need (413).¹⁵ The narrator's account of his and Emile's reception at this more affluent

¹⁴In a coincidence that could only have taken place in a fictional narrative, Emile's mentor has a premonition in "Book IV" concerning the identity of Emile's future wife. While lecturing Emile as well as the reader on the traits of an ideal woman, he writes: "Let us call your future beloved Sophie. The name Sophie augurs well. If the girl whom you choose does not bear it, she will at least be worthy of bearing it. We can do her the honor in advance" (329). While it is only a coincidence, I believe that the pre-nomination of Sophie only emphasizes the fact that Emile has prepared himself for his immanent meeting with her insofar as he carries with him a name and with it a face—a detail which, as I will show, severely complicates the meeting itself.

¹⁵It is interesting that the narrator remains reticent in regards to this peasant. For not only does this character offer a meal and beds for the evening (two luxuries which he himself can barely afford), but his generosity also extends beyond his material belongings in that he selflessly humbles himself before the riches of his neighbours. He expects no reward, and indeed receives none. Once Emile learns of these wealthy neighbours, the peasant is all but forgotten for the promise of a more luxurious welcome. This rejection of the peasant is perhaps the first of a series of refusals that populate *Emile's* hospitality scene.

household is rather meticulous. The scene he conveys contains many smaller scenes within it—scenes which often point to a troublesome elsewhere beyond the text (to Homer, to France)—thus acting as a kind of paradigm for various levels of discomfort, uneasiness, and upset in Rousseau’s writing with regards to the welcoming of strangers. For this reason, I will read the passage rather slowly, dividing it into manageable parts, pausing (sometimes at great length) between each in order to retrace the various paths and threads that it obliges us follow. The narrator begins:

We are shown to a very little, but clean and comfortable apartment. A fire is made. We find linen, garments, everything we need. “What!” says Emile. “It is as though we were expected! Oh how right the peasant was! What attention, what goodness, what foresight! And for unknowns! I believe I am living in Homer’s time.” (413)

“*Je crois être au temps d’Homère,*” says Emile, reminding us as well as his mentor that hospitality requires as much hindsight as it does foresight. In his amiable host, Emile finds the splendour and the benevolence of a by-gone era. He fancies himself on the threshold of an ancient *philoxenos*—a lover and friend to strangers. It is a strange thing, to be sure. While foretold by the peasant, there is much surprise in the reception. Emile is beside himself, stepping momentarily out of his being to reflect on and apprehend himself in the scene he finds before him—a scene which he has encountered countless times before, as Rousseau informs us only a few lines later, in his readings of classical literature. Only in a time as strange and as distant as Homer’s could Emile find himself

and his mentor so well received. Only in a time when strangers are admitted without condition could two travellers such as these—two “unknowns [*des inconnus*],” to use Emile’s remarkable words—be made to feel so at-home in the house of another. They are unknown and yet they are received as though they are expected, as though they were not stranger at all, but friends—“guest friends,” as Homer says (*Odyssey* I.187)—who find themselves belonging to a society or a fellowship of men.

Their reception at this household remains faithful to the structure of Homeric hospitality, which dictates that a meal, that a welcome, “precede any mention of business, and even any inquiry into the stranger’s identity” (Reece 49). Rousseau was no doubt familiar with this classical narrative convention of serving now and asking questions later, as it were. His hillside hosts respond to Emile and his mentor exactly as Telemachus to Athena-Mentes¹⁶—by receiving them without question or concern for who they are. Without revealing any more than their need for hospitality, Emile and his mentor are welcomed to dine with their hosts. So the question remains, who are these country dwelling Homerians whose offer of asylum is as anachronistic as it is unexpected? Who are these thoughtful patrons onto whom Emile (and later his mentor) project the phantasm of the *xenizein*—an art of receiving guests which, it would seem, belongs primarily to the past? As it turns out, they are Sophie’s parents, a fact which complicates the reception a great deal. For the business of these travellers (of which they are permitted to remain momentarily silent) is precisely to find Sophie, who is to be the

¹⁶From *The Odyssey*: “Greetings, stranger, you shall be welcomed among us. And when / You have eaten dinner you will tell what it is you need” (I.123-4).

wife of the narrator's protégé. They have travelled from the great chattering city of Paris, where "many days [were] lost in vain searches" (410), and have taken what they believe to be an insignificant but necessary detour to a place of distinguished hospitality. They do not know of the surprise that awaits them there, that the girl—the daughter of their hosts who sits "without speaking" as they devour their feast (413)—is the one for whom they have travelled so great a distance. Without stating their business, without proclaiming that the "object of their trip" (413) has been to reach this very household, they arrive at their destination *without knowing they have arrived*. They arrive without having been prepared to do so at all—at least, not here, in this way, at this very moment. At once early, late, and on time, our travellers are disjointed, or "out of joint," to steal a phrase from Shakespeare—a phrase that Derrida deconstructs in ways that are especially relevant for this discussion (*Specters* 49). The time is out of joint for these two travellers who, coming from a time and a world (Paris/France) in which hospitality is false or limited, arrive here at a place inhabited by a people from a different time, it would seem—people who offer a generosity which, it is supposed (albeit hyperbolically), has not existed since the time of Homer. Moreover, this ancient benevolence comes also from the future; to a certain extent, they have been expecting it. It comes from the future, but it has come to soon—it is here upon them, now, as though with an unexpected urgency—while the present or, to be more specific, the conscious recognition of this moment has been postponed; for even when they meet Sophie face-to-face, they will fail to recognize in her appearance that which has promised to come, the other in whom lies Emile's future.

It is a confused and confusing moment, which makes it difficult to proceed too quickly. What is, what was, and what will be are transposed, inverted, and disjoined so that consciousness finds itself (or more precisely *fails* to find itself) belated but also premature with respect to time. While the imagination of our travellers is fixed on one future (on the figure of a *single* face, on *one* possible spectre of Sophie's face), they miss an *other* future, the approach and arrival of which is as untimely as it is unforeseeable. The interpretive problems of this scene are comparable only to the play of "countless confused interpretations" that Emile will later encounter in the face of his lover (414). In its temporal complexity, the scene also calls to mind the tale of yet another wanderer—namely, Wordsworth, who in *The Prelude* will grieve over a lapse in consciousness caused by his having "cross'd the Alps" at "Simplon Pass" without knowing it (VI, 524). Rousseau's scene at the house of Sophie similarly involves, as David Ferris claims of Wordsworth's Alpine premonition, "an anticipation . . . that could not be met at the place where its external and historical existence is meant to reside" (412).¹⁷ This is not what is *supposed* to happen; this is not *when* it is supposed to occur. And yet it does, leaving the reader to question the implications and consequences of this narrative hiccup. What are we to make of this encounter, one which allegorizes, more than anything, the experience of irreducible belatedness, the way in which consciousness lags behind experience, as it were? Why this disjointedness, now, at this crucial moment in the text when Emile meets

¹⁷While I cite only Ferris, there has been an explosion of critical responses to this moment in Wordsworth. See for instance, Keith Hanley, "Crossing Out: The Problem of Textual Passage in *The Prelude*" (1992), W. J. B. Owen, "Crossing the Alps Again" (1994), and Alan Liu, *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* (1989).

Sophie for the first time? To what extent does it frustrate or disrupt the responsibility of our two guests, their very ability *to* respond to an other who remains hidden before their eyes?

One thing is for sure: the temporal skewing of their arrival produces a certain refusal. As I have said, Emile initially and flat out dismisses the face of the other. He denies Sophie, who is quite literally (or *literarily*) his other—the very woman who will soon play the role of companion in his life. He disregards this stranger, this future wife, who sits “modestly” before him and whose face does not exactly match the one he has “depicted to himself” (414). Even his mentor seems unfit to recognize the very figure he has chosen for his pupil’s wife—which is only *apropos*, as Sophie is fashioned not to “enchant at first glance,” but to please “more each day” thereafter (410). The principal object of his trip “as distant from his thoughts as he believes himself to be still distant from [his] goal” (413), Emile dismisses the presence of his future partner, preferring instead to revel in the lavish hospitality of her parents. He refuses her because the face he is seeking is one of his own conjuring, which (in Levinasian terms) is to say, it is the face of the same. The face of the other is not *of* the same; it is different, unforeseeable, accidental. In this overtly pedagogical text, Emile’s initial passing over of Sophie presents itself as an object lesson on the irreducibility or the non-prefigurability of difference.

Only when Sophie’s mother whispers her name does Emile turn “with a start” and with an “avid glance” to greet this plain little girl for the first time: “Sophie,” he cries, “O

Sophie! Is it you whom my heart seeks?” (414). Sophie’s mother puts a *name* to the face, a gesture which is ironic in many ways, not the least of which is the fact that it signals a certain disfiguration or de-facement of the other, as though the recognition of the other *vis-à-vis* its nomination amounts to a second refusal. First, the other remains so different so as to go unnoticed, and now it is summoned and held hostage under the authority of a name. This second refusal finds its binding power in the form of a question. Emile’s greeting of Sophie is an interrogation—one which presupposes a certain answer, a name by which the other can be identified and summoned, as well as a certain sovereignty on the part of the questioner. The question (“O Sophie! Is it you whom my heart seeks?”) performs a kind of violence, diminishing the other’s difference with the *presumption* of identity. It amounts to a refusal to give welcome to unidentified difference; it is an effacement of the face of difference. Collapsing the incongruity of the foreseen and the encountered (or what is thought to have been encountered), the question and the name it elicits familiarize what was heretofore unfamiliar. For Derrida, hospitality is always a question of the familial, or rather, of breaking from the notion of the foreigner “as a family”: the “absolute other,” he writes, “cannot have a name or a family name; the absolute or unconditional hospitality I would like to offer him or her presupposes a break with hospitality in the ordinary sense” (*Of Hospitality* 25). Posed another way, the question is: does one give hospitality to an identifiable subject (to the familial, someone recognized as belonging to this or that family) or is hospitality given prior to such identification? The questioning gesture of the name suggests that the acknowledgement

of the other or the acceptance of its hospitality is a form of reduction of the alterity of the face to something like a name, something which holds the other's face hostage in a discourse of the same, a discourse in which a face must adhere to the logics of self-sameness. It denies the excess of the face, its ability to exceed and overcome its own appearance.

The articulation of Sophie's name is an unexpected surprise, one which plucks the very fibre of Emile's being. It is a shocking coincidence to hear this name—a name which he and his mentor have spoken in the past as a sign of feminine ideality. The name was previously a dream, but now that it has been embodied, capturing this girl within the body of a fantasy, it calls out for responsibility. Searching “each movement, each gesture” of Sophie's face, Emile finds himself “*uneasy and troubled*” (414, *emph. mine*). He no longer finds comfort in the sanctuary of his host's expansive benevolence. No longer at home, he is deeply unsettled by this face which he is forced to confront for a second time but also for the first time (this time as “Sophie”). He is beside himself—thrown into question by this face which, like a text, admits of numerous tellings and “countless confused interpretations [*mille interprétations confuses*]” (414).¹⁸ No matter how

¹⁸This phrase, “*mille interprétations confuses*,” contains within it not “the reduction of writing” that Derrida, in *Of Grammatology* (98), claims is exemplarily thematized by Rousseau. Rather, it contains precisely the opposite, namely, a celebration of writing—one might even say, a pro-scriptive commemoration of the infinite play of a face/signifier that refuses to settle in a kind of self-presence, reveling instead in an interminable play of differences. If there exists a theory of writing in Rousseau (as incomplete as Derrida suggests it might be), this theory troubles and quickens this moment of ultimate undecidability in *Emile*. Which is to say, if metaphysics is an “exemplary system of defense against the threat of writing” (Derrida, *Grammatology* 101), then *Emile*, itself a text that exceeds a philosophical or metaphysical rigour with the play of its literary structure, opens itself up to and welcomes this threat. It is an extraordinary phrase, this “*mille interprétations confuses*,” signaling not only the radical nature of Emile's hospitable encounter with Sophie, but also the hospitable event of the text itself—its exposure to the inexhaustible indeterminacy of writing.

prepared he thinks he is to meet this face, no matter how much this preparation had produced within him a sense of who he is (identity) as well as a certain premonition of that which he seeks (difference), the face of the other upsets and overturns him in its countlessness. It shatters the face “that he had depicted to himself” previously, that face which came not from the other but from his own imagination. He suffers a *loss* of face. As the narrator admits: “[Emile] does not know whether the one he sees is better or worse” (414). More upsetting than this is the unalterable fact that he knows *nothing at all* of this face. It destroys all assumptions and exceeds all expectation. How *could* he have anticipated this face which stares at him now with multiple expressions, none of which he can comprehend? How could he have readied himself for this humility before the other? “Confused, embarrassed, fearful,” writes his mentor, “[Emile] no longer dares to look around him for fear of seeing that he is being looked at” (415). The other’s specular gaze—which is to say, the gaze which the subject, in its fear of *being looked at*, transposes onto the other’s face—obliges Emile to gaze upon himself, to see himself as he must (or *thinks* he must) look to others, and to question his knowledge of the world. As Levinas argues, the reflection of the other’s face “involves a calling into question of oneself, a critical attitude which is itself produced in the face and under its authority” (*Totality* 81). Sophie’s face reveals to Emile his naivety, his utter lack of readiness to receive and to welcome the other into his life.

While this embarrassment exposes him to a terror which is for Rousseau the very root of *l’amour propre* (of desiring and demanding veneration from the other), Emile

“surrenders” to the “timid voice” from which flows Sophie’s “natural gentleness” (415).¹⁹ Overwhelmed, he is transformed by the other: his “soul” is “changed in a few instants” (415). Along with that face he previously depicted to himself, Emile transcends his former self. And yet the metaphors with which the narrator transcribes this transformation divulge what I argue is a consistent *apprehension* in Rousseau’s encounters with hospitality, that is, a certain hesitation and resistance with respect to the other’s hold upon the subject—which is perhaps best described as the subject holding *itself vis-à-vis* the specular or imagined gaze of the other. Emile is enchanted [*enchanté*], intoxicated [*enivré*], the effect of *le poison de ses charmes* (415). Poison or drug, pollutant or narcotic, the discursive ambiguity of Emile’s ingestion, his “deep drafts [*longs traits*],” of Sophie’s allure typifies a rather conventionally misogynist view of sexual attraction.²⁰ His “first passion of any kind” is *all-consuming* (415); it swallows him whole. Ecstatically submissive, he loses his former self to a bizarre play of sexual animatronics: “He no longer speaks, he no longer responds; he sees only Sophie, he hears only Sophie. If she says a word, he opens his mouth; if she lowers her eyes, he lowers his; if he sees her breathe, he sighs” (415). This is a strange account, indeed, one which

¹⁹For a good discussion on Rousseau’s concept of *l’amour propre* see Marcel Hénaff, “The Cannibalistic City: Rousseau, Large Numbers, and the Abuse of the Social Bond” (1992). If ever there was a moment in Emile’s life which exposed him to the full terror of *l’amour propre* this would be it. For what is *l’amour propre* if not the paralysing shock of apprehending one’s own radical unpreparedness before the other—or at least a response to such a shock?

²⁰For discussions of Rousseau’s misogyny see Annette Cafarelli, “Rousseau and British Romanticism: Women and the Legacy of Male Radicalism” (1998), Judith Still, “Rousseau’s La Nouvelle Héloïse: Passion, Reserve, and the Gift” (1996), and Lorenne Clark and Lynda Lange, “Rousseau: Women and the General Will” (1979).

inadvertently parodies what I call (after Levinas) the constitutive priority of the other. More automaton than autonomist, Emile is reborn through emulation; he is bewitched by Sophie's poisonous exorbitance. Trembling before her, he is exposed to the limits of subjectivity where the other shatters identity in a moment of transcendence—a moment in which (as we shall see further) it radically disrupts and unsettles the subject, obliging the subject to respond (“O Sophie!”), to change, and to redefine itself with respect to difference. It is a moment of terror, an experience throughout which the subject feels its subordination, its insignificance before the other. For Emile, it is a time in which “he would like to make himself invisible” (415).

Although this scene deals specifically with a romantic or sexualized other (a textual circumstance which in itself draws on various literary conventions: of surprise, of enchantment, of *impotence*), the text's expression of gynophobia (its fear of women and their effects on the soul) is nevertheless a palpably meaningful encounter for the subject. For as Levinas argues, while love remains “a relation that turns into need”—which totalizes and thus reduces the exteriority of the other's face—“love also goes beyond the beloved” (*Totality* 254). It responds to (without ever comprehending, without *grasping*) the “obscure light” which comes from beyond the beloved's face, “from what *is not yet*, from a future never future enough, more remote than the possible” (254-5). The lover senses in the beloved (via a caress or, in this case, a questioning gaze) that which is imperceptibly different, something which cannot be gauged—an infinite array of possibilities, so infinite so as to be unfathomable, unpredictable, impossible. The face of

the beloved—the face of the other—glows with the promise of a boundless but unintelligible future, a bewildering and immeasurable *not yet*. It transcends its own possibility which is open to anticipation; it transcends its appearance, thus exposing the lover to the im-possible (the not-yet) which is also the very condition of its possibility. The face of the beloved-other overcomes its possibility because it cannot be contained as such. It always exceeds—is always *other than*—what appears within the finite scope of the lover’s perspective. Shattering any face, any apparition, which opens itself to interpretation, the face of the other gestures toward what is not yet, what has not appeared.

For Emile, this deferral is troubling. He waits in a kind of panic for Sophie to speak. At his most vulnerable, he waits for recognition, for redemption, for a sign which promises to deliver to him his Sophie. But what *will* she say? What words could she possibly utter that might set him at ease? As his mentor says, “[Emile] would give half his life for her to be willing to speak a single word” (414). In a certain sense, he has given half of his life, his being, already. Anxiously expectant of a word from Sophie’s lips, Emile is a split being. His exposure to the surprise of the other *others him* from within—the difference here being between an Emile who anticipates the arrival of the other, who defines himself with respect to a difference imagined before the fact, and an Emile who stands mistake or *in-error* before the other, who not only mis-recognizes the other in its place but who also continues to fumble as he tries make sense of the other’s presence, or, to be precise, its absence. As he reads Sophie’s face, he is confounded by

“countless confused interpretations.” To parasitize Ferris’ argument about Wordsworth’s missed encounter with the Alps, Emile’s experience allegorizes the fact that the other “will be knowable as error” (Ferris 418). His experience, and his discomfort with this experience, encapsulates what is best described as the trauma of a *being-in-error*—a being, that is, which is *always* mistaken about the other’s identity. Emile sees at least two faces, neither of which is congruent to the other: he sees the face “he has depicted to himself” which turns out to be ill-conceived, and he sees a face before which he falters in a seemingly endless play of misinterpretation. He cannot, properly speaking, read this second face. It is unfathomable, and yet it demands to be read. It compels him to “search” its contours—every crinkle, every twitch that configures the face anew.

The face obliges Emile to decipher its secret, “to arrest [it] in a certain position, thus settling on a thesis, meaning, or truth” (“This Very Moment” 410). But this, as Derrida insists, is always a “mistake” (410). It is a mistake which halts the other in its place, imposing upon it a logic which is not its own. Emile’s encounter with Sophie is a lesson on how *not* to read the other, on how one *cannot* read the other. One must, or one should, resist the reflex reaction to put a name to the face (and thus to render it a face *as such*), and indeed to put a *face* to a face. For the other’s secret is that there is in fact no secret whatsoever to be found, no punctually apprehensible interiority for which the face is an embodied figure. There is no single key that will unlock the identity of the other, no beacon that will illuminate the other as if in a wondrous moment of clarity. Put in linguistic terms, there is no one sign—no transcendental signifier—that might ground

Emile's various readings of the play of movement on Sophie's face. The other is radically unknowable; it "sits in a spot we can never occupy, speaks from the point of view we cannot inhabit, presides over a *secret* we cannot share" (Caputo, *More Radical* 8, *emph. mine*). Its secret is an impossibility because it is not a secret that the other holds back as though it might choose to reveal itself utterly and completely at some other time, at some other place. The other can never resolutely divulge itself; for it is mysterious beyond the reach knowledge, beyond the limits of representation or the plastic exterior of a feminine face. It is always beyond our grasp, "safe on a shore we will never reach" (Caputo, *More Radical* 8). One does not "settle" on this or that reading of the face. Rather, one is *un-settled* by the face, by its surprise, its sheer inscrutability, by the predicament of never understanding, of always guessing and second-guessing, of never feeling comfortable with what one knows of the other.

Yet the unknowable difference of the other is both troubling *and* attractive for the subject. At least, it is for Emile. He is a philosopher [*philosophos*] in every sense of the word: a friend-lover [*philos*] of *Sophia* (an association which, interestingly, gives knowledge a [proper] name and also a kind of face). Emile is attracted to the unknowable, formlessness of the face as much as he is shaken by it. Persistently, he waits out the ethical relation, the first and most powerful ethical moment of his life, in which he lies utterly exposed, humiliated, and most of all, vulnerable before the other. He falls at the mercy of its gaze which demands that he be responsible in his search for revelation. While there is, properly speaking, no secret—no authoritative truth which the other can

either conceal or disclose about itself—the subject experiences in the other what both Caputo and Derrida call a “*more originary* experience of the secret” (*More Radical* 2). This is an experience in which the subject feels the *effects* of a secret, not because a truth has been withheld but because *nothing has been revealed*. Although this lack of revelation would suggest a concealment, nothing is concealed *or* revealed. The other’s face retains the effect of absolute mystery. Sophie’s gestures are significant not because they convey some hidden meaning not yet disclosed, but because in not signifying anything, they ignite an endless play of interpretations, as confused and countless as they may seem. In Levinas’ words, from her face breaks forth a “‘non-signifying’ and raw density, an exorbitant ultramateriality” (*Totality* 256). Her expressions reveal themselves only as the possibility of meaning, the effect of which is an experience of not knowing whether this face is friend or foe, whether it is approving or condemning. Always beyond expression, beyond signification or what is said, the face holds the subject in its own host-age, its reception of difference, its responsibilities to that reception.²¹ Sophie’s face

²¹As Thomas Keenan points out, the subject is held hostage by the voice or the call of the other in the sense that it is “neither irreplaceable nor unique” as the “me” who answers the call (22), that is, the “me” who is *anyone* at all who happens to respond: “what is it that you demand of me?” or “why me?” “We are all taken hostage in this way, every day and night,” writes Keenan; “there is a cry for help, addressed not to me in particular, not to anyone in particular, but to me as anyone . . . and my anonymity in the situation, far from offering an excuse to ignore the plea, implicates me directly” (22-3). Such is what I called earlier the “accidental” or “co-incidental” nature of the interrelation of being there together with the other—an other who calls me to responsibility not because I am special in any particular way but because I am there as “me” and because there is nobody else *but* me where I happen to be. For Emile, this crisis of being there, now, called to address the other as “me,” when he least expects it, when he could not ever have expected it, compels him to question the subjective locality of his *being-me* before the other. He is held hostage in that locality, compelled to ask the other to speak: “tell me what it is that you demand; I am responsible to and for you.”

exposes Emile to a future which is as uncertain and unpredictable as was this very encounter. It forces him to see himself from a different perspective (the perspective of the “me” on whom the other calls) and to question not so much the identity of the other, but himself: who is Emile? And to whom am I responsible?

In the end, Sophie does say something, only Rousseau interestingly chooses not to transcribe her words. And while he is relieved at the gentle sounds of her voice, Emile is nevertheless held captive by what she will say or do in the future. His life is transformed into a life of waiting for the other to speak, to keep speaking, and to say what cannot be said. Expressed another way, the question “What will Sophie *say*?” draws out the Levinasian distinction between the ontological language of the Said and the ethical Saying of a linguistic event. What is said by Sophie will never deliver her presence, for there will always remain in her voice “the residue of the unsaid Said within the Saying” (Critchley 123). She will never be self-identical to the words she speaks, but is, rather, always in excess of what she says. And it is precisely this excess which compels her to continue speaking, which also compels Emile to continue listening for her to say something more. Hospitality is forever unsettled by this tension between what is said and what is left unsaid in the greeting. There is always this “spiralling movement” of the greeting which works to destroy the face even as it works to articulate it (Levinas, *Autrement* 57). Always attuned to the Saying of the other, Emile becomes a “being-toward-the Other” (*Totality* 261), and perhaps more importantly, a being-toward-the-other in himself—his encounter with Sophie being as much an encounter with an otherness that

lies within the self, an otherness which is here manifested in the specular vision of a face that lays claim to the other *before* the “other” is encountered. The face that Emile depicts to himself prior to meeting Sophie is the sign of his own difference, and its collision with the face of Sophie enacts a crisis in which he must face his other faces, questioning not only *their* orientation to meaning, but also the integrity and significance of his own face, which is to say, his own identity.

Before leaving this discussion of Sophie, it is important that we emphasize Emile’s initial terror and repulsion. For it reflects (among other things) what Judith Still describes as a “tension” in Rousseau “between his selection of a certain feminine abundance and his fear of (and desire to contain) it” (“La Nouvelle” 45). As Emile’s mentor explains, he has “chosen Sophie as Emile’s partner because “[s]he is a pupil of nature just as [he] is, and she, *more than any other*, is made for him,” an admission which, oddly enough, threatens the very integrity of her otherness (410). *More of the same* than she is different, Sophie is “the woman of the man [*la femme de l’homme*],” of all men, truly a *man’s woman* (410). Her position in the text is so stifled within a masculine discourse of the same that the only role model Rousseau provides her is not an ideal of womanhood but a man—namely, Telemachus from Fénelon’s *Les Aventures de Télémaque*.²² Her disciplinary model is no different than any that the narrator might have prepared for Emile. As Jan Crosthwaite observes, when Sophie presents her book to

²²Fénelon’s *Les Aventures de Télémaque* was a contemporaneous conduct book/novel written for the instruction of Louis XIV’s grandson, Duc de Bourgogne. As Alan Bloom argues, *Les Aventures* was a book for which *Emile* was intended as a companion piece (*Emile* 493n.32).

her lover, Telemachus becomes Emile's model for the final stages of his maturation (189). But this "tension" to which Still refers has other troubling effects. Sophie is and always will be other than what even Rousseau can imagine. Just as she transcends her own voice, she exceeds whatever is said *of* her. There are a multiplicity of other Sophies who manage to frustrate the text's containment of her. As Crosthwaite argues, *Emile* contains at least three Sophies. We have already seen two: first, the Sophie whom our travellers meet in a home on the other side of a hill; and second, the imaginary Sophie who is evoked much earlier in the text as the standard against which all women are to be measured. With the allusion to *Les Aventures de Télémaque*, a third Sophie appears, one which performs the role of counter-example to Rousseau's feminine ideality: she is a "girl so similar to Sophie that her story could be Sophie's without occasioning any surprise" (*Emile* 402)—similar, that is, except for the fact that she is unable to marry because "no one can come up to the standard she has set . . . [i.e.,] Telemachus" (Crosthwaite 190). I raise the issue of Sophie's excess in the text because it encapsulates what is for Still a "typical" trait of Rousseau's work: he "will *show* what runs counter to the story he wants to *tell*" ("La Nouvelle" 45). In his attempt to contain Sophie—to sculpt her as *la femme de l'homme*—he unwittingly enables her to reassert her otherness and to return time and again in various forms of difference. Although she is stifled by what is said of her, she continues to live on in the saying of the text. Unable to control her, Rousseau is compelled to keep speaking of her in such a way that she exceeds the written text.

“l’hospitalité de Calypso”

Rousseau’s complication of Emile’s encounter with Sophie as a belated recognition due to an initial mis-recognition spectacularly realizes a fundamental truth about the other; namely, that the other is always different from what one expects and that this difference surprises and unsettles the subject. There are, however, other aspects of this encounter which complicate it further (perhaps unintentionally) and which reveal, with even more clarity, the text’s discomfort with the scene of hospitality. Perhaps the most interesting and troubling line of this scene, for instance, occurs as Emile expresses his gratitude to the host. Responding to Sophie’s father’s observation that he and his mentor have “arrived here tired and wet like Telemachus and mentor on Calypso’s island,” Emile bellows: “It is true that we find here the hospitality of Calypso” (414). The reference to Calypso is curious indeed, for it signals Emile’s discomfort even before he discovers Sophie’s proximity to him. Interestingly, two allusions are made in this exchange. While the narrator and Sophie’s father clearly understand this reference to Calypso as an allusion to Fenelon’s *The Adventures of Telemachus*, Emile’s attention is directed to the *Odyssey*. Thus, the text stages a misunderstanding that is, I argue, meant to reveal more than Emile’s charmingly naive optimism. Of all the scenes of hospitality in the *Odyssey*, why this one? Why such enthusiastic comparisons to Calypso? While Calypso’s hospitality is impeccable insofar as she leaves virtually no desire unfulfilled, she is most famous for the hospitable *faux pas par excellence*; she detains Odysseus beyond his will, and not just momentarily but for several years. As Steve Reece argues,

her very name becomes inextricably associated in the *Odyssey* with the verb *κατερῖκε*, to detain against one's will (67). In the context of *Emile*, the reference seems clear enough, so clear as to suggest an intentional glitch in this otherwise wondrous and idyllic hospitality scene. The oddity of the passage is that Sophie's hospitality (or at least her father's) detains Emile from his goal (i.e., to continue on his journey toward his beloved) while at the same time leads him to the fulfilment of his quest. As we know, he does not yet know of Sophie's identity. To repeat the narrator's description, the "principal object of [Emile's] trip is as distant from his thoughts as he believes himself to be still distant from its goal" (413). Thus, while he is entertained by the generosity of his hosts, there is this allusion which exposes the fact that he is being held against his will; he is being detained, prevented from reaching his goal *precisely at his destination*. The peculiarity of this glitch (of being "held up" at one's destination) has much to do with the belated recognition of Sophie-as-lover, but it also implies that Sophie's hospitality, like that of Calypso, is at once friendly and hostile. Emile feels both at-home and detained. Is this what *Emile* finally means to teach us, that there is in the hospitable relation always a feeling of resentment, of being held against one's will, but also that there is a hospitable relation that exceeds subjects that are conceived in terms of will, whether executed or compromised? For is not the crux of Emile's dilemma of detainment the result of a conflict between a conscious will to stay and enjoy the bounty of Sophie's parents *and* a more automatic or unconscious will that prevents him finally from enjoying such generosity, *driving* him to move on, as it were—a sort of lingering desire to continue his

journey and its pursuit of a face he has already met? In any event, there is always this hesitation on the part of the guest, always this feeling of having over stayed one's welcome and feeling trapped or detained within the circle of restitution engendered by an act of kindness. Does this allusion speak once more of a certain unshakeable resentfulness on the part of the guest with regard to the obligations engendered by an act of kindness?

Certainly a feeling of indebtedness is essential to the hospitable relation even as the welcome works to cancel the debt it imposes upon the guest. But the debt can never be repaid because the gift of welcome is in truth nothing less than the gift of strangeness. The host (by no authority of his or her own) welcomes a guest as a way to preserve and to respect the guest's foreignness, his or her difference. As Vinh argues, "hospitality must never attain its goal of dispelling the strangeness of the stranger . . . it must fail to bring the guest home" (par. 26). The gift of hospitality is, in the end, impossible. It must never make the guest feel entirely at home. Were it to do so, hospitality would cease to be. It would destroy itself *as well as* the other's strangeness. Welcoming the stranger so that he or she feels completely at-home would be, in a certain sense, an act of violence which robs the other of its existence, its alterity. As a result, hospitality can only make the guest feel "as if" he or she were at home, without truly being at home. "As if, but not really," says Vinh: "the guest is always in the process of coming home without ever quite arriving" (par.26). Rousseau's allergy toward beneficence is perhaps nothing less than a recognition of the failure of hospitality to finally welcome him home. Just as Rousseau

never felt at ease in the house of another, the guest must always remain strange.²³

We can understand this better if we return once more to the arrival of our two wanderers, Emile and mentor—return, that is, to that initial passage from which we have departed and taken many detours of our own. And let us begin again by questioning the significance of Rousseau’s imagined hosts whom we have already identified as Sophie’s parents. They are first identified as Homerians, country folk obeying the rules of a past so remote, so distant so as to be other worldly. (It is, after all, a past whose remoteness resides in its fictionality, which is to say, a past which is *most* remote, which is preserved from being sullied by actuality). It is important that we consider Rousseau’s phantasm of the *xenizein* itself, for it is not entirely accurate. Homeric Greeks were themselves no strangers to what Ladislaus Bolchazy calls the “xenophobic environment” in and around which they lived (2). According to Bolchazy, these early Greeks simply deferred their own fears about strangers, oddly enough viewing foreigners as barbarian Polyphemuses, Laestrygonians, and Circes—all of whom they believed practised “*xénophobie farouche*” (3). This is a weird phobia, this fear of strangers fearing strangers, but it is one of which

²³Consider, for instance, Saint Preux’s description of the supposedly infinite hospitality of the people of the Upper Valais who are intent on making their guests feel at home: “The most agreeable part of their welcome, it seemed to me, was to detect in it not the slightest vestige of constraint either for them or for me. They live in their homes as if I were not there, and I was free to do as if I were there alone. They are unacquainted with the incommodius vanity of doing honors for strangers, as if to alert them to the presence of a master, on whom for no other reason one is dependent” (*Julie* 66). While Saint Preux applauds these people for making him feel completely at home and free to do as he likes, he will admit later to being obliged to sit at the dinner table with them longer than he would have liked and to drink much more than he ought. “I got myself drunk out of gratitude,” he says; and later, “I paid [my fare] with my reason” (67). Obligated to eat and drink “proportionally” with the Valaisans (67), Saint Preux is made to feel strange—to act out of character—even as he is made to feel *as though* he were at home.

Homer himself was well aware. “For our people,” says a disguised Athena to Odysseus, “do not well endure a stranger, nor courteously receive a man who comes from elsewhere” (*Odyssey* 7.32-33). Similarly, Julia Kristeva reminds us that the “ancient world remained closed upon itself. Voyages inspired fear and, if we are to believe Homer, appealed more to people on the fringe of society (illegitimate sons, for instance)” (49). Closed upon itself, Homer’s world closes *itself* to those already foreign from within—a fact which goes to Kristeva’s point that we are all strangers to ourselves, and that this self-estrangement is the paradigm for all foreign relations.

My purpose, however, is not to challenge Rousseau’s depiction of Homer but to flesh out the hallucinatory properties of this dreamy allusion. This way of exercising a kind of hopeful hindsight, of dreaming backwards to a time in which guests are more welcome, in fact confirms Derrida’s suspicion that “we do not know what hospitality is [*Nous ne savons pas ce que c’est que l’hospitalité*]” (“Hostipitality” 6). At least, “Not yet” (6). This “not-knowing” is not necessarily “a deficiency, an infirmity, a lack” (7). Rather, as Derrida wants to claim, “hospitality is not a concept of objective knowledge” (7). To be sure, there is a concept of hospitality and we even have what Derrida calls a “pre-comprehension” of the term; but we are at a loss for what it means or how we might collect and recollect what it signifies within an organized body of knowledge. And while Derrida adds a “not yet” to the admission of this not-knowing, he is quick to concede that we may never know, that it may not, in the end, be a question of knowledge and time at all. We do not know what hospitality is, he claims, because hospitality *is* not—

l'hospitalité n'est pas (8). "It is not a present being" (8)—which is also to say that it never *was*. It proclaims itself "as a law, a duty or right, an obligation, that is, as a should-be [*un devoir-être*] rather than as being or as a being [*un être ou un étant*]" (8). Hospitality is a performative gesture producing not only the law which constitutes what *should be* but also the rule of what *should not be*—that which is within the law and that which is outside-the-law, foreign and alien to it. Not a being in and of itself, hospitality orders being; it opposes (and thus makes strange) what *is* by enforcing a constative set of ethical imperatives. In this way, the institution of hospitality, in its proclamation and in its administration, produces the very crisis which it is meant to resolve. As a law, it cuts into the singularity of what is and introduces an other-than-present which *is not*—which is precisely *other* than what is there—but which decrees what the present *ought to be*. One *should be* hospitable is always the rule. This difference between the present and the law governing what should be effects a loss of generosity which never took place. Thus, we have a structure of mourning hospitality that compels scenes such as these to look to the promise of a not yet, to a future that should be. Hospitality is never yet, but is, rather, always remote.

Even when hospitality is *yet*, or seems to be present in a sense of experiencing a generosity that compels one to say "yes, this is how it ought to be" (as is the case with Emile and his mentor), it *is not*. For, even in the saying of "this is how it should be," one is already thinking of an elsewhere, a place much more hostile than the present, but which in its way of being different gives meaning to the present, to the now which is so much

more preferable to then, so much more welcoming than that place of hostility (that chattering city of Paris, for example) which one carries with one always. Even when one revels in the *should-be* grandeur of rustic benevolence, one is contaminated by the city, by its hostility which reminds one always that where one is (in the country) is and always will be as it should be. Wherever there is hospitality as it should be, there is hostility threatening to ruin one's welcome.

No stranger to the paradoxical structure of that which is not, never was, nor ever shall be, Rousseau rouses the Homeric convention of hospitality as a way to prepare his rejection of the present in favour of a time when strangers are once again welcome. He refuses being for a time which is in fact out-of-time, a time which is mythical in every sense of this word. He awaits the arrival of this time when strangers are once again welcomed as they should be, when they can once again proclaim their right to asylum. This ideal of the *hôte* is structured as a return, and not simply a return of the ideals of an Homeric age, but also more specifically to the ideal of the Golden Age described, as Crosthwaite explains, "in the *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité*, where small patriarchal households, united by love, live independent and pleasant lives" (195). This ideal of the simple life is constitutive for Rousseau's idealization of a rustic form of hospitality, precisely the kind we find in Sophie's household. Calling on Homer as an analogue to Sophie's parents' generosity, Rousseau enacts what both Reece and Bolchazy understand to be an ancient rule or law of hospitality, one which seems to have been forgotten: the measure of civilization is tested by its reception of strangers. Just as

Homer has Athena visit Telemachus in the guise of a stranger, Rousseau depicts the generosity of Sophie's parents in order to throw into sharp relief the hostile effects of urban life.

Hospitality only means something in the context of opposition and hostility. *Emile's* idyllic countryside manor offers a hospitality that *should be* as opposed to the city's way of welcoming strangers which is *not* as it should be. For just as Emile grows excited and is struck with wonder at the welcome he receives from this house on the other side of the hill, his sober mentor is quick to caution him:

“Be sensitive to all this, but don't be surprised. Wherever strangers are rare, they are welcome. Nothing makes one more hospitable than seldom needing to be. It is the abundance of guests which destroys hospitality. In the time of Homer people hardly travelled, and travellers were well received everywhere.” (413)

An abundance of guests, a poverty of hosts. Such is the lament of our travelling heroes; and so marks *Emile's* most explicit theorization of hospitality. It is a theory which, as we have seen, produces the effect of nostalgia, a longing for a time when people knew more about hosting than about visiting. With this loss of hospitable savvy comes a lost sense of being-at-homeness, a sense which still echoes in the hillsides of rustic simplicity. If hospitality is impossible, as Vinh suggests, then the effect of its failure is precisely this form of regret, of taking stock of the nation's hospitable practices and lamenting that somewhere, somehow the nation has lost its way.

There are too many travellers today, too many guests! Having been repelled from Paris by an incessant chatter, Emile's mentor reminds us of Rousseau's infamous distaste for cities. In the *Second Discourse*, he goes so far as to locate the cause of the inhospitable in the "bad air" of the city, the toxic pollutants generated "by our moving back and forth between the interiors of houses and the open air" (96n.I).²⁴ For Rousseau, urban proximity threatens to collapse the distinction between habitation and visitation. The urbanite seems to move freely through the city, permeating the homes of others so that he knows not whether he is guest or host. His visits linger like a bad stench, contaminating the private spaces of the populous. The cost of such intimacy is "our health," Rousseau claims (96n.I). The citizens of the city are dis-eased by the fact that they can never retire to the comfort of their own home without the trace (the bad air) of someone or something which inhabits that space at the same time. For Rousseau, France had lost its sense of being-at-homeness, of being home alone with oneself. And with so many visitors prowling the streets for a place to stay, hospitality suffers.²⁵

At the heart of Rousseau's attack on Paris is the discourse of Parisian *politesse*. As Peter France argues, Rousseau lived in a time in which *politesse* or politeness was the dominant rule of the day—a rule that was best typified in the intellectual salons of the day

²⁴Compare with Wordsworth: "... how men lived / Even next-door neighbours, as we say, yet still / Strangers, and knowing not each other's names" (*Prelude* VII, 118-120).

²⁵For Marcel Hénaff, Rousseau's distaste for urban proximity is similarly expressed in his theory of eating and civility. Hénaff concludes his essay on "The Cannibalistic City": "*The city shows that when men are too close, they devour each other . . . at a good and appropriate distance, men dine together and rediscover true civility, which the city has lost*" (23, *emph. preserved*).

(54). France goes on to argue that Rousseau in particular “was very hostile to women-dominated salon Politeness—a form of discourse [he believed] which ‘robbed’ men of their ‘manly virtues’” (56).²⁶ Among the *philosophes* and *encyclopédistes* who occasioned the salons, Rousseau seemed the least suited to the manners of the *beau monde*, his coarse appearance and “rustic manners” earning him the nickname “the rough bear” (Cranston, *Jean-Jacques* 161, 249). Although he was accepted in the Salons, and became famous among them for his boorishness, his incorporation (or, to be more precise, his commodification) as an exception to the rule would exercise a key function of the Salon’s *politesse*: “strangeness had to be smoothed out” (France 5). Rousseau came to view politeness as another form of oppression. Yet his criticism of the Salon and its hostesses is unusual in many ways, not the least of which is the fact that he owed much of his success and livelihood to these women. More than this, the *salonnière* (as far as Jolanta Pekacz and Peter France describe her) resembled rather closely Rousseau’s own ideal of the hostess whom *Emile* describes as being able to make each table guest believe “that she has thought only of him” (383-4). Rousseau’s distrust of the hostess, however, surfaces only a few lines after this description: “The same turn of mind that makes a woman of the world excel in the art of being a hostess makes a coquette excel in the art of

²⁶In her book, *Conservative Tradition in Pre-Revolutionary France: Parisian Salon Women*, Jolanta Pekacz takes issue with this idea of the Salon as being woman-dominated—an idea which, she argues, was espoused not only by Rousseau, but which also manages to survive today. “Present-day interpretations of the allegedly central role of salon women in the French Enlightenment,” she says, “mask their real exclusion” (141). For Pekacz, female-run Salons were just another institution of the masculinist command of discourse: “The reason salons survived the emergence of male-run places of socializing were the same that gave the salon its *raison d’être* in the first place . . . they kept women away from the commerce of men” (141).

entertaining several men” (384). Never certain whether he was being entertained or seduced, flattered or cuckolded, Rousseau feared that the institution of women-run salons contributed to the widespread effeminization of manners (France 70-3). Often preferring the homely worlds of Geneva or the High Valais regions,²⁷ Rousseau aimed to counter the false courtesies of the high social circles of Paris with what Peter France calls a “*politesse du coeur*,” a “manly” or rustic form of politeness unspoiled by the old spirit of insincerity (72). If the salons of Paris deployed a style of manners indistinguishable from the lures of the coquette, then, Rousseau believed, a return to the agrarian simplicity of a hillside manner (not unlike that of Sophie’s Father) was essential to the development of a free society.

If Rousseau expressed qualms over the pollution and corruption of urban life (especially that of the social elite), then his narrator ruins the rustic plainness of *Emile*’s hillside welcome scene with the following admission of Sophie’s father:

From his former opulence he has retained a facility for recognizing the station of people by their manners. Whoever has lived in high society is rarely mistaken about that. On the basis of this passport we are admitted. (413).

While they are unknown, our travellers are not foreign. They carry with them the stench—the “bad air”—of the city, and on this basis alone they are admitted.²⁸ This is not a

²⁷See, for instance, *Lettre à d’Alembert*, in *Politics and the Arts: Letter to M. d’Alembert on the Theatre* (1968); and *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761).

²⁸Ironically, the publication of *Emile*, as I have noted, resulted in Rousseau’s own “passport [*passport*]” being revoked, as it were. Rousseau’s identity papers or *passport*, had he had them or something like them (some kind of supplementary documents that re-present the

reception of otherness, but a reception of the same. Their business as men of the same class is communicated to the host *in advance* of the welcome, thus ruining the Homeric allusion as well as the desire for an anonymous or absolute hospitality. At the heart of Rousseau's rustic hospitality scene lies a recognition of urbanity, as though hospitality were really some kind of secret code for discerning the gentry from the undesirables. The scene is contaminated by the city, by its decorum and division of classes. From his former opulence, the host retains the exclusionary powers of the social elite. Lest they be turned away, the guests must subject themselves before him; they are welcomed on the condition that they respect the master's rules of conduct. There is no hospitality without the reaffirmation of the host's sovereignty. Conformance to the law of the father is the passport to compassion and generosity.

This hardly seems hospitable at all, this offer of aid to men of similar station. If, as Derrida argues, "forgiveness forgives only the unforgivable" (*On Cosmopolitanism* 32), then we might say the same for hospitality: to welcome only the hospitable is to render hospitality meaningless.²⁹ One must offer hospitality to that which is unwelcome,

identity of a subject) on his person as he fled the state, would no doubt have been re-written (may even have re-written themselves somehow) without actually (which is to say, literally) having been re-written as such. This begs the question: are there such things as "good" and "bad" passports? Can one meaningfully distinguish between "forged" and "truthful" identity papers, when one's papers are *re-forged* to re-present the subject as suddenly illegitimate—thus, re-signifying that subject no longer as a citizen but as a fugitive? How does one become *sans papiers* literally overnight? How do the papers of a person *sans papiers* suddenly and abruptly become "no good," no longer "truthful" insofar as they now misrepresent a subject whom they have represented ("truthfully") in the past as genuine, verifiable, authentic? For more discussion on this topic see, *Identity Papers: Contested Nationhood in Twentieth-Century France* (1996).

²⁹For Derrida's reading of the philosopheme of forgiveness in Rousseau, especially in regards to Paul de Man's reading of Rousseau's famous confession in *The Confessions* for having stolen a "little pink and silver ribbon" (86), see "Typewriter Ribbon: Limited Ink (2) ('within such limits')," (2001).

give oneself to the potential hostility of the other without the expectation of return. If this sounds impossible, it is because hospitality itself becomes possible from the moment that it appears impossible. Its history begins with the (im)possibility of welcoming the inhospitable—with the inhospitable welcoming itself within the space of the subject regardless of the subject's agented attempts to control the passage of that space. To think otherwise about hospitality would mean to take certain chances. As Caputo rightly points out, hospitality always puts one's "home at risk" (*More Radical* 57). To repeat a central thesis of this chapter, one welcomes the other by being unprepared—by being prepared for anything, be it hostile or friendly, malevolent or hospitable. But how does one befriend the unfriendly? If it is true that Rousseau often *shows* what runs counter to the story he wants to *tell*, then perhaps what *Emile* means to teach us is the very impossibility of the unconditional welcome. For the hospitality that the text deems to be an ideal throwback to the gracious days of Homer flourishes in its own kind of hostility, intended as it is for an elite, well mannered aristocracy of *les hôtes*. The text *shows* us the inequity of the stranger's welcome as though to say that, when put into practice (i.e., within the conditional), hospitality is always as exclusionary as it is embracing—that even a *politesse du coeur* suffers from an unshakeable *xénophobie farouche*. As I argue throughout the thesis, however, if there is a violence necessary to the practise of welcoming the other, then hospitality becomes ethical precisely when we acknowledge its impossibility. It is then, and only then, when we can begin, without ending, to be responsible to and for the exclusions by which we proceed.³⁰

³⁰For the grammatical formulation of this sentences and the one preceding it, I am indebted to Butler (53).

The Sleepy Carib: Rousseau as Host

Rousseau's interest in a *politesse du coeur* can be traced back to his discussion of the so-called "Golden Age" in the *Second Discourse* and his *Essay on the Origins of Language*. For the remaining part of this chapter, then, I wish to shift my focus toward reading some of the hospitable circumstances of the former. Peter France argues that, in order to exert an influence in the eighteenth-century world of *politesse*, writers like Rousseau "had to play their part in the world, speaking to polite society in the language it was used to, flattering their patrons or their audiences" (4). Nowhere is this more evident than in the prefatory work of the *Second Discourse*, where Rousseau carefully assumes the voice and the rhetoric of a writer on trial, so to speak. There is a letter to "The Republic of Geneva" (addressed: "Magnificent, Most Honoured, and Sovereign Lords"), a Preface, and an introduction inviting his readers to listen to him like "Plato and Xenocrates" in the "Lyceum of Athens" (25). With these gestures, Rousseau performs a series of hospitable sequences: prostrating himself like a guest before the court, inviting his lords (and his larger audience) to receive the gift of his labour, welcoming them *as well as* himself to the story over which he resides as host. While the nuances and interconnections of these gestures lay beyond the scope of the present chapter, I nevertheless wish to seek out the complexities of a relation which Rousseau fails to respect in the opening manoeuvres of his text, namely, his association with the Carribean native. I want to consider the kinds of hospitality that Rousseau shows to the inhabitants of a land which would, in turn, give to Europe its very symbol for hospitality, the

pineapple—a symbol which the European would transform into a status symbol for wealth and cosmopolitan savvy.³¹

In his book *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Transparency and Obstruction*, Jean Starobinski makes only one reference to the curious position of the Carib in the *Second Discourse* (291). Even then, he does not take the opportunity to theorize the consequences of using such a figure except to explain an old and familiar problem with regards to Rousseau's relation to history: how can one escape history in order to witness the birth of history? "What guides shall we choose?" (291). As is well known, Rousseau looks to the accounts of travelers who had witnessed first hand the aboriginal residents of the West Indies in order to tell the story of "natural man" and "his" exodus from the "natural" state. Yet Rousseau knows as well as Starobinski does that the people described in these New World narratives are "already 'denatured' and differentiated by culture" (291). Duly recognizing the limits of his Caribbean "informants," Rousseau thus employs the services of yet another guide, the imagination. For the imagination, explains Starobinski, when it is "escorted by the mindful hand of ethnographic data," is "free to extrapolate boldly [*extrapoler hardiment*]" (291). How, then, to respond to this account which in itself gives license precisely to a certain fearless unaccountability—an account,

³¹According to the *World Encyclopedia of Food*, Caribbean natives hung pineapples or pineapple crowns by the entrance to their huts and villages as a promise of welcome to all visitors (517). Interestingly, they also "planted thick hedges of pineapple plants around their villages to keep strangers out—effective protective barriers for the sharp, spiky edges of pineapple leaves can inflict nasty cuts" (354). Bearing the symbolic fruit of welcome as well as a defense against foreigners, the pineapple plant seems the perfect emblem for the Derridian critique of hospitality, which determines that a welcome is at once friendly and hostile.

that is, which permits the imagination to rouse, mobilize, and discard the colonial other at will? What is the structure of this (dis)figuration--this visitation of an other whose visit is always already placed under erasure for its inadequacy? The Carib is in a peculiar position--at once responsible for "man" insofar as he signals (at the very least) a *form* of otherness with which to compare the species, while inadequate as a figure with which to measure this distance accurately. In a manner of speaking, he is neither properly "human" nor wholly other, neither civilized European nor purely "natural." Acting as a kind of middle-man, he is somewhere in between--abjected on both accounts--thus leaving the terms "man" and "natural man" pristine, untainted, and otherwise ready to be fictionalized.³²

The Carib is a stranger who is made to feel neither at ease nor at home in Rousseau's text. He is only partially welcome. His invitation is issued not as a means to celebrate his own otherness but to introduce a difference within his host, the European anthropologist who lacks (or believes that he lacks) an other against which to compare himself. If modern anthropology is, as Derrida says, the product of the "humility of one who knows he is 'unacceptable'" (*Of Grammatology* 101), then part of this humility would come from knowing that the *other* is also unacceptable--that the aboriginal one

³²This double abjection of the Carib explains my implied reference to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in the term "Caribbean 'informant.'" Appropriating the term from ethnography, Spivak re-conceives the "native informant" as "a site of unlisted traces," a "mark of expulsion from the name of Man" (6). On the margins of my reading, as on those of Spivak's, is "the imagined and (im)possible perspective of the native informant" (9)--that "para-subject" (34) called "Carib" whose name signals an imagined opposition to the European anthropological perspective.

imagines to know is but a surrogate source. The Carib is the guest into whose face one refuses to look, whose arrival requires the supplement of the imagination in order to be received. He is a place-holder occupying the position of an other guest, “natural man,” whose absence threatens to upset the authority of the host, but whose presence would prove equally threatening. Part guest and part hostage, the “native informant” is held captive by the very embarrassment that its presence signals.

My purpose, though, is not simply to suggest that Rousseau is a bad host, as it were. Nor am I concerned with determining whether Rousseau is generally amiable toward the Carib or whether his engagement with the Carib is fuelled by hostility.³³ The relation is too complicated to be reduced in this way. Rather, I am primarily interested in one particular evocation of the Caribbean native in the *Second Discourse* because I believe that it sketches an interestingly paradoxical scene of hospitality that in effect parodies Rousseau’s in-hospitable treatment of the Carib. I use a hyphen here, between this word “hospitable” and its negative prefix, in order to suspend the conventional binarism between benevolence and hostility upon which the word hospitality calls. It is meant to indicate what Derrida says about welcoming the other, namely that after all is said and done it is quite impossible to distinguish between hospitality and its opposite,

³³Given my earlier reference to Rousseau’s analogy of himself in the city of Paris as a kind of lonely Robinson Crusoe, however, it is easy to criticize Rousseau’s hosting of the Carib. For would the Carib here not play Friday to Rousseau’s Crusoe? While it is beyond the scope of the present argument, it would be interesting to follow this analogy, especially as *Robinson Crusoe* is one of the very few books that Emile’s mentor will let him read. Indeed, *Emile*’s narrator will hail Crusoe as an “ideal” person for various reasons, including his ability to survive in the absence of others (185-6). Friday is not mentioned.

hostility. There is “no hospitality,” says Derrida, without the institution of a host’s sovereignty which exercises its power by “filtering, choosing, and thus by excluding and doing violence” (*Of Hospitality* 55). An injustice toward the other is committed “from the very threshold of the right to hospitality” (55)—the *impossibility* of hospitality thus making the question of hospitality and justice all the more pressing. These meditations as well as Derrida’s thoughts on the transgressive slippage inevitably housed in the guest-host dualism are spectacularly realized in the reference I have in mind.

Drawn from the seventeenth-century missionary writings of Jean Baptiste Du Tertre, Rousseau’s evocation reveals a certain fascination with the sleepless misadventures of the Carib in the colonial marketplace.³⁴ Crafting his image of “savage man” as a being without foresight or future—whose plans “barely extend to the end of the day”—Rousseau recalls the following fable of Caribbean commerce:

Even today [he says], such is the foresight [*prévoyance*] of the Caribbean Indian: in the morning he sells his cotton bed and returns weeping to buy it back in the evening, having failed to foresee [*prévu*] he would need it for the coming night. (*Discourse* 35-6)

The passage appears not long after Rousseau’s suggestion that a foreknowledge of *death* is “one of man’s first acquisitions” upon leaving the natural state (35). The lingering

³⁴Jean Baptiste Du Tertre was, as I have said, a seventeenth-century Dominican priest who spent several years as a missionary in the French West Indian colonies, including St. Croix and the Virgin Islands. During his stay he studied and collected data on the natural history of the islands, their native inhabitants, and the European settlements. His *Histoire Général des Antilles Habitées par les François* (Paris, 1667-1671) is the text from which Rousseau draws his reference to Caribbean exchange.

implication produced (perhaps unconsciously) by the Carib's close proximity to this announcement is quite clear: without foresight, the Carib is without death (a figure for which the "coming of night" is, of course, an ancient trope).³⁵ He knows nothing of his own finitude—an ignorance which manifests itself here in an uncanny inability to anticipate where he will be (or even *if* he will be) at the end of the day. If death is, as it is for Heidegger, *Dasein*'s own-most possession and possibility—the very object of its being (*Being* 279)—then the Carib's loss is much more serious than it would at first seem. In addition to his cot, the Carib loses everything—his finitude, his humanity, his very ability to possess anything whatsoever. This is a tremendous loss indeed—one which Rousseau registers in a remarkable moment of destitution and homelessness, a moment in which the Carib has in fact sold his home (his place of rest) *without knowing it*—his loss being a loss

³⁵This lingering diagnosis is further strengthened by an earlier moment in the text when Rousseau asserts that "savages expire [*éteignent*] in the end without anyone noticing [*aperçoive*] that they have ceased to exist and almost [*presque*] without noticing it themselves" (29). Rousseau's word "*éteignent*" means, more precisely, "to extinguish, to fade or die away." This alternate emphasis aligns the "savage's" fate to Heidegger's account of animals who, unlike humans or *Dasein*, simply "perish" without knowing their death, without living "toward-death" (*Being* 279). Interestingly, Rousseau qualifies the savage's lack of knowledge of his or her own death, saying that these people fade away *presque sans s'en apercevoir eux-mêmes*. They *almost* notice it themselves—nearly, scarcely, hardly. Or is it that they almost *do not* notice it themselves, meaning that they do notice, only just barely? It is difficult to tell. The difficulty arises not simply from the grammatical peculiarities of Rousseau's statement, but also because it begs us to ask: what *would* it mean to notice one's death, anyway? Is not death the very impossibility of noticing one's own passing—which is to say, the impossibility of (self-) consciousness *as such*? Or is a knowledge or foreknowledge of death the same thing as noticing or experiencing one's death? Is this what it means to be human—to have a knowledge of death by noticing it before the fact? Is this an *almost* knowledge that the savage lacks, or is it a knowledge that the savage almost *has*—the absence of which reminds us that death, that our own impossibility, is always near—that it is always almost with us? How else could we explain the Carib's losses unless he *possessed* certain things to begin with, even if it were only a matter of *almost* possessing these things?

of loss, one that is not experienced as a loss at the moment of its occurring, but only after the fact. His nocturnal sanctuary as far from his mind as the day is long, the Carib (as Rousseau imagines him) is a wanderer—*unsettled* and *out of place*—returning groggily to the site of his uprooting.

What seems to fascinate or scandalize Rousseau is the Carib's failure to remain in possession of his faculties *as well as* his belongings. How could he literally undersell himself like this? How could he sell that which lies beneath him, that very thing which gives him the comfort to sleep at night? Shamed and impoverished before the patronizing gaze of the anthropologist, the aboriginal is as much sleep-deprived as he is "wakefulness-deprived"—his putative lack of alertness being the very reason that he loses his home in the exchange. Such is the scenography of the passage: the Carib is unable to recognize his cot for what it can offer him in the future. Failing this, he fails to recognize the *other within himself*. He fails to greet himself—to prepare welcome for himself in another time, in another place. Knowing no other than what is here before him at this very moment, he anticipates no arrivals, least of all his own. Never entirely at-home with himself, Rousseau's Carib is without hospitality—a concept which (among other things) presupposes a manner of dwelling, of being-there ahead-of-oneself, and of relating to that self *in addition to* others.

The Carib is a guest—a guest of the colonial marketplace—who neither knows himself to be a guest nor how to act like one. And his hosts (by no means benevolent ones) are ready to exploit his confusion even as they criticize him for being so confused.

As Du Tertre notes, the colonial merchant's sole purpose for purchasing the Carib's cot was precisely to sell it back to him at a higher price, a rapacious detail that Rousseau conveniently elides. Dazed and dispossessed of his home (a home which, without ever being habitually possessed, was never really a home in the first place), the Carib corroborates Rousseau's intimation that there exists no form of hospitality in the "natural" state, no face-to-face-ness, as Levinas would say. "Without fixed dwellings," Rousseau says about the "savage," "they might meet up scarcely twice in their lives, without recognizing or speaking to each other" (*Discourse* 37). Rousseau's purely "primordial" man lives in a world without faces, without greeting, without language. If he is a man at all, he is not a subject. "He" is not even a "he" but an "it" utterly without society or a sense of individuation. He does not dwell, he makes no place for himself, and he does not make visits—taking as much notice of an other as he would a tree or group of stones. He is unable to say "yes" to the other, to hail and welcome the other as a recognizable being toward which he feels obligated and from which he might distinguish himself as different.

Not much has been made of Rousseau's brief reference to the Carib. But I want to linger over its mechanisms of condensation and displacement, treating it like the Caribbean daydream that it is. (What better way to ease the colonial conscience than to dream of a native who strips himself of his native land.) I want to reconsider the scandal for which this passage sets the stage and the alternate forms of hospitality that it leaves unmentioned as well as the inhospitality that it brings to the fore. A glance toward the

original Dominican text provides a much wider context. The first thing that Du Tertre will notice is the fact that the Island Caribs “have among them no kind of commerce, they sell or buy nothing, giving each other quite liberally all the things with which they can relieve their compatriots without inconveniencing themselves too much” (131). They possess what could be called a “pure *gift economy*”—one that cannot, as David L. Clark argues, “but seem catastrophically ill-advised, not to say economically other-worldly from a bourgeois point of view” (25). If Du Tertre’s Carib possesses any kind of hospitality (and it is precisely his inability *to possess* which makes this expression so problematic), then we would say that he possesses an unlimited or infinite hospitality. To be in-finite in one’s hospitality, however, is as a matter of fact to have no hospitality whatsoever. It is to be beyond hospitality—at least, from a European point of view. For hospitality to have a history a negotiation must occur between “*the* law of hospitality (which can appear as unconditional)” and “the laws which come to limit and condition it in its inscription as law” (Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism* 17). Hospitality requires one to be restrictively finite with regards to the property and the possessions one is willing to share. Whereas for the Carib, these things are porous. There is nothing to share because there is nothing to own. Properly speaking, there is no propriety and thus no *place* from which to welcome an other and no occasion for which to issue an invitation. Hospitality in Du Tertre’s Caribbean sea is entirely indefinite—without history, law, or condition. Thresholds do not apply. Functioning within such an amorphous and permeable framework, the Carib’s hospitable practices are unmistakably foreign to the colonial marketplace.

Herein lies the scandal: the aboriginal is trapped on the threshold between this imagined gift economy in which possessions are not possessed and an economy of exchange in which gifts accrue debt and payments are due. What is more, the absence of that “regular” and regulated economy of profits and losses is identified as the absence of foresight. Like most scandals, however, this one is manufactured, the whole encounter resembling a reverie at once nostalgic and cautionary. It is an hallucination in which we find both Du Tertre and Rousseau pining for as well as troubled by a generosity which can never have taken place. Just another figure of discourse, the Carib’s supposed liberality reflects *more than anything* a complex and conflicted desire on the part of our two authors to produce a model of gift-giving which as Derrida says “escapes from the circle of restitution” (“This Very Moment” 408)—a model which is as unfamiliar as it is *unthinkable*. It is worth emphasizing here that this desire is ruined as soon as it is expressed. For is the Carib not eager to trade with the French—a longing which in itself reveals a certain familiarity with commerce in the first place? Is he not *already* determined to enter into a world of faces, property, and exchange, thus abandoning what Du Tertre describes as his “praiseworthy custom” of giving “liberally whatever is asked of [him]” (131)? After all, the Carib does not *give* his cot away so much as he *sells* it. In a way he is so caught up in the world of getting and spending that he forgets his *needs*. His profligate or excessive spending (over-spending, really) puts him at odds, paradoxically enough, with the getting and spending world; he has gone too far, unable to tend to his needs. Willing to cross such thresholds (to go *too* far), the Carib offers

himself and his cot to his mercantile hosts, inadvertently reminding them (as well as Du Tertre and Rousseau) of the first lesson of cosmopolitan society: let the buyer beware.

The lesson is one which speaks to the whole question of the *secret*, of how holding a thought and not divulging it is the key to the “birth” of something like exchange. (This would explain Rousseau’s interest in the passage, the *Second Discourse* quite clearly suggesting that it is the act of withholding one’s thoughts which marks the very origin of property and possessiveness.) Du Tertre explains:

As we French are quicker and more adroit than they are, they are easily enough duped; they never sell a bed in the evening, because [they] see the need they have for one at the present moment . . . but in the morning they give them cheaply without thinking that once the evening comes they would be in the same position as the preceding evening; in addition, they do not fail to return at the end of the day . . . saying quite simply that they cannot sleep on the ground, & when they see that no return will be made, they almost cry with vexation. (133)

What happens when “man” and Carib come face to face in the marketplace? Who is the foreigner in this case—and who the host? Is it even possible to tell the difference? Does the Carib welcome the Frenchman as foreigner—which is to say, as a visitor from across the globe? Or has he become the guest, the stranger, in his own home? To be sure, he is stripped of his dwelling or, to be more precise, he is imagined to have stripped *himself* of his place of rest—and is forced to beg for its return. He falls at the mercy of this stranger

from afar, this European visitor turned New World host. Displaced by the *arrivant* with whom it would share its home, the face of the aboriginal is full of tears. Which leads us to another question: does the Carib (as cited by Du Tertre and Rousseau) even have a face? Roused as a simulacrum of *l'homme sauvage*—which is to say, as a figure who fails to recognize the faces his fellow man and his duties toward them (42)—the Carib *loses* face. He becomes face-less—an empty caricature into which the European aggressively collapses the irreducible differences of singular “Caribs” (each different from the other and each the other of him/herself). How then to speak of hospitality and, more precisely, of obligation in the faceless other? For Rousseau continues to feel obliged to the coastal apparition of virtual otherness, this face, that he finds in Du Tertre’s text. (Indeed, Du Tertre finds himself equally obliged, his own recollection of the Sleepless Carib being wrought with regret or rather, more properly, what we might call a regret-effect.)

This obligation, I would argue, has much to do with the Carib’s tears. Are these tears not the real reason that both Du Tertre and Rousseau cite this tale of Caribbean commerce? Why this interest in a *weeping* Carib? Does the image of his tears not bring the Carib’s face so conspicuously to the fore? If this citation leaves us with any impression at all, it is precisely the vexed cry of the aboriginal—a face palpably wrenched in the throes of sobbing. (In this sense, the Carib “pays” way too much emotionally for his “mistake.” His incompetence within the marketplace becomes another figure for “native” incompetence generally, from an anthropologist’s point of view—an incompetence that is the *raison d’être* for siting the passage and staging this mocking

scene in the first place.) Properly speaking, the Carib does have a face, and that face is none other than the face of justice. Although the face is one conjured by the European which displaces any face that a “real” Carib might have (if such a person even exists), it nevertheless calls out to Du Tertre and Rousseau obliging them to turn and to take notice. It obliges them to respond to this homeless, weeping, and otherwise tragic image of colonial uprooting and displacement. It disarms them in its melancholy—the Carib’s grief being the one thing that he seems able to hang on to, the one thing which he manages to possess and which manages to possess *him*. While he swaps his cot willy-nilly, he cannot shake off the regret of doing so. A melancholic *par excellence*, the Carib is haunted by an absence of foresight and an abundance of hindsight—knowing what he has done only after the fact. He appears to work through his grief each day only to feel loss at the end of the day again—his melancholia being perhaps a grieving over grief itself. Unable to mourn a sadness which returns night after night, the sleepless Carib cries out for the end of grieving—i.e., for a *memory* of loss to frame and thus render meaningful the loss. In any event, projecting its own anxieties onto the Carib’s tears, the gaze of the European reminds itself of how grief fundamentally structures the cosmopolitan psyche. It “reminds” itself of that mythical moment when “man” regrettably sold “himself” out, when “he” sacrificed “his” innocence for a head full of foresight and cunning.

There are various a reasons why I have chosen to reactivate this reference to the Carib, not the least of which is to document my own compulsion to respond to his tears. That the face of the Carib obliges us to respond powerfully demonstrates the full extend

of its resilience in the hostile world of colonial hospitality. Despite the loss of his home, the Carib continues to act as a host whose offering (of himself) is constitutively prior to the discourse of anthropology. While he is not imagined to be wholly or absolutely different, the Carib does signal a form of difference. –This is his gift. This is the hospitality that the Carib (as host) grants to the discourse of Western anthropology. While the Carib may undergo a transition from host to guest in Rousseau’s cited passage, his position in Rousseau’s text parodically inverts this transition—as though by giving up his cot, the Carib gives with an immeasurable generosity. He is a guest turned host. He becomes what Derrida calls “the host’s host,” thus illustrating Derrida’s claim that “the guest, the invited hostage becomes the one who invites the one who invites, the master of the host” (*Of Hospitality* 125). By virtue of his foreign character—his alterity—the Carib places “man” into question. He puts to “man” the question of identity and difference: who are you, he beckons? And what is this thing called “man”? A stranger from a strange land, the Carib demands that “man” identify “himself.” He invites “man” to welcome “himself,” to make a space for “himself,” and to call that space “anthropology.”

The aboriginal’s offering of itself in the form of otherness is the hospitable offering *par excellence*—the first welcome. Perhaps this is the real reason why Rousseau is unknowingly drawn to the Carib. Perhaps he senses in this Caribbean allegory something that can never be said, something that even the allegory itself can never embody: namely, the gift of the other which is itself not “an object of exchange” but is what Geoffrey Bennington calls “a pre-archaic donation which can never have taken

place” (*Jacques* 188, 190). Were this gift to *take place*—were it to be given and received—it would incur gratitude on the part of its receiver which functions as a payment in return, the gift in this instance being no longer a gift but just one more product of the marketplace. Exorbitantly heterogeneous, the other’s gift is as irrecoverable as it is irredeemable. It is simply too generous and too diverse to be wholly embraced or welcomed. Always *in the midst* of arriving and being sent, this gift sends only the *promise* of its reception, thus rendering the circle of restitution and exchange possible. It sends itself as this promise, this pledge, which in itself bestows upon the subject a profoundly interminable and irreparable feeling of indebtedness for which it must try to answer. Rousseau’s invitation to the Carib, then, is actually a *response* to the Carib’s call—a call which comes from across worlds and holds Rousseau, and Du Tertre for that matter. The call captures them, interpellates them, in their own host-age. They are detained—held hostage at-home—waiting for the other’s arrival, an arrival which will never come, which will only promise to come without ever arriving.

It would seem, oddly enough, that the European mis-recognizes the Carib’s gift for the giving up of his mat. What they really seem to be interested in is the other’s gift of otherness. The very fact that the Carib *has* a cot would suggest that he has a certain amount of foresight—that he knows the mat *as such* or *qua* mat: something made to comfort one not just tonight but in the many nights *to come*. This causes problems for the rhetoric of “loss” in the first place. “Giving up” one’s cot, losing it, one’s humanity and finitude implies that one *has* these things *prior to* one’s loss. Hence, the Carib does have

hospitality, to a certain extent and in a certain European way, and it is only by being violently or aggressively *received* in Rousseau's and Du Tertre's texts that he loses (is stripped of) these things in the first place. His figural usefulness as a being without hospitality or sociality is based on the fact that he somehow "had" these things in a past which is no-longer-present. It is *almost* as though the Carib has "fallen" from graciousness, so to speak. He can only become "without hospitality" by finding his "origins" precisely in a former understanding of gratitude and benevolence, which is to say, he can only be non-human by being once the very model of humanity. He *is* man, the modern *anthropos*, before there is a man—before there is a Western European or French anthropologist who would proclaim himself to be "*l'homme*."

Without even knowing himself as the gift he sends, the Carib sends the pledge of heterogeneity—the promise of otherness—which enables the ethno-anthropologist to appropriate for himself a place and a discourse of his own. Without this gift, there can be no *anthropos*, no occasion to call "man" by his name. Without the Carib there are indeed no *men*—which is to say, nothing with which to sort out the hierarchical differences between one man and another (or, as Clark convincingly demonstrates in a slightly different context, nothing to distinguish the taxonomical differences between one man and a woman, the Carib doubling as a displaced figure for the eighteenth century's anxieties over effeminate idleness or, what is even more threatening, consumption without production [66]). As I mentioned earlier, the Carib marks a difference *within* "man" "himself"—say, for instance, the difference between the prudent cosmopolitan who

strikes a shrewd figure in the marketplace and the rash consumer who would be swindled out of his possessions. Other examples abound in the *Second Discourse*, the most effective of which finds Rousseau complaining about what he perceives to be the Carib's underdeveloped posture, curiously attributing the defect to poor parenting skills (87n.C). Deploying what is tantamount to colonial gossip so as to admonish and correct the potential bad habits of his readers, Rousseau impresses upon them that what finally makes the properly human is discipline—a kind of orthopaedics, as it were, at once physiological and psychical. In the end, however, it is the Carib who causes Rousseau to stand up and to take notice: who are you, Rousseau seems to ask—you, who turns my head with a face full of tears? What is this sadness that places me into question? Perhaps, we are looking into the face of Shelley's Rousseau after all—a man who casts his own gaze across an ethnographic sea, finding there a distorted visage reflected in the waves. Whose face *is* this, he wonders as he speaks: “Shew whence I came and where I am, and why” (“Triumph” 1.398).

Conclusion

This last citation from Percy Shelley describes the experience of anthropology as such—an experience which rattles and unsettles the anthropologist, forcing him or her to question (as Emile does) not the capacity or secret identity of the other, but his or her own identity. It is a self-welcome—a moment in which the anthropological subject looks into the reflective (and refractive) surface of the water and sees the startling image of its own

difference, its own alterities. In the end, I wish not to suggest that otherness is unsettling for Rousseau because he alone is particularly allergic to it. Rather, his allergy to hospitality reveals something constitutively uncomfortable about the subject's encounters with the other. Hospitality is, after all, not entirely synonymous to benevolence and generosity. It is inextricably bound to hostility, a fact which is supported by the etymology of the word itself: *hostis* can mean either host or enemy. The limits of Rousseau's theories of hospitality are not, strictly speaking, the symptom of a hermetic lunatic, someone who feared those around him. These limits, rather, find their origin in the very nature of the other who surprises, startles, and upsets me at every turn—who, finally, compels me to ask myself: who is the other that is me? How do I welcome myself? And, in doing so, whom do I violate, whom do I exclude? (A concubine, a virgin daughter, an aboriginal?) What are the violences of my welcoming embrace? These are questions which I will continue to explore in the chapters to come.



CHAPTER TWO

The Rights of the Stranger: Peace, Nationality, and the Kantian “Bond of Hospitality”

In their own country, [the Germans] are more hospitable to strangers than any other nation.

—Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (235)

Introductory Note

In keeping with my emphasis on scenes of reading the foreign, the strange, and the excluded, this chapter focuses primarily on three such scenes in the late writings of Immanuel Kant. The first scene, which fuels the first two sections of this chapter, is drawn from *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* [*Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*] (1798). Kant imagines in this scene the mental and intestinal distresses of the strangely self-consuming habits of the solitary eater, a figure whose lack of sociability—which is to say, his refusal to offer hospitality when he eats—is both irresponsible and unhealthy. Kant’s disavowal of this solitary creature, I argue, throws into sharp relief the rigorously monitored technologies of social ingestion which Kant prescribes for the subject who would eat as well as it thinks. In other words, reading the gross habits of the solitary eater enables Kant to privilege a meticulous *social* practice of regulating the subject’s “bond” of hospitality: a practice of being responsive to the others with and on whom the subject dines. I shall show, however, that the social meal is as troubled in the *Anthropology* as the solitary meal—that it is troubled *by* the text’s inability

finally to have had done with the lingering memory of the man who eats alone.

The second scene is also drawn from the *Anthropology*, and it deals with another of the text's objects of abjection, namely, the Asiatic Turk, whom Kant deploys as a kind of conduit for gazing upon the nations of Europe from a foreign perspective, thus enabling himself to declare Germany the most hospitable nation on earth. Like the solitary eater, the Turk elicits a crisis of hospitality, or, at the very least, an occasion to problematize the subject's (or, in this case, the nation's) relation to others as well as to itself—only this time the context of the crisis is not the dinner table but a table of a different kind: a taxonomy of nations, onto which Kant plots the hospitable characteristics of the various European peoples. Finally, the third scene that I read (which is really an extension of the second, and which comprises the final two sections of this chapter) centres around the “foreigner” of the “Third Definitive Article” of *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* [*Zum ewigen Frieden*] (1795), where Kant lays out the laws and the limits of the stranger's rights of visitation and welcome in the lands of others. I argue that a kind of (auto)deconstructive thread runs through these three scenes of hospitality insofar as each scene contains its own impossibility—a quandary on which I will continue to focus in the chapters to follow on Samuel Coleridge and Mary Shelley. There is, I contend, always another other who is forcibly disavowed in the welcoming gesture, but who nevertheless returns to the scene of the welcome (which is to say, the site of its disavowal) only to reassert its constitutive priority in the hospitable imaginaries of Kant's texts. Whether it be the androcentric Kantian feast, the imagined Eurocentric

community, or the theatre of international cosmopolitanism, Kant's scenes of hospitality equally remind us of the subject's responsibilities to the others who dwell both within and without the house of the self.

Friendships of Taste: Toward a Philosophy of the Dinner Table

The issue of the subject's relation to itself provides the climax of the first of the *Anthropology's* two parts, "On the Art of Knowing the Interior as well as the Exterior of Man." As a way to prepare for that climax as well as to firmly situate the issue of self-relatedness within the sartorial rhetoric of hospitality and eating, one of the *Anthropology's* early "Notes" poses the following question concerning the origin of the metaphor of taste: "How might it have happened that the modern languages particularly have chosen to name the aesthetic faculty of judgement with an expression (*gustus*, *sapor*) which merely refers to a certain sense-organ (the inside of the mouth), and that the discrimination as well as the choice of palatable things is determined by it?" (145). Despite its ancillary position in the text, the question plays a significant role in establishing the conditions for one of the text's most elaborate and (for Kant) most pleasurable sketches of enlightened anthropological life, that of the cosmopolitan dinner party. In answer to the question why transcendental matters of taste are linguistically similar to those of an empirical or sensuous kind, Kant happily answers: "There is no situation in which sensibility and understanding, united in enjoyment, can be as long continued and as often repeated with satisfaction as a good meal in good company" (145).

For Kant, taste is a faculty of “social judgement” [*gesellschaftliche Beurteilung*] which manifests itself most admirably in the ability of a host to make an “acceptable selection” of dishes for his guests (143, 145). The last of Kant’s works to be published in his lifetime, the *Anthropology* presumes that matters of taste are metaphorically tied to the tongue because the tasting of food, seasoned with a disciplinary mixture of table etiquette, provides the optimal conditions for that partly sensuous, partly ethical, partly aesthetic feeling of “civilized bliss” (186). Promising pleasures which ground the faculty of aesthetic judgement, the dinner table confidently reclaims its position in the *Anthropology* as the privileged site for the *tasteful* advancement of sociality. If “eating together at the same table” is to be regarded as evidence of the “bond of hospitality” (*Anthropology* 188), then Kant’s representation of the “tastefully arranged dinner” (190), with all its various inclusions and exclusions, offers itself as an object lesson on how and *how not* to welcome the other.

The *Anthropology* is not the first of Kant’s works to signal an interest in the social meal.¹ His *Critique of Judgement* [*Kritik der Urteilkraft*] (1790) also draws on the dinner party as a figure bridging the gap between the merely agreeable sense of physical taste and the subjective universality of aesthetic judgement. In the third *Critique*, however, Kant stresses that the dinner party as a metaphor for the aesthetic is

¹Kant’s devotion to this metaphor of the social meal lasted well into his old age. Gulyga explains that, in the final days of his life, Kant had himself brought to the table before his dinner guests even though he was unable to eat (256). His guests would eat in silence, honoring the resilience of their accomplished host. As Thomas De Quincey notes, “It disturbed [Kant] to see his . . . dinner companions conversing together whilst he himself sat like a mute on the stage with no part to perform” (*Last Days* 154).

considerably limited: the rules or manners of the dinner table are only “*general* (as all empirical rules are), not *universal*, as are the rules that a judgement about the beautiful presupposes” (56). For the pragmatically minded Kant of the *Anthropology*, however, there is something powerfully attractive about the dinner party and the hospitable pleasures it affords. His enthusiasm for it is evident in the exclamatory refrains garnishing his instructions for the “full dinner,” where “the multitude of courses is only intended to keep the guests together for a long time” (189). The enchanting appeal of Kant’s dinner party, then, lies in the fact that it embodies the conflicted movement of the *Anthropology* from the transcendental project of the third *Critique* toward its more pragmatic and empirically “interested” account of “man.”² Written for the “general public” (6), the *Anthropology* presents its dinner party as a didactic parable for the cultivation of hospitality and taste—one that is palpably consumable for Kant’s cosmopolitan readers.

The party is a moral tale containing a modified version of the anthropological imperative: if man must “make himself a rational animal” (*Anthropology* 238), then he must also make himself something good to eat. He must learn to live with taste. In the

²Late in his career, Kant became increasingly interested in the figure of man, believing that anthropology would prove to be the final resting place for all philosophical inquiry. In his lectures on *Logic*, he famously introduces the question “What is Man?” as a fourth, and ultimately comprehensive, question to the questions of the three *Critiques* (What can I know? What ought I do? What may I hope?). With the subsumption of these three questions into a fourth, Kant aimed to unify “metaphysics,” “morality,” and “religion” under one anthropological discourse (*Logic* 89). For a close commentary on Kant’s institution of a “philosophical anthropology”, see Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (1962). See also Frederick P. Van de Pitte, *Kant as Philosophical Anthropologist* (1971), and Peter Melville, “Kant’s Dinner Party: *Anthropology* from a Foucauldian Point of View” (2002).

Anthropology, eating is always a matter of form as well as substance. But for an activity that is literally a matter of life and death (not just for the individual, but for the community as a whole), form acquires a deeply serious and ethical significance. The aesthetics of eating (from a pragmatic point of view) are forever complicated by a constant negotiation between what is pleasurable and what is good. In a word, Kant's aesthetics of eating are irreversibly entangled with his *ethics* of eating—his interests clearly focused on the *form* of the hospitable relation between the subject and the others with whom it shares its food. The tension inherent in this entanglement reproduces itself in an ultimately irresolvable conflict between the social eater and Kant's solitary feasting philosopher—the one who eats, drinks, and thinks alone. The struggle between these figures affects an odd but necessary process of consumption on the level of the other—a process in which fellow interlocutors are served, as it were, as dishes for table companions; whereas certain dis-gusting others are inhospitably vomited from the social mechanisms of the meal.

The *Anthropology* introduces its solitary eater before itemizing its detailed instructions for the social meal. A troubling guest who never leaves, this figure lingers, as we shall see, motivating the well-bred, presumably self-regulating guests of Kant's ideal gathering of friends:

Eating alone (*solipsimus convitorii*) is unhealthy for a philosophizing man of learning; it does not restore his powers but exhausts him (especially when it becomes a solitary feasting); it turns into exhausting work, and not

into a refreshing play of thoughts. The indulging person who wastes himself in self-consuming thought during the solitary meal gradually loses vivacity which, on the other hand, he would have gained if a table companion with alternative ideas had offered stimulation through new material which he had not been able to dig up himself. (188-9)³

What is especially distasteful about the solitary man of learning is the grisly fact that he is a *wasteful* consumer. He is an insatiable eater without manners, recklessly devouring all things before him, including food, thought, and especially himself. If, as Leon R. Kass argues, the “experience of taste manifests an openness to the world, tinged with wonder and appreciation” (90), then Kant’s lonely philosopher demonstrates that this experience can also be spoiled by an utter lack of ethical responsibility to the self and to the other, or even to the self *as* other, as the ready-to-taste object of contemplative consumption. In this sketch of the solitary eater, the process of consumption is increasingly interiorized within the self; and the metaphor is one of disease. The solitary eater “wastes himself” [*sich selbst zehrt*]; he is wasting away in “self-consuming thought” (188). Drawing much

³As projected in Chapter One, Rousseau’s *Confessions* poses an interesting counterpoint to Kant’s remonstrance of the solitary eater: “it has always been a fancy of mine,” remarks Rousseau, “to read as I eat when I am on my own; it makes up for the lack of society. I devour a page and a mouthful alternately, and it is as if the book were dining with me” (225). Perhaps the most interesting aspect about Rousseau’s passage is the pleasure Rousseau takes in the sheer proximity of the two activities, thinking and eating. They are so palpably close that he can almost taste it: “I devour a page and a mouthful alternately.” They are so close that we can imagine him losing track, literally mistaking a page for a piece of food. “Where was I?”, he seems to say; “I have lost my place? Was I eating or reading just then?” More than a tasty counterpoint to Kant, Rousseau’s passage tempts one to wonder: might Kant’s allusion to the solitary eater be, in the end, an attempt to rid himself of a horrible and lingering aftertaste left by a distressing encounter with this moment in the *Confessions*? Impossible to know, but interesting nonetheless.

needed energy from the stomach in order to think, the philosopher leaves himself vulnerable to a self-squandering disorder of the senses which, as Kant says elsewhere in the text, potentially leads one to the “madhouse” (17). *The Conflict of the Faculties* [*Der Streit Der Fakultäten*] (1798) is also surprisingly clear on this point: an example of thinking at “Unsuitable Times,” the practice of “occupying oneself with reading or reflecting when dining alone provokes pathological feelings” (199). It “brings on hypochondria,” a condition with which Kant was personally familiar (*Conflict* 199).⁴ If hypochondria is the desire to observe oneself too closely (*Anthropology* 17), then eating and thinking in isolation induce a similar pathology of self-fixated ingestion.

In the strangely elliptical and hypochondriacal logic of *solipsimus convictorii*, the solitary eater is absorbed by the very food he eats. His private victuals are seasoned by his own obsessive contemplation of the meal. Feasting on food and mind alike, this hermetic feasting philosopher practices gluttony. Bloated and stuffed, he is thus diseased, the subject and the object of one and the same act of incorporation. As a figure of intemperance, Kant’s lonely philosophizing man of learning turns out to be a kind of anti-*mensh*, a subject who does not know how to care for and welcome itself as other, who allows its own “seed of discord” (*Anthropology* 238) to swell and give birth to itself. Opposed to the ideals of middle-class “sociability (that is, to living with taste)” (154), this hungry hermit stands as a warning to all that to be properly self-managing, the subject

⁴For a broader discussion of Kant’s experience with hypochondria see Susan Shell, *The Embodiment of Reason: Kant on Spirit, Generation, and Community* (1996). See also Peter Melville, “‘Illuminism and Terrorism’: Melancholia and Hypochondria in Kant’s *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*” (1999).

must not take up this task alone; it must welcome others to partake in the food it has to eat. Otherwise, the solitary eater, isolated from his fellows, abandons himself to self-consumption, losing his vivacity as his pathologically self-reflexive gaze becomes evermore fixed on his own failing health. The more he turns inward, the more he wishes to “play the spy” (*Anthropology* 17) on his own thoughts and feelings, the sicker he gets.

What is perhaps most indigestible for Kant is the sheer *efficiency* of this solitary meal. Without the regulatory interruption of *another* other, the solitary eater completes the gustatory circuit himself; he is openly self-divided. Perversely self-efficient, he burns up, as it were, like so many calories. As a preventative measure, Kant issues an ultimatum: the subject, if is to eat well, must “go on a *diet with regard to thinking*” (*Conflict* 199). It must learn to control the digestive process of its mind as it does the work of its intestines. In the words of Paul Youngquist, “dinner and company provide the substance of this diet, without which thinking might ravage the stomach” (349). If the subject wishes to survive its own indiscriminating predatorial instincts buried deep within its breast, it must remain socially responsive. In his *Metaphysics of Morals* [*Metaphysik der Sitten*] (1797), Kant says: “It is a duty to oneself as well as to others not to *isolate* oneself (*sepataristam agere*) but to use one’s moral perfections in social intercourse (*officium commercii, sociabilitas*)” (588). In other words, the subject must abandon its most primal and self-destructive urges, and embrace the stern strictures of a socio-ethical existence.

As Kass rightly contends, however, “the good is not simply given” (91). Even more to the point, Derrida asks: “since one must eat, and since it tastes good to eat, and

since there's no other definition of the good, *how* for goodness' sake should one *eat well*?" ("Eating" 282). At the heart of Derrida's inquiry lies an uncertainty as to what eating means. Does one consume a plant, a painting, or another person? Everything that happens at the "edge of the orifices," he argues, demands that the metonymy of "eating well" be the rule—which means, above all else, that the self must know that it is never entirely on its own ("Eating" 282). The imperative to "eat well" is a shared one, and shared not only through language, but also through "*learning and giving to eat, learning-to-give-to-the-other-to-eat*" ("Eating" 282). The self is always already given to the other—although not because it gives of itself intentionally. Rather, Derrida's "*learning-to-give-to-the-other-to-eat*" suggests a process and a knowledge that are, fundamentally, in excess of any self or subject that could be said to learn much less to give. It is a knowledge and an apprehension of knowledge "older" than the subject, since the giving and the gift it evokes "happens" prior to and is the founding condition of a self that then gets troped as doing wilful, agented things like "giving" and "learning." As Derrida says, "one eats [the other] regardless and lets oneself be eaten by him" ("Eating" 282). To "eat well," therefore, is always to remain responsible to the others *with* and *on* whom one dines. With its conduct book rhetoric, the *Anthropology*'s dinner party, like some kind of treatise on hospitality, aims to teach the bourgeois subject how to regulate or, at the very least, negotiate its necessary and constitutive engagement with its community through the medium of food. The solitary eater will in effect limn the social eater, haunting the dinner table as the absent guest who functions as a kind of counter memory to Kant's

idealization of sociability, inadvertently reminding his readers of a hard truth about the being-cosmopolitan of middle-class society.

As Kant understood only too well from his own hypochondriacal experience, some food and drink (such as certain mushrooms, wild rosemary, acanthus, Peruvian chicha, South Sea Islander's ava, and opium) weaken one's vitality "as poisons," while others (like fermented beverages, wine and beer, or brandy) "strengthen the powers of vitality" (*Anthropology* 59). A certain discipline is required for eating well, one which might enable the subject to prefer, for example, a wine-party, which is normally "merry, boisterous, and teeming with wit," over the "beer-drinking bout," which frequently leads to "taciturn fantasies" and "impolite behavior" (59). To avoid the dangers of intoxication and excessive eating, the subject must choose its food wisely.

For Kant, the trick is to mediate one's meal through a screen of sociality—to acknowledge eating as an act which is always engaged with forms of hospitality. As Gulyga explains, company exerts a "beneficial influence," even upon the hypochondriac, whose "spirits and appetite improve by it" (52). According to Kant, then, to be an ethical eater one must have other table companions to whom one can respond and be responsible. The solitary eater "loses vivacity" because he lacks a "companion with alternative ideas" as food for thought. In his *Lectures on Ethics*, Kant speaks of a "friendship of taste" through which pleasure is derived from companions whose interests are different from one's own (205). Oddly enough, this statement restricts Kant from eating with (or on) colleagues. "I am not attracted to another," admits Kant, "because he has what I already

possess, but because he can supply some want of mine by supplementing that in which I am lacking” (*Ethics* 205). Two scholars, to use Kant’s example, are *not* to dine together. They will not form a friendship of taste because “their capacities are identical; they cannot entertain or satisfy one another, for what one knows, the other knows too” (205). While thinking may be a “scholar’s food” (*Conflict* 199), the thought of another scholar is not. Unable to stomach the other’s presence, these scholars dining together resemble too closely the self-consumption of the solitary eater. In the case of the philosophizing man of learning, the scholar is a doppelganger of the self, detrimental to mental health. This is a queer fear, to be sure—perhaps a fear of the queer itself, of the same, or what is imagined to be the same. While Kant’s ideal dinner party is properly homosocial in nature (and I will return to this), there are certain homophobic limits to this intimacy. Paying too much attention to the faculties of a companion too similar to oneself is simply in bad taste. The healthy consumer, who eats as well as he thinks, craves diversity with his meal. Heterosociality being perhaps distastefully broad and indiscriminating (not to mention unfamiliar for Kant, veteran bachelor that he was), the good meal in good company finds a more manageable sense of variety in a heterogeneous homosociality.

Kass reminds us of the etymological root of the word “companion,” which is composed of the Latin prefix *com-* (together) and *panis* (bread), hence, “Company . . . comes to accompany the bread” (131). But if man comes together *with* or *through* bread, he also comes together *as* bread. Susan Shell informs us that Kant would refer to his friends as dishes, likening Moses Mendelssohn (despite his scholarly similarity to Kant!)

to a rare and unexpected delicacy: “he honored me,” Kant writes in a letter to Marcus Herz, “by attending two of my lectures, taking potluck [*fortune du pot*], so to speak, since the table was not set for such a distinguished guest” (*Correspondence* 162). This sharing of the self for consumption is precisely what occurs during the meal that brings together “men of taste” in the *Anthropology*, men who “are not only interested in having a meal together but also in enjoying one another” (187). The main course of the good meal in good company is the company itself. The dinner party appears “only as a vehicle” for “social enjoyment,” says Kant, and as such is essentially anthropophagic or *cannibalistic* in nature (187).⁵

The Politics of Eating (the Other)

The question of eating well in Kant returns time and again to “determining the best, most respectful, most grateful, and also the most giving way of relating to the other, and of relating the other to the self,” as Derrida puts it (“Eating” 281-2). Eating well is a matter of regulating *how* one eats, of managing these hospitable practices of giving to and taking from the other, which even in “nonanthropophagic” cultures organize themselves and their codes of moral conduct around what Derrida calls “symbolic anthropophagy” (“Eating” 282). In the *Anthropology*, an economy of figural cannibalism underwrites hospitality and the moral code, and specifically, duties concerned with the tasteful consumption of another’s secrets:

⁵For a discussion of Kant’s interest in cannibalism as it relates to war and international relations, see Susan M. Shell, “Cannibals All: The Grave Wit of Kant’s Perpetual Peace” (1997).

There can be no question that whatever is publicly said by an indiscreet table-companion at all dinner parties or even at an inn, to the detriment of someone absent, should not be used outside this company and should not be gossiped about. Even without any special arrangement any such gathering has a certain sanctity and duty of secrecy about it in consideration of what embarrassment fellow members of the dinner party might be caused afterward. Without such confidence the wholesome gratification of enjoying moral culture within society and of enjoying culture itself would be denied. (187)

Although these words sound strange coming from the philosopher who would reveal the location of his guest to his likely assassin rather than to tell a lie,⁶ the pragmatic rule of the dinner party is to digest the other's secrets without regurgitating them. As Kant states elsewhere, to be human is to feel strongly the need to "*reveal*" oneself "candidly" to another (*Metaphysics* 586). However, great risks accompany this desire. Kant knows that there are others whose inhospitality drives them to "prudently keep back" and "conceal" their thoughts and judgements while taking advantage of another subject's personal disclosures (*Metaphysics* 587). Warning his readers to exercise care in a

⁶In "On a Supposed Right to Lie From Altruistic Motives" [*Über ein vermeintes Recht, aus Menschenliebe zu lügen*] (1797), Kant tells the following tale to test his imperative to tell the truth: "After you have honestly answered the murderer's question as to whether his intended victim is at home, it may be that he has slipped out so that he does not come in the way of the murderer, and thus the murder may not be committed. But if you had lied and said that he was not at home when he had already gone out without your knowing it, and if the murderer had then met him as he went away and murdered him, you might justly be accused as the cause of his death" (328). Evidently, rather than lying to your friend's assassin, it is better to invite the assassin in for dinner. Might this be infinite hospitality?

mercantile world where the usual creed is eat or be eaten, he nevertheless serves up a more palatable solution in which the subject strikes a mutual confidence with the other. As courteous as he is cautious, the social eater presents his friends with the most precious gifts—his private self, his thoughts, his secrets, his very (self-)otherness.

Within the bounds of what Kant calls “moral friendship” (*Metaphysics* 586), the subject is at ease with its secrets; it shares them with the other who exchanges them for its own. Dining with friends is like eating with Arabs, says Kant, “with whom a stranger may feel safe as soon as he has been able to obtain a refreshment (a drink of water) in the Arab’s tent” (*Anthropology* 188). What is interesting about the Middle-Eastern analogy (beyond signaling another of Kant’s mobilizations of the “foreigner,” to which I will return) is what it leaves unsaid: the refusal to partake of the other, to refuse his hospitality, is the hostile gesture *par excellence*. Denying the other is to refuse to give oneself to the other. It is to offend the other by signaling one’s disgust and refusal to digest the other. Kant’s social eaters, on the other hand, enter into a shared “bond of hospitality”—giving and taking of one another’s secrets, consuming each other as communal foodstuffs (*Anthropology* 188). Mutual ingestion sanctifies mutual respect and leaves a good taste in one’s mouth. Reciprocally cannibalistic, one’s moral friendships guarantee that one’s secrets, including one’s indiscretions and *faux pas*, will remain confidential. “Eating together at the same table,” writes Kant, “is regarded as formal evidence of such a covenant of security” (*Anthropology* 189). Anything that a guest reveals about himself or his companion (be it in good taste or in bad) is the

privileged food of the present company. There are no left overs from Kant's dinner party, nothing to take home or to bring to another gathering of friends. Without this condition prohibiting the consumption of rumors beyond the table, there can be no "open exchange" of ideas among men of taste (188).

At the social dinner, then, the tasting of food is policed by a taste of a higher kind. The party becomes an aesthetic procession, a performance through which the individual's relation to and consumption of the other is regulated according to the aesthetic norms of sociality and table etiquette. The individual learns to present itself tastefully to the other by practicing the hospitable protocols of "civilized" conduct. In the *Anthropology*, Kant rehearses two ideal descriptions of the aesthetic form of the meal. The first "full dinner" goes through "three stages of 1) narration, 2) reasoning, and 3) jesting" (189). In each stage a necessary connection is drawn between the kind of matter consumed and the kind of matter discussed. In the first stage, for example, appetizers are accompanied by news of the day. Then, after the "first appetite is satisfied" (189), the main course is served alongside, and is "felt to be beneficial" to, a livelier discussion involving disputes (189). Finally, the meal ends in the "mere play of wit" (189). Kant elaborates most precisely on this last stage, but in doing so grounds the dinner's aesthetic alliance between the physical and the social in an anatomical correlation between the digestion of food and the laughter of the meal. "Such laughter," he claims, "if it is loud and good-natured, has ultimately been determined by nature to help the digestive process by moving the diaphragm and intestines, consequently contributing to the physical well-being" (188). Is this what it

means to eat well? To eat, drink, and be merry? Would malicious laughter stimulate the diaphragm in a way that would be harmful to good digestion?

In *The Conflict of the Faculties*, Kant pauses to consider what he calls the “*vermicular*” movement of the intestines: “If they are removed,” he says, “still warm from an animal and cut into pieces, they crawl like worms, and one can not only feel but even hear them working” (*Conflict* 195-6).⁷ The descriptive logic of this recollection endows the intestines with an alien subjectivity of their own, one that lives a separate existence within the self and whose demand for sustenance exceeds or outlives man’s own. Imagining himself with a belly full of worms that continue to move and to work independently of his mind, Kant confirms his own hypochondriacal suspicion that digestion is a dangerous endeavor. If left unchecked, the vermicular organs of the stomach threaten to consume the entire life of the organism. For Kant, there are several ways to master the hunger of the viscera, such as eating only once a day (in the evening during middle age, or at midday in later years) and not “giving in” to attacks of thirst, which “are, for the most part, only habit” (*Conflict* 197). The most effective regimen, however, keeps the intestines at bay by bringing them into communion with sociality. For Kant, conversation, like laughter, helps to regulate the movements of the diaphragm. His anxiety over the necessary rapport between eating and speaking is so acute that he

⁷We can only speculate on Kant’s thoughts the first time he witnessed (or learned of) this gory scene—his attention no doubt drifting from the strange intestinal afterlife of a slaughtered carcass to the grumbling of his own gut and what had yet to be digested therein—but the timeliness of its recall confirms, with spectacular clarity, the furthest reaches of the philosopher’s hypochondria.

appends to his first account of the good meal in good company a second, more detailed description, one which is particularly sensitive to the transitions and interruptions between the specific conversational topics and themes of the meal. Kant offers the following rules of decorum: for a “tastefully arranged dinner” which “animates the company” rather than exhausting them,

a) choose topics for conversation which interest everybody, and always give everyone a chance to add something appropriate; *b)* do not allow deadly silence fall, but permit only momentary pauses in the conversation; *c)* do not change the subject unnecessarily, nor jump from one subject to another . . . An entertaining subject must nearly be exhausted before one can pass on to another; and, when conversation stagnates, one must know how to suggest skillfully, as an experiment, another related topic for conversation. In such a way one individual in the company can direct the conversation, unnoticed and unenvied. *d)* Do not tolerate the beginning or continuation of anything dogmatic, neither for yourself nor the companions in the group. Rather, since this conversation ought not to be business but merely a pastime, avoid such seriousness by means of a jest deftly introduced. *e)* In a serious conflict, that cannot be avoided, control yourself and your emotions carefully so that mutual respect and good faith always prevail. What counts more is the *tone* (which must neither be ranting, nor arrogant), not the content of the conversation, so that none of the guests should go home from the company at variance with another. (190)

While Kant never liked to “talk shop” in his spare time, he never ceased to speak at mealtimes (Gulyga 53). Fearful of long awkward pauses, he preferred to keep his guests from pausing and inwardly redirecting their hunger for ideas, and subsequently, consuming themselves in thought. His rules are so riddled with anxiety, so rigorous and overdetermined in their desire to keep communication flowing that they expose the precariousness and fragility of his subject. Nothing specific or exclusionary which might leave some guests bored, silent, and otherwise vulnerable to introspection; no lengthy pauses; nothing abrupt or unexpected; nothing dogmatic; nothing contentious. These are the five commandments designed to limit the conversation and protect the subject from itself.⁸ Hoping one day to write a *Critique of the Culinary Art*, Kant places several limits upon the social eater (Gulyga 151). Owing to his concern for pauses during the meal, he decrees that the company shall not break into small groups; one should address not only one’s neighbor but the entire company, whose number “must not be fewer than that of the Graces, nor more than that of the Muses” (*Anthropology* 186). Should the company

⁸It is interesting to note at least two things with regards to the restrictions that Kant places on the conversation at the dinner party. First, *vis-à-vis* “tone”: the *Anthropology*’s sensitivity to the tone of the dinner party is not unlike that found in the essay “On a Newly Risen Superior Tone in Philosophy” (published only two years before the *Anthropology*), in which Kant essentially asks certain “Christianizing Platonists” (specifically, Johann Georg Schlusser) to adjust their tone—their sentimentalizing rhetoric being too much for the philosopher of the three *Critiques* to bear. For impressive meditations on this late essay of Kant’s, see essays by Peter Fenves and Derrida in *Raising the Tone of Philosophy* (1993). Second, *vis-à-vis* “nothing contentious”: as his biographer Manfred Kuehn points out, Kant was well-known for his “audacity to endorse the principles of the French revolution (a subject to which I will return), defending them *even at dinners* in the noblest houses” (4, *emph. added*). Despite the fact that others were often “blacklisted” in Königsberg for precisely this hospitable *faux pas*, Kant would continue rudely to pursue this contentious issue in the table-talk of his illustrious hosts—no doubt excluding many of the other guests who might otherwise be too cautious to speak their minds.

break into smaller groups, the conversation might become exclusive, forcing some guests into isolation. As the citation above suggests, the fewer the number of interlocutors, the more one is likely to loose oneself in heated debate. According to Kant's laws of hospitality, for a tastefully arranged dinner that animates the company a jovial tone is best.

But what does this privileging of the jest ultimately suggest about *solipsimus convictorii*? Without laughter, without conversation, there is only upset, the agonizing heartburn of an ill-consumed meal. If the self hungers for friends through the medium of the good meal, then the solitary meal is an odd feast indeed, a diseased spiral into nothingness and oblivion. Perhaps, this is why the solitary eater is abjected from Kant's ideal dinner party. If, as Derrida argues, the Kantian scheme of taste "throws up" that which it can incorporate only in the form of a substitution of dis-gust ("Economimesis" 25),⁹ the solitary eater of the *Anthropology* will be invited to the party precisely to be

⁹Derrida maintains that what is vomited is not always the same as what is indigestible. Rather, he argues for "the possibility of a vicariousness of vomit" ("Economimesis" 25). What this means is that for every agitation, retch, or upheaval, there is always some deeper, unrepresentable disgust for which the vomit can only be a substitute. For example, we might say that what disgusts Kant is not simply the idea of a self-consuming solitary eater (although the idea certainly does upset the philosopher to some degree). Rather, the real repulsion lies in his inability to purge himself of this figure once and for all. And since one cannot throw up an inability to vomit, Kant must repeatedly disavow the solitary eater (in all its various shapes and forms) as he negotiates the demands of eating well. We might say that in a Derridian sense, the *Anthropology* presents its dinner party as a strange kind of conflicted hybrid economy: it is conflicted, on the one hand, by Kant's desire to produce a "restricted" economy in which, as Denise Gigante explains, "everything circulates, and which thus entails no loss;" and by its tendency, on the other hand, to perform the work of a "general" economy that produces "excesses" (such as the irrepressible thought of a solitary feasting philosopher) that "by definition cannot be utilized, or inscribed back into a closed cycle of circulation" (Gigante 93). Motivated by the indigestible memory of the solitary eater's excessive, unregulated indulgence, Kant's reiterative insistence on a social metabolism thus renders his ideal dinner party

vomited. Always the first to arrive and the last to leave, he stands in as a regurgitated replacement for the indigestible remainder of a self that has an ethical obligation never to redirect its hunger inwardly. He names an array of unspeakable solitary practices, including those of a sexual kind. Mid-way through his *Lectures on Ethics*, Kant briefly pauses to censure that other auto-erotic form of self-incorporation, namely “onanism” (170). The solitary eater’s twin, the onanist exercises the sexual appetite in the “complete absence of any object of sexuality,” and in doing so, says Kant, “degrades himself below the level of animals” (170). “Contrary to the ends of humanity,” this solitary self-predator is too disgusting even for words (170).¹⁰

The solitary eater is also a displaced figure for the hostile exclusion of women from the homosocial atmosphere of the meal. For Kant, the presence of “ladies” is a regrettable circumstance, “limit[ing] the freedom of the conversation to what is polite” as well as preempting that “certain sanctity and duty of secrecy” which exists only among “men of taste” (*Anthropology* 187n, 187). Is the woman, then, to eat alone—banished from the brotherhood of taste? Where will she go to eat in peace, to escape the “intentional, but not insulting attacks on her sex” committed by the men of the meal

unpalatable despite its promise of “tastefully arranged” dishes. For as Gigante points out, “there is nothing tasteful about the general economy. Like a barbaric exterior, it surrounds and enables the restricted economy, whose very coherence (or waste-free circulation of meaning) depends upon exclusion” (93-4).

¹⁰The prudishness of these remarks is interesting coming from one of the loudest champions of the Enlightenment, a man who would elsewhere famously inspire the self precisely to free itself from the dogma of blind irrationalism (“Answer” 54). While Kant’s motto may be to *know thyself*, examining oneself *too closely* is sheer folly. As the saying goes, it leaves one blind—blind to one’s respect for oneself and to one’s obligations to the other. Again, clarity of mind and good health come with a certain distance which only the other can supply.

(189)? And who is preparing and serving this meal, after all? Perhaps one reason for Kant's refusal of the female consumer can be discerned from his characterization in the *Metaphysics of Morals* of the generative act as being uncomfortably close to *literal* cannibalism (495). For Kant, the "absurd demand" of carnal desire is to gorge on human flesh in "unending gluttony" (Edelman 16). Sexual exhaustion, he says, is "in principle" virtually indistinguishable from death, be it in the form of a fatal pregnancy or as the result of being eaten alive by "mouth and teeth" (*Metaphysics* 495). The only difference separating sexual consumption and masticatory ingestion is found "in the manner of enjoyment" (*Metaphysics* 495). One eats one's lover as readily as one chews a piece of cod (Kant's favorite dish). For Kant, female reproductive organs are just another set of "consumable thing[s] (*res fungibilis*)" (*Metaphysics* 495)—the woman herself a mere *dish* too tasty to be indiscriminately blended with the healthier cosmopolitan platters of the Kantian feast. This confusion between the feminine sex and food is sustained throughout the *Anthropology*, as Kant compares women to everything from ugly black fish to stuffed ducks (150, 168n). While Kant finds a certain humour in the analogy, there is something soberingly serious about a feminine presence that threatens the replenishing exchange of hospitality between men of taste. For the *Anthropology*, copulatory desire is simply another form of gross self-consumption. Kant's doctrine of dining and camaraderie continues to operate within what Foucault and Derrida respectively call a "classical" or "androcentric" structure of friendship, a fraternal attachment which necessarily excludes the sexual relation for its asymmetrical and recklessly self-destructive penetration of the

other (Foucault, “Genealogy” 259; Derrida, *Friendship* 13). For Kant, the proper, masculine, subject requires a reciprocal hospitable relation, lest it consume itself. Clearly chauvinistic, Kant’s dinner party sets no place for a feminine subject who would forego eating in favor of being eaten.

The solitary eater is consummately dis-tasteful, therefore, precisely because he is so attractive. He is a compelling counter-aesthetic, a figure whose function in the *Anthropology* is to haunt the homosocial companions of the dinner table. He scares them into talking to one another. He spooks them into becoming the formally aesthetic, openly social eaters they ought to be. The forced and overdetermined relation that Kant strikes between the digestive process and the laughter of civilized communication, enables him to ensure that acts of incorporation remain co-operative—both aesthetically managed and ethically motivated.¹¹ One must always think of others, preserve them as food for thought at all times. A self-proclaimed recovering hypochondriac, Kant aims to teach what he doubtless tried to teach himself—to look away! –To stop abusing himself!¹² The subject must be taught to look else-where and other-wise. Always the gracious host, Kant

¹¹It is odd to say that a meal based on the exclusion of women is “ethically motivated.” I have left this absurdity endure as a way to suggest that Kant’s meal is expressly structured according to an *ethos* that posits otherness as its greatest concern—even and *especially* if that otherness is to be disavowed, forcibly deemed as unfit to attend the meal. In this sense, the ethical is less a description of value that renders one thing “good” and another “bad” (“ethical” or “unethical”) than it corresponds to an active “interest” that one takes in others as beings toward which one claims to have more or less responsibility. In a manner of speaking, then, Kant’s ethics of eating are *motivated* by a clearly misogynous distaste for women.

¹²In his essay, “Kant’s Alien’s: The *Anthropology* and its Others” (2001), David L. Clark performs a close reading of Kant’s strategy of “*negative attentiveness*” (which is to say, of *turning away*). I cannot resist citing his most memorable witticism: “For Kant, something like Attention Surplus Disorder is the paradigmatic threat to mental health” (72).

distracts his table companions with a tasteful assortment of culinary and conversational treats. In a moment of reflection, he looks around him, at the feast he has prepared. He looks and laughs, knowing that his guests will sleep well because they have eaten well. But how will Kant sleep at night? How will he sleep knowing the truth about the indigestible and irrepressible hunger of the solitary eater—a truth that will always be vomited from the meal, that will always return to haunt the social eater? For the solitary eater is none other than the social eater's other-self. He is an other-self, moreover, who is interestingly conjured to represent precisely the dangers of devouring self-otherness without regulation—which is to say, without recognizing or respecting the self-other as an other to whom one must be responsible. “What do we know about the nightmares of Immanuel Kant?” Paul de Man once asked (“Kant” 134). They must have been interesting indeed: Kant lying restless in his bed, clutching his aching belly (that upset subject within the subject), weeping for the good-natured laughter of a good meal in good company.

Staging the Nation: Hospitable Performances in the *Anthropology*

If the solitary eater's unwillingness to open itself up to and welcome the other gives Kant indigestion, then his disgust for such a refusal continues to motivate his interests in the rights and duties of hosts and guests on both national and international levels. Published only three years prior to the *Anthropology*, for instance, *Perpetual Peace* contends that the right to hospitality means, above all else, “the right of a stranger

not to be treated as an enemy when he arrives in the land of another” (320). To the extent that a nation honours this right of the visit, it can be said to be civilized insofar as it contributes to the history and constitution of a “world citizenship” (320). With these conditions, Kant thus confirms a classical Greek convention which determines that a nation is judged by the gods according to its treatment of foreigners (Reece 34). In the *Anthropology*, he continues this tradition as he performs a series of national evaluations based, for the most part, on the hospitable characteristics of at least five different nationalities, including the English, the French, the Spanish, the Italian, and finally the German. He characterizes the English people, for instance, as an unfriendly nation of island dwellers who often leave the foreigner “to die on the dunghill because he is not an Englishman, that is, not a human being” (230). And while the English are the rudest of all the nations, the French display “courtesy” and “good taste” toward the stranger, the Spanish fail “to learn from foreignness,” and the Italian demonstrates a form of hospitality that, as Kant puts it, resembles the “stock market” (230). Despite the author’s supposed sense of modesty with regard to self-praise,¹³ the most striking aspect of Kant’s characterization of his own nation places the Germans exemplarily beyond reproach: in addition to being the most cosmopolitan of all peoples, says Kant, the Germans “are *more hospitable to strangers than any other nation*” (234, *emph. added*). Kant attributes the sentiment to Boswell (and, really, who better to speak on behalf of the nation’s hospitable

¹³In a footnote, Kant writes: “It is understood that the German nation is omitted from this character analysis, because otherwise the praise by this author, who is German, would be self-praise” (*Anthropology* 226n). I will return to this performative statement in a moment.

practices than a foreigner), but its inclusion in a national taxonomy based on foreign relations demands that the taxonomy be read slowly and with special care.¹⁴

Let us begin with a question: if national identity is based on the reception of strangers, how then can a nation welcome a foreigner without having already been a nation in the first place? Which is also to ask, how can a nation possess a nationality—or, more precisely, a history—prior to the advent of strangeness? As Derrida argues, Kant's rule for a universal hospitality among nations is interesting in that it presupposes a place of welcome (i.e., a nation or territory) as well as for its constative determination of what or who is foreign and who, if anyone, has the obligation, much less the authority, to offer the foreigner refuge ("Hostipitality" 4). In the *Anthropology*, I argue, the foreigner is always historically prior to the nation insofar as his claim to the right of visit produces simultaneously his own foreignness and the character of the state onto whose shores he washes. What is more, the foreigner produces the nation not simply as the effect of its arrival, as though foreignness were strictly a symptom of other-worldliness. Rather, the stranger is constitutive to the production of nationality insofar as the foreign is always already *within* the nation itself, from its very inception. The foreigner's arrival plays

¹⁴In her book, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Liah Greenfeld assembles a series of epigraphs, two of which share a certain likeness with Kant's appraisal of the German's hospitable practices. First, from Wilhelm von Humboldt: "There is perhaps no country that deserves to be free and independent as Germany, because none is so disposed to devote its freedom so single-mindedly to the welfare of all. The German genius is among all the nations the one which is least destructive, which always nourishes itself, and when freedom is secured Germany will certainly attain an outstanding place in every form of culture and thought" (cited and translated in Greenfeld 274). Second, from Fichte: "The German alone can . . . be a patriot; he alone can for the sake of his nation encompass the whole of mankind; contrasted with him from now on the patriotism of every other nation must be egoistic, narrow and hostile to the rest of mankind" (cited and translated in Greenfeld 274).

itself out as the nation's troubling recognition of its own internal strangeness—or, as Julia Kristeva would have it, the nation's uncanny encounter with the abject, hidden face of its identity.

This way of seeing the foreigner as fundamentally prior (or *internal*) to the nation is, interestingly, analogous to the etymology of the word “nation” itself, which can be traced back the Latin *natio*. As Liah Greenfeld points out, while *natio* refers to “something born,” the concept was initially derogatory, referring not to the identity of the state, but of the foreigners living within that state: “in Rome,” she writes, “the name *natio* was reserved for groups of foreigners coming from the same geographical region, whose status—because they were foreigners—was below that of the Roman citizens” (4). Even when the term loses its derogatory implication, it continues to point, first and foremost, to things foreign. In the early universities of Western Christendom, argues Greenfeld, the word “nation” comes to be associated with groups of foreign students “united by place of origin” (4). The University of Paris, for instance, was home to four separate “nations,” including France, Picardy, Normandy, and Germany—the inclusion of France, here, being not so much a designation of the nationality of the University itself as it was a label for students whose origins lay in Italy and Spain in addition to France. Given these early connotations of the word, we might think of the nation, on a certain level, as an orphan collective, a group of foreigners whose parental and familial affiliation lay not here in Rome, but beyond the city's borders, in some *other* place. Part of my argument will be to think of the nation, especially in Kant, as a form of abject (self-)abandonment—a process

through which the nationalist becomes foreign *prior to* becoming national. In this sense, the nation is always first a *foreign* nation, a group of foreigners that collect and reconnect themselves in another place before they can finally return home. But this process of forming the nation abroad also has effects much closer to home. For a nation to become a nation, it must finally abandon its own *natio*; it must renounce or repudiate that part of itself which has always already been *there* in some form or another, but which the nation believes to be somehow other than or foreign to itself. Thus, while the “nation” is “something born”—something which, in the modern discourses of nationalism, gives birth to itself—the etymology of the word suggests that nationality gives birth to itself by tearing itself away from the other within.¹⁵

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the *Anthropology*’s national taxonomy is not so much what it says about each European nation, but how it is able to produce the phantasm of a differentiated “Europe” in the first place. As a composite of “popular” lectures delivered to the “general public” (6n), the text projects a unique hospitality scene of its own, one which is as temporally confused as it is historically relevant to the production of the German state: the philosopher, standing before a nation of *Weltbürger*, invites his audience to imagine, for a moment, an “Asiatic Turk,” a figure so taxonomically different than the European that, in his eyes, “Christian Europe” transforms itself into that exotic creature called *Frankestan* (227n). Kant speculates:

¹⁵Kristeva would no doubt see this tearing away as a tearing away *from the (m)other within*.

If the Turks, who call Christian Europe *Frankestan*, would travel in order to learn about people and their national character (this is done by no other people but Europeans, which proves the provinciality in spirit of all others), they would perhaps classify the European people according to the *defects* shown in their characters as follows: 1) The land of fashion (France). 2) The land of moods (English). 3) The land of ancestry (Spain). 4) The land of splendor (Italy). 5) The land of titles (Germany, together with Denmark and Sweden taken as Germanic peoples). 6) The land of lords (Poland), where every citizen wants to be a lord; but none of these lords, except one who is not a citizen, wishes to be a subject. Russia and European Turkey, both largely of Asiatic lineage, would lie outside *Frankestan*; the first is of Slavic, the other of Arabian origin, both descending from two ancestral races which once extended their reign over a larger part of Europe than any other people; and they have hit upon a constitutional system without freedom, where, therefore, no one is a citizen. (227n, *emph. mine*).

What makes this reference to migrating Europeans and stationary Turks especially hallucinatory (not to mention, ironic) is that Kant himself made a point of never travelling to learn about people. He did nonetheless have a particular interest in travelogues. He alludes to his fondness for such texts in the “Introduction” to his *Anthropology*: the passage of “maritime commerce” on the banks of the river Pregel, he argues (apparently

from personal experience), makes the ports of Königsberg “an appropriate place for enlarging one’s knowledge of people as well as of the world at large, where such knowledge can be acquired even without travel” (4-5n).¹⁶ Do travelogues and oral tales of travel then constitute *kinds* of travel? Could one rigorously show that there is or was for Kant as essential difference between travel and reading vicariously *about* travel? It is difficult to say. In any case, given Kant’s allergy to “travel” and his fondness for travel narratives, the Turk becomes a bizarrely fantasized transposition of Kant himself. What is more, the Turk’s fanciful taxonomy of Europe looks like a kind of oneiric blueprint of the national nomenclature that the text is about to transcribe and claim as its own. More important than this, however, is the gesture itself. For although this hallucinated scene of Turkish alterity plays itself out in a footnote to the published text, its performance, like a play within a play, stages (in one spectacular moment) precisely the various forms of abandonment and disavowal necessary for the text’s taxonomies to work. It does so not only literally by relegating the Turk to the margins of the text, but also figuratively by rehearsing what I see as Kant’s own self-abandonment, which is to say, the process by which he others himself by forcibly donning the mask of a stranger. The passage is, of course, posed in the conditional: *if only* the Turk would travel in order to learn about people and their national character. At a latter point in the discussion Kant will explain

¹⁶As a point of interest, Kantian critic and scholar, Robert B. Loudon, has this to say about Kant’s brand of armchair anthropology: “[Kant] does not always heed his own advice that social scientists must use such materials carefully if they are to successfully weed out fact from fiction. Particularly in his discussions of race, he accepts uncritically the gossipy and sensationalistic (that is to say false) reports of European explorers and travelers concerning *die Wilden* (savages, literally the ‘wild ones’) and others” (68).

the Turk's unavailability: "since the nationals of European Turkey never have had a character," their description "may properly be passed over" (235). A bold and inhospitable statement, to be sure, but the Turk's supposed lack of character is precisely what makes him so useful to Kant. Emptied out of national character himself, the Turk becomes a kind of placeholder for the differences which make Europe an "imagined community" of differing nationalities. The Turk may not actually arrive when Kant calls on him, but that does not stop Kant from appropriating the Turk's fabulous vantage point as the site upon which he welcomes himself to Europe as if for the first time.

Kant conjures the absent position of the Turk so as to produce a kind of disciplinary knowledge of Europe itself—a knowledge through which he can sort out the "defects" of the many *others* within the European. Is this not always the function of the foreigner's eye: to play the vessel by which the nation visits itself in order to witness as well as to police the ways in which it comports itself not only with respect to others, but also with respect to itself—to the other within itself? It is worth noting here that this particular use of the Turk has something of a pattern about it in the *Anthropology*. As David L. Clark argues, Kant often "*hallucinates*" the other in the *Anthropology* (as he does so here with the Turk) "so as to admonish his own 'species,' and thus subject 'man' either to 'good-natured ridicule' or 'contempt'" (213). For Clark, this strategy of fantasized humility offers Kant a form of difference (as conjectural as it might be) with which he can then begin to register the taxonomical value (i.e., the identity or character) of the species. I argue that a similar strategy operates in and around Kant's conjuring of

the imaginary Turk. It is a strategy which lends itself rather well to Geoffrey Bennington's insistence that a nation's "constitutional" defects or imperfections are productive of, rather than detrimental to, national identity: "national differentiation," he claims, "does not come along to trouble the state *after* its perfect constitution, but precedes the fiction of such a constitution as its condition of possibility" ("Postal" 130). Properly speaking, in the imagination of the nation, the foreigner's eye becomes a means of self-surveillance, which is to say, a means of forcibly producing the sentimental and nostalgic illusion of such a perfect constitution, even and especially if it means disavowing the various defects and forms of difference which reside already within the imagined borders of the state. Only by commandeering the gaze of the stranger can Kant stand beside himself, turn back on that self, and decipher the hierarchical differences between one European nation and the next. Estranging himself in this manner, Kant turns his gaze to a Europe-turned-*Frankestan* only to find that the most hospitable, most cosmopolitan, and hence most commendable of those nations is the one to which he himself belongs. Hence, I maintain that the philosopher's lectern—that special place within the German university on which a certain *Bildungsbürger* named Kant delivers his text to the "general public" (*Anthropology* 6n)—in effect becomes the stage on which the German *Bürgertum* plays out (as well as witnesses) its own self-reception as visitor from afar.

Modesty and self-praise aside, the proximity of the Germans' hospitable excellence to this exemplary moment of the *self*-hospitable (a moment which makes the

whole system of national difference possible) attests to the imaginative capacity of Kant's Prussian audience. Who else but the most hospitable nation could receive itself in this exemplary manner? In what better place than the German university could the philosopher welcome a nation to welcome itself through the eyes of another?

Misappropriating the estranging gaze of the foreigner, the German character constitutes itself in a moment of prolepsis. For to be self-receptive is to be a split being. It is to be both here and elsewhere, both in place and out of place, always waiting for oneself to arrive. As Derrida says, hospitality is always a matter of waiting—of waiting for a visitor who never shows up, except unexpectedly. In this case, however, I would argue that the wait also reflects the irreducible gap between what Homi Bhabha calls the nation as a pedagogical object and the nation as performative. Pedagogically speaking, the German nation is simply a nation that distinguishes itself most honourably among the nations through its traditionally superior hospitality. However, the performative of Kant's footnote (in which this German trait performs and *maximizes* itself by welcoming *itself* in the strange and estranging manner I have just highlighted) intervenes in the pedagogical by introducing what is for Bhabha a “temporality of the ‘in-between’ through the ‘gap’ or ‘emptiness’ of the signifier that punctuates linguistic difference (299). What this means is that the performative threatens binary division (say for instance the division separating the Germans from all other nations, all other foreigners) by introducing a division *within* this division. Thus, the German people are not only the most hospitable of nations (welcoming as they do the people of other nations), but more importantly, they are also

the most self-hospitable of nations. They are different from others, but they are also different from themselves. They welcome themselves as strangers. This extra level of difference within the sign of the German reveals the play between the homogeneous pedagogical and the performative heterogeneity of the nation. In Bhabha's words, the self-generating self-receptivity of the German character "becomes a liminal form of social representation, a space that is *internally* marked by difference and the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples" (299).

The effect of the performative is strange, to be sure; but it only confirms Kristeva's thesis that we are all strangers to ourselves, and that this self-estrangement is the paradigm for all foreign relations (34). "Strangely," she writes, "the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity" (1). The Turk is a queer figure lurking within the periphery of the text; he is a figure whose foreign perspective (as empirically unavailable as it is) is required to throw the European (or *Frankestanis*) culture into sharp relief. But his strangeness, and the oddity that his vision affords, are queer not because his origins lie elsewhere, or because he comes from some far away place. (We remember that the encounter is not "real," but imaginary.) He is *made* strange—violently *imposed* upon as an other who is made to function as a foil for the nation's repudiations, its disavowals of all that it desires *not* to be. The Turk, like all foreigners, is unsettling for his uncanniness. He is *unheimlich*. Claiming to have inherited the uncanny from Schelling, Freud describes the *unheimlich* as that which "ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light" ("Uncanny" 345). Likewise, the Turk's strangeness is

familiar to Kant, to those who gather around his lectern, or who read his text. He reminds them not of an actual culture different from their own, but of their own foreignness, of how they are different from themselves, divided from within. He is the uncanny harbinger of the nation's abject, its repressed self-dividedness, its hidden face ("Uncanny" 357).

For an explanation of this, we need not even stray as far as Freud, Kristeva, or Bhabha; for Kant himself accounts for the presence of the nation's self-estrangement. "By the word people [*Volk*]," he writes, "we mean the number of inhabitants living together in a certain district" (*Anthropology* 225). "Those inhabitants," he continues, who "recognize themselves as being united into a civil whole through common descent, are called a nation [*Nation*]" (225). The "unruly group" among these people "which segregates itself from these laws" Kant calls the "rabble [*Pöbel*]," and their "illegal union" he calls the "mob," a moniker which "excludes them from the privileges of a citizen" (225). In his own coldly taxonomical way, Kant here manages to describe the operation by which the nation constitutes itself *via* a kind of civil war—an *internal* conflict which, to repeat Bhabha's wonderful phrase, is marked by "the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities, and tense cultural locations" (299). For Kant, these locations reveal the pressures and the stresses of a series of nations *within the nation*, each of which struggles for dominance, and, what is more, seeks to de-legitimize the others by representing itself to itself as a civil whole, as the united and authoritative expression of the people. Kant illustrates the nation's performative, repudiative abjection

of the rabble-mob—that “unruly” group within the nation which finds itself at odds with the dominant expression of nationality—by asking his readers to consider the French insult *la canaille du peuple* (the Rabble of the people), which, he argues, finds its origins in the Latin *canalicola*, meaning “a loafer going to and fro along the canal in ancient Rome, and teasing the working people” (*Anthropology* 225n). Given our earlier foray into the origins of the Latin *natio* as a group of outlanders, the foreigner and *la canaille* (the Rabble) seem to be intimately connected in ways which render them similarly other-worldly as alien presences within the state. There are those who come to live here from afar; and there are those who live here, who have always lived here, but for the intents and purposes of the nation building process, seem not to be from here at all. Indeed, the alienation of the latter spawns precisely from their imagined contempt for this process, this “canal” building which, metaphorically speaking, integrates the state as a whole. As an illustrative gesture, this pairing of the Roman “loafer” and the “Rabble” within the Kantian imagination also implicitly admits to the phantasmatic properties of the latter. No less “real” than the *canalicola*, the “Rabble” represent the nation’s dreamy abject, which is to say, its imagined opposition to the political identifications of national identity.

The Turk becomes a sign of difference; but he is less a sign of inter-national or inter-cultural difference than he is a sign of an *intra*-national divide. He reflects the remainder of a people-become-nation. To quickly point to an example, Sara Friedrichsmeyer tells us in her readings of Achim von Arnim that the Germans often held up the history and the fate of the Gypsies (who might very well qualify in Kant text as

belonging to the mob-like rabble or, at least, to the groups of non-nationals) as a “mirror” in which they could “define their own national characteristics and reflect on their dreams of a nation state” (56). We might say, then, that the Turk similarly reminds Kant and his readers that there is a bit of the Gypsy within them all, that there is this sense within them that they are not yet a nation themselves. Uncannily familiar, the Turk is the philosopher’s alter ego, his double; he is the “mask” against which the German can then begin to distinguish itself as different and unique. By donning this mask, Kant thus literalizes a process of nationalization that makes of the Turk an abject figure of self-estrangement—a kind of dumping-ground for everything that is already constitutively non-European, non-cosmopolitan, and non-German about the German nation.

Kant’s interest in the internal conflicts between an *illegally* organized rabble versus the legitimate authority of the “nation” calls to mind his own conflicted responses to the French Revolution and its aftermath. The self-making of a nation, as a figure of nationalistic discourses in the late-eighteenth century, is spectacularly (and problematically) made visible by the Revolution. Properly speaking, no one of Kant’s generation could think of the “nation” without thinking of France as well as the best and worst in humanity that the Revolution brought into focus. Kant’s deployment of the popular French phrase, *la canaille du peuple*, for instance, could not be anything less than an indirect reference to Voltaire, whose famous disdain for the masses, consistently and derisively referring to them as *la canaille*, became a sort of slogan for those critical of the storming of the Bastille and, more generally, the Revolution itself. As I have indicated,

Kant was originally rather verbal in his support of the Revolution, scandalizing his dinner companions with his enthusiasm for it from across the most illustrious place settings in Königsberg.¹⁷ Like many intellectuals of his time, however, he too grew disenchanted with the years of chaos and “Terror” following the Revolution, and the bloody acts and mass executions organized by French Jacobin leaders, Maximilien Robespierre and Louis-Antoine de Saint-Just.¹⁸ He was especially offended by the regicidal slaughter of Louis XVI, finding such acts of violence deplorable and unjustified. He did nevertheless retain a certain sympathy, or what Kantian scholar Sidney Axinn calls an “increased respect” (431), for the principles motivating the Revolution—evidence of which we find in several places, especially in *The Conflict of the Faculties*, where, referring obviously to the people of France, Kant writes: “the revolution of a gifted people which we have seen unfolding in our day may succeed or miscarry . . . this revolution, I say, nonetheless finds in the heart of all spectators . . . a wishful participation that borders closely on enthusiasm” (153). Nevertheless, the failure of the French Revolution, as many critics

¹⁷In *Kant: A Biography*, Manfred Kuehn lists a number of references from various students of Kant’s that illustrate the philosopher’s enthusiasm for what he felt were the principles motivating the Revolution (341-3). As Kuhn writes, “the politics of the Revolution was [Kant’s] favorite topic of conversation, and he was so curious about the new developments that ‘he would have walked for miles to get the mail’” (343).

¹⁸It is worth noting here that Kant’s attitude toward the Revolution is notoriously difficult to pinpoint partly because Kant rarely said anything explicit in his work or in “public” that might reveal his “real” position on the matter. As Roger Sullivan reminds us, Kant may have believed in a right to publicity (which I will discuss in a moment) but he did not really experience this right under the censure of his King: “Even the benevolent Frederick required absolute obedience and Kant could be quite sure that whatever he wrote about the obligations of a subject to his sovereign would be scrutinized carefully at court” (245). To his friend Mendelssohn, he wrote: “I am absolutely convinced of many things that I shall never have the courage to say” (*Correspondence* 54).

speculate, inspired Kant to think about an unconditional respect for the state and the rule of law—a form of respect which is doubtless the rationale behind Kant’s characterization of the actions of the mob as “unruly” and, more harmfully, “illegal.”¹⁹ In his essay, “On the Common Saying: ‘This May Be True in Theory, But Does Not Apply in Practice’” [“*Über den Gemeinspruch: ‘Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis’*”] (1793), Kant explains that while one might have sympathy or an increased respect for the plight of a citizenry that is motivated to rebel against the state, “all resistance against the supreme legislative power, all incitement of the subjects to violent expressions of discontent, all defiance which breaks out into rebellion, is the greatest and most punishable crime in a commonwealth, for it destroys its very foundations. This prohibition is *absolute*” (81, *emph. preserved*). To revolt against the state in violence is to defy mutual respect between citizens, which is the very foundation of civil society.²⁰ Any who would attempt to do so are mob-like in their illegal rabble-rousing. As Sullivan avers, Kant’s citizenry are obliged to “obey even unjust laws” (244). According to Kant, the “safeguard” of the “rights of the people” lies not in rebellion but in what he calls the “*freedom of the pen*” (“On the Common Saying” 85). In lieu of the right to revolt, the people have the “right of publicity” (Hunt 136) or the “right of public criticism” (Reiss

¹⁹For detailed analyses on Kant’s position *vis-à-vis* the subject’s duty to respect the state and the rule of law, see Sullivan, *Immanuel Kant’s Moral Theory* (1989), Louden, *Kant’s Impure Ethics* (2000), and Luis Hunt, “Principle and Prejudice: Burke, Kant, and Habermas on the Conditions of Practical Reason” (2002).

²⁰As Kant argues in Part One of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, respect for the dignity of persons precludes “a right to lay hands on or take the life of the chief of state when he is an individual person” (86). Again, Kant is no doubt referring to the murder of Louis XVI.

32). Praising Frederick the Great's maxim "Argue as much as you will, and about what you will, but obey!" ("Answer" 53), Kant invests his ideal constitution with a mutual respect between: a) the people, who respect the law and the legitimacy of the state, and b) the ruler of that state, who shows respect for public opinion (Hunt 136). As a result, he constructs a series of differences within the nation that founds but also threatens the integrity of the nation as such: i) there is the civil authority of the state and the legitimate citizens who obey without dissent; ii) there are those who differ from that civil authority but who deploy their right to publicity as a way to voice those differences; and iii) there are others (who are more different still) who waive their right to publicity and transgress an absolute prohibition and mobilize mob-like against the state. What is more, in order to privilege a more "peaceful" or "civil" internal conflict within the nation—i.e., between the supreme legislative authority and those citizens who voice dissent through a legitimate right to publicity—Kant must, in a certain sense, perform the very action that his refusal of the right to resistance prohibits: paradoxically, he must forcibly deny *la canaille* its right to wage force and coercion against the very authority that would violently and coercively label it the "mob."²¹

Whether in the form of *Canalicola* or *natio*, rabble or Turk, the *Anthropology*'s spectres of difference equally remind Kant not only that Europe is differentiated by national characteristics, but also that these differences continue within each nation itself, and that these inner differences are in fact constitutive to nationality. Only in the eyes of

²¹This is a paradox that I will explore in the next section on the conditioning of a peace which is perpetually opposed to war.

these imagined outlanders—indeed, only through the supplement of an *other* Europe called *Frankestan*—can the real question of the text finally be addressed: who are we Germans? The question is interesting for many reasons, not the least of which is for its prematurity. Historically speaking, when Kant delivers these lectures to the German public, the "German" nation is itself still phantasmatic, the obscure object of certain desires amid the complicated aggregate of fiefdoms, city-states, and smaller countries. Teeming with expressions of a rising class-consciousness and more traditional organizations of power, the internal cultural conflicts of a late eighteenth-century "pre-political" Germany is, perhaps not surprisingly, similar to Kant's description of the intra-national struggle between the mob and the nation (Brubaker 5). Thus, the question "Who are we Germans?" is, properly speaking, an impossible one, since the "we" it asks about, and crucially presumes must be the case in the asking, does not yet exist.

I would argue that the question "Who are we Germans?" asked before there is a Germany, brings out the fact that even if there were a Germany the question would still be impossible—would register the very im-possibility of the nation and of nationality. Again, the question is an instance of a performative that must also somehow be a constative speech act. As Bennington argues about the birth of America, "An analysis of the American Declaration of Independence [by Derrida] shows . . . how . . . an undecidability of constative and performative values (marked here in the very term 'declaration,' but which in fact constitutes the performative as such: there is no performative which does not also involve an at least implicit description of the state of affairs it produces)

produces a pseudo-present that would be the fiction of the origin point of the State or nation or, in this precise case, of its independence. One must already be independent in order to be able to declare oneself such, but this independence is produced only in and through the declaration of itself" (*Derrida* 233-4). Bennington's comments are especially illuminating when applied to the footnote in the *Anthropology* to which I referred earlier in which Kant claims to forswear his prejudice toward the excellence of the German state: "It is understood that the German nation is omitted from this character analysis, because otherwise the praise by this author, who is German, would be self-praise" (226n). The "character analysis" to which Kant refers here has to do with the *Anthropology*'s proclamation that England and France are "the two most civilized nations on earth" (226). The Germans, as we have seen, do receive a character analysis in the larger taxonomy of the nations that follows this announcement. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Kant's self-deprecating footnote is its reference to Kant as an author "who is German [*Deutscher*]." There are difficulties with this performative declaration—primarily because Germanness is still in question at the time of this announcement. Who are the Germans? A nation, a people, an idea? What does it mean to be German before there is a Germany? What does it mean *not* to be German? Who or what is affirmed, who or what is disavowed, by this announcement?

According to Greenfeld, one cannot speak of German national consciousness before 1806—her rationale being that this consciousness first gives birth to itself in the "Wars of Liberation from Napoleonic domination in the early nineteenth century" (277).

The *Anthropology* was published in 1798, and was compiled from twenty years of lecturing. Greenfeld does admit, however, that this consciousness was the product of a “long and tortuous process of intellectual fermentation” spurred on by the very class to which Kant himself belonged, the *Bildungsbürgertum* (277, 293). As Clark demonstrates, above and beyond addressing the question of “man” (the anthropological subject), the *Anthropology* is keenly aware that it addresses itself *to* men—a very specific group of men, to be exact, who filled the ranks of the Prussian merchant and middling classes (224). As an intervention into the late eighteenth-century public—or “popular”—culture, the *Anthropology* may be too early to proclaim explicitly the question of a German nationalism; but there is this sense in the *Anthropology* that the addressee of the text, the Prussian reading and lecture-attending public, is being called upon to lead the nations toward the “Universal Hospitality” of Kant’s cosmopolitan ideal. The Germans are being called upon as a nation which is the most hospitable of all the nations. If there is an answer to the question, “Who are we Germans?”, it lies precisely in the middle-class decorum of Kant’s audience, in their uncanny ability to entertain and welcome that imaginary double called “Turk.” As German historian Wolfgang Kaschuba claims, sociality as well as an aptitude for “social self-stylization” were the exemplary features of Germany’s eighteenth-century “cosmopolitan bourgeoisie” (2). Summoning this spectral figure so as to witness the difference that is Europe is Kant’s way of saying that Germanness is born an act of self-reception which is as productive as it is descriptive of its national identity. As foreigner, the Turk performs what Noëlle McAfee describes as “a

necessary function for subjectivity and political identity” (117): he personifies an emerging process of a national self-consciousness. Yet, because he is born of an exemplary act of imaginative hospitality (the Germans’ most laudable characteristic), he also signals the presence of certain Germanness that requires the German to be self-divided, to be foreign in one’s own consciousness. The foreigner, it could be said, is a witness to the self-dividedness of the nation.

One could argue that Kant does not, strictly speaking, appeal to a Romantic or ethno-cultural discourse of the *Volk* in his description of the German nation. Such an argument would comply with what we might call the “preferred reading” of the *Anthropology*’s national taxonomy. After all, Kant is best known for a politics that, as Martha Nussbaum contends, is “based upon reason rather than patriotism or group sentiment, a politics that was truly universal rather than communitarian” (26). But to leave the *Anthropology* satisfied with this reading would be to overlook the fact that Kant’s deployment of the Asiatic Turk opens up a kind of fissure that exposes Kant’s otherwise rationalist model of cosmopolitanism to a tacitly Romantic call which summons the Germans to witness and to receive their own hospitable virtue.²² This

²²While I refer to the call as “Romantic” in nature for its self-productive and proleptic properties of assuming (and thus constructing) the identity of a particular subject prior to that subject having any identity whatsoever, it is also consistent with a certain Kantianism that, as George H. Mead argues, forms part of the basis of “philosophical Romanticism” of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. For Mead, the *Critique of Judgement*, with its interest in the conflict between the “teleological” and the “mechanical” interpretations of nature, comes closest to positing a Romantic subject in Kant by grounding the transcendental unity of apperception with “the postulation of a self which we could not possibly know but which Kant said we could not help assuming” (67). Always assuming (or teleologically positing) but never knowing the noumenal subject as such is itself another instance of a performative that must also somehow be a constative speech act. To paraphrase Bennington once more: one must already

fissure tells us a different story about the nation—one that anticipates what Marc Redfield calls a more properly Fichtean “ability to image ‘the German nation’ as a receptive ear” (“Imagi-Nation” 79). As the phantasmatic effect of the nation’s own imagination, the Turk becomes the very sign of the nation’s exemplary origin as an entity able not only to imagine itself into being, but also to imagine itself into a specific mode of *being receptive*—or, to be even more precise, into a mode of being receptive *to onself*. As Wolfgang Becker claims, Kant was trying in the *Anthropology* to construct a “theory of the practice of life” (*Theorie der Lebenspraxis*)—a “care of the self” in the Foucauldian sense, one might venture to say—a practice that would “be useful not merely for *school*, but for *life*, and through which the accomplished student is introduced to the stage of his destiny, namely, the *world*” (cited and translated in Louden 65).²³ The *Anthropology*, I have argued, is also implicitly aiming to teach the Germans a kind of theory of a practice of nationality, one that produces the German character at the same time that it describes it, pedagogically, as the most hospitable of all the nations. “All cultures compete in this regard,” says Derrida, presenting themselves as “more hospitable than the others”

possess identity in order to be able to declare one’s identity, but this identity is produced only in and through the declaration of itself (*Derrida* 233-4). Also, this call is Romantic in the sense that it opens the subject to differences and otherness within itself—a gesture which is mirrored by what Tilottama Rajan identifies as the Romantic hybridization of a text like the *Anthropology* that “opens up knowledge” to “the romantic development” of forms that allow for “reflection upon an idea from more than one disciplinary perspective” (“Without Reserve” par. 10). As a hybrid of “world history, biographies, and even plays and novels” (6), the *Anthropology* welcomes forms of thought that are otherwise thought to be *estranged* from Enlightenment philosophemes such as reason and rationality.

²³For a discussion on the *Anthropology* as a kind of conduct book or manual for a care of the self, see Melville, “Kant’s Dinner Party: *Anthropology* from a Foucauldian Point of View,” (2002).

(“Hostipitality: Sessions” 361). But to aspire to this ideal, the nation must open itself to the very notion of openness. For Kristevan critic Bonnie Honig, this is precisely the role of the foreigner, to “disabuse” the nation of its “fantasies of identity” and to make it “more open to difference and otherness” (196). Paradoxically the nation welcomes the foreigner, and by doing so, opens itself to its own undisclosedness. It exposes itself to an otherness that lies within, to that abject interior wherein lives the rabble, the Turks—all those hidden faces which the nation must repress in order to launch itself into an *international cosmopolitanism*.

International Hospitality and the Conditioning of a Perpetual Peace

If the nations are to be judged according to their treatment of foreigners, then what are the conditions of international hospitality in the first place? I began the previous section with a brief reference to *Perpetual Peace* and its insistence on the right of the stranger not to be treated as an enemy when he arrives in another nation. I will now return to consider this text—one which scholars have only just recently esteemed for setting the stage for many of modernity’s concerns over international and foreign affairs as well as for forming one of Kant’s most articulate responses to the French Revolution’s destabilizing impact on the integrity of the borders and the national characters organizing Western Europe (Covell 2).²⁴ Written specifically in reaction to the Franco-Prussian

²⁴As Bjoern Moeller, editor of the *Non-Offensive Defense & Conversion, International Research Newsletter*, points out: *Perpetual Peace* “was resurrected from near-oblivion in 1983 by Michael Doyle and others, and which has attracted growing attention after the end of the Cold War, both as a treatise on ‘democratic peace’ and as a cosmopolitan (i.e. world federalist)

Treaty of Basel (whose sanction for France's continued occupation of land west of the Rhine angered Kant a great deal), *Perpetual Peace* is satirical in nature, but its "wit," as Shell points out, is "gravely" serious ("Cannibals" 151).²⁵ Disingenuously bowing before the "practical politician" whose "malevolent interpretations" would work to disfigure its "sweet dream" of peace on earth (*Perpetual* 306), for instance, the text recognizes the impossibility of its proposal but nevertheless sets its conception for a continuous peace as an ideal for which humanity must strive—which is to say, as a proposal for a peace *to come* [*à venir*], to borrow a construction from Derrida.²⁶ As Shell argues, *Perpetual*

platform" (45). Although he does not specify, Moeller is no doubt referring to Doyle's essay, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part I" (1983); and "Part II" (1983). Moeller proposes in these essays that Kant's little-known treatise on peace holds great interest for us in our age of increasing globalization.

²⁵The wit to which Shell refers is made clear by Kant's reference to a "Dutch innkeeper's sign upon which a burial ground was painted" (*Perpetual*, 306). A kind of satirical cartoon from Leibniz, the sign bears the same title as Kant's "Philosophical Sketch," and, according to Shell, insinuates the following conclusion: "what men yearn for (permanent deliverance from death at one another's hands) is identical, in the last analysis, to death itself" ("Cannibals" 152). For Shell, however, Kant's play on the title signals the seriousness of his text's inquiries: "can human aspiration rise above the grave" (152)? Can we dream beyond the cynicism of the innkeeper's sign?

²⁶As I mentioned in the "Introduction," Derrida explains this movement *to come* as a way of "responding to that which must be absolute hospitality, the 'yes' to the *arrivant(e)*, the 'come' to the future that cannot be anticipated—which must not be the 'anything whatsoever' that harbors behind it those too familiar ghosts, the very ones we must practice recognizing. Open, waiting for the event *as justice*, this hospitality is absolute only if it keeps watch over its own universality" (*Specters* 168). A peace, or a hospitality, *to come*, then, is a *current* process of working *towards* an unknown, unanticipated horizon; it is a process that constructs and de-constructs the present as a way of working towards (without ever positing *as such*) the other that is the future—an unreserved way of enabling and welcoming the arrival of the future as something other-than what we know, expect, or hope for. It is an historical process, so to speak, by which the promise of peace/hospitality *to come* continually enables (even contains) its own revision insofar as it compels us to think about the limits of peace/hospitality, about how peace/hospitality can be different or other than it is—about how it is different than itself.

Peace “sketches” not perpetual peace (“which cannot be represented”), but its “progressive approximation” (“Cannibals” 152). It gestures *toward* perpetual peace—a gesture which renders the text an interesting extension of what I argue (in Chapter One) is Rousseau’s reliance on a notion of a hospitality which is *not yet*, but which *should be*.

For Kant, hospitality and peace are complementary (although not necessarily synonymous) concepts.²⁷ They are complementary insofar as the one conditions the other. As the title of Kant’s Third Definitive Article for a Perpetual Peace stipulates, the “Law of World Citizenship” is and always will be “Limited to Conditions of Universal Hospitality” (320). Before exploring these conditions, I want briefly to explore the impossible structure of perpetual peace which traces Kant’s discussion, and which, as I said, offers a particularly revealing analogue to the im-possibility of hospitality. To speak of any kind of meaningful peace is for Kant to exclude outright any mention of a mere *suspension* of aggressions, as though peace were simply a matter of delaying inevitable conflicts. This is, it would seem, the only way one can rigorously think of peace. As Derrida claims, “as soon as one thinks the concept of peace in all its strictness, one must be thinking of perpetual peace” (“Hostipitality” 6). Kant already knows this: for him, peace means, above all else, “the end of all hostilities—so much so that even to attach the word ‘perpetual’ to it is a dubious pleonasm” (*Perpetual* 306). To speak of a “perpetual peace” is to use too many words, the dubious pleonasm in this case being representative

²⁷As Derrida speculates, “One can imagine a political peace between two States where no hospitality would be offered to the to the citizens of the other State, or where strict conditions would be placed on any hospitality” (*Adieu* 86).

of what is, incidentally, the text's overdetermined aggressive stance toward any opposition to peace. A treaty of peace, as Kant wants to think of it, works to *annihilate* the very causes for future wars, even if it must do so by using an overabundance of words. The language that Kant deploys at this moment is rather striking, and demands to be studied closely. He uses the word "*vernichtung*." The causes for war, he writes, are "without exception annihilated [*vernichten*] by the treaty of peace, even if they should be dug out of dusty documents by acute sleuthing" (*Perpetual* 306-7). Just as hospitality is itself the product of a hostile relation in which it is opposed to the very opposition (between benevolence and belligerence) which makes it possible, Kant's perpetual peace is born out of similarly hostile conditions. And, in his attempt to wage a veritable war against war, Kant conscripts a whole host of hostile expressions: *vernichten, ganz aufhören, das Ende aller Hostilitäten* (*Perpetual* 427-9). Perpetual peace strives to exterminate its opposition, to destroy it utterly, once and for all. As I discussed in the previous chapter, hospitality, as an ethical constative (that is, as a *should-be* poised over and against what *is*), ruins what is. Similarly, perpetual peace seeks to uncover and to annihilate all forces of opposition, all possible conflicts which might lead to *future* hostilities—again, "even if they should be dug out of dusty documents by acute sleuthing." It preempts the future of war by terminating its life in the present.

The efforts implied by Kant's metaphors and pleonasms (e.g., the acute sleuthing, the extraordinary excavatory work of cleansing the dusty archives of the political past) attest to the impositional nature of a perpetual peace. Not unlike a bad guest who stays

too long, who asks too much of the host, peace (as Kant sees it) is an *imposition*. It imposes itself upon the world; it puts the world out, so to speak—placing on it a certain strain, making it feel a certain discomfort, putting it in a position that does not feel “natural” (whatever this might mean). For Kant, this word—this way of feeling “natural”—is precisely opposed to peace. “The state of peace,” he says, “is not the natural state (*status naturalis*)” (311). Rather, “the natural state is one of war;” or, to be more precise, it is a state constituted by “an unceasing threat of war” (311). As he famously concludes, “a state of peace, therefore, must be *established*, for in order to be secured against hostility, it is not sufficient that hostilities be not committed” (312). Otherwise, “each may treat his neighbour” as an “enemy” (312). A “civil state,” then, in which neighbours see one another as friends rather than as foes, can only emerge—can only be established, instituted, and imposed—through a certain incivility toward nature.

Derrida, who has much to say about Kant’s *Perpetual Peace*,²⁸ captures this conundrum in a question: “as soon as peace is instituted, politically deliberated, judicially constructed, does it not indefinitely and inevitably retain within it a trace of the violent nature with which it is supposed to break, the nature it is supposed to interrupt, interdict, or repress?” (*Adieu* 89). As an (intolerant) universal law, perpetual peace is itself so radically and militantly antagonistic that anything other or different than itself must be aborted, crushed before it is given birth. Peace is absolutely opposed to hostility. There

²⁸Derrida’s many discussions on hospitality all tend to return, at one time or another, to Kant’s *Perpetual Peace*. In fact, a great deal of his passion for the subject comes from an interest in determining the legacy of a certain hospitable tradition which we inherit from Kant and other thinkers on Enlightenment and cosmopolitanism.

is no overcoming this resistance to peace because peace is itself this resistance (to paraphrase Paul de Man on “the resistance to theory” [“Resistance” 12]). Not unlike hospitality, the structure of a perpetual peace is therefore at odds with its meaning; it would necessarily have to oppose its own opposition to opposition as such. Normally this would be interesting in and of itself, but here we are dealing with a concept which calls precisely for the end of all opposition. In order to manifest itself truly, peace would necessarily have to strive to annihilate its own processes of annihilation *ad infinitum*. For its existence as a *being-opposed* to war does not simply express itself as a benign allergy to war, but as a fierce desire to eradicate or cancel war from existence. As such, it is fiercely against itself. Given these conditions, we can say, as Partha Chatterjee says of the Enlightenment, peace “needs its other” in order to assert its sovereignty as the universal ideal; “if it could ever actualise itself in the real world as the truly universal, it would in fact destroy itself” (293).²⁹

²⁹ The disagreement or conflict here between Kant’s definition of peace and the structure of that definition, I argue, is what Rajan would call the “subtext” of *Perpetual Peace*. Rajan uses the term “subtext” to indicate “a subversive and repressed text which is not consistent with the explicit text, in relation to which it stands as the subconscious to the conscious” (*Dark* 21n). Moreover, she assumes “first that the subtext is not something which can be found *in* the words of a poem, and second that the author is not wholly in control of his subtext” (21n). In Rajan’s hands, the term “subtext” figures the ways in which a text builds into itself the tools for its own dismantlement. It is the level of a work on which the text both conceals and exposes its logical lacunae. Read from the perspective of its subtextual level, *Perpetual Peace* can be seen to resist in own most critical formulation, namely that peace (in the strictest and most rigorous sense of this term) means the end of all hostilities. It resists this idea by uncovering the aporia that the text would otherwise wish to conceal: in order to call for the end of all hostilities, the definition of peace must, in its very structure, commit the most extreme act of hostility. Such is the residue, or the indivisible remainder, of Kant’s project toward a perpetual peace. The notion of a perpetual peace covers up its own violent history—but it does not do so *without a trace*.

As Derrida says, “each concept becomes hospitable to its other, to an other than itself that is no longer *its* other” (“Hostipitality: Sessions” 362, *emph. preserved*).

Opposing itself to the opposable, hospitality gives shelter to the opposable; it draws the opposable into itself, welcomes it as its other, even as it opposes it—indeed, precisely *by* opposing it. What this suggests, in the end, is that hospitality is not so much opposed to, or the opposite, of opposition. Rather, the relation between hospitality and opposition is best characterized as a relation of *apposition*. There is no hospitality without hostility; no hostility without hospitality. The two modes of being (the hostile and the hospitable, war and peace) are as much apposed as they are opposed to one another. Inseparable, they tarry alongside one another. One cannot offer hospitality without some kind of annihilation, some radical act of violence accompanying the gesture. I cannot offer asylum without opposing and obliterating some for of objection. It is in the very gesture: a welcoming wave that is also a hand that pushes the other away. I limit, or delimit, my relation to the other by welcoming it into my home—a home into which the other will come to visit regardless of whether or not it is invited.

There are, of course, other ways to read the impossibility of hospitality and the concept of peace. While Derrida, for instance, refers only briefly to the constitutive violence at the heart of Kant’s concept of perpetual peace, he understands the impossibility of this peace in other, perhaps even more subtle, ways. “Kant,” he observes, “is only laying out the very structure of the concept of peace, which implies a promise of indefinite, and therefore eternal, renewal” (“Hostipitality” 6). Derrida sees Kant’s idea

for perpetual peace as a uniquely perceptive model of the trace—or what we might otherwise call a Butlerian process of abjection. Because it is born out of hostility, or to be more precise, because it can never fully dispossess itself of a malicious intolerance which is central to its structure, perpetual peace can only be conditional. It can only send itself as the promise of an end to hostility—a promise which works toward (but without ever achieving) its fulfilment through a reiterative process of repudiation. It works as an “impure” regulatory ideal that ensures, enforces, and polices a movement *toward* a perpetual peace. It is the gesture of perpetual peace which counts and which makes it meaningful. The ideal may be impossible, but perpetual peace traces all treaties of peace as the *law* of peace, as the (fundamentally undeliverable) promise of a better day when neighbours can greet one another without fear of assault. Through constant reference to this ideal law—and (ironically) through the *force* of exclusion and abjection required to institute such a law—all treaties of peace produce what Judith Butler would call a “constitutive” or “abject outside” to peace (i.e., war, aggression, or opposition), which is, in the end, *inside* the treaty of peace “as its own founding repudiation” (3). Well-meaning or no, a treaty of peace is perpetually bound to reveal itself as its own opposite precisely by opposing itself to anything at all.

Kant knew very well that his idea for a Republic of nations was unachievable. As James Bohman explains, Kant preferred an expanding “confederation” of independent states over a global republic as the fertile ground or model for the development of a perpetual peace (179). Kant is wary of a despotic gesture which would collapse all states

into one, as though the institution of peace were simply a matter of repressing independence, of assimilating (and thus annihilating) opposite and opposing identities and cultures. His idea of a growing confederation, as Bohman reminds us, acts as a “negative substitute” for a fully realized cosmopolitan republic (179)—a substitute, I argue, that not only prevents the treaty of peace from devouring the states and the peoples it is meant to secure, but also protects (in the Derridian sense of *retaining within itself*) the impossibility of the ideal itself. For is this not what Kant means to say in the end: his concept of peace is autodeconstructive and requires an understanding of peace as a process or movement toward the unachievable? *Perpetual* peace, then, means perpetually coming peace—or a peace *to come*, as I suggested earlier. Such an idea, in itself, is perhaps not all that surprising to the ear of the Kantian critic, but a radical reading of the impossibility of achieving a perpetual global peace understands this impossibility as having had less to do with fears of despotism and with a “natural” tendency toward aggression, than it has to do with the structural or linguistic impossibility of the concept. As Shell points out, Kant’s idea for a perpetual peace is “a rational idea whose immediate actualization is, for human purposes, self-cancelling” (“Cannibals” 152). His goal is to “make the impossible possible: to sketch out a plan for the worldly actualization of what he elsewhere treats as the Platonic Idea—the maximum freedom of each, compatible with the maximum freedom of all others” (“Cannibals” 161). He refers to a perpetual peace as a “*supplement*,” a “higher cause,” and as a “guarantee” (*Perpetual* 322). As a regulatory ideal, it is meant to “produce a harmony among men, against will and indeed through

their discord” (322). By this last phrase, “through their discord,” Kant surely means to refer to his understanding of the human’s frictional nature (which is intended by nature to spread humanity away from itself and across the globe), but perhaps the phrase could be read as a signal revealing a certain (perhaps, subtextual) awareness of the constitutive violence of a perpetual peace itself, its self-cancelling auto-de(con)structiveness. Kant’s recognition of the despotism of a single republic of states is, I would argue, a displaced recognition of a perpetual peace which operates to destroy all forms of opposition by homogeneously consuming all things that oppose it or stand in its way.

On the Foreigner in *Perpetual Peace*

If perpetual peace is possible by virtue of a constitutive act of aggression, then the history of hospitality likewise begins with the inhospitable, with those very conditions which make the offer of a welcome an impossibility. The issue is best illuminated through (not to mention of crucial importance for) the immigrant. For who, after all, is it more important that his or her strangeness be dispelled than the foreigner/immigrant? Is it possible for the immigrant ever to feel at home? At stake in the issue of immigration is the idea of “true” hospitality—a welcome which succeeds in effacing itself so that the distinction between the guest and host finally dissolves. How to effect such a welcome? And when, if it is even at all possible, is the immigrant no longer an immigrant or a guest of another country but a resident, citizen, or member of the household? How would the history of this transformation be charted or registered when there is no more history at

this moment, this point which marks the end of the immigrant's history and being as a guest? How to place one's finger on this moment when the acts of hospitality and welcome are no longer necessary, executed or extended? When does the foreigner become a national with the rights and duties of a host? Or does the foreigner, like the man from Ephraim we spoke of earlier in the first chapter, never acquire this right?³⁰

I bring these questions to bear on Kant's *Perpetual Peace* because the text captures, in a spectacular moment, the auto-immunization of hospitality, especially as it concerns the foreigner. This moment occurs within the famous "Third Definitive Article for a Perpetual Peace," which begins by stipulating that universal hospitality is not a question of philanthropy, of being friendly to one's fellow neighbours. Rather, it is a question of right:

Hospitality means the right of a stranger not to be treated as an enemy when he arrives in the land of another. One may refuse to receive him when this can be done without causing his destruction; but, so long as he peacefully occupies his place, one may not treat him with hostility. (320)

³⁰The foreigner, it would seem, remains suspended in a state of what Hélène Cixous calls *Algériance*—a word she uses to describe the circumstance of the French-Algerian immigrant who is neither here nor there, neither guest nor host, but whose nationalization is continually postponed. As Mireille Rosello argues in *Postcolonial Hospitality*, making the guest/immigrant feel at home in his/her new place of residence has proven (especially in modern-day France, the subject of Rosello's book) historically unpracticable. The "distinction," she writes "between guest and host tends to be blurred by the fact that the opposition is always inserted into a larger structure that barely tolerates the idea that an immigrant should become a host" (118). Hospitality in this structure tends to be replaced by "parasitism" and "charity" (167). Even second- and third-generation immigrants face this problem. For Rosello, there is something like a "gene of guest-hood" which guests pass on to their offspring (93).

Faithful to the pursuit of first principles, Kant appears less interested here in the normative particularities of border crossings than he is in the fundamental conditions which make these exchanges possible. What the investigation reveals, moreover, is an anxiety over the inhospitable treatment not only of the foreigner, but also of the host, who has the right to turn a visitor away if that visitor appears before the nation in the form of a perceived threat. Hence, “Universal Hospitality” is, for Kant, first and foremost concerned with hostility. Its conditions are predicated on and preoccupied by the possibility of it being ruined by the inhospitable before it can take place. The other who approaches the border of the state presents itself (or, to be more precise, is *imagined* to present itself) as a risk. While the preservation of the guest is of great concern to Kant, his “Third Definitive Article for a Perpetual Peace” works primarily to assert the sovereignty of the host. Although he does not explicitly articulate the problem of the guest in the terms of border control, he does open a problematic in which the guest is exposed to the mercy of the host who regulates the passage, the comings and goings, of the hospitable exchange. As Derrida and Charles Covell both attest in their own way, the proof of the text’s privileging of the host lies in the subtlety of the “right” which Kant aims to articulate in this passage. Covell reminds us that “the right of the stranger to receive hospitality in foreign lands [does] not mean that the stranger was to be thought of as being entitled to claim the *right of a guest*” (142, *emph. preserved*). As Kant says, “it is not a matter of being received as a guest in one’s house” (*Perpetual* 320). This would require a “particularly benevolent convention” (320)—or, more precisely, a *policy* or treaty

between two or more *specific* states. As we know, Kant is not interested here in benevolence, or in philanthropy; he is not concerned with a particular politics of the welcome. He wants, rather, to question the event of the other's arrival—what I would call the “pre-political *ethical* relation” occasioned by this event—as well as the obligations and the risks involved in this relation.³¹ The stranger's right is not a right to be welcomed as a guest who then places certain demands on the host, such as the right to stay for a given length of time or the right to expect a certain level of generosity. It is not, as Covell puts it, a “right of settlement” (143), but an ethical right simply to come, to arrive, to appear before the nation. The stranger's right is a right of “visitation,” as Derrida calls it, and not a right of “residence” (*On Cosmopolitanism*, 21). Respectively, Covell calls it a “right of resort,” the right to leave one's province [*re-sortir*: to go out again] and to turn to another, to seek recourse elsewhere, whether it be for assistance, for pleasure, or for support (142). It is a right to turn to, to appear before, and to *appeal* to a foreign power. And the host nation has every right (has a *reserved* and *instituted* right) to treat the foreigner with suspicion, to question the foreigner as a threat, and to turn that foreigner away for whatever reason, so long as it does not lead to the foreigner's demise.

There are, of course, historical constraints placed on Kant's formulation of a universal hospitality. Covell explains that Kant's articulation of a right of resort (as famous as it has become) “involved no great departure from orthodox opinion regarding

³¹As I will argue in a moment, the politics and the ethics of hospitality are in fact inseparable. But I want to proceed for the moment as though it were strictly a matter of the ethical.

the rights of foreigners under the law of nations” (212n.48). Emmerich de Vattel, whom Kant lists in *Perpetual Peace* among the “importune comforters” of political theory (317), also stipulates that sovereign rulers are entitled to suspect the foreigner as hostile and to refuse that foreigner’s entry based on that threat (Covell 212-3n.48). But the historicity of Kant’s articulation comes to us in other ways as well. As many commentators have stressed (including Covell and Bohman), Kant’s apprehension with regard to the foreigner surfaces in his text as a condition of his adverse reaction to and condemnation of the hostility of colonial encounters. For Kant, these encounters have produced a number of useful (albeit negative) examples for a project toward perpetual peace. First, there is a list of bad *hosts*: the inhabitants of the Barbary Coast, who rob ships in “neighbouring seas” and enslave “stranded travellers;” and the Bedouin Arabs, who “see approach to nomadic tribes as conferring the right to plunder them” (*Perpetual* 321). And there is the deplorable conduct of bad *guests*: the “inhospitable” colonial actions of the “civilized” and “commercial” states of “our part of the world” (321). This last group, says Kant, “confuse visitation with conquest” (321).³² Using these negative examples so as to admonish the hospitable improprieties of the “civilized” world, Kant reveals that his argument and its ideal of a perpetual peace among nations are not only historical insofar as they are just one more product (a bad aftertaste, perhaps) of a colonial consciousness,

³²From *Perpetual Peace*: “The injustice which [the commercial states] show to lands and peoples they visit (which is equivalent to conquering them) is carried by them to terrifying lengths. America, the lands inhabited by the Negro, the Spice Islands, the Cape, etc., were at the time of their discovery considered by these civilized intruders as lands without owners, for they counted the inhabitants as nothing” (321).

but they are also fundamentally political in nature.³³ This comes as no great surprise, especially from a “Definitive Article” which accentuates the *conditioning* of a world citizenship by a universal hospitality. But it does lead us back to what Derrida calls the “impurity” of perpetual peace (*Adieu* 88-9). It leads us back to thinking about the impurity of a hospitality which aims to abolish hostility and war on a permanent basis. An ethical constative of what *should be* as opposed to what *is*, hospitality of this kind amounts to a political intervention into the ethical relation that exposes us to the other. It amounts to a repression of this exposure, a repudiation of the possible hostility and the many serious risks involved in this exposure. For Derrida, such is the ideology of the Kantian cosmopolitan ideal: “a community of Nation-States can only condition peace, just as it can only limit hospitality, refuge, or asylum” (*Adieu* 89). Kant’s reading of a colonial history teaches the community that an unconditional hospitality is sheer folly. A nation is best to be on guard and protect itself by savouring the right to turn the foreigner, the visitor, and the refugee away. While this Third Article prevents the nation from treating the stranger as it would an enemy, it does not prevent the nation from suspecting

³³In *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Spivak elaborates on Kant’s interest in colonial subjects: in the *Critique of Judgement*, she says for instance, Kant evokes spectres such as the “New Hollander” and “the man from Tierra Fuego” (found in *Conflict* 225) only to disavow them insofar as they “cannot be the subject of speech or judgement in the world of the *Critique*” (26). “The subject as such in Kant,” Spivak argues, “is geopolitically differentiated” (27). This subject is produced through a discursive process that repudiates other “para-subjects” who remain “outside the work” (26), but whose disavowal nevertheless circumscribes and thus constitutes the defining limits of Kantian subjectivity as such. We have already seen the production of another of Kant’s para-subjects in the *Anthropology*’s evocation of the “Turk.” For an illuminating discussion on numerous other para-subjects in the *Anthropology* (e.g., women, non-Christians, Caribs, etc.), see David L. Clark, “Kant’s Aliens: The *Anthropology* and its Others” (2001).

him as such.³⁴ Lauding China and Japan for their wisdom in denying entry to the colonizing “commercial” states of his own “world,” Kant commends the repudiation of the ethical openness of a hospitable relation, thus transforming a “universal hospitality” from the open exposure of visitation into a limited policy of a kind of national defence (*Perpetual* 321). For a perpetual peace to take place, a policy of hospitality must be instituted which annihilates (but also preserves, as we have seen) any kind of opposition which threatens the peaceful interrelations of states within the cosmopolitan community—even if that threat presents itself to the nation in the form of the foreigner’s right to resort.

But how can one deny the foreigner without having already affirmed his entry? How to refuse or decline something one has not already ingested or accepted? Despite the repressions and avoidances of Kant’s ideal for a universal hospitality between states, his politics of welcome (which is to say, the ways in which he parses out and regulates normative distinctions such as good and bad hosts and guests) retains within it the ethical exposure to the other which it would otherwise try to deny. As I mentioned earlier, the other comes with or without an invitation. It visits, indifferent to the laws of peace. One way to understand this is to think about the politics of the welcome and the right of resort

³⁴Indeed, why would a nation turn the foreigner away if “he” were not in fact an enemy to some degree? What would be the *harm* in letting “him” stay? Kant, of course, knows very well what the harm would be. He understands only too well the threat that the foreigner (enemy or not) poses to the nation. Without the nation’s *right to refuse* the stranger, its border would simply disappear. There would no difference between inside and outside the nation. Without some form of immigration policy, without the power to regulate who comes and who goes, the nation (its recognizable borders, its culture, and its identity) dissolves. Put another way, the right to refuse the foreigner is the right to maintain the production of a constitutive “outside.” It guarantees the existence of an opposition to the state which is the very source of national identity. I will return to this shortly.

in terms of a politics of reading (and mis-reading) the other who washes onto the nation's shore. Before the right to resort and the right to refuse can even take place, the foreigner must first be read. He must become the problematized object of a scene of reading. The question of a universal hospitality—the *first* question of this construction—should read: how to interpret the intentions or the history of the stranger? How to determine whether the stranger is peaceful or whether he can be refused “without causing his destruction” (*Perpetual* 320)? The politics of welcome thus plays itself out on the level of the sign. It is a politics, moreover, in which one says *yes*—hailing the other, reading the foreigner's presence, incorporating this presence within the symbolic realm of readability—before saying no.³⁵ One must welcome (or consume) the other's appearance before the nation, before one can say “nay,” and turn the other away.

If universal hospitality is the right of the stranger to appear before the nation, then is such a law even necessary? For the foreigner will always appear, without permission, without adhering to or transgressing any law. There is no stopping him, no denying him the “right” to appear. As Derrida points out, the problem of the foreigner centres around a distinction between two modes of arrival: the *invitation*, in which the other is summoned to the place of welcome by an agent who has prepared for and anticipated the arrival; and the *visitation*, in which a visitor simply appears unannounced (“Hostipitality”

³⁵Thomas Keenan argues: “Every demand—including the first *Who's there?*—is preceded by something like this affirmation, this nonsignifying response that opens the possibility of speaking, even of questioning” (8).

17n.17).³⁶ Again, Kant is not so much interested in the former; he leaves the “invitation” to the realm of (particular, as opposed to universal) politics and diplomacy. That he focuses on the right of the visit, however, does not entirely divorce his ideal for a universal hospitality from a certain politics (namely, the politics of interpretation), but it does signal an awareness of the impossibility of this politics. Again, the visitor *appears*, and he will do so regardless of any attempt to secure his right to do so. He is “someone who could come at any moment, without any horizon of expectation, who could like the Messiah come by surprise” (“Hospitality” 17n17). There are therefore two moments, as it were, of the arrival which occur simultaneously, and, what is more, work to frustrate the logics of reception. There is the first, or primal, moment of the other’s appearance, which is a moment of ethics. It is the moment in which the other occurs as a surprise, as an accident, as the absolute unforeseeable; we know nothing about it. The second moment (which does not necessarily come *after* the first, but which is nevertheless a kind of response to it) is the political moment, which attempts to interpellate the other’s

³⁶Again, it is useful to think of the “open-door” policy which must *announce* itself to the other in order to remain in a state openness (see Introduction). At this point in the discussion, we can think of such a policy as an invitation rather than as a visitation because it foresees and even solicits the other’s approach. Interestingly, this places great strain on the whole notion of an absolute or “true” hospitality, especially the way Caputo describes it as involving “a certain unconditionality in which one is prepared for anything, which means that one is not prepared” (*More* 41). How does one remain open to or unprepared for the other without instituting some kind of policy, which is to say, without preparing for the other, even if that preparation takes the form of unpreparedness—as though one could do something agented like will oneself into absolute candor, disclosure, vulnerability, or what have you? An open door addresses the other before the other can arrive, before the other can make its surprise visit. The open-door anticipates this surprise, and thus ruins the arrival by doing so. One might even go as far as to suggest that an open-door policy (or a strategy of unpreparedness) aims to preempt the visit, to spoil it before it even occurs.

appearance by questioning it, its intentions, and its past. In Keenan's words, this moment "brings the other into the field of law, constitutes him as subject in addressing him, opens him out of the question into the upright stability of the self" (9). The nation speaks to the foreigner in a foreign tongue. It questions him as Horatio does the ghost of King Hamlet: "Speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!!" (1.1.52).³⁷ In order to trigger the protocols of a universal hospitality, the foreigner must signify what his presence, his appearance, his material being-there, cannot by themselves signify. He must become an object of interpretation, which means entering into a discourse which is not his own. As a foreigner to the language of the state, the other must learn to speak, to signify, in the tongue of another. Its otherness must be translated, reduced, within a discourse of the same. Speak! Tell us your name, and whether you are peaceful or hostile, and whether you are free to leave or whether you shall be put to death. What are your intentions? From whence do you come, and why?³⁸

³⁷Act 1, Scene 1 of *Hamlet*, as Keenan powerfully demonstrates, is an uncannily useful analogy for the arrival and subsequent interpellation of the other-foreigner. The ghost strikes "fear and wonder" in the hearts of its witnesses (1.1.44), these emotions then giving rise to the desire to contain or capture the ghost, to interpellate it within the known, the familiar, and the understood. Its inscrutability demands a certain response which might enable the witness to grasp the meaning of its unexpected visit. Thus, Bernardo claims: "It would be spoke to" (1.1.45). This scene is also exemplary insofar as it alludes to the impossibility of the transaction. The ghost is "offended" and "stalks away (1.1.50-1), thus signaling the other's resistance to interpellation. Spectrally present at best, the other is impossible to grasp; it exceeds the material attempt to reduce it to a name, to a word, to any form of representation. And Hamlet's interaction with the ghost will only strengthen this hypothesis, as he plays out the tragic condition of never being completely certain about what it is that his father's spirit wants him to do.

³⁸And yet, as Derrida astutely observes, this situation reveals to us that we do not simply demand that the foreigner speak in our language and according to our culture (*Of Hospitality* 15). We must *ask* him to do so; we must request that he understand us, that he speak in such a way

It is a complicated moment, this advent of the visit. On the one hand, the foreigner could not be read if not for his otherness. The occasion would not announce itself as such if not for this difference. On the other hand, it is precisely the other's difference which, finally, makes its presence impossible to read. As Antoine Berman argues in *The Experience of The Foreign*, the good translation (and this scene of reading the foreigner at the border is easily configured as a scene of translation) fails to assimilate the original text entirely, but prefers instead to preserve the foreignness of the original—its mysterious, wondrous other-worldliness. As such, all readings of the foreigner are (at least to a certain extent) misreadings, which is precisely why such readings are subject to conditions, laws, and politics. These readings are misreadings, yes, but only in the sense that they demand that reading does not stop, that one reading does not become the preferred or authoritative reading. They demand, moreover, that reading be executed with caution, with care, and, most of all, with *responsibility*. Reading the foreigner demands that we read with a respect for the other's excess; it demands that an attitude of peace be *instituted* at the border where such readings occur.

The impossibility of reading the foreigner poses many difficult questions. As Derrida points out in his book *On Cosmopolitanism*, it is not only difficult to determine what or who the foreigner might be, but it is also equally difficult to determine whether the "other" "has (*indeed*) arrived" (23). Because meeting and greeting the foreigner

that we can understand *him*. We petition him for his cooperation, and for him to welcome us, our language, and our customs. We appeal to him for this generous, hospitable gesture prior to considering his plea.

enacts a scene of misreading (in which the other is reduced, assimilated, repressed), one has perhaps “not yet recognized it” at all (23). The other may pass through, visit, and stay with us without our having known about it whatsoever. It passes unannounced, unacknowledged, anonymous. It is as though the other were always already *here* with us and in us from the start. As I have argued in the previous sections (and at various other points throughout this thesis), reading the scene of the stranger is often (if not always) a covert way of reading one’s own strangeness to oneself. Just as reading the face and the intentions of his father’s spirit provides Hamlet with a way to address the demons, the insecurities and fears of his own soul, the foreign encounter plays itself out in Kant’s work as the nation’s self-encounter.

Conclusion

A significant line of inquiry in this chapter has been to question whether one gives hospitality to the other by first offering it to the other within the self. Do foreign exchanges depend upon a constitutive moment of self-receptivity? Kant’s contribution to my argument for a Romantic hospitality is to recognize not only that the other’s arrival is unpredictable, but also that the other is (and always has been) *already* there—that the other surprises us from within as much as from without. The feasting philosopher is the paradigm for this unforeseen presence of the other who dwells within the subject, and who is devourable as such. The other (be it a foreigner on the border or a companion of the social meal) reminds the subject, in an uncanny moment of self-recognition, that it

does not eat alone, that it could *never* eat by itself *even if it should decide to do so*.

Eating is always a social engagement, and thus calls for a certain responsibility with respect to the subject's reception of the others with and on whom it eats. The other sticks in one's throat like an aftertaste; it lingers in one's house like a guest that never leaves.

The overdetermined nature of Kant's disavowal of the solitary eater as well as his management of the social meal attest to the fact that the other visits at the most unexpected times, and that one can only prepare for these visits by problematizing the act of eating as a field of instability and discord. Anything can happen at the table—or on the border. Anyone at any given moment can be abused, mistreated, and otherwise consumed without responsibility and respect. If a “true” hospitality is impossible, the *Anthropology*, I have argued, constructs an etiquette and a sartorial discourse which acknowledge this impossibility. The reiterative force of Kant's rules for the dinner party (we remember that he *re-visits* the party twice with at least two sets of regulations) illustrate the sheer *responsibility* required to eat alongside another. Through its disavowals, Kant's work points to the priority (not to mention the inevitability) of the stranger's right to the visit; and it emphasizes that we must respond to this right with care, and with an understanding of our own unavoidable violences against the other. If Romantic hospitality unsettles the subject (by occurring without warning, by questioning the identity of the self), then Kant's understanding of this relation demands that the impossibility of receiving the other on its own terms is precisely what makes the hospitable gesture meaningful. The full force of his pragmatism directs itself toward accepting not so much the other itself, but

our failure *not to return from the other to the self*. If we see ourselves in the other (which is to say, if we play out our own self-repudiations in the stranger's face), then we must begin building toward, but without ever achieving, a "true" hospitality by questioning (as well as by policing and regulating) precisely those moments when we think we eat alone, or when (in our solitude) we think that the other lies elsewhere, in the face of a stranger from some foreign land far from here.



CHAPTER THREE

Coleridge and the Poetics of Hospitable Failure

... oh, foul breach of the rites of hospitality! I mean to assassinate my too
credulous guests!

—Coleridge, “To Joseph Cottle,” (c.1797)

Introductory Note

In the previous chapters, the impossibility of hospitality has emerged as a major theme of this thesis. I have argued that, in principle and in practise, hospitality is doomed to self-contradiction and failure. In this chapter, I continue this line of inquiry by turning to the work of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Primarily, I propose that reading Coleridge yields an opportunity to begin discerning the complexities of what we might call a Romantic *poetics* of failed hospitality. As we shall see, hospitable failure is a subject to which Coleridge returns time and time again—so often, in fact, that it would be difficult *not* to think that the theme of the welcome was ever very far from his mind.

A Mouse in the House

Coleridge’s collected works are extensive, elaborate, and most undeniably diverse, thus making it difficult to parse the schematics of a consistent principle or theory of the hospitable relation. The critic who would attempt to do so would do well to heed the warnings of H. J. Jackson, who, in her attempt to register Coleridge’s “attitude towards women,” admits that Coleridge “did not *achieve* consistency” in his writing, “and on the whole there is something reassuringly human about the moments of imprecision

and even of confusion” that we find therein (578, *emph. preserved*). Not unlike the works of Rousseau, many of Coleridge’s texts leave the theme of the welcome inconclusive and unsettled. And while this is not exactly a failure in and of itself (we remember that Rousseau’s “unsettled” theory of hospitality is as productive as it is problematic, indeed, productive *because* problematic), I argue that there is nevertheless a certain pattern in Coleridge which reiteratively tropes the hospitable encounter in the language of failure. This pattern is by no means authoritative. As I have said, Coleridge’s works are much too heterogeneous to be reduced to a single pattern of repetition and representation. I do maintain, however, that the theme of the failed hospitable encounter—which remains strangely unproblematized in Coleridge’s critical heritage—is one which surfaces in many of his most distinguished and most widely read works of poetry and prose.

That being said, I begin my analysis of this pattern in a much less distinguished and familiar place, namely, in a letter from Coleridge to Joseph Cottle, circa April 1797—a letter to which Richard Holmes’ biography, *Coleridge: Early Visions*, draws our attention in ways that are of great importance to this discussion. It needs to be said that the letter in question is not really a letter in the strictest sense, at least not in the sense that it is a *complete* letter. As Earl Leslie Griggs, editor of *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, points out, the letter is “obviously a composite of several letters” which Cottle reconstructed for printing in his *Reminiscences of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey* of 1847.¹ The logic of this reconstruction, as Griggs speculates, follows

¹ The fragmented nature of the letter explains why parts of the letter appear to have been written *from* Coleridge’s cottage in Nether Stowey, while other parts appear to have been written elsewhere and then sent *to* Stowey.

Coleridge's interests in the life of domestic animals and humanity's ethical duties toward these creatures. First, Coleridge's letter asks Cottle to "Remind Mrs. Coleridge of the kittens"—an odd request which the letter fails to explain except by setting it in apposition to another request (a warning, really) regarding George Burnet's tainted "smuggled spirits" (*Letters* 322).² The implication is, perhaps, that Mrs. Coleridge's "kittens" are as "execrable" as Burnet's brandy, the "smack" of which has left Coleridge swearing to have done with the stuff for "half a century" (322). In any case, Coleridge seems, at the very least, to be concerned about the handling of these mysterious kittens; and it is a concern which extends by the end of the letter to a "mad dog" which Coleridge claims has run through the village of Nether Stowey the previous day, causing much distress for man and animal alike. (In addition to striking fear in Coleridge's neighbours, the dog has "bit several [other] dogs" throughout its reign of terror [322].) As if to quell the flames of this tremendous scandal, Coleridge assures Cottle that he has not only urged the farmers to be "attentive" in the future to the curious complexities of dog-life, but has also generously promised to prepare for these men (by the next day, no less) a precautionary manual detailing "the first symptoms of madness in a dog" (322). While jocular in tone, the letter's reference to cats and dogs does signal a serious sort of regret for a poverty of

²George Burnet was introduced to Coleridge through their mutual friend, Robert Southey, and promptly joined both Coleridge and Southey in their Panitsocratic scheme. He later became Coleridge's brother-in-law by marrying Mrs. Coleridge's sister, Martha Fricker. The reference here to his "smuggled spirits" alludes to his alleged purchase of "some prime cheap brandy" which (according to Cottle) Coleridge professed to be "a compound of Hellebore, kitchen grease, and Assafoetida! Or something as bad" (140). These "spirits" are apparently the cause of Burnet's illness which Coleridge mentions in the opening lines of the letter.

knowledge concerning the ethical protocols surrounding the hazards of sharing domestic spaces with animal life. How to welcome a rabid dog, or a pack of hungry kittens? Where do one's obligations lie?

The crux of this *predicament puissant* is best captured in the letter's most sustained, and most humorous, engagement with the poet's encounters with animality, this time with the incorrigible mice of Nether Stowey. The encounter (which takes up the entire third paragraph of the letter) holds the most interest for our present discussion of a Romantic poetics of hospitality, and for this reason, I cite it here in its entirety. Caught in the claws of a kind of quasi-moral dilemma, Coleridge openly jests:

The mice play the very devil with us. It irks me to set a trap. By all the whiskers of all the pussies that have mewed plaintively, or amorously, since the days of Whittington, it is not fair. 'Tis telling a lie. 'Tis as if you said, 'Here is a bit of toasted cheese; come little mice! I invite you!' when, oh, foul breach of the rites of hospitality! I mean to assassinate my too credulous guests! No, I cannot set a trap, but I should vastly like to make a Pitt-fall. (Smoke the pun!) But concerning the mice, advise thou, lest there be famine in the land. Such a year of scarcity! Inconsiderate mice! Well, well, so the world wags. (322)

Holmes suggestively links this passage to many moments in Coleridge's life and work; and I will certainly follow (and lengthen) this intertextual sequence in a moment. Presently, however, I wish to linger over the figural significance of this little joke awhile

longer. I have already alluded to the earnestness of the letter's jocularity. As Freud warns, jokes can be as serious as dreams.³ One need only look to the letter's reference to William Pitt to see how the joke is actually telling us much more than it says, a "Pitt-fall" being as irresistible and effective in catching mice as Pitt was in attracting the nation to what Coleridge felt would be its own downfall.⁴ As Morton D. Paley admits, Coleridge was rarely shy about making similar puns on Pitt's name, remarking once in a lecture, for example, that the Prime Minister had "dugged a pit" into which he himself would be "doomed to fall" (Paley, *Coleridge* 18; *Lectures* 10). This is serious business, to be sure—so serious, in fact, that in the poem "Fires, Famine, and Slaughter" (published not long after this letter to Cottle), Coleridge will tactfully (if not entirely inconspicuously) *avoid* making a similar pun which, as Paley's reading of the poem implies, would set into motion the oppositional play between a "bottomless pit" and the poem's personification of "famine" (16). Returning to the letter to Cottle, we notice, on the one hand, a Pit(t), one that consumes mice (and is perhaps bottomless as well), and there is this omen

³In *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), Freud suggests "that joke-work [that is, the unconscious economy of joke telling] and dream-work must, at least in some essential respect, be identical" (165). Using the dream as a model, Freud describes the formation of a joke as follows: "*a preconscious thought is given over for a moment to unconscious revision and the outcome of this is at once grasped by conscious perception*" (166, *emph. preserved*). Like the dream, the joke can be read to reveal the anxieties, obsessions, and concerns of this revision.

⁴In his satirical portrait of the Prime Minister, published in the *London Morning Post* just three years after this letter Cottle, Coleridge reveals his concern for Pitt's powerfully attractive appropriation of popular opinion, leading the people toward what Coleridge describes as all that is "most dangerous in democracy" ("William" 203). According to Coleridge, Pitt's "extemporaneous arrangement of sentences" had lulled the public in a false sense of security under the delusion that "eloquence implied wisdom" (203).

regarding “scarcity” and “famine in the land”—these two opposite images producing a powerful parody of Pitt’s excessive wartime taxation and political ambition. On the other hand, we have the parallel between a *mouse*-trap and a *Pitt*-fall, suggesting (although not surprisingly) that the trap is in fact set for Pitt, much like the one he sets for himself in Coleridge’s *Lectures*. Pitt is both the trap and the trapped, both the solution and the problem (“inconsiderate” mouse, that he is)—an ambiguity that cuts to the heart of Coleridge’s anxieties not only over the topsy-turvy world of English politics, but also over the quotidian realities of keeping a cottage of one’s own. And so the world wags on.

The pun on Pitt is certainly complex, and one could no doubt continue to read it more closely and extensively than I have done so here. My purpose in reading the pun is simply to reinforce Freud’s insistence on the seriousness of jokes, particularly as it relates to the letter’s failed hospitable encounter between poet and mouse. The letter’s model of a failed or *abused* hospitality is as interesting as it is amusing, especially as it marks the presence of what I am characterizing as a certain pattern in Coleridge’s texts. The first thing to notice about the letter’s hospitality scene is the fact that the mice in question (who are “invited” by Coleridge to dine on a tasty “bit of toasted cheese”) are not really “guests” at all, at least not in the usual sense of this word. As Coleridge explains, the setting of the trap is *as if* to invite the mice. The mice are not guests—but not because they are not human and thus can claim no rights to a friendly welcome, but because, presumably, they are already *there*, in the home, prior to any such invitation. If there is any invitation at all, it is an invitation for the mice to leave the home in one way or

another, by trap or by fall. The mice reflect the unwanted guest who is *there*, has *always* been there, but who is not *desired* to be there whatsoever. Their presence poses a threat to the notion of home-ness as such—and not simply because (as Coleridge's references to famine indicate) they will eat him out of house and home, but more so because they throw into question what it means to *possess* or *own* a home in the first place. Residing in the household not as visitors but as co-habitants, the mice unsettle the logics of hospitality—at least, as it is thought in the naive sense of a host who offers refuge by no power or authority beyond his own will. Depicted here as parasites feeding off their host, the mice defy the master of the household; they work and play in such a way as to be beyond the master's surveillance and control. Their presence mocks the very institution of home-ownership.

And yet, strangely, as undesirable guests they confirm—or *constitute*—the very sovereignty they threaten. While they are the disavowed—the abject, the hidden identity of the household—they guarantee the conditions by which the master takes possession of that home. Their pesky presence inaugurates the first act of occupancy: Coleridge must rid himself of these mice before he can entertain guests of his own. How could he possibly receive guests—how could he possibly receive *himself* as head of household—when his home is held under siege by a whole *host* of tiny plundering visitors? The mice invite the issue of otherness within the home, even if their presence is as old as the institution of domesticity as such: how is otherness to be handled, how it is to be regulated? Coleridge, the host, must purge himself of his guests (thus taking possession

of and mastery over the space of the home) before he can invite them back once more, this time under the scrutiny, the rules, and governance of his own control. The crisis of Coleridge's letter to Cottle finds the mice *possessing* the cottage, leaving the traces (the crumbs, the tiny teeth imprints) of their ghostly guest-like movements. Uncannily, they are guest-like (or *un-heimlich*) prior to the advent of hosting. They are already making themselves welcome (taking up residence, a place in the household) before the master can say, come in, "I invite you." For the time being, Coleridge and mice live in-common, side by side, in a relation that we have already characterized as one of apposition.⁵ As parasites, the mice "live beside the grain;" they dwell beside the host, living in a common home.⁶

For Coleridge, the mice's unsanctioned (not to say, unconscious) act of living in common with him makes them "inconsiderate"—an anthropomorphism which explains more about Coleridge's own feelings of guilt in this domestic drama than it does the actions of a pack of rodents without the capacity for consideration as such. Coleridge knows only too well that he can hardly blame the mice for their behaviour. It is a joke, after all—the punch line, I would argue, being that the mice's "breach" of "unauthorized" cohabitation is not really a "breach" at all but an imagined infraction whose very imagining establishes the very conditions out of which hospitality emerges. Properly

⁵See Chapter Two.

⁶For an analysis of the etymological relation of the words "parasite" and "host," see J. Hillis Miller, "The Host as Critic" (1994).

speaking, their “breach” leads to a second (equally imaginary) breach out of which the politics of the welcome come forth and announce themselves: reflecting on the efficacy of setting a mousetrap, Coleridge laments “oh, foul breach of the rites of hospitality! I mean to assassinate my too credulous guests!” There are, then, two breaches which are not in fact breaches at all. The first is innocent because the mice live beyond such rules and by doing so constitute these rules. But the second breach is, as I have said, equally imaginary; for Coleridge is only too aware of the cruelty of a desire to assassinate “too credulous guests.” His desire to betray his “guests” (his ghostly enemies) remains, for the time being, nothing more than a wish-fulfilment fantasy. By articulating his hesitation (and thus, by disavowing his desire), however, he betrays that desire, making it more visible than ever.⁷ “What to do about these mice?” becomes a question haunting all relations (aberrant or otherwise) between “man” and domestic animal. What to do about cats and dogs, especially those which are barely domesticated, more “mad” than they are complicit with the rule of domestic law? Why won’t these animals cooperate?⁸

⁷I mean to say that this desire is overdetermined. Coleridge evidently takes much pleasure in the jest: his pussies that mew amorously, the expressive “oh,” and the self-satisfaction from the pun on Pitt’s name all point to a certain enjoyment in the problem of the mice and in the impending solution of a kind of mouse holocaust.

⁸For a discussion on the broader (political) significance of Coleridge’s interest in animal-human relations, see: David Perkins, “Compassion for Animals and Radical Politics: Coleridge’s ‘To a Young Ass’” (1998). Perkins points to another joke in “To a Young Ass” involving mice which Coleridge interestingly deletes from the published version of the poem, primarily because (as Perkins argues) the joke’s mockery revealed, perhaps too much, his earliest and “gravest doubts about the practicality of the Pantisocratic community” (940). Characterizing the dwelling-place of Pantisocracy as a place where “Mice with Pussy’s Whiskers sport in Love,” this deleted jest “teases” the poem’s utopian ideal; but its imagery reveals an early interest in the metaphor of a kind of cat-and-mouse game. Perhaps this interest comes back to haunt him here in a letter where a series of curious metonyms—from devilish mice to the plaintive mews of

If there is no rhyme or reason to the behaviour of Coleridge's mice, it is because they are the very reason for reason itself. Their (non-)transgression, which is to say, their way of entering a home not through an open door but through its walls, through the very mechanisms designed to keep strangers out, reiterates the crisis for which the home itself is meant to resolve: the crisis of establishing a place in which the subject might regulate its access to others. Penetrating the fortress of the wall, the mice (as incorrigible other) grant to the wall its very wall-ness, its *raison d'être*. Guests or parasites (indeed, as "smuggled spirits"), Coleridge's mice remind the poet that a breach must occur, and must *continually* occur, for the "rites of hospitality" to exist at all. Hesitating before acting on his desire to kill the mice—which is to say, before committing his own breach by destroying his "inconsiderate" fellows—is perhaps Coleridge's way of saying that to assassinate these guests would be to murder the host, to destroy himself *as well as* the other who grants him the rites to receive guests in the first place. While he resists the urge to kill the guests/ghosts of his household, Coleridge will nevertheless find some way to purge himself of their company. How much more hospitable is it to entrap one's guest than to murder them outright? He fails to welcome them to stay (a gesture, incidentally, which itself fails to understand the mice *as other*, as beings beyond but constitutive to the rites of welcome). Beneath this joke, then, there lies a series of failures: a failure to

whiskered pussies, from toasted cheese to assassination—point to equally grave doubts about his obligations to himself as cottage-dweller versus his duties toward the others inhabiting that space. Does the poet pounce, thus devouring the entire the cottage for himself, or does he hold this desire at bay, redirecting it, as I have said, through the repressive mechanisms of a wish-fulfillment fantasy?

prevent the inevitable visitation of the other, a failure to recognize the other as being beyond one's control, as being anything more than a "devil" or a threat, and ultimately a failure to rid oneself of one's own desire to assassinate one's "too credulous guests." Perhaps the greatest success of the joke is that it demonstrates the fact that failure is at the heart of hospitality, that it is (as I have said) its *raison d'être*, the very condition of its possibility.

One could argue that I am taking the joke *too* seriously, or that I have ruined Coleridge's letter by deflating its obvious ironies. But I stand by the conviction that a jest is never just a jest—that irony of the kind found in jokes often points to a troubled psychology. As Ronald C. Wendling argues, Coleridge may have suffered from a kind of "psychological homelessness" (51),⁹ a diagnosis which sheds much light on a joke that draws much of its strength from the frustrations and disillusionments of a first-time cottage-dweller. Perhaps Coleridge's sympathy for these mice comes from an identification with their own needs for shelter as much as his intolerance for them grows out of a fear of never feeling entirely at-home, the effect of having to share that home with others. Can one really say that one is the master of one's household when there are others scurrying in and around one's cupboards and nibbling on one's food? More than this, Holmes points to other moments in Coleridge's *oeuvre* which further enrich and

⁹Wendling writes: "At the core of Coleridge's dependency was an insatiable need for rescue. He did not ask others for love; he sought to compel it. His sense of undeserved injury at his early separation from domestic attachment made his demands for compensation (in terms of laudanum, money, and the time, hospitality and affection of others) seem reasonable enough even as they were becoming excessive" (51).

complicate the troubled psychology (the joke-work, as it were) lurking beneath Coleridge's domestic jest. For instance, any reference in Coleridge to "a bit of toasted cheese" should remind the reader of one of Coleridge's earliest and most significant memories of childhood. Roughly contemporaneous with the letter to Cottle is another letter to Thomas Poole detailing Coleridge's famous quarrel with his brother Frank over a toasted bit of "*crumbly* cheese" (*Letters* 68)—an incident which, as Stephen M. Weissman speculates in his "psychobiography" of Coleridge's character, came to have a significant impact both on Coleridge's relations with others and on his critical philosophy (xvii-xx). Having coxed his mother into cutting for him the perfect slice of this difficult and crumbly cheese, Coleridge (at age seven) sneaks out to the garden for a moment and returns only to find that his brother has "deliberately crumbed the cheese" in his absence (Weissman xvii).¹⁰ As is well known, the young and disillusioned Coleridge strikes his brother down and, in a fit of rage, grabs a kitchen knife and readies himself to deal the final blow. Caught in the act by his mother, Coleridge drops the knife, runs frantically out-of-doors, heads toward the River Otter where he then collapses from exhaustion and spends a "dramatically stormy night" (Weissman xix)—a night which may very well have been his first taste of (psychological) homelessness. Reading the incident through the letter to Cottle (thus pursuing the autonarrative intertextuality of these two letters),

¹⁰ Actually, as Weissman narrates the tale, Coleridge *sets aside* this perfectly un-crumbed slice of cheese *after* his mother has cut it—perhaps with the intention of savoring the idea of its perfection a little while longer as he ambles out to the garden. There is, of course, another possibility: he deliberately sets the piece aside for the sole purpose of "setting up" his brother, so to speak. Could it have been a trap—the first in a long line of similar (in-)hospitable traps that populate the dream-work of his poetry and prose?

Holmes guesses that Coleridge may have “felt some real kinship with his devilish mice cheated of their cheese” (*Early* 139)—not to mention the loss of their home. This is an interesting possibility, for it would then lend even more credibility to the notion that a mousetrap (or a *Pitt*-fall) is a form of self-entrapment—which is to say, that killing or banishing the unwanted guest is also a means of sending away one’s own sovereignty as host. The *other* side of abjection is, after all, the return of the repressed—an arrival or *visitation* which (in all the ghostly senses of these words) continues to haunt and undermine the master’s mastery of the home. —All of this conflated into a single double-edged desire: an identification with and persecution of persistent pests.

Nevertheless, I do not wish to over-emphasize the psychobiographical connection here. One can never be too sure about this kind of approach. Weissman’s book is often hailed as provocative in its “novelization” of Coleridge’s life, but weak in its critical methodology. The fact remains, however, that the letter does play its part in a sort of complex “history” in Coleridge’s work concerning his interest in (or obsession with) the conditions and the effects of failed hospitality. Referring to Coleridge’s jest about a mouse in the house, Holmes writes: “A domestic joke here contains the seeds of metaphysical drama” (*Early* 138) with which Coleridge continues to struggle in “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” where the reception of animal life is once again a central theme. As Coleridge writes in the “Argument” to the 1800 version of the poem, “Rime’s” narrative discloses “how the Ancient Mariner cruelly and in contempt of the laws of hospitality killed a Sea-bird” (*Poetical Works* 186n3). I will return to “Rime”

later. For now, I wish to point out that there are several other moments of ruined hospitable encounters in Coleridge's work that Holmes does not mention. Michael E. Holstein, for instance, provides a useful, though sketchy, map of the various "unexpected" intrusions in Coleridge's poetry: the "irritating interruption" of Coleridge's dream by "the man from Porlock," the "uninvited arrival" of the Mariner at the wedding banquet, and the "*stranger*" at the "door of young Coleridge's classroom" in "Frost at Midnight" (120). These moments of intrusion, Holstein argues, are eventually "tolerated" by a host who, in the end, "may reap unforeseen benefits from the visit" (120). Holstein's argument is therefore complicit with the "return-upon-itself" ideology of what M. H. Abrams calls "the greater Romantic lyric" ("Structure" 530). Rather than read these intrusions as disruptive encounters which the host then integrates simply by "accommodating" his or her "pattern of thinking" (Holstein 120), I argue that these "surprise" visits function as reminders that there is no resolution in which otherness is finally received or accommodated. For these encounters have a way of returning to the subject. They redouble in such a way that the intrusion plays itself out in a kind of reiterative performance of breach and containment which is not unlike that of Freud's psychological game of the Fort-da.¹¹ For this reason, I argue that Coleridge's narratives of failed welcomes, invitations, and intrusions are best captured from the perspective of this particular psychological model. Furthermore, it is only when we treat these narratives not necessarily as the product of a conscious attempt to produce a theory of

¹¹I want to thank David L. Clark for reminding me of this figure in Freud, and for suggesting to me its usefulness to this study.

hospitality, but rather as recurring points of theorization (which is to say, as moments in which Coleridge's work repeatedly opens itself up to [or welcomes] the theoretical complexities of the hospitable relation) that we can begin to sense the prospects for a Romantic poetics of failed hospitality. Let us now, then, turn to Freud's description of the Fort-da as well as to its extension in Derrida.

Coleridge and the Fort-Da Game of Hospitality

Derrida reminds us that the Fort-da game was concocted by Freud's grandson—a significant little fact that Freud neglects to mention himself, but on which Derrida focuses a great deal of energy in *The Post Card* as he attempts to flesh out the various “returns” of the repressed in Freud's own articulation of the game. In “Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” Freud claims that this “good little boy” (his grandson) had an “occasional disturbing habit” of tossing his toys into a corner, accompanying this action with a “loud, long-drawn-out ‘o-o-o-o’” which Freud and the boy's mother (Freud's daughter, Anna) determine is baby-talk for “*fort*,” meaning “gone” (284). As is well known, the grandson further develops this occasional habit by using a “wooden reel with a piece of string tied around it,” which he pitches over the edge of his “curtained cot” and then pulls back into his sight once more, uttering “o-o-o-o” when it is “gone” and celebrating with a resounding “*da*” [“there!”] upon its return (284). For Freud, this is “the complete game—disappearance and return” (284). His interpretation of the game is to suggest that it, like all games, finds its origins in “another motive” for which the game acts as an alibi (285).

The motive is one which Freud characterizes as being “hostile” in nature, a description which bears obvious relevance for this discussion (286). The child plays the game, argues Freud, as a means to make himself “master of the situation” (286). Specifically, the game substitutes the disappearance and return of the wooden reel for the disappearance and return of the child’s mother, over whom he increasingly realizes he has no control. It is an act “revenge,” says Freud (285). It is as though the child says to the mother, “All right, then, go away. I don’t need you. I’m sending you away” (285). Commenting on the differences between cause and effect (or cause and *affect*) of Fort-da gaming, Freud concludes: “As the child passes over from the passivity of the experience [of abandonment] to the activity of the game, he hands on the disagreeable experience to one of his playmates [or toys] and in this way revenges himself on a substitute” (286).

The model of the Fort-da game has since become a useful model for the return of the repressed. I contend, moreover, that it is also very useful for charting the processes by which the subject exacts a kind of vengeance on hospitality (or, to be more specific, on its own failure to secure hospitality on its own terms) by modelling and re-modelling (i.e., re-presenting) the welcome in a poetics of failure. I propose to read Coleridge’s work as a series of texts which theorize the vengeance and acts of mastery implicit in *every* representation, in *every* attempt to represent and control the elements of the hospitable encounter—even and especially if these acts portray the encounter in a negative light. Engaged in a game of representation which posits hospitality as lost or as conflicted by its own impossibility (*Fort*) but which “finds” or masters the hospitable relation precisely by

positing it as lack or *as impossible* (*da!*), Coleridge's work finds *itself* perpetually deferring or postponing its reflections on the hospitable, and in doing so, theorizes its own inability to master the game itself.

My approach to Coleridge and the poetics of failed hospitality through the Fort-da mechanism does have precedents, not the least of which is Derrida's reading of Freud's "Beyond the Pleasure Principle." As Derrida observes, Freud will reiteratively "renounce" or "abandon" the idea of the pleasure principle in this essay for its impossibility to prove or adequately theorize (*Post Card* 295). By the conclusion of Freud's essay, says Derrida, "we have not advanced one step, only steps for nothing on the path of the manifest investigation" (296). And yet these steps are *not* for nothing; they are, rather, the steps of a theory which prefers to "de-monstrate" itself, which, as Derrida explains, means that it "makes its proof without showing [*monstrer*]" (296). Rather than relying on evidence, Freud's theory *performs* its theoretical speculation by tossing its evidence away and then returning to it time and time again. Freud "pretends to distance the [Pleasure Principle]," says Derrida, in order to "bring it back ceaselessly," that is, in order to observe that it "brings itself back," and then to conclude: "it (he) is still there, I am always there. *Da*." (302). The reiterative abandonment of something like a theory of pleasure or an image of reception involves a certain amount of pleasure. It involves exacting a certain level of mastery over such a theory.

There is pleasure in it, as there is pleasure in Coleridge's joke about the mice in his letter to Cottle. Hospitality may be impossible but that does not prevent one from

taking pleasure in it. As we shall see, the hospitable relation will be impossible to control, thus guaranteeing that if there is pleasure to be had in the attempt to master it, the promise of this pleasure will be forever renewed as the relation continues to escape the hands that would hold it down. As is the case with all Fort-da games, the psychical object of the game (i.e., control over the objective world) is always postponed. There is no satisfactory end of the game. The depiction of one failed hospitality scene always gives rise to another. Hospitality is a process of disclosure, of being so open and embracing that the welcome is never foreclosed as such. If it is to be thought with any kind of rigour—that is, with any concern for its absolute unconditionality—hospitality welcomes its own failure *ad infinitum*. While hospitality is an invitation to play, its summons is endlessly open, welcoming the subject to a game in which there is no final card to draw, no final move, no checkmate—only the promise to play again, and to experience the failure one more time.

Although I focus primarily on moments of hospitable failure in Coleridge's work, I am nevertheless *not* suggesting that Coleridge took no efforts to construct and preserve an ideal hospitality, or that he never expressed this ideal through his poetry or in his prose. There is at least one depiction of such an ideal in the early poem "Pity," written in 1794 and later published in 1796. A product of Coleridge's "most Christian phase" (Holmes, *Selected Poems* 300), this sonnet features a speaker who takes pity on an "Old Man" who has been treated poorly by the elements. The Old Man is cold; there are

“frozen dew” hanging from his beard and numbing his chest. The speaker (whom we presume is an idealized version of Coleridge himself for his references to “Sara,” his wife) offers the Old Man an arm and a place to warm at “our fireside’s recess” (10). There are references to Christ, the “Galilaean mild,” who “met the Lazars turned from rich men’s doors / And call’d them Friends, and healed their noisome sores!” (13-4). Clearly, there is a precedent set both by the “Galilaean” ideal and by the poem itself—it being the first, to my knowledge, of Coleridge’s dabbling into the theme of the hospitable. And yet even in this poem (which Holmes, perhaps too hastily, characterizes as being “naive” in its philanthropy [*Selected Poems* 300]), the hospitable gesture remains suspended in a moment of deferral, as though the promise of the Old Man’s reception is still very much of the kind of a welcome *yet to come*. The poem is, after all, written in the future tense: “I’ll melt these frozen dew / That hang from thy white beard,” says the speaker; “My Sara too shall tend to thee, like a child” (7-8, 9). For the moment, there is only Coleridge’s bleeding heart (or, at least, it is a heart that “has bled” in the past “To see thee, poor Old Man”), and there is a demand: “throw away this tatter’d vest / That mocks thy shivering! Take my garment—use / A young man’s arm” (1-2, 5-6). There is no closure to the sonnet’s despair, no actual reception, no embrace by the speaker’s hearth. There is only a reference to the example of Christ, only the declaration of suffering and of how this suffering *should be* redressed. With the close and resolution of the poem, the old man continues to suffer, and we are left only with a speaker’s promise. Indeed, in the strangely inhospitable turn of the poem’s conclusion, we are distracted

from this Old Man who, in his suffering, remains frozen in the timelessness of a poem, reaching for a “young man’s arm.” We move from this image of destitution, not to the fireside on which he is to receive a guest’s welcome, but to a place much further away (through space and through time) in which Lazars are met by the “Galilaeen mild.”

Hospitality in this poem takes place not here but elsewhere, in a place as mythical as it is far. The Old Man’s deliverance, his reception, is postponed and replaced by a scene from scripture which acts as the moral standard. There is no mention of this poem in any of Coleridge’s biographies, so it is difficult to know whether this Old Man were a caricaturized figure from the poet’s life (replete with all the inhospitable stereotypes of an elderly man’s pitiful frailty), or whether this old man were a fiction through and through (equally infused with similar assumptions about old age). What is more, the biographical makes little difference here. For the poem is what it is: a constative proclamation of an ideal hospitality, one which merely substitutes one scene of hardship and distress for another, without delivering on its promise of redemption. In this sense, if the poem is complete, it is complete only in its incompleteness, which is to say, in its own refusal to foreclose the hospitable relation. The inequity between guest and host remains frozen in time.

And yet “Pity” testifies to Coleridge’s literary concerns for and commitment to thinking through the conditions and the protocols of the hospitable relation. The poem also adds further credibility to the notion of a certain unsettlement with regard to Coleridge’s work and its depictions of the hospitable—even when these depictions present

themselves in an ostensibly idyllic mode. I have mentioned “Kubla Khan” and “Rime” as other instances in which this unsettlement emerges to represent itself. While I will focus more on “Christabel” and other poems in this chapter, a few words must be said about these two poems not simply (or not only) because they attest to the pattern of failed hospitality in Coleridge, but also because they complicate and enrich our understanding of this pattern in ways that are unique unto themselves. “Kubla Khan” places its scene of hospitality in relation to writing. Famously, Coleridge claims in the poem’s “Preface” that he was unable to complete the “two to three hundred” line version of “Kubla Khan” that he anticipated, as his trance-like transcription of his miraculous dream-vision of Xanadu is disturbed “by a person on business from Porlock” who “detains” him for more than an hour (Homles, *Selected Poems* 229). Many critics have highlighted the staginess of this encounter, conceding that the preface has no “literal” truth (Schneider 238), or, more complexly, that “poem and preface are equidistant from the literal Word” (Mileur 25). Hence, we can safely treat the encounter as a narrative, or as Jean-Pierre Mileur alternatively calls it, “a self-conscious fiction” (26)—and thus, as an instance of a *constructed* failure of the hospitable. The hospitable failure of the preface, however, is not so much that a man has come from Porlock and imposed himself and his business on Coleridge, consequently detaining him from his work. There is in fact nothing glaringly unusual about his arrival, and Coleridge’s reception of the stranger seems innocently and admirably executed (although we can imagine the speaker’s distraction, forgetting to offer

the traveller something to drink, perhaps).¹² The failure, rather, lies not so much with the act itself but more so in its *competition* with another act of hospitality—namely, the one between the speaker of the preface and the dream he *receives* in a moment of tremendous inspiration. In the postscript to an undelivered letter, circa 1826, Coleridge characterizes his writing process (specifically the process of writing notes—which we can image as being similar to the hasty composition of a fabulous dream) as an act of “promiscuous hospitality” in which the poet opens all the “windows,” the “doors,” and the “inlets” of his mind to the chance visitation of imaginative revelation (*Letters* 1352). It is a process which he likens to the reception of “Angels in disguise” (1352).¹³ When his Porlockian businessman calls, then, Coleridge is faced with a intriguing dilemma: to which door

¹²As Katherine Wheeler points out, the word “business” as a descriptor for the arrival of the person from Porlock had for Coleridge a “very special connotation at the time” (*Creative* 23-4). The “business,” she claims, has to do with the “spying” to which he and Wordsworth “were subjected by the ‘Aristocrats’” (24). The stranger in this case is therefore not strange at all but inhospitably familiar—that is, familiar both in the sense that Coleridge new these spies and in the sense that “becoming familiar” or getting “too close for comfort” is precisely the “business” of every spy.

¹³Coleridge’s reference to “Angels in disguise” echoes the final line of William Blake’s “Holy Thursday” from *Songs of Innocence*: “Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door” (l.12). In turn, both writers echo scripture: “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Heb. 13.2). Does this possibility of entertaining guests *unawares* suggest a figure for a radicalized hospitality in which one offers refuge without knowing it—without “offering” it as such, without executing any kind of agented authority over an other who always already arrives without one’s permission, without need of such permission? Another possibility: does the celestial visitant, *as disguised*, amount to a test, a calculated (one might even say inhospitable) arrival designed to measure and judge a host’s treatment of others? Faced with these conflicting questions, it is perhaps best to say: not one possibility or the other but both—only competition between possible readings, differences in emphasis, differences in contexts. (Perhaps there is even a competition between poets, between texts that call on scripture, between poetic and biblical discourse?). For Coleridge, I argue, competition lies at the heart of every hospitable event.

should he turn? Does he honour his duties as a host by attending another human being or by answering the call of inspiration? At stake in the preface is a confrontation between two competing obligations, one which leads to Porlock, the other to Xanadu. The intersection of these obligations manifests an incontestable and irresolvable limit of the hospitable relation, a *failure* to welcome several guests simultaneously. One must always choose to let one guest pass while keeping another at bay. It is the very definition and meaning of a welcome. As Mileur puts it so wonderfully, “like the tango, business takes two” (29). As the story goes, Coleridge chooses to close the windows, the doors, and inlets of his mind (at least for an hour or so), apparently feeling more obligated to open the doors of his home to this man, with whom, after all, he has things to discuss. There is certainly a failure here—one that highlights the fact that hospitality, if it is to succeed at all, must destroy itself. It must paradoxically close itself to otherness in order to receive others as guests.

While the drama of competing hospitalities in “Kubla Khan” occurs almost silently, the in-hospitable drama we find in “Rime” is more obvious. Again, the first mention of hospitality in “Rime” occurs in the 1800 version of the “Argument” in which Coleridge writes: “how the Ancient Mariner cruelly and in contempt of the laws of hospitality killed a Sea-bird” (*Poetical Works* 186n3). While it is true that the main body of the poem does not itself mention the theme of the hospitable by name, the marginal gloss (added in 1815-6) mentions it at least twice more: first with the descriptor, “a great sea-bird, called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great

joy and hospitality” (83); and again in a moment of crisis, “The Ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen” (84). The initial good will toward and reception of the Albatross should remind us of at least one of the limits of hospitality to which we have alluded time and time again—namely, the tendency of the host to receive the familiar over and against the impossibility of welcoming the unwelcome. As Paul Magnuson argues, in the “nightmarish” landscape of “Rime,” the Albatross “is the one familiar sight,” and it is on this account that the “great bird” receives a friendly “Christian” welcome (59). Once more, the issue of competing obligations arises with this observation: where do the Mariner’s obligations lie in the end, toward the familiar or toward the strange and the unknown? This is, I would argue, one the poem’s most crucial inquiries—one for which the explicit and most obvious hostility of killing the “great” sea bird could be said to serve as a kind of decoy.¹⁴ Magnuson himself questions the logics of the conventional reading of this murderous act as signalling an allegory of sin and repentance, suggesting instead that the “crime” of killing the Albatross has little to do with the punishment to which the Mariner is subjected (59). He observes that the so-called “punishment” begins in fact *prior to* the “crime.” He also points out that the

¹⁴For essays on other forms of hostility and difference for which the Albatross stands as a decoy, see John B. Ower, “Crantz, Martens and the ‘Slimy Things’ in ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’” (2001). See also R.A. Foakes, “Coleridge, Violence and ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’” (2001). More radically, critics have recently read much of the poem’s action as an alibi for its engagements with colonialism and Romantic Orientalism. See especially, Debbie Lee, “Yellow Fever and the Slave Trade: Coleridge’s ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’” (1998), and P.H. Knox-Shaw, “The Eastern Ancient Mariner” (1996). My interest, for the present chapter, is simply to draw out (albeit quickly) the competing hospitalities in “Rime’s” Wedding Guest framework (along with those in the “Preface” to “Kubla Khan”) as a means to anticipate a broader discussion of the repetition of hospitable failures in “Christabel” and in other poems such as “Frost at Midnight” and “To Two Sisters.”

connection between the killing of the great bird and the chaos that ensues was not originally Coleridge's idea but Wordsworth's interpretation of the poem (57)—one which Coleridge (perhaps due to his feelings of intimidation before his accomplished friend) nervously adopted and immortalized in the gloss many years later.¹⁵ More an afterthought of the poem than a constitutive part of it, this reading of the Albatross's murder as being responsible for the poem's scenes of terror (a reading which, like most prefatorial or marginal glosses, aims to pre-empt other possible readings) acts as a kind of distraction from other more complex in-hospitalities at play in the poem. Among other things, it serves to distract the reader from the gloss's and the Preface's hostile or inhospitable takeover of the poem's interpretive reception.

The emphasis that the gloss places on the "crime" distracts its readers from the curiously troubled scene of hospitality triggered by the poem's "Wedding Guest" framework. While Katherine Wheeler, for instance, argues that the "Wedding Guest" is crucial for structural reasons,¹⁶ he is, I would argue, also interesting on a thematic level as

¹⁵From Magnuson: "In the first edition Coleridge does little more than report that the mariner killed the bird. The addition of the gloss does not illuminate the reasons, if there were conscious reasons, for the act" (57). Interestingly, the changes to the "Argument" and the addition of the gloss are, in themselves, failed acts of hospitality. Ostensibly intended to aid in the reading of the poem, these supplemental features overdetermine the reception of a kind of "preferred reading" of the text, thus exacting a certain hostility toward the poem's own otherness as well as a certain hostility toward the reader who would otherwise read the poem differently. The gloss and the "Argument," then, reproduce the poem's failed scenes of hospitality within the subtextual drama of poem's the scene of reading. For more on the various *impositions* of the gloss, see James Holt McGavran, "Glossing Over the Ancient Mariner: Perversion, Panic, and Collage-Texts" (1995), and Diane Long Hoeveler, "Glossing the Feminine in The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1992).

¹⁶For Wheeler, the Wedding Guest figures in the poem as an "ideal" reader (*Creative* 48)—a figuration which lends even more evidence toward the poem's aggressive privileging and restriction of its own interpretation. The Wedding Guest, like the gloss, works to "read out" otherness in the poem, so to speak.

a figure in a peculiar hospitable dilemma all to his own. He is a guest invited to a banquet, and therefore has a certain obligation to arrive, especially as he is “next of kin” (6). It would be rude for him not to show; but he is prevented from honouring this duty as the Mariner does “detaineth” him for quite some time (5). The Mariner must simply unburden himself by telling his tale, but he can only do so at the expense of another. In this way, the Wedding Guest transforms from a guest to a host who gives the Mariner a moment (a long moment!) of his time. More specifically, his will *imposed* upon him by the Mariner’s mesmeric “glittering eye” (13), the Wedding guest is held hostage in his host-age of the Mariner’s tale—a predicament that only reinforces the notion that hospitality and *hostility* are never far from one another, that they co-exist, side-by-side, residing in apposition.¹⁷

The Wedding Guest scene is as complex and subtle as that between Coleridge and his Porlockian visitor in the preface to “Kubla Khan.” Anthony J. Harding, who describes the scene in the specific terms of “love,” understands this scene as yet another contest between competing obligations. This competition takes place between what he calls the “easy sociability” of the wedding festivities (which, he claims, can become a “prison” trapping love “within an artificially enclosed world”) and the more difficult act of love that brings the Mariner and the Wedding Guest together in their precariously sustained communion (65). Not unlike the speaker of the preface to “Kubla Khan,” the

¹⁷For an account of the mesmeric debates in the eighteenth century and their influence on “Rime,” see especially Charles J. Rzepka, “Re-collecting Spontaneous Overflows: Romantic Passions, the Sublime, and Mesmerism” (1999). See also John Beer, *Coleridge the Visionary* (1970), and Frederick Burwick, “Coleridge, Schlegel, and Animal Magnetism” (1985).

Wedding Guest is forcibly obliged to choose one form of hospitality at the expense of another. Should he listen to this Ancient Mariner who is compelled to teach him a lesson—one which will be realized simply in the listening, by choosing to welcome the Mariner's tale over the sounds of the wedding feast? (The Mariner is the Wedding Guest's albatross of sorts. Were he to join his fellow celebrants he would in effect be slaying a great sea bird of his own, thus confirming the tragedy of the Mariner's tale.) Or should he follow his initial instinct to forsake the Mariner? (As Harding reminds us, the Wedding Guest "threatens to use his stick to rid himself of this persistent stranger" [64]: "my staff shall make you skip" [13, 1798].) What looks like a breach of hospitality on the part of the Mariner's detainment of the Wedding Guest is in fact another form of hospitality which competes with and, as the poem relates, overcomes the hospitality of the wedding festival—although not without the hostile mesmerism of the Mariner's glittering eye. My interest in this competition is not simply to evaluate the merits and the shortcomings of either choice as Harding does—his interests lying, it would seem, in the reconstruction of a dominant idea of love in Coleridge over various others. The choice that the Wedding Guest does make or is *forced* to make (i.e., to listen to the Mariner's tale, albeit begrudgingly and not without complaint) does counterbalance the inhospitable slaying of the Albatross insofar as he refuses to refuse his would-be interlocutor, his spectral or ghost-like visitor. But the merits of the choice are only relative to the harm it causes. Could it not be argued that the Wedding Guest simply embraces the lesser evil, or that Coleridge's interest in the obligatory nature of the Wedding Guest's choice (i.e.,

his spellbound *inability* to refuse) is to question the violence of obligation as such? As “next of kin,” his presence will surely be missed. His decision will no doubt cause a certain amount of grief. Could it not be suggested that the more difficult decision might have been to choose the banquet, leaving the Mariner to his “agony” (583)? *Tête-à-tête* encounters do, after all, command a significant, even hypnotic, power over the subject, obliging it to respond. It would require an extraordinary repressive apparatus to turn coldly from the stranger’s plea (although this happens so often and, seemingly, with such ease!). Would it not be more difficult to raise one’s stick against a “bright-eyed” grey-bearded Mariner than to listen to his plea? It is difficult to say. And yet Harding seems to say it with great ease. He promptly dismisses the Wedding Guest’s duties and the offence that his absence might inflict. More than this, he belittles these duties, characterizing them as part of an “artificially enclosed world.” They are of no great concern or consequence. As comprehensive and illuminating as it is, Harding’s reading tends to reproduce and confirm the hospitable ideology of the poem: pity over party.

One need not settle on the idea that the Wedding Guest makes the “right” decision by welcoming and attending the Mariner’s tale over and against the wedding feast. Could we not, as speculative readers, enter the wedding feast, as it were, without our two interlocutors? Are we not free to imagine the insult and the impropriety of the Wedding Guest’s refusal to attend the wedding, at which the host has reserved for him a prestigious place as next of kin? Is it so easy and forgivable to refuse such an honour? And why characterize the hospitality of the “garden-bower” as “artificial” or as less authentic or

“real” than others? According to Harding, there is “no wonder” that, in the end, the Wedding Guest is “sadder” and “turn[s] from the bridegroom’s door, for his Eden has been shown to be a prison” (65). And yet I do wonder just a little: perhaps it is the case that the Wedding Guest is simply too “stunned” and “forlorn” to join the festivities—which, incidentally, Coleridge never truly characterizes in a negative light, and certainly never as a “prison.” While it is true that the “lesson” of the poem is that “He prayeth best, who loveth well / All things both great and small” (614-5)—which is to say, one is best to aid the needy than to pray in a “garden-bower” (593)—the poem’s scenography suggests that such principles are not executed without consequences. I do not believe that “Rime” means primarily (or, at the very least, *exclusively*) to privilege the decision for pity over party. Rather, the poem also compels us to think about the act of choosing itself, and of the inevitable or constitutive inhospitalities that such choices secretly harbour. The “right” choice is always also a *wrong* choice: something or someone is always wronged. As with Coleridge’s narrative of the person on business from Porlock, the success of hospitality in “Rime” is accompanied by a failure to realize one’s obligations to another other. One may decide which decision is more right—whether it is to pity or to party that one will turn—but one cannot forget that suffering is always just around the corner, that it is always the *other* side of the decision. Why should Coleridge have added this curious conflict of competing obligations if not to suggest that every welcome (even if it is the expression of an unshakeable sense of pity) comes only at a cost? There are no pure welcomes, only contending obligations.

The Case of “Christabel”

Moving from the competing hospitalities of “Kubla Khan” and “Rime,” I turn now to “Christabel” in order to further read the complex role of pity in Coleridge as well as to continue charting the insistence of the Fort-da pattern of the in-hospitable.

“Christabel” is exemplary in this regard precisely because it reproduces and thematizes the repetition of the failed hospitable encounter *within* the structure of its narrative. The supernatural tale of one woman’s encounter with and welcome of another, “Christabel” is, on its own, a complex Fort-da game of violation and trespass. Among the many breaches of borders and failures mentioned in the poem (all of which run along an axis of the guest-host dualism), we can include: i) the violation and abuse of Geraldine by the “Five warriors” who leave her stranded in the woods; ii) Geraldine’s and Christabel’s crossing of the threshold of Sir Leoline’s household while he lies asleep (and is thus unable to welcome the castle’s newest houseguest, whom we might say is an *unannounced* visitor—i.e., *there* but not entirely known to *be* there); iii) Geraldine’s aggressive exorcision of Christabel’s mother’s spirit; iv) Bracy’s hesitation and refusal to extend Sir Leoline’s promise of hospitality to Geraldine’s father Roland; and v) most complexly, Sir Leoline’s climactic accusation that Christabel (his own daughter) has “disgraced” “all his hospitality” by objecting to Geraldine’s reception in the “presence room” (644, 396). All of these trespasses and failures (each of which contains its own inner violations and disruptions) renders “Christabel” a kind of microcosm for the recurring pattern of failed hospitable encounters in Coleridge’s poetry.

“Christabel” is especially interesting because it binds the pattern of failed hospitality with another central theme of this thesis, namely, the complex issue of the self-welcome. There are a great number of violations in the poem, but, as Christian La Cassagnère argues, the greatest failure is not committed by Geraldine, whom critics often treat as a demonic intruder abusing an “innocent” Christabel’s kindness. Rather, the greatest failure is committed by Christabel herself: she fails to recognize her *other self* in Geraldine. For La Cassagnère, Christabel’s tale is one of a “missed encounter, and its myth that of a failing self-integration” (88). While many readings of the poem focus either on psychoanalysing the poem’s various sexualities or on Geraldine’s serpentine iniquity, “Christabel” is also the story of the failed *self*-hospitable encounter.¹⁸ To put it in La Cassagnère’s Lacanian language, the poem narrates the consequences of a missed encounter with the other within oneself. Although Geraldine represents a mirrored double of Christabel, the mirror in question is not a “narcissistic mirror,” as La Cassagnère argues, but an “uncanny mirror” which “sends back Christabel an image she [does] not expect” (87). In the reflection of this mirror Christabel sees not herself as she imagines her ideal form, but a scene with which she is not familiar—at least, not entirely.

¹⁸Various critics have similarly characterized Geraldine as Christabel’s double. Wheeler, for instance, argues that Geraldine reflects “the ‘other side’ of the mind, or the unconscious” (“Disruption” 87). Similarly, Diane Long Hoeveler writes: “[Christabel] ‘marries’ herself to herself; she joins the two sides of her personality and accepts her sexuality in accepting Geraldine” (*Romantic* 178). I choose to focus on La Cassagnère not only because his reading is perhaps the most theoretically complex, but also (and more importantly) because, unlike other critics, he characterizes the scene as a *missed* encounter rather than as a “marriage” or as the discovery of a “complement” (Hoeveler, *Romantic* 178). It is a failure rather than a successful self-integration.

As the poem narrates, she encounters Geraldine in the woods as “a damsel bright” (53); and while it is true that Geraldine is “A lady richly clad as [Christabel]” (68), situated there on the “other side of the oak” (56), she is strangely foreign and unrecognizable to Christabel. Such a familiar looking figure placed in this oddly othered world on the opposite side of the dark oak is for Christabel “frightful there to see” (66). For La Cassagnère, Christabel is disturbed to find the “homelike” figure of Geraldine rendered positively “*unhomelike*” (87). She is startled by the uncanniness of the encounter, by this figure so similar to herself but also at the same time so destitute, ravaged, and in need of aid. Next to this lady so richly clad, Christabel is beside herself—both sympathetic to this “wretched maid” (104) and terrified by her otherworldliness.

Frightfully she gasps, “Mary mother, save me now” (69). Grappling with an identity so similar to and yet so distant from herself, she asks, “And who art thou?” (70). Geraldine’s response informs Christabel that “[Her] sire is of a noble line, / And [her] name is Geraldine,” an identification that prompts Karen Swann to reconfigure the response: “I am like you, and my story is like your own” (151). The spooky play of similarity and difference in this wooded drama surprises and unsettles Christabel. It is not what she expected to find as she came here to pray for the delivery of “her own betrothed knight” who is presently so “far away” (29, 30). It is precisely this prayer—this desire or longing for her betrothed knight—that contains the guarantee of Christabel’s missed encounter with herself as well as what La Cassagnère call the “true ethics of Coleridge’s poem” (87). If ethics “is a task of recognition and integration” (87)—a task

best summarized, as La Cassagnère explains, in Freud's popular aphorism "Where id was, there ego shall be"—then Christabel's failure is that she misrecognizes the "otherness" of her desire. Arriving at the oak tree expecting to find a shrine at which to devote herself to her heterosexual desires for a knight so far away, Christabel discovers instead the secret place of an *other* desire altogether. Unable (or unwilling) to understand her attraction to this "exceedingly" beautiful and "wildly glittered" stranger (68, 64), she is paralysed—her prayer, "save me now," being perhaps an appeal against the sexual powers of Geraldine, who, as we later learn, has the ability to "worketh" spells over Christabel's conscious mind (267).

Even after she invites Geraldine to "share" her "couch for the night" (122), Christabel continues to deny her desire, offering up yet another prayer, this time one of repentance: "'Sure I have sinn'd . . . / 'Now heaven be praised if all be well!'" (381-2). While she resorts to a moral code that condemns her same-sex desire and privileges only her feelings for her betrothed knight, the poem nevertheless works to foreground another ethical reality, one primarily focussed on the self's responsibility to recognize its repudiation of the other for the disavowal of the other within the self. As La Cassagnère writes, "Geraldine is neither good nor evil" (87). Contrarily, she is "the lawless Real . . . which is internal to the subject but from which the subject's consciousness has become estranged, keeping him or her paralysed, locked up in neurotic conflict" (87). Christabel's tale is thus another parable of abject self-abandonment, and Geraldine functions in it much like the "Turk" does in Kant's narrative on the hospitality of nations.

She represents the abject interior, the hidden face of the subject's identity, once more reminding us (to return to the language of Kristeva) that all encounters are self-encounters and that self-estrangement is the condition of possibility for all foreign relations.

It seems only too convenient, moreover, that Coleridge's poem draws on the condition of the absent mother to complete its psychodrama of self-integration. For as Kristeva often observes, abjection is a process of "matricide" through which the subject ascends into the symbolic (that is, the signifying realm of the father) by rejecting its own otherness, which comes to be associated with the literal separation from the mother's material body (Nikolchina 35). Interestingly, Christabel's mother dies in child birth ("She died the hour that I was born," she says [197]); and while Barbara Schapiro suggests that the literal absence of the mother enables the poem to image the psychical conflicts of "good" and "bad" motherhood (76), I argue that it foregrounds the other, more serious, psychical issue of maternal separation in the poem. In the absence of her biological mother, Christabel confronts the abject body of another (m)other, as it were, namely Geraldine, who interestingly has her own (in)hospitable encounter with the "spirit" of Christabel's mother. When she offers Geraldine to partake in her mother's "cordial wine" of "wild flowers," Christabel utters yet another prayer, "O mother dear! That thou wert here!" (202), to which Geraldine responds: "I would . . . she were" (203). For Geraldine, the mother is very much there in spirit, if not in body. Aspiring to seduce Christabel, she turns resolutely hostile toward its protective presence. If she is to assume the maternal body and hold Christabel in her arms "As a mother with her child" (301),

she must exorcise this ghost. Accordingly, with a much “altered voice” (204), she turns as if to speak with the “bodiless dead” (209):

“Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
I have power to bid thee flee.”
.....
“Off woman, off! This hour is mine -
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off! ‘tis given to me.” (205–6, 211–3)

The strange otherworldliness of this scene only attests to the powerful supernatural elements in Coleridge’s poetry. More interestingly, it also underscores the poem’s interest in abjection insofar as it constructs the stage for Christabel’s encounter with and rejection of the (m)other’s body. What is perhaps most scandalous about this scene—which is to say, what makes the poem, according to many of its earliest readers, “the most obscene poem in the English language” (House 126)—is that it dramatizes a perverse kind of sexual reunion between mother and child. With the power to transform from woman to snake,¹⁹ Geraldine is also capable of changing from other to mother—and back again. She summons the ghost of Christabel’s mother only to send it away and take its (physical) place. In this forbidden night of sexual taboo, Geraldine becomes the mother Christabel never knew, the maternal body that she was never able psychically to reject. Christabel embraces Geraldine, the (m)otherness of her desire, if only to disavow the encounter altogether. Locked in Geraldine’s maternal embrace (“the lovely lady’s

¹⁶Turning from Sir Leoline to Christabel in the castle’s “presence room,” Geraldine undergoes the following transformation: “the lady’s eyes they shrunk in her head, / Each shrunk up to a serpent’s eye” (584–5). For a provocative Kleinian reading of this transformation, see Margery Durham, “The Mother Tongue: *Christabel* and the Language of Love” (1985).

prison" [304]), she arises to push this body away, and, with it, the darkest, most obscure longings of her desire. Asking "He, who on the cross did groan" to "wash away her sins unknown" (389-90), Christabel confirms the disavowal, and in the confirming, re-enacts the subject's separation from the mother, its lacerative and self-abjuring process of individuation.

Christabel, however, seems not to have had done with Geraldine just yet, nor does the poem discontinue its insistence on Geraldine's connection to the maternal body. For although Christabel rejects her nocturnal indiscretions with Geraldine the following morning (pleading with her father to "send [this woman] away" [617]), Geraldine ends the poem's (incomplete) narrative in another, more domestic, maternal position: Sir Leoline, insulted by his daughter's request, takes Geraldine from his "presence-room" and leads her deeper into the castle's domestic spaces, while at the same time leaves Christabel behind like a child to meditate on her offences.²⁰ This final scene of Part II thus fashions for itself an intriguing little oedipal drama, one in which we can imagine both father and daughter desiring the mother figure alike—the only difference being that the child has now entered into a mode of repressing and disavowing that desire. While the poem ends on this unsettling note, it is but the beginning of Christabel's renunciation of desire. As Marjorie Levinson and E. H. Coleridge each point out in their own way, the poem is not only an unfinished fragment, it is also "a sequence of fragments" in and of itself (Levinson 77). Hence, we need not even speculate on what *might* have been

²⁰From "Christabel": "And turning from his own sweet maid, / The agéd knight, Sir Leoline, / Led forth the lady Geraldine" (653-5).

Christabel's fate to know that what Wheeler and Claire B. May alternatively call the poem's "disruptions" (Wheeler, "Disruption" 87) and "textual instabilities" (May 705) guarantee that she will remain, in a Kristevan sense, a subject "in process / on trial."²¹ Unable to integrate the otherness of her desire, Christabel's future promises to be as fragmented and disjointed as her past. If Geraldine is a figure of disruption for both the reader and for Christabel's hidden desire, then we can safely say that her disruptive presence will not subside, that Christabel will in fact continue to struggle with the hidden faces of her desires. As a kind of manifestation of what Kristeva would call the poem's "genotextual" impulses, Geraldine attests to Coleridge's intuition that otherness will *always* resist attempts at integration, and that the subject's self-denial in the face of difference renders it forever foreign to itself. Christabel's missed encounter with the unsettling image of herself in the other, amounts to a Lacanian lesson, which La Cassagnère wittily paraphrases: "where it (Geraldine) was, in the forest, I (Christabel) should come as last. Christabel is thus called to an appointment with the real: a real that offers itself to her grasp in a crucial but privileged moment of being" (87-8). But, alas, it is an appointment that she will not keep. Like the impatient host, the "real" is made to wait, and the hospitality of the household is subsequently left "disgraced" (644).

²¹Interestingly, May argues that "Christabel," the poem, "remains unsettled and unsettling" (699). For her, the poem's fragmented nature renders it impossible to read—or, at least, impossible to reduce to a *single* comprehensive reading. The content *as well as* the form or structure of the poem, then, reinforce one of its central themes, namely, the subject's struggle to welcome self-difference, whether it be the self-difference of its own sexuality or the self-difference of a text that is wont to be read in infinite ways.

Christabel's ultimate failure to recognize herself in the place of the other is not only the most significant failure characterized in the poem, but it also lies at the origin of most, if not all, of the poem's failures and violations. If Sir Leoline's hospitality is "disgraced" by his daughter's actions, then the moment of this disgrace begins long before she openly challenges his authority as a master of the house. It begins with the numerous "illegitimate" crossings of the castle's property and structure—all of which are the allegorical equivalents to the secretive violations of Christabel's desire. In the absence of the father's controlling eye, the daughter incrementally violates the law of the castle, exploring the darker side of her pleasure. In the space of fifty lines, we find Christabel and Geraldine "cross[ing] the moat" (130); passing "the threshold of the gate" (132); "cross[ing] the court" (this phrase is uttered twice [136, 143]); "pass[ing] the hall" (the word "pass" occurs thrice [154, 155, 158]); "steal[ing] their way from stair to stair" (168); and finally, "pass[ing] the Baron's room" (170). So many crossings of thresholds and boundaries, all of which lead our couple to the chamber in which the poem's sexual transgression takes place. The repetition of these crossings echos the multiple breaches at play: the breach of the home itself, the breach of trust (between Christabel and Geraldine), and most importantly the breach of the law of the father (be it in terms of sexual transgression or in terms of hospitable authority).

Much like the mice of Nether Stowey, Geraldine is an unannounced visitor, residing in Sir Leoline's castle without his knowledge and, most importantly, without his permission. While it is true that she receives invitation and welcome from Christabel

herself, the gesture remains informal, as it were, without the “proper” greeting of the father. Christabel may be a hostess of sorts (welcoming as she does a distressed stranger to spend the night on her couch), but she is not master of the household. If there is a hierarchy of hospitable command, she ranks rather low. As I have noted, when she does attempt to exercise a certain authority—pleading with her father, “I entreat / That thou this women send away!” (616-7)—her command is resolutely contradicted and chastised. Sir Leoline swells with “pain and rage” upon the request; he turns his back to his only daughter (“his own sweet maid” [653]), and “[leads] the lady Geraldine” to a place of honour in the home (655). The whole exchange indicates Christabel’s true position in the hierarchy of the welcome: she is less than host *and* less than guest. Facing the backs of her father and his newly appointed guest as they retire, she is effectively removed from the encounter altogether. One daughter replaces the next in the host’s esteem. As for Geraldine, her celebrated acceptance into the home reveal a most crucial and ironical fact: Sir Leoline’s hospitality is and never will be his own to offer. For the belatedness of this welcome highlights his lack of understanding and control of the regulation and flow of the castle’s visitors. Like the young Coleridge at Nether Stowey, he knows very little of the history of occupation and goings-on of his own home. His welcome is simply a formality, a showy performance designed to confirm the exigency of his mastery of the castle’s hospitality. It is a performance that necessarily extinguishes Christabel’s power. Consequently, the poem articulates a uniquely Coleridgean insight: in order to exercise its power, a host must first *exorcize* any other potential hosts. Once more, we are privy to a

failure brought about by a contest of competing hospitalities.²² With its combination of images, both supernatural and domestic, “Christabel” presents its series of breaches, invasions, and belated welcomes not only as the residual echo of the pattern of failed hospitality in Coleridge’s works in general, but also as a uniquely self-conscious text which theorizes this pattern as the affect of the subject’s conflicted encounters with its own internal differences.

The Fluttering “Stranger” and the Failure of the Hospitable Imagination

If the Fort-da pattern of the in-hospitable presents itself explicitly in poems like “Rime” and “Christabel,” then it also presents itself implicitly in poems that appear to have little, if anything, to do with hospitality at all. “Frost at Midnight,” for instance, features a poet in his “solitude” (5), but the interruption of that solitude by a “film” flapping on the poet’s grate (that “fluttering *stranger!*” which “makes a toy of Thought” [26, 23]) signals the poem’s interest in what I would call a “phenomenology of the welcome”—which is to say, an interest in the appearance (and disappearance) of alterity in

²²For a brief but interesting account of the competitive differences between Sir Leoline’s and Christabel’s hospitable practices, see Andrea Henderson, “Revolution, Response, and ‘Christabel’” (1990). Comparing and contrasting the Baron’s hesitation before Geraldine with Christabel’s less restrictive welcome, Henderson argues: “If Christabel’s openness leads to too much change, the Baron’s considered benevolence goes hand in hand with an unwillingness to change which, ironically, leaves him unable to resist change effectively” (894). Hence, not only is there competition with regard to the hierarchical authority of hosts, but there is also a level of competitiveness which throws into question the *quality* of the welcoming embrace. The gendering of this extra level of competitiveness suggests that the poem harbours a self-reflexive critique of Coleridge’s own masculinist notion of “manly benevolence,” which Henderson describes as “a considered and willed, rather than instinctive, kindness” (894).

the subject's reception of difference. I will, however, limit my discussion of "Frost" not only because the poem has already received a great deal of attention concerning the "stranger" (although rarely, if ever, in the distinct and radical terms of hospitality), but also because I wish to deploy the poem as a means with which to prepare a few suggestive comments about the failed hospitable encounters of a later, lesser known poem, "To Two Sisters," and Coleridge's most celebrated prose work, *Biographia Literaria*.²³ As a kind of meditation on the limits of the Romantic hospitable imagination, "Frost" theorizes the failure of the figure of the "stranger" (the *arrivant*) to contain the presence and/or the arrival of the other. As Jan Plug intimates, the poem reads as an allegory of the fact that even the *strange* figured as "strange" or as "stranger" is always already familiarized through the "play" of language—that it is always already known to us from the start (39). For this reason, the term "stranger" is strangely inadequate as a salutation with which to greet the other. If otherness, in the most radical sense of the word, is *absolutely* different—which is to say, so resolutely other so as to be other than *nothing in particular*—then to encounter it within the linguistic rubric of the "stranger" is to draw it too close to us, and to ruin the other in its very alterity. What is the "strange," if not the other side of familiarity? Deploying a classic deconstructive gesture, we can say that the "stranger" is un-familiar—both unrecognizable in terms of similarity, and yet still *recognizably* different. How else could we address the stranger if we were not

²³See especially, Tim Fulford, *Coleridge's Figurative Language* (1991), Wheeler, *The Creative Mind in Coleridge's Poetry* (1981); and Steven Bygrave, *Coleridge and the Self* (1986).

already *used* to it in some way or another? How could we hail the unknown visitor if he or she were not already interpellated, fixed within a system of recognizable similarities and differences? The sign of the “stranger” is not as strange as we might at first think. The stranger, as we know him or her, has already been robbed of his or her alterity simply by being recognized as a figure whose difference makes a “toy of Thought.”

Coleridge is known for moving methodologically in his poetry and prose “from a sense of multēity to one of unity in a movement that will also encompass the self, creating a coherent image of it through the specular identifications” (Plug 28). This is to assume that Coleridge’s work generally contains a certain politics of integration which privileges the consumption of alterity and the reduction of difference to similarity. As Fulford explains: “Just as [Coleridge] thought that ‘two very different meanings if not more lurk in the word, *one*,’ he thought that *strange* might contain a buried allusion to its opposite” (50). While this is an insight that complexly anticipates the kind of rhetoric of deconstruction, it is my intention to argue that “Frost” means to teach us much more than this. For the poem works to push this insight to its very limits and to accentuate the negative processes of abjection and disavowal at play in any movement from multēity to unity, from difference to similarity, from otherness to sameness. Rather than simply argue for a form of integration of self and other, in which the subject realizes its selfhood in tandem with or in relation to the other-than-itself, the poem critiques this conception of the I-thou relation for rendering (and thus impoverishing) the other as a mere projection of the self’s other selves. No longer the other-than-nothing-in-particular, the other in

such a configuration becomes the other-than-the-self, a relation that renders it symmetrical to, and therefore *subject to*, subjectivity itself. In this sense, the other is hardly other at all—at least, not radically other. It remains the mere opposite against which the subject consolidates or constitutes its singularity.²⁴ Such is the limit of the Romantic hospitable imagination. As Tilottama Rajan remarks, communicating with the “sole unquiet thing,” the speaker of “Frost” “turns solipsistically back on [himself], caught in the inevitable narcissism of [his] attempts to grasp the external world as an object in relation to a subject rather than as a purely objective reality” (*Dark* 225). This is a fitting summary of the poem’s genre, the “greater Romantic lyric,” which (as we have noted) has a “return-upon-itself” structure. And yet if the subject constitutes a coherent image of itself through reflective and specular identifications with otherness, then it is actually

²⁴To further clarify this distinction between the other as other-than-nothing-in-particular and the other as merely other-than-the-self, I quickly point to a contemporary example: namely, the “first contact” scene from Robert Zemeckis’ science fiction film, “Contact.” Much to the expressed dissatisfaction of many viewers, Zemeckis’ film refuses to portray its aliens according to the usual science-fictional clichés concerning the anatomical features of extra-terrestrial life. Indeed, we never learn if they are “like us.” After the bolstered anticipation of a spectacular interstellar journey, we discover instead that these aliens choose to manifest themselves not in their true or original form, but rather in the more familiar and thus more comforting image of the main character “Ellie’s” deceased father. It is an interesting, if unpopular, directorial decision, for the scene then becomes a metaphor for the subject’s finite interaction with otherness. While presented as other-than-the-self, which is to say, *via* an image perceived by the subject as *specifically* different from itself (e.g., the face of a father figure), the film’s aliens remain other-than-nothing-in-particular precisely because their real identity (their true difference) is intentionally withheld from the movie’s intergalactic imaginary. Their absence preserves their alterity. It allows Zemeckis to avoid a reduction that would render his aliens as simply the “other” of something in particular, like a human being. Perhaps this is the film’s way of saying that these unrepresentable aliens are so remotely other-worldly that their difference could never be contained in such a specific and limited opposition to humanity. As others beyond the particular, these aliens would exceed this opposition. In this way, the movie acknowledges the limits of the I-thou relation while, at the same time, gestures toward a difference that can never be accounted for—a difference that is different even from itself.

caught up in a game of self-alienation in which it welcomes not the “flaps and freaks” (20) of the other’s being but the fluttering of its own interior strangeness. The “stranger” may strike a “companionable form” (19), but it does so only because the self, even when it sits alone and undisturbed by its cottage “inmates,”²⁵ requires some kind of outlet—an external place in which it entertains a company of guests who visit not from outside but from within house of the self. As Wheeler points out, the speaker of the “Frost” “is specifically engaged in a ‘self-watching’” (*Creative* 95), an activity through which the subject pluralizes itself, as it were, so that the only conscious entities present in the poem are the speaker and its *other* self which paradoxically witnesses itself in a moment of solitude. Communing with the “stranger,” then, the subject externalizes its own internal alterity by projecting that difference onto the objects around it, consequently treating “multēity” as a *tabula rasa* or palimpsest onto which it transcribes and welcomes the story of its own self-dividedness.

The poem signals its awareness of this process as it tries to articulate the texture of the silence that surrounds the speaker throughout his meditations. There is a richness to this silence. It is so palpable that it “disturbs and vexes” thought (9). It is so “strange” (9) and “extreme” (10) in nature that one can hear the fluttering of a film on a grate (if

²⁵Magnuson notes that at the end of the eighteenth century this word, “inmate,” referred “to strangers dwelling in one’s home” (29). While Magnuson argues that the word contributes to the poem’s invention of the speaker’s sense of isolation, the word might also suggest that the others in the house (the speaker’s wife, his child, etc) are, for all intents and purposes, ontologically similar to the “film” on the grate.

such a sound were even audible!).²⁶ Magnuson reminds us that Coleridge alters the poem's appearance when it appears in *Sibylline Leaves* in order to intensify the palpability of the silence, replacing the words "this dead calm" with "this deep calm" (32). Whereas the change represents for Magnuson an emphasis of the fact that the speaker "has not achieved a progressive understanding of the world around him" (32); Plug sees this replacement as echoing the speaker's attempt to "bury the death . . . of the poet's own voice" (35). I would argue, however, that we need not read the switch from "dead" to "deep" as an anxious admission of some sort of failure—at least, not as an admission of an irrecoverable or fruitless failure. For as much as the speaker's imaginative forays into the world "end in silence" or are "thrown back into the vacancy in which [they] began" (Magnuson 32), they continue to search for the stranger in a seemingly endless process of productive meaning. Perhaps it is most productive to read the poem's "stillness" the way Steven Bygrave does, as being at once silent *and* "potential" (*Coleridge* 115), or better yet, as containing the very *possibility* of meaning. Does not absence portend the arrival of significance? The substitution aptly recognizes

²⁶It is actually quite amusing that speaker is so attuned to the "sole unquiet" motion of the film. We know that "Frost" was both set in and composed at Stowey and that it is roughly contemporaneous with the letter with which I began this chapter. Thus, we may ask without being entirely facetious: what of the mice? Did Coleridge finally manage to rid himself of them? Perhaps the speaker of the poem refers also to the *mice* of Stowey when he writes: "The inmates of my cottage, all at rest, / Have left me to that solitude, which suits / Abtruser musings" (4-6). If Magnuson is right about the association of "inmates" with strange house guests, then who can tell for sure? Perhaps the absence of these mice in the poem is meant to add even more depth to the silence of the speaker's solitude. For even when it seems that no "others" are stirring—not even a mouse!—there is always another other barely audible but nevertheless loud enough to unsettle and occupy one's mind.

the fact that the depth of the other's absence, the vacancy it offers, is illimitably interpretable. It is, in other words, a recognition of the other as being the very source of significance for its inability to signify meaning. As Rajan writes, it is "emptiness which precedes and generates the compensatory projection of plenitude" (*Dark* 226). –The poem's "deep" and otherwise inexhaustible silence figuring, as I have said, as a *tabula rasa* on which the subject produces the story of its own self-estrangement.

As a palimpsest for the self-encounter, the "fluttering *stranger!*" signifies to the speaker a series of strangers who grow increasingly familiar as the poem nears its conclusion. The "stranger" sends consciousness into its childhood where it turns its classroom gaze from the "stern preceptor's face" (37) to a "door half opened" (39) beyond which it hopes to espy another "stranger's face, / Townsman, or aunt, or sister more beloved, / My playmate when we both were clothed alike!" (41-3). As Plug points out, these identifications "are not only familiar, they are increasingly familial—again, from the relative remoteness of a member of the same community, to a mother's sister, and finally to the speaker's own sister" (31). The speaker therefore "humanizes" the "extreme" of the silence, exchanging its strangeness for a "film" of familiarity (Plug 31). But this process can only go so far before the other's alterity finally disrupts the speaker's self-identifying associations with the "deep" strangeness that surrounds him. While he fills in the other's depth with images of his "sweet birth-place" (28) and memories of his schooldays, there remains in the "stranger" what Rajan names (after Hegel) an "inflexible foreignness" (*Dark* 226)—an indivisible residue of difference which prevents the speaker's

self-identifying visions from achieving any kind of clarity. The door beyond which the speaker might espy the visitor's face remains only "half open." Or, if we choose to see the door as only "half-closed," the specular entry of one "stranger" permits several other *others* to pass through at the same time, and consequently pre-empts the conflation of multēity into unity. One way or the other, the speaker's self-hospitable encounters are overcome by the other's excess, by its refusal to be contained within the apparition of a single figure or the linguistic order of "stranger." Each figure of the "strange" dissolves before the speaker's gaze. "Townsmen" and "aunt" are rapidly subsumed in the metonymy of familiarization that leads him to his familial play-mate. Additionally, this sister, whom Rajan amusingly calls the speaker's "sartorial twin" for being "clothed alike" (*Supplement* 118), vanishes upon closer inspection. For, even though the descriptor "clothed alike" establishes similarity, it also points to difference. The sartorial similitude that the speaker imposes on himself and his sister points specifically to a difference between desire and its object, the sister in this instance resembling what is for Rajan more "an imaginary or narcissistic construct rather than a recollection of something that once existed" (*Dark* 226). A narcissistic construct "clothed alike," the sister renders the brother sister to himself. Even the child—to whom the speaker quickly turns in an attempt to secure a more palpable self-reflection—turns out to bear the mark of "inflexible foreignness," the sign of being other than the self's twin or other than the other-than-the-self. While Hartley's sleepy body (a presence which is also an absence) recalls to the speaker his own childhood "'mid cloisters dim" (52) as well as the imagined future of his

son (who will learn “far other lore” [50]), the child’s “gentle breathings” (45) are heard with the only other unquiet things—the “owlet’s cry” (2) and the film’s “unquiet” motion—and, as such, can then be plotted along the poem’s axis of indecipherable (and hence, unidentifiable) difference. There is in the poem the sense that the speaker’s son is as foreign to him as are the “film” and the nonsensical cry of a bird. According to Jacques Lacan, the subject is “barred” from the Other by the self-dividing processes of signification, and is left with nothing more to do than to ask the Other an unanswerable question: “*Che vuoi?*” (13), which we can translate either as “what do you what from me?” or “what is the meaning of that sound you make?” From a Lacanian perspective, the difference between a baby’s breath and an owlet’s cry would depend on the linguistic efforts of the subject—which is to say, on the parade of signifiers that the subject is willing to mobilize *along with* the sound in an attempt to understand it. Since the “desire” or “intention” of the Other is inaccessible, the subject must answer its own question of the other through “fantasy,” which Slavoj Žižek describes as “a screen concealing the gap, the abyss of the desire of the Other” (*Sublime* 118).²⁷ As we have seen, in “Frost,” the speaker’s fantasies lead or slip into other fantasies, moving from the remoteness of his past to the “lakes and sandy shores” of his child’s future (55). Imagining for his son “far

²⁷ Lacan calls “fantasy” the “veritable delusion of being” (15)—the delusion being that the other’s absence conceals the presence of meaning. To use the example in “Frost,” the speaker’s delusion is that there is a kind of consciousness behind the flap of a film, the cry of an owl, and the breaths of a sleeping babe—even if that consciousness is the projected image of the speaker’s own mind. In other words, the fantasy acts as a defense against the subject ever consciously realizing that without its question, *Che vuoi?*, the movement/voice of the Other remains as meaningless as sound.

other lore,” the speaker fantasizes about the difference that lies between them. He identifies with his son by projecting himself into his son’s future, or to be more specific, his *other* self, namely, the childhood he never had: “I was reared in / The great city, pent ‘mid cloisters dim . . . / But *thou* my babe! Shall wander like a breeze . . . beneath the crags / Of ancient mountain” (51-56). The child’s alterity (its silence as a being which “neither understands nor responds” to the speaker’s address [Plug 35]) is therefore inscribed as being no more and no less than other-than-the-self, which is to say, the speaker’s own alterity.²⁸

If the poem’s repeated return to the silence of the “secret ministry of frost” (that is, its return to the impenetrable mystery of the other) constitutes a failure finally to receive the self in the place of the other, then it is a failure which prepares the self to receive itself *ad infinitum*. The other’s gift, as I have argued in previous chapters, is the gift of plenitude, even and *especially* if that plenitude emits from a place of absence. The other as “stranger” offers the self a *vacancy*, which the subject borrows as a place of refuge and welcome—a place to forge a home for itself and for the others within its own psyche. Hence, while “Frost” relates the speaker’s anticipation of a stranger whose visit

²⁸ Holmes relates an interesting scene in Coleridge’s correspondences with Poole which actually highlights the poet’s melancholic realization, upon seeing his son for the first time, that the child, in addition to being part father, was also “utterly other” (*Darker* 123). This revelation is nevertheless short lived. Coleridge writes that “two hours” after the shock of recognizing (or, more precisely, *not* recognizing) his son’s alterity, he sees the child in “the bosom of it’s Mother,” the vision of which “thrills” and “melts” his heart and inspires him to give the child “the Kiss of the Father.” The whole account smacks more of integration than the acceptance of difference. While Coleridge’s first impression of Hartley leaves him sad, it is only when Hartley is cradled at the bosom of the Mother/Wife that Coleridge can rejoice, the recognizable narrative of the family unit quieting his uneasiness with regards to the boy’s irrefutable difference from him. The kiss of the father is thus the seal of domestic familiarity.

is portended by the residual film of a dying fire but whose arrival, as Rajan insists, never occurs, the poem experiences an *other* truth: waiting to receive the other, the subject is received by it. Rather than being welcomed by the subject as though the self had some agented authority over it, the other welcomes the self into its othered and othering spaces wherein the self makes a home for its own alterities. This act of reception, however, is not itself an agented act of benevolence. The other is never just another self who interacts with the subject in a symmetrical relation of reciprocation. Rather, the vacuous absence of the other—the active but ultimately unconscious (or disinterested) movement of a flapping “film,” for instance—portends the arrival of significance even as (or, precisely because) the other remains vacantly without a signified intention of its own. The “stranger” of “Frost” becomes a pure signifier, as it were—an object with meaning *to let*. For the subject, the cost of occupying this space is, as I have already suggested, nothing less than the repudiation of its own self-dividedness. The rent is high, indeed, for it amounts to another missed encounter with the other within the self. Just as Christabel fails to recognize the other (Geraldine) as just another version of herself, the speaker of “Frost” necessarily overlooks the *tain* of the “mirror” which the “*stranger*” holds up to its face, that imperceptible reverse side of the mirror which has an unlimited or infinite capacity for reflection—i.e., its very otherness. In order to peer into a mirror which holds the image of oneself (or in this case, the image of a sartorial twin or a “cradled infant” [7]), one must look past the mirror’s surface, the dissolution and disappearance of which

makes reflection possible.²⁹ To use Coleridge's own famous aphorism, the self-gazer of "Frost," reflecting itself in the "film," must suspend its disbelief, setting aside for the moment the fact that "mirror" and mirror image are not unequivocal—that the "stranger" and the self-other one sees in the "stranger" are not one and the same. Associating the "flaps and freaks" of the "fluttering stranger" with the other selves of his own imagination, the speaker of "Frost" represses the other's vast and inexhaustible vacancy; it sublimates the infinite play of the mirror's tain—evidence of which lies in the poem's metonymous deferrals from one self-twin to the next, from the preceptor's stern face to the familiarity of a fellow townsman, from a maternal aunt to childhood sister, and so on. Following a series of mental images which shift and slide along an axis of increasing familiarity, the speaker forgets what it is that he stares at. The other is not integrated into consciousness so much as it fades from the subject's vision in such a way that the subject sees only the images of its own imagination. Returning to the language of the hospitable, we might say that rather than welcoming the other in a gesture of unification through which both self and other are coherently captured in poetic discourse, the speaker of "Frost" occupies—one might even say, pillages—the other's place in the world. In this light, "Frost's" hospitality scene reads more like a home invasion than a friendly and harmoniously integrative welcome of the other (if such a thing were even possible).

²⁹I receive my use of this term from Rodolphe Gasché's *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (1986). Gasché writes, "*Tain*, a word altered from the French *étain*, according to the *OED*, refers to the tinfoil, the silver lining, the lusterless back of the mirror. Derrida's philosophy, rather than being a philosophy of reflection, is engaged in the systematic exploration of that dull surface without which no reflection and no specular and speculative activity would be possible, but which at the same time has no place and no part of the reflection's scintillating play" (6).

Two Too Many Sisters: Coleridge's Discursive Homelessness

More than an instance of the “greater Romantic lyric,” “Frost” also belongs to a specifically Coleridgean sub-genre of poems called “the conversation poem.” As I have said, the poem’s “return-upon-itself” structure renders it an interesting hospitality scene on its own, as it dramatizes the reader’s invitation to listen in, as it were, and to take part in the production of the poem’s meaning. Rajan has already considered the “supplement of the reader” in “Frost,” and, more generally, in the conversation genre itself, in great detail.³⁰ Accordingly, I turn now with slightly different purposes to another lesser known conversation poem, “To Two Sisters,” which Coleridge composed for the Brent sisters, Mary Morgan and Charlotte, under whose hospitality and care he spent several years convalescing from his debilitating opium addiction. Alternatively labelled one of Coleridge’s “confessional poems” (Holmes, *Selected Poems* 195), “Two Sisters” not only deploys the literary conceit of the “absent” addressee, but it is also confused as to the identity of its intended recipients. If Hartley is figured (along with the reader) as the “absent” addressee of “Frost” (“absent” in the sense that he neither answers nor even grasps the speaker’s words),³¹ then the Brent sisters would indeed seem to be the intended

³⁰ See Rajan, *The Supplement of Reading* (1990), 108-131; and *Dark Interpreter* (1980), 204-259.

³¹I say that Hartley is “figured” as the addressee because, as is the case with any poem, the addressee is impossible to determine. The reader is always unforeseeable. As Derrida famously puts it in *The Post Card*, if a letter has the possibility of never arriving at its intended definition, then it will always miss its destination, always turn up at the most unexpected times and in the most unexpected places. Such is the hospitality of writing. The written text “opens” itself up absolutely to the world, thus enabling its own deconstruction—exposing itself to numerous unexpected readers and numerous unexpected readings.

addressees of “Two Sisters.” The difficulty with such a statement is that, when all is said and done, it is not entirely clear to whom the poem finally addresses it self. The poem knows that it is more than just a private letter or homage written for a limited set of eyes. It knows that it is a *poem*, one which deliberately skews its public debut in the *Courier* in 1807 under the authorial pseudonym “Siesti” (just barely concealing the initials of its author, “STC”). There are many repressions and avoidances in this poem, perhaps forever the burdens of an unhappily married poet. And yet the poem’s concealments reach far beyond the usual business of extramarital caution. For vagueness and confusion with regard to others are the poem’s object and theme—evidence of which begins in the poem’s title, especially when it is compared to the directness of a letter-poem like “A Letter To Sara Hutchinson.” My reference to this latter poem is far from accidental, as the Brent sisters receive constant comparison in “Two Sisters” to Sara Hutchinson and *her* sister, making it difficult, as I have said, to determine exactly to which two sisters the poems actually speaks. As Morton Paley comments, the poem is so mystified by its two sets of two sisters that it is “as if one woman friend or love object could easily be confused with another” (*Coleridge* 33). One could argue that this confusion is an extreme instance of what Elizabeth Fay calls a masculinized Romanticism’s “repressive sincerity”—which is to say, a lack of “sensibility” which “allows the male writer [for instance] to substitute love of rocks for love of women” (*Feminist* 8), or, in this case, to substitute the love of one woman for the love of another. Like “Frost,” then, “Two Sisters” theorizes a form of hospitality through which the subject hijacks the space of the

other, so to speak, projecting itself, its past, and its desires into that space willy-nilly, making it a mirror (another “toy of Thought”) for specular and reflective identification.

The image in this mirror is never quite clear precisely because the speaker’s sisterly equivocations confuse himself as much as the reader. For instance, celebrating the “re-appearance” of a “Hope” that burns dimly in “memory’s guise” (20), the speaker experiences a blurry kind of “doubled” vision, one which arrives with all the full abruptness of a hard dash:

Even thus did you call up before mine eyes
Two dear, dear Sisters, prized all price above,
Sisters, like you, with more than sisters’ love;
So like you *they*, and so in *you* were seen
Their relative statures, tempers, looks, and mein,
That oft, dear ladies! You have been to me
At once a vision and reality. (21-27, *emph. preserved*)

As if unsettled by the addict’s miasmic delirium, the speaker is for the moment uncertain as to the integrity of the image he sees in the face of the other. In whose home, the speaker seems to ask himself, do I presently receive hospitality and treatment? Am I here, under the care of John Morgan and the Brent sisters, or am I back at Grasmere with Wordsworth and the Hutchinson sisters? As Holmes reminds us, after his “break” with Wordsworth, Coleridge was already preparing the Brent sisters for the “emotional roles in his life once played by Mary Wordsworth and Sara Hutchinson” (*Selected Poems* 327), and this, not to mention the role played by his idealization of his own sister, Anne (“more than sisters’ love”), his eternal “playmate clothed-alike.” With its conflation of all these various sisters, this passage reads as an admission to the subject’s hostile takeover of

difference, the kind of which we have already seen in “Frost”—an invasion which only confirms H. J. Jackson’s suspicion that for Coleridge “Girls, Girls, Girls Are Made to Love” (576). Freely engaging one object of affection and dependence as the reduplication of another, the poem admits that the other is never simply *there*, but rather, that it is both “vision *and* reality,” both subjective hallucination and objective existence, and can only be known as such. The poem mobilizes a powerful critique of what Mileur calls Coleridge’s own complex understanding of “Immanence” (36). If “coincidence of an object with a subject” or “of thought with the thing” is the “primary ground” of Coleridge’s theory of knowledge (*Biographia* I, 202; II, 12), then the poem’s double-vision questions the nature of this “coincidental” union—especially if one reads it the way Abrams does as a “synthesis” through which “the elements lose their separate identities” (“Structure” 547). While the poem certainly dramatizes this kind of homogenizing synthesis, it does so self-consciously in order to throw into suspicion the subject’s tendency to coalesce not so much the thought with the thing but one thing with another, binding one object or other to the next, transposing onto them the unresolved conflicts of its own internal differences. In a manner of speaking, the poem’s doubling of doubles (that is, seeing quadruplets when there are in fact four different others, each residing in its own singularity, each with its own internal differences) posits the I-thou relation in Coleridge as dysfunctional. While there are no miraculous spectacles with which to correct the subject’s blurred vision, the poem seems to say that we can at least be cautious of the subject’s solipsistic tendencies to treat the other as a screen on which to replay (and confuse) the alterities of its own memory.

As Rajan observes, some of Coleridge's best insights are apparent in the "recurrence of twins" or object-doubles which "reflect or repeat other objects and lay bare the element of duplicity in the twinning of image and reality . . . vital to the Romantic theory of poetry as a conversation with truth" (*Dark* 239). The play between "vision and reality" as witnessed in the speaker's recollection of the Brent and Hutchinson sisters reveals that "reality" and "truth" are no where to be found. The collision and merge of these twin sets of sisters leaves the speaker disoriented with regard to the "original" pair: "Are you for *their* sakes dear, or for your own?" he questions (38, *emph. preserved*). Who is vision, and who is real? One can never tell. For the speaker mistakes his own alterity for the "other selves" (46) of this sisterly quartet. The Brent sisters' "other selves" (i.e., the Hutchinsons), are no more real than they are, as they too are idealized by the force of desire. The speaker knows this only *too well*. Dreading rather than craving a visitation that would bring the four sisters together "placed around one hearth" (45), the speaker protects himself from the sentimentality of his desire, while at the same time exposes his dreams for the illusory images that they are:

Far rather would I sit in solitude,
Fond recollections all my fond heart's food,
And dream of *you*, sweet Sisters (ah! not mine!)
And only *dream* of you (ah! Dream and pine!)
Than boast the presence and partake the pride,
And shine in the eye, of all the world beside. (47-52)

In terms of hospitality, the speaker's actions are difficult to assess. For his preferential turn from "reality" to vision—his "Romantic aversion" as Douglas Kneale would call it (4)—is intensely complex, at once hostile and generous, antipathetic and

sympathetic. “Reality” in this instance is, of course, *already* rhetorical; and turning away from this to something safely labelled “vision” or “*dream*” is a means to repress this rhetoricalness –which is to say, the fact that “reality’s” otherness or difference from “vision” and “*dream*” lies *de facto* in the gesture of “putting it aside” and avoiding it (Kneale 4). Just as Freud sees “repression” as “turning something away, and keeping it at a distance from the consciousness,” Coleridge preserves the integrity of his “real” precisely by refusing it and keeping at bay (“Repression” 147). At the same time, however, documenting this process through poetic language, Coleridge achieves in this poem what Rajan claims “Constancy to an Ideal Object” does: it “recognizes something inescapable illusory and phenomenal in the images constructed by art” (*Dark* 204). Despite its intentions to construct a sort of protective aversion from discovering the *unreality* of such images, the poem (with its autonarrative or auto-poetic transposition of personal experience into verse) demonstrates or welcomes the fact that reality and vision are inseparable, that they are often impossible to differentiate.

If there is a welcome in “Two Sisters,” it is a self-welcome. It is a welcome of the addict’s irrepressible craving for his own suffering. If Coleridge seeks hospitality in these sisters, whose vision and reality confusingly render them phantasms of ideal hostessing, then the poem structures Coleridge’s own hospitable embrace of his own inability to find refuge and to feel at-home. He prefers to *dream* of their reception rather than to *be* received. Even when he is made to feel *as though* he were at home—as though this refuge at the Brent estate were a space to make a place of his own—he remains split,

experiencing himself as out-of-place, still far *away* in some other home which is no longer a home and from which he remains estranged. Forever nostalgic for *another* hearth, Coleridge can hardly feel at home in the “present,” in which he is, truth be told, more than welcome. He protects himself from being welcomed, opting instead to remain a wanderer whose constitution resides in the impossibility of a kind of penultimate encounter through which all his hostesses and potential warm-welcomers will be gathered around a single hearth to embrace him in a final homecoming—an image which is apparently as unbearable to him as it is unrepresentable. His preference for this impossibility, moreover, amounts to a whole series of refusals. Refusing the welcome of the Brent sisters in order to postpone or delay it, he refuses to welcome *them* in their own singularity, or at least without the supplement of his own hospitable imagination, his own internal remembrances of encounters with difference.

As its subtitle indicates, “To Two Sisters: A Wanderer’s Farewell” problematizes the fact that no welcome will satisfy the poet’s longing for hospitality. It figures the subject’s postponement of its final encounter with the impossibility of welcoming as such—that is, with the fact that the hearth for which one longs is and always will be as phantasmatic as it is attractive. Coleridge represents himself in the poem as lacking, a subject without ground and without an ability to ground the visions he sees. His aversion, it would seem, is to identity itself. Without ground to stand on, he remains a mix of vision and reality. It is in this regard that the poem reveals its purpose: to articulate the poet’s own impossibility—which is to say, his own inability to welcome himself as author,

as speaker of the poem he writes. Always borrowing one image for the expression of another (i.e., metaphor), “Two Sisters” attests to Coleridge’s poetic life of mourning from poem to poem, wandering in a strange kind of exile through the myriad of images that he uses to articulate and dis-articulate his own suffering.

If homelessness is the subject’s way of life, then why not borrow the home of another? According to Jerome Christensen, this would be the guiding methodological principle of Coleridge’s *Biographia Literaria*. The *Biographia*, then, will be our final repetition of Coleridge’s Fort-da game of hospitality. Retracing the vexed question of Coleridge’s plagiarism in the *Biographia*, Christensen argues that Coleridge practised a brand of “marginal exegesis, not philosophy but commentary” (105). As a generality, Christensen claims, the “marginalium is . . . both enrichment and deprivation of its hosts, just as it is, equivocally neither inside nor outside the text” (106). Recognizing the fruitfulness of his sudden turn to the discourse of the hospitable, Christensen briefly recasts his thesis in “another metaphor (or another metaphor for metaphors)” (109). “The political aggressiveness of the marginalist,” he says,

may be attributed to the contingency of living in a borrowed home: the security of a sheltering text is crossed by the unsettling awareness that it is someone else’s text. Inhabiting margins is “expropriation, being-away-from home, but still in a home, a place of self-recovery, self-recognition, self-master, self-resemblance: it is outside itself—it is itself.” *Almost* itself

because not quite still a home—or, rather, not quite a still home because borrowed. One must constantly maneuver to maintain one's place until one has a place of one's own. (109)

The extensive citation inhabiting this citation from Christensen—which is itself a kind of host text or borrowed home—arrives from Derrida's "White Mythology." Christensen informs us that Derrida applies this description to metaphor—a fact which, in this instance, renders writing itself a kind of metaphor for the subject's destitution in a world of difference. Christensen's play between the marginalist's discursive homelessness and borrowed places call to mind a distinction that phenomenologist Edward S. Casey makes between the "place" of the subject and the "space" of the other—a distinction which leads him to conclude that "space is two" (39), both subjective locality *and* placialized space, both a home and not a home (or, as Coleridge would have it, both "vision" and "reality"). In as much as it is a borrowed home, the place of the subject is always other than the shelter it provides. It is always a *space* in excess of the "place" it becomes, and as such is never quite a "still" home. Discursively without permanence, the marginalist relies on the other who, like a host, provides him/her with a place which he/she can (temporarily) call a home. The repetition of a text within his/her own text (i.e., the benevolence of a sheltering text) enables the marginalist to re-place the space of the other, much the way the deconstructor repeats the texts of the tradition, drawing them to their very limits, exposing them to a difference that makes them speak *otherwise*.³²

³²For more on the (marginal) method of the *Biographia*, see Tim Milnes, "Eclipsing Art: Method and Metaphysics in Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*" (1999), Lawrence Buell, "The

There is, however, an uneasiness to this practice, as Christensen admits, which comes from the insecurity of living in a home knowing that one is and always will be homeless, that one must always relocate, must always inhabit an *other* home, that the other's home, which is not *your* home, is the best home one can hope for. The marginalist, Christensen seems to say, is uncannily aware that, to a certain degree, all writing is marginalia, that it is a matter of living in a place as borrowed space. These are all insights which Coleridge understood on both personal and professional levels. Even as he dreams the "fantasy" of a "home he will never have," he never loses sight of its impossibility, intuitively allowing the fantasy to auto-deconstruct. Recalling that "Dear tranquil time, when the sweet sense of home Is Sweetest," he invites his reader to imagine him/herself returning home for the evening,

to your family, prepared for its social enjoyments, with the very countenances of your wife and children brighten, and their voice of welcome made doubly welcome, by the knowledge that, as far as *they* are concerned, you have satisfied the demands of the day by the labour of the day. Then you when you retire to your study, in the books on your shelves you revisit so many venerable friends with whom you can converse. Your own spirit scarcely less free from personal anxieties than the great minds, that in those books are still living for you! Even your writing desk with its

Question of Form in Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*" (1994), and Frederick J. Ruf, "Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*: Extravagantly Mixed Genres and the Construction of a 'Harmonized Chaos'" (1992).

blank paper and all its other implements will appear as a chain of flowers, capable of linking your feelings as well as thoughts to events and characters past or to come; not a chain of iron, which binds you down to think of the future and the remote by recalling the claims and feelings of the peremptory present. But why should I say *retire*? The habits of active life and daily intercourse with the stir of the world will tend to give you such self-command that the presence of your family be no interruption. Nay, the social silence, or undisturbing voices of a wife or sister, will be like a restorative atmosphere, or soft music which moulds a dream without becoming its object. (*Biographia* I, 153-4)

While Christensen fails to contextualize his use of this passage from the *Biographia* (he is after all only borrowing its space, making a place and an argument of his own), Coleridge constructs this homecoming as a way to illustrate his claim that “genius cannot exist, certainly not manifest itself, without talents” (152). He warns the “scholar” to “make a division between the two” (153)—a piece of advice which is perhaps symptomatic of his own anxious and persistent struggle to write works of genius *and* earn a living at the same time. The passage expresses the poet’s desire to build a place of his own, a home in which he is master of his developing genius, in which he has both the space and the time to let it “manifest itself.” One spends the day using one’s talent and one spends the night working on one’s genius. The division is ostensibly preserved. And yet, when we look closer, this is not in fact the story that Coleridge’s tale wants to tell. For the

division between talent and genius, outside and in, is redoubled even as the master of the home is made “doubly welcome” by his wife and children. As far as “*they*” are concerned, the demands of the day are fulfilled. Coleridge is no doubt referring to the fact that this day-labourer still has work to do, that he is now free to focus on his genial powers. But the emphasis on “*they*” suggests that there is a difference *within* the home. “*They*,” his wife and children, seem only concerned with the labour of the day. “*They*” are not a part of his nighttime labours, his work of genius—indeed, his feeling of being at home. On the contrary, treated with the same “self-command” used to intercourse with the “stir of the world,” “*they*” are of-the-day, as it were. “*Their*” concern for practical matters (again, returning to the figure of “autonarration,” we think of the struggles of Coleridge’s own personal marital affairs), “*their*” preoccupation with the master’s *useful* talents, renders them oddly alien to/different than the master’s home-life which he carries out in the privacy of an even more interior room of the house. It is as though “*they*” embody the presence of the day *within* the home—and are thus segregated from his nightly labour. “*They*” render the home divided between a master who seeks refuge from the day and his family whose welcome is a doubled welcome, receiving both master *and* his day-labour into the home. Speaking of things from another world “outside” the home, in which practical matters are of great importance, “*their*” voices prattle on “undisturbingly” like a “restorative atmosphere” or “soft music” which “moulds a dream without becoming its object.” Like “white noise,” “*they*” are a kind of abject background out of which the subject, its genius, and its dreams emerge and manifest themselves in the most private recesses of the home.

This *internal* separation within this domestic space (between inside and out) is made literal by the citation's insistence on a place of retirement within the home, the study. There is *always* a place more withdrawn, a place more private and interior than all the others. A place of refuge from which Coleridge would himself, on certain days, seldom emerge, the study divides the house from the inside, further prolonging the deferral of the division of genius and talent. The study is a microcosm of the house itself, but one which ruins one's feeling of certainty and at-homeness. It models itself on the home (or on *being* at-home), but in doing so, rends the home asunder—(self-)dividing it so that it is separate not only from the outside, but also from itself. What is more, the speaker is no more at home in study than he is in the rest of the house. For even, here, in a room away from all rooms, he visits and “revisits” the presences therein (i.e., the lives of authors who live for him) as though he were not a host but a guest in the very room into which he retires from the world. Even in the most private of all spaces, there are other internal spaces to attend; there are always more hosts to bid one welcome. The house with a study may not be a “still” home, as Christensen says (109), but neither is the study it harbours. With every welcome, another hospitality presents itself—almost as though it were an escape or retreat from an uneasiness that accompanies a prior welcome, an “involution,” to borrow a term from De Quincey (*Works* XIV, 23), which characterizes the seemingly endless inward spiral of Coleridge's ideal homecoming fantasies.

Coleridge is, as I have said, able to *sense* the failure—the redoubling deferrals—of his “welcome made doubly welcome.” He second-guesses his choice of words: “But why

should I say *retire*?" (154). Why should he admit to a private retreat which makes of the internal privacy of the home an outside? Why disrupt the sanctity of the inside and the outside of the home by reproducing this dichotomy in the interior so that there is an inside but also an inside-the-inside which brings the outside in? Coleridge's uncertainty about the word, "retire," is coupled by the uncertainty of the image he deploys as a "link" between the master of the home and the authors and characters of the past who inhabit and even *possess* his study like so many ghosts. Clarifying (or *overdetermining* the meaning of) his metaphor of a "chain of flowers," Coleridge insists that he speaks "not [of] a chain of *iron*, which binds you down to think of the future and the remote by recalling the claims and feelings of the peremptory present" (154, *emph. mine*). I contend that this insecurity, this hesitation, announces a deeply unconscious intuition on the part of the poet regarding the infinite recession and "involution" of hospitality *as such*, into which the host forever falls like a guest into a series of welcomes—into which the host is welcomed to the hospitable relation not as a sovereign subject, but as a kind of vagabond perpetually borrowing the "ground" of the other's home. Never quite a still home, the retreat of the man of genius rests on the spaces of numerous others whose voices call out to him from the shelves of his study, reiteratively reminding him that the "blank paper" and all the "implements" of writing are gifts bestowed upon him by the enormous benevolence of the past and by the generous expanse of a limitless future yet to come. As marginalist, Coleridge takes advantage of the subject's failure to make a permanently autonomous home of its own. In Christensen words, the annotator "has no ground to

defend” because his “room” is “provided for him by his host” (108). Lost in the complex chiasma of possessing, and being possessed by, the texts one appropriates, the marginalist, then, is left with an irreparable sense of indebtedness, perhaps the one thing which he is able to own, the one thing which manages to own him.

Conclusion

Holmes calls the *Biographia* a “talking cure,” which, in a “Freudian sense,” manifests itself in Coleridge’s “attempt to come to terms with his own achievements and failures” (*Darker* 378).³³ Under the general rubric of issues for which the *Biographia* is meant to “cure,” we might include Coleridge’s abiding sense of indebtedness, that chain of “flowers” linking him to writers as diverse as David Hartley, Wordsworth, Schelling, and Kant. As is well known, Coleridge’s borrowings from these writers in the *Biographia* and elsewhere are extensive. If the poet’s discursive encounters with others can be construed as a series of welcomes, then we can certainly read these borrowings as contributing to the repetition of the hospitality scene in Coleridge’s work. What is more, Raimonda Modiano’s essay on the “ethics” of “gift exchange” in Coleridge figures Coleridge’s handling of these encounters as complexly troubled hospitable *failures* rather than instances of sincere homage (113). For instance, as both she and Donald Reiman argue, Coleridge’s “disingenuous” celebration of his “indebtedness” to Bowles’ Sonnets

³³Similarly, Robert J. Barth calls the *Biographia* an extended “conversation poem”—one that could be said to bear both the inclinations and the resistances of a return-upon-itself structure (2).

in Chapter One of the *Biographia* acts as a kind of buffer which enables him to avoid acknowledging (and thus freely welcoming) his literary and philosophical debts to Wordsworth (Modiano 113-4, Reiman 346-7). This hospitable failure is double-edged: on the one hand, it is resolutely hostile to Wordsworth, from whom Coleridge took great pains at this time to distance himself (Reiman 346); while, on the other hand, the disingenuous nature of the gesture is equally disrespectful of Bowles as it objectifies the poet, reducing the other in this instance to the functional level of decoy.³⁴ As the coded sign of Coleridge's dispute with Wordsworth, Bowles represents Coleridge's abuse of his so called "marginal method" (Christensen 105).

Much like the *Biographia*, the Coleridgean "pattern" that I identify as a sort of recurring Fort-da game of the in-hospitable is itself a kind of "talking cure": it is a way of mourning an irrepressible uneasiness with respect to the self's hospitable encounters with difference. It is a means of setting up failure so as to control and subsequently appease this feeling of uneasiness, with the hope of experiencing hospitality on one's own terms. But, as I have argued, this sort of control is always one step beyond the subject's grasp. The subject ends up being controlled by the very game through which it aspires to acquire mastery. While Coleridge may never have intended to estimate or even construct such a

³⁴This figure of what Charles Mahoney calls a kind of "Coleridgean apostasy"—which is to say, the abandonment of and/or aversion to a philosophical or poetic heritage (89)—is most apparent as Coleridge claims that Bowles, along with Cowper, were "the first who combined natural thoughts with natural diction; the first who reconciled the heart with the head" (*Biographia* I, 16). As Modiano observes, these are virtues that Coleridge elsewhere denies to Bowles, criticizing him for his "famous mediocrity and for his "trick of moralizing everything" (133).

series of failures, its recurrence nevertheless generously offers to us the opportunity to theorize the impossibility of the welcome and how this impossibility is not only the condition of a welcome's possibility but also the condition of a desire to repeat this failure time and again. In other words, the pattern of failed welcomes and abusive intrusions in Coleridge's poetry presents to us the means by which to think of a kind of Fort-da game of the inhospitable.

The repetition of failed hospitality in Coleridge's poetry also enables us to think of the impossibility of the game itself, of how the game contains its own contradiction. As Derrida states, the Fort-da prevents the subject from reaching the object of the game. It prevents the subject from achieving perfect mastery over the object of its desire. Like the subject's reiterative disavowal of the other within the self, the Fort-da game is without end. It occurs *ad infinitum*. Accordingly, depicting the failed hospitable encounter is in fact a way of welcoming the encounter's return time and again—albeit with an invitation that is less a welcome than it is a kind of *detainment*. If the purpose of the game is to acquire mastery over the failed welcome, then the game never lets the encounter go, as it were. Rather, the encounter is held prisoner in a repetition which is then *itself* a failure like the very failure it repeats. This last failure, which we might very well call the “structural failure” of the Fort-da (i.e., the failure of the game finally to “let go” the repetition of failure), is a failure *beyond* the subject's control. If the failed hospitable encounter returns to the subject (*da!*), then it also returns with (or in apposition to) its other, namely, the *failure* of failure—that is, the failure of a repetition of failure that ends

up controlling the subject in its excess. As Derrida learns in *The Post Card*, the Fort-da—which Freud himself was never able to prove, but merely postpone and even perform in “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” (302)—returns upon itself. If the subject holds the string that sends the “wooden reel” away (*fort!*) and brings it back within sight again (*da!*), then the subject is also held *by* string—the string of the other, which sends the subject spinning, compelling it to play the game once more so that it is both player *and* object of the same game. The subject plays the game, and the game plays it. The subject controls a failed hospitality scene by repeating it, but it is also *controlled by* its own failure to have had done with the game, by its inability to relinquish the repetition of the encounter.

If we think of Coleridge’s poetry as offering a model of a Fort-da game of hospitality (again, we think of this offering itself as a generous gift bestowed unto us by the collected unconscious of a vast body of works), we can begin to imagine this body of work as donating unto us a fundamental truth about hospitality and about the Fort-da itself: the other arrives regardless of one’s attempt to welcome, ruin, or postpone its arrival. There is always another *other* within each repetition of the failed hospitable encounter. In “Rime” and in “Kubla Khan” the other arrives in the multiplicity of competing hospitalities and obligations. In the insistent repetition of violations and breaches in “Christabel,” the other also arrives as a disruptive transgression that requires infinite disavowals; the other returns to Christabel even as she denies its legitimacy through prayers and through her objection to Geraldine’s right to hospitality. In “Frost”

and “Two Sisters,” this pattern of return continues even as the speakers of these poems turn/avert their attention away from or postpone the arrival of another who promises to come again and to *overcome* the phantasms which attempt to reduce it to a single figure of “vision and reality.” To relapse into the scenography of the letter with which we began this chapter, one will always have mice with which to contend, even if these mice take only the form of a ghostly possibility—the spectre of the unwanted visitor—against which one sets various traps and “Pitt-falls.”



CHAPTER FOUR:

Uninvited Guests: 'Visitation' and Obligation in Mary Shelley's The Last Man

"Friend, come! I wait for thee!—*Deh, vieni! Ti aspetto!*"

—*The Last Man* (355)

Introduction: A Dedication to the "ILLUSTRIOUS DEAD"

Despite a significant increase in scholarly activity over the past couple of decades concerning Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's third published novel, *The Last Man* (1826), there still lingers a tendency on the part of its critics to express a certain regret for the lack of attention given to the novel in the field of literary studies. Starting in the 1960's, two critical perspectives emerge, one affirmative, the other skeptical: on the one hand, the complete novel's first twentieth-century editor, Hugh J. Luke, Jr., insists that given our culture's recent anxieties over the threat of atomic annihilation, "*The Last Man* should find a more responsive audience in the 1960's than it did when it was first published almost a hundred and fifty years ago" (317); on the other hand, Jean de Palacio, measuring the novel's progress only three years after the appearance of Luke's 1965 edition of *The Last Man*, asserts (much too prematurely) that "there is no evidence so far, however, of Mary's third printed novel making an epoch in our century" (37). Inspired by feminist scholarship and perhaps also by the approaching millennium, critical activity privileging *The Last Man* gained a modest momentum throughout the seventies and eighties with a limited, if influential, set of readings of the novel by Lee Sterrenburg,

Robert L. Snyder, and Anne Mellor.¹ Finally, we witness what is (given the context) a veritable explosion of interest surrounding the text throughout the nineties and into the twenty-first century.² And yet, still, doubts persist as we are left to ponder, along with the participants of the 1997 “Romantic Circles Virtual Conference”: is Shelley’s novel “Virtually Dead?”³ Has *The Last Man* survived? Or does the novel, like its narrator, Lionel Verney, continue to struggle with the possibility that it has no audience—at least, not a very large one?

Answers to these questions might very well lie in the issue of last-ness itself, which *The Last Man* thematizes in an obvious manner—its narrator being the last human to survive (and document) a plague that annihilates the species in the late twenty-first century. If, as Sophie Thomas argues, *The Last Man* reads “as a reflection on the *infinality* of writing itself” (23, *emph. added*), then we might say that this reflection is twice reflected in the novel’s critical heritage as its readers continue to question whether *The Last Man* will, in fact, *last*. Commenting on the abounding proliferation of “last man” texts in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century (a generic tradition out of

¹See Sterrenburg, “*The Last Man: Anatomy of Failed Revolutions*” (1978), Snyder, “Apocalypse and Indeterminacy in Mary Shelley’s *The Last Man*” (1978), and Mellor, “Love, Guilt, and Reparation: *The Last Man*” (1988).

²For a useful bibliography of extant criticism on *The Last Man*, see Frederick S. Frank, “Mary Shelley’s Other Fiction: A Biographical Census” (1997). Several essays have appeared in print since the publication of this collection. According to my last count, there exist over sixty articles and book chapters that address *The Last Man* since Luke’s edition of the novel in 1965.

³For access to “Virtually Dead? Mary Shelley’s *The Last Man*” (September 13, 1997), see <<http://www.rc.umd.edu/villa/vc97/MWSprogram.html#lastman>>. Among the Keynote speakers and respondents are Elizabeth Fay, Gary Kelly, Greg Kucich, Anne Mellor, and Alan Richardson.

which the publication of Shelley's novel was considered to be "ridiculously" late), one of Shelley's contemporary reviewers contends that "last things are generally the last things in the world that are last."⁴ As if to test this maxim as well as to reproduce the novel's apocalyptic tone, many of the novel's most recent critics find themselves concerned that they will be the last to remember *The Last Man*, that without more readers to follow, *The Last Man* will simply fade away and be forgotten by a culture which historically prefers male to female Romantic poets—or, as is the case with *Frankenstein*, which remembers (and even expropriates) the work but forgets the female authorship of the work. This anxiety may not be an entirely surprising symptom of reading a novel that (pre)figures the end of writing *per se* (or at least, tries to)—the narrator's text being the final testament of the human race. But it has inspired a dedicated preservationist effort surrounding the novel, much of which has generated a kind of discursive ritual which many critical responses to the novel reproduce at one moment or another. In addition to eulogizing the text's inability to maintain a devoted following of readers (which is to say, the history of its suppression), scholars of *The Last Man* often repeat one or more (and sometimes all) of the following critical gestures: a) reminding the reader that Shelley was prevented by her husband's father from publishing a formal biography of his son, a prohibition that led

⁴"The Last Book: with a Dissertation on Last Things in General" (1826). This reference was first cited and made popular by Morton D. Paley in "*The Last Man*: Apocalypse without Millennium" (1993). As to the issue of lateness (*and* lastness), Paley remarks that by the publication of Shelley's contribution in 1826, "the subject of the Last Man had come to seem not apocalyptic but ridiculous. Behind the ridicule, however, there is a suggestion that presupposes a recipient or reader whose very existence negates the Lastness of the narrating subject" (107). With the threat of the cholera outbreak in the early nineteenth century, moreover, one wonders about just how "ridiculous" the theme would have appeared to Shelley's readers.

Mary to use *The Last Man* (especially in its characterization of Adrian) to commemorate Percy's life and philosophy through fiction; b) labeling the novel as a *roman à clef* which celebrates as well as critiques the various personalities of the Shelleys' circle of friends, including Percy himself; c) locating the novel's position in a tradition of apocalyptic fictions that deploy the "Last Man" theme; d) subsequently qualifying at least one of the previous three gestures, insisting that the novel holds infinitely more interest for us than as a simple monument to the author's deceased husband, as a *roman à clef*, or as another bleak installment of a "Last Man" narrative;⁵ e) historicizing the novel's depiction of the Plague as Shelley's complex response to or "rejection" of the (masculinist) Romantic and revolutionary politics of her parent's generation (Sterrenburg 328); and finally, more recently, f) lauding the novel's inquiry into the nature of "plaguing politics" as especially relevant to our own culture's encounters with and representation of the AIDS epidemic (Fisch 267).

These critical gestures are important for appreciating many aspects of the novel, especially its marginal or "minor" position in the history of Romantic thought as well as its recent revival in literary studies. I do nevertheless wish to suggest that these gestures reflect more than just the usual business of academic scholarship and the necessity of contextualizing or historicizing a work from the past. Such gestures testify to a certain

⁵In her Introduction to the 1996 Broadview edition of *The Last Man*, for instance, Anne McWhir insists that it is quite common to "obscure" the "significance of the novel by "reducing *The Last Man* merely to a *roman à clef*" (xxiii). What seems more common, however, is the tendency to renounce such a reduction. Many critics before and after her have done precisely that, including Luke (319), Sterrenburg (327), Mellor (*Mary Shelley* 148), Paley ("*Last Man*" 110), Mark Canuel (149), and Joseph W. Lew (163).

obligation that we, as readers, have for texts in general. I would argue, however, that this obligation becomes especially conspicuous when reading a text which fictionalizes precisely its own impossibility of being read—a text, that is, which imagines a time when there are in fact no more readers as such.⁶ Properly speaking, we readers of the early twenty-first century are still the object of the dedication that Lionel appends to the last book that humanity will ever write. “ILLUSTRIOUS” or not, we are the “DEAD” of 2100, the “last year of the world” (365). We are the “SHADOWS” who are summoned by Lionel to “ARISE” and “READ” our “FALL” and to witness “THE HISTORY OF THE LAST MAN” (356). This is at least one trait that we share with Shelley’s contemporary readers: with the exception of some of our children (who might conceivably still be around in the year 2100), most of us will be dead before we can measure just how prescient the novel really is. Working to preserve the novel from the forgetfulness of history, then, we readers and critics of *The Last Man* pursue an obligation to speak for a text whose fiction *claims to speak for us*. Shelley is a member of what we have determined to be one of *our* “Illustrious Dead” (again, even if this has only been the case in the wake of relatively recent feminist recovery efforts). We continue to speak for

⁶A whole debate has emerged around *The Last Man*’s figuration of its lack of readers. While Sterrenburg, for instance, is among the first to claim that “part of the fiction in *The Last Man* is that the narrator has no audience” (342), Gregory O’Dea argues that the paradox of the preface (i.e., that Lionel’s text will be read not by his descendants but by his predecessors) throws into relief the fact that simply by writing (and thus visualizing the possibility of a reader), whether “real or imagined, Lionel has an audience” (301). My purpose is not so much to engage this debate as it is to recall the fact that the novel’s fictionalization of a time without readers foregrounds the demand that a text places on its readers in order for it to *be* a “text.” As I argue, Shelley’s novel makes an issue of the reader’s responsibility *to respond*.

Shelley; we insist on being responsible to and for her as a novelist, as a woman. While at the same time, her novel problematizes precisely this relation insofar as both novel and readership are caught in a bizarre (albeit fictional) chiasmus of mutual obligation. In other words, we repeat Lionel's dedicatory gesture when we aim to restore *The Last Man* from its historical anonymity and extend its critical heritage.

Accordingly, I argue in this chapter that *The Last Man* is primarily concerned with *obligation*—with how the subject responds to or prefigures otherness, be it in the form of plague virus or refugees seeking asylum *from* the plague. What is more, if the novel's shift from "domestic fiction to plague fiction . . . amounts to a shift in the relationship between individuals and communities," as Mark Canuel argues (151), then the novel is also concerned with seeking new ways to engage the other, especially when that other is no longer recognizably human—which is to say, when the world is no longer inhabited by other subjects but, rather, by an otherwise indifferent expanse of everything *but* the human. While Samantha Webb claims that Lionel's writing at the end of the novel "is obsolete for all but the most self-reflexive purposes" (133), I tend to agree with Barbara Johnson who sees Lionel's writing not so much as solipsistic as it is a necessary step towards discovering "that he doesn't know how to speak the other's language anymore" (263). Still Lionel continues to feel obliged to communicate nonetheless: if his cries go "unanswered" by the wind (349), he nevertheless feels obligated to pick up the "writing materials" that he finds in an "author's study" (364) and (re)present himself to the other through writing—even if that other turns out to be none other than himself, the first reader

of the text he writes. His isolation foregrounds the problems of a subject who is, ostensibly, no longer subject to the human but who continues to experience obligation nonetheless. “Here I am (*me voici*),” John Caputo might have him say, “[still] on the receiving end of an obligation,” still bound to another I can no longer see (*Against* 7). Knowing full well that he will hear no reply, Lionel insists on “lifting up the only voice that could ever again force the mute air to syllable the human thought” (*Last Man* 349). *The Last Man* is thus a meditation on the nature of obligation both before and after its narrator becomes the sole survivor of the human race: what is the nature, it asks, of a responsibility that compels one to speak when there are in fact no others left to talk to? As I have done in the preceding chapters, I will question the extent to which this obligation is complicated by the question of the subject’s obligation to the other(s) within itself. After all, the last surviving face that Lionel describes is his *own*, reflected as it is in a mirror that he finds in a palace in Forlì. His own “miserable” image startles and frightens him in its sudden unfamiliarity, causing him to do a double-take “with renewed wonder” (354). And who else, but himself, could hear his own voice, the *last* voice to “again force the mute air to syllable the human thought?” Focusing on the various forms of responsibility in the novel, including the subject’s obligations to the other in need of aid, I argue, finally, that *The Last Man* stages its *crisis*-narrative—or as Johnson alternatively puts it, its “limit-narrative” (258)—as a means to explore the absolute limits of the hospitable relation between the subject and the others that surround it. While the Plague consumes social and national boundaries, rendering them obsolete, the subject

scrambles desperately to renegotiate its relation (or non-relation, as the case may be) with an other that grows increasingly more obscure and unidentifiable as the novel unfolds.

In the first few sections that follow, I turn to the impossible conditions of hospitality and writing as related (if not indistinguishable) enterprises in a world without guests or readers. I argue that Lionel's narrative does not write the end of writing so much as it pledges never to close itself insofar as it remains hospitably open-ended. The novel truly does "end outside of itself," as Thomas claims (35); for even as Lionel forsakes writing for the open waters of the Aegean, the novel can only postpone the apocalypse, marking not the end of humanity, but rather the promise of life yet to come. Saying more than it can say, Lionel's narrative leaves the end of history (i.e., the moment when the last man actually dies) resolutely unreadable—the temporal contradiction of the text's fictional recovery in the Sibyl's cave long before it is written being, I argue, Shelley's way of registering such unreadability. Accordingly, I also read the novel's frame-narrative as an elaborate hospitality scene in itself—one in which Shelley's imaginary editor and author of the "Introduction" recalls his/her visit to the "timeless" cave of the Sibyl (Sterrenburg 342), claiming to have received in this celebrated place of antiquity a kind of prophetic gift-narrative of the future.⁷

⁷As many readers have pointed out, Shelley refrains from allotting gender either to the supposed author of the "Introduction" or to the author's "companion." As one can imagine, composing a five page narrative involving two persons without identifying their gender would be very difficult—at least, difficult *enough* to suggest a concerted effort and some kind of intention behind that effort. It is enough to inspire Michael Eberle-Sinatra to wonder: "Is Shelley here raising the possibility of a new kind of subject in which gender is absent, or at least, unstable, fluid, unimportant?" (102).

As if to observe the paradoxical (or, at least, cyclical) logic of a book that confuses its destination and departure (i.e., beginning *and* ending in the “Introduction”), the final sections of this chapter move backward from the novel’s grim ending in order to consider how the advent of the Plague (a coldly indifferent and unknown—or absolute—form of otherness in itself)⁸ disrupts what we might call the subject’s hospitable relations with regard to other more restricted forms of difference: for example, its own self-differences, differences of race and nationality, and finally differences between hosts and guests in general—this last distinction finally collapsing, as we shall see, as the Plague literally and figuratively devours all the “hosts” of Europe.

Visiting the Sibyl: Narrative as (the) Gift (of Death)

Whither does this lead? we asked: can we enter here?—“*Questo poi, no*”—said the wild looking savage, who held the torch; “you can advance but a short distance, and nobody visits it.”

—“Introduction,” *The Last Man* (2)

1. The “Work” of Lionel’s Narrative and the Death of the Reader

Barring the occasional quarrel between the novel’s various lovers, the plot synopsis of *The Last Man* is rather straightforward. Lionel Verney narrates the story of

⁸While the Plague is certainly engaged in the novel in all sorts of restricted ways (e.g. as foreign, as feminine, as anti-political, etc.), its difference is essentially unrestricted. Extending Snyder’s argument that the Plague resists representation (and is *potentially* meaningful for this reason), Johnson observes that even though the Plague can be read to represent various things (a critique of revolutionary politics, for instance), “*there is no relation*” between the Plague and any of the meanings attached to it (Snyder 445, Johnson 264). I will return to the issue of “non-relatedness” in the next section.

his life from the misdirected foibles of his rustic, almost parodically Wordsworthian,⁹ youth to his final days in the twilight of the twenty-first century as the last surviving member of the human race. Early in the novel, he meets Adrian, Earl of Windsor, whose father abdicates his rule as King of England so that a republic might be implemented. Softened under the influence of Adrian's intelligence and renowned "spirit of benevolence" (20), Lionel abandons the uncouth ways of his youth, cultivates his mind with poetry and philosophy, and gradually finds himself enmeshed in the world of English politics, through which he is introduced to an ambitious statesman named Raymond, who later marries Lionel's sister, Perdita. Lionel, in turn, marries Adrian's sister, Idris, whom he calls "the talisman of my existence" (48), and the pair join Adrian, Raymond, and Perdita at Windsor—their "beloved Castle" (71)—where they live an idyllic life in "hushing tranquility" for over five years (72). Raymond's political ambition, however, finally compels him to leave Windsor castle (with Perdita and his daughter, Clara) for London's political scene, where he is eventually installed as Lord Protector of England. Troubled by a secretive heart-wrenching affair with an impoverished Greek Princess named Evadne Zaimi, and prompted to action by the renewal of hostilities across the Aegean, Raymond renounces his position as Lord Protector and returns to Greece in order to lead the Greeks in their assault against the Turks. It is at this point—when the Turks have been effectively defeated and Constantinople falls into the hands of the Greek

⁹Paley contends that "Lionel, unlike the boy Wordsworth portrays himself as having been, is rough and uncouth . . . Young Lionel is if anything a travesty of the Wordsworthian ideal of power. It is only by the civilizing influence of Adrian that Lionel's conception of himself changes" ("*Last Man*" 111-2).

army—that the Plague enters the novel. Opening the gates of “this city of the dead” (162), Raymond seems to unleash an irrepressible pestilence on the Western world. The first Westerner to contract the Plague, Raymond dies and is buried on Greek soil at the head of a “sublime chasm” near Hymettus (164). Over the course of the next seven years, pestilence spreads across the globe, traveling as far west as North America, forcing the inhabitants of that continent to migrate (in a kind of parallel formation with Europe) to the last bastion of civilization—namely, England, which manages somehow to protect itself from the Plague longer than any other nation on earth. When the Plague finally reaches England’s borders and begins to consume its population, Adrian bands together as many domestic and foreign survivors as he can and convinces them to journey southward *en mass* toward more “tropical” climates and to seek what he calls “some natural Paradise, some garden of the earth” (244).¹⁰ By the time they reach the town of Como, Lionel, Adrian, and Clara remain the last surviving members of this unhappy band of wanderers, “a simple triad on the empty earth” (342). Endeavoring to spend their final days in Greece, they sail for the Cyclades, when a brutal tempest interrupts their voyage, tossing them into the sea, out of which only Lionel emerges, as he is washed ashore the

¹⁰Paley makes an amusing observation *vis-à-vis* the southbound journey of Adrian’s crew, pointing out that it “is strange because the plague abates in *winter*; they really should seek the ice-pack like Frankenstein’s monster” (“*Last Man*” 117). As Lionel says, “Plague is the companion of spring, of sunshine, and of plenty” (250). Winter is “welcomed with gratitude” (188). Adrian’s decision to head south is a curious lapse of reason, indeed; but it only makes William Lomax’s argument even more emphatic, that the overruling structure of *The Last Man* is that of an “anti-” or “reverse-epic” which moves backwards through human history until, finally, it ends at the beginning, in paradise, where Lionel becomes the “Last Man,” but also the “First Man” (Lomax 8, 11).

banks of Italy near Ravenna. From Ravenna, a solitary and melancholy Lionel heads toward the desolate city of Rome, where he spends a year writing what he calls “a monument of the existence of Lionel Verney, the Last Man” (364), before embarking on his final (un-narrated) journey along “the beauteous shores and sunny promontories of the blue Mediterranean” (366).

There are various sub-plots that texture the novel’s advancement, including Lionel’s account of his sister’s death by drowning as well as Adrian’s celebrated arrival in Paris and his dealings there with the “imposter-prophet” (302). But, on the whole, the novel is essentially guided by a singularly broad gesture: an invincible plague easily levels an idealized English republic and, with it, the entire Western world, until there is but one man left to tell the tale. Indeed, the aforementioned first twentieth-century editor of the novel, H. J. Luke, complains: “we could wish, certainly, that *The Last Man* were somewhat shorter” (317). Similarly, Sterrenburg, grumbling that the novel “is over-long,” ultimately excuses its length due partly to the fact that Shelley was “trying to write a triple-decker so as to conform to the format of the circulating libraries” (343). While these critics anxiously apologize for the novel’s meandering, episodic digressiveness, I wonder if we could really have expected anything less from a novel about humanity’s last stand. Could the dying breath of the human be anything *but* long-winded?

It is, I believe, useful to think about this loquacious history of the-end-of-history in terms of the generous *excess* that flows from what Levinas calls a “work”—which is to say, an expression that seeks not to “reabsorb every Other” into a text which finally

makes “sense” of or embodies a unified meaning and which thus neutralizes both its own alterity and that of the other (“Meaning” 90). Rather, a “*work conceived radically*,” writes Levinas under italics, “*is a movement of the Same towards the Other which never returns to the Same*” (“Meaning” 91). The “work” can be posited, he argues, only as a gesture which begins in the particular (i.e., in the self/ego), but which moves consistently and hospitably outside the identical (without restoration or restitution) toward an other that is indifferently or “absolutely” other (91). Never to return to the self, never to find self-closure in a singular, unified, or fixed meaning, the “work” keeps talking (or “saying,” as Levinas says), always enabling itself to be read in different ways, just as Lionel’s thirty chapters (which are themselves an abridged version of the Sibyl’s countless leaves) barely muster the courage finally to utter those final words, “THE END”—words which are themselves incomplete, trailing off as they do into a kind of invisible ellipsis, pointing to what they dare not, cannot say: “...OF MAN...OF WOMAN...OF HUMANITY...OF WRITING...&c.” Lionel’s narrative will not end, even if it refuses to continue. For the ellipsis following the two (non-)final words of the novel refer also, we remember, to Lionel’s final journey across the Aegean which the novel cannot properly narrate. By positing the trip, however, the novel out-writes itself, as it were, exceeding its narrative frame, promising not an end but the beginning of something more, something in excess of itself—something *to come*. In other words, Lionel’s narrative is a text that “works” so hard to say what it has to say that it has always already said too much. Obligated to say much more than it can contain, the “work” of the text can never find the

closure needed to utter the final words of “Verney—the LAST MAN” (367). If the reader is impatient for Lionel to stop writing, perhaps that impatience is actually a kind of recognition that, in the end, we will never know Lionel’s last words.

Aside from any solipsistic investment, without readers to follow, Lionel will see no “return” on his narrative. (This is a problematic which is only heightened by the fiction of the “Introduction” as the narrator of that text cannot return *The Last Man* to Lionel (its author) any more than he/she can return it to the Sibyl, from whom he/she receives it. The narrator cannot give thanks for the gift he/she finds.) Lionel’s insecurities over the impossibility of having readers, moreover, further complicate the closure of a text that would otherwise close the book on humanity. “O Reader,” he often laments: “whoever thou art, wherever thou dwellest, whether of race spiritual, or, sprung from some surviving pair, thy nature will be human, thy habitation the earth” (312). The conflicted nature of this lament—i.e., envisioning the reader as possibly ethereal and elsewhere, but nevertheless all too humanly grounded on *terra firma*—reveals Lionel’s mixed emotions concerning who or what could possibly read the text he writes. On the one hand, he fears the futility of his task; while, on the other hand, he senses an obligation to write nonetheless. He is compelled to believe, “with certainty of faith,” that “other spirits, other minds, other perceptive beings, sightless to us, must people with thought and love this beauteous and imperishable universe” (269). Writing his text, Lionel senses the presence of the other. He would not be able to write unless there were someone to write *for*. To write is always necessarily to posit a reader—even, as I have said, if that reader *is*

the writer him/herself.¹¹ In any case, invariably sensing but never beholding its “sightless” reader(ship), Lionel’s narrative performs the work of a “work” insofar as it not only refuses to incorporate its reader (thus leaving the addressee of the text ultimately *other-than expected*), but it also dramatizes, as I have said, precisely the impossibility of the text’s return to self: who knows where the narrative will end up? Who knows who or what will read this text in the end? While it is true that Lionel does occasionally conceive of his readers as “no less human than himself” (McWhir, “Anatomy” 172), he could hardly have imagined, as Samantha Webb observes, exactly when and where his text would end up, nor could he have imagined a reader more different or “other” than the fictional author of the “Introduction” (131).

What is more, Lionel’s uncertainty with regards to the reader (sensing but ultimately unable to locate its presence), renders the reader similar to another incalculable and “sightless” entity in the novel—namely, the Plague, which Lionel describes at least once as the “*sightless enemy*” (217, *emph. added*). Struggling to discover meaning in the events that lead to humanity’s demise, Lionel’s narrative continues to “work” in the Levinasian sense: it enables the Plague to remain unrepresentable in its otherness, thus

¹¹Canuel comes close to saying just this: “Lionel, any reader can quickly see, is both the ‘LAST MAN’ and yet writing for one more beyond the last—as if it were in fact unfeasible to imagine a community consisting of one” (148). Generally speaking, I believe Canuel to be right; but perhaps it might be more accurate to rephrase the speculative clause that ends his sentence, adding my own words in parenthesis: “as if it were in fact unfeasible to imagine a community (of one) consisting of (just) one.” Just as *The Last Man* is (within the various frames of its fiction) the product of a multiplicity of authors (i.e., Lionel, the Sibyl, the fictional editor, and Mary Shelley), so too might “Lionel” be the product of a multiplicity of alterities, divided from within, other than the self. Looking into the mirror in Forli, Lionel may well have been staring his reader directly in the face.

preventing any potential readers from finally recovering or recuperating it within a discourse of the same. While the Plague, for instance, is potentially meaningful for several of Shelley's critics as representative of revolutionary politics, foreignness, or femininity (see respectively, Sterrenburg 382; McWhir, "Introduction" xxviii; and Aaron 17), it ultimately exceeds these meanings as it is infinitely productive, which is to say, permanently different or *other* than itself. It is an "all-embracing evil" (238), welcoming any and all subjects, indifferently devouring them without judgement and without any higher purpose. It defies meaning, as Snyder says, arising slowly "from the earth as though it were a primordial negation within the very structure of life itself" (442)—a description which explains why still other critics read the Plague as a possible paradigm for deconstruction (Fisch 272, Canuel 164). In Simon Critchley's words, Lionel's narrative could be said continually to "open" itself to and "exceed" "that which comes before and after nominalization" (Critchley 110). As a "work" in the Levinasian sense, the novel simply refuses to name its poison.

If Lionel cannot (or will not) determine the nature either of the Plague or the reader, he does nevertheless resign himself to finding other ways of communicating with whatever otherness can be found in his post-apocalyptic isolation. He finds himself obliged to do so. Before considering Lionel's attempt to address this otherness in more detail, however, I do want to suggest that it is perhaps misleading to say, as Johnson does, that "in leaving Rome [and the novel] to seek an unknown otherness, Verney stops writing" (263), or that by positing his choice not to write Lionel writes the end of writing.

For the “work” never stops. As Derrida would say, there is an “other hand” to the text’s paradoxical desire to write the end of writing—its desire, that is, to do precisely what it now claims is no longer possible in the absence of readers. “Isn’t the voice of language,” Derrida asks, “always that of the last man?” (“Newly” 146). Taking as his touchstone Kant’s own apocalyptic concerns over the fate (or the “ends”) of philosophy in the late eighteenth century, Derrida suggests that it is the very nature of the “text” to proclaim a crisis—an end—that cannot exist apart from its proclamation (147). The text, in other words, cannot posit its crisis without some kind of violence, without effectively killing what has come to pass precisely by proclaiming the death of that thing. The end requires the text to *perform* the end. Alternately, it takes a *man* to “authorize” the end(s) of man: it always takes one more—a *last* man to make sure that he *is* last and that what he says is the last *word*.¹² Sensing what we might call the last man’s murderous arrogance, Johnson herself admits that in traveling to Rome, Lionel performs the “humanist gesture *par excellence*”: “*he seeks to live the death of all of humanity*” (263, *emph. added*). Believing that he “possesses the most important story that has ever been told” (Johnson 265), Lionel travels to Rome to make sure that there are no more survivors: he actively seeks the death

¹²Questioning Shelley’s decision to employ a first person masculine narrator to tell the story of the last human, Johnson wonders: “Why couldn’t such a story be entitled *The Last Woman*? . . . Would the idea that humanity could not end with a woman have something to do with the ends of *man*?” (262). As Paley notes, when Shelley’s contemporary critics panned the novel, the “author’s gender was not spared . . . ‘Why not *the Last Woman*?’ asked *The Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres*. ‘She would have known better how to paint her distress at having nobody left to talk to’” (“*Last Man*” 108).

of the species.¹³ The death of the human, then, is *premeditated*. It is premeditated not by the Plague, which has no purpose or capacity for premeditation as such, but by Lionel himself, author of the last book that humanity will ever write. Why else would Lionel travel to Rome? How could he possibly suspect the end is near had he not already dreamed (or desired, as Freud would add) the death of humanity? How could he suspect this had he not already thought it through *in advance* or *before the fact*? In order to write his “monument of the existence of Verney, the Last Man” (364), Lionel must (in a kind of discursive holocaust) “inscribe” the reader, as Johnson says, “precisely as dead” (265). The weapon of choice: a dedication to the “Illustrious Dead.”

How, after all, could Lionel possibly know that he is the *last* man? While his narrative often demonstrates an omniscience over the lives of others that is already quite inconceivable, it would take an omniscience altogether different to know that one is truly the last man standing. Lionel, as we have noted, cannot help but wonder if there still exists some “surviving pair” whose offspring might very well read his text after he himself has expired (312). And yet he is still willing to proclaim death of the human—thus, in a sense, murdering *all* men, erasing all potential survivors from the history of his narrative. Figuratively speaking, he kills his readership by *figuring* the impossibility of the scene of reading his text. He figures the impossible as such: how to announce the end of man, when he himself is still a man—a man who could never

¹³The same could be said of the critical heritage of the novel, in which we see critics fretting over being the last to read *The Last Man*. We might say that the critic likewise “seeks to live the death of the novel.”

determine whether he was last, next to last, or even the first *and* last to witness the end? His proclamation or announcement of the end is in a very real sense the English imperialist gesture *par excellence*. Only an Englishman, it would seem, could proclaim the death of the species after witnessing the death of the English. (But, then again, how could Lionel witness even this?) Julia Wright argues that by imagining England, in the opening paragraph of his narrative, as a “speck” in an immense world dominated by English colonialism, the novel reveals Shelley’s anxieties over the “management” of colonial space (130-1). I contend that Lionel’s performative announcement—his “dedication” to the death of all other men—is not only typically masculinist, but it also defines the very limits of imperialist expansion. I will return in greater detail to issues of imperialism in the novel near the end of this chapter. Suffice it to say, without knowing if there are other people who might have out-*lasted* the Plague (say, for instance, in South America, Africa, Australia, or any other part of the globe currently inaccessible to him), Lionel essentially colonizes the world over once more: he claims to embody all of humanity; he claims that he *is* humanity as such. It would seem that, for Lionel, if the world is left with only one surviving Englishman, there is but one human—a kind of logic which, interestingly, reminds us of Kant’s witty assessment of English hospitality: as far as Lionel’s narrative is concerned, all other foreigners, all other human beings, scattered across the globe in this plague-ridden world, will be left to “die on the dunghill” *not* as men, and certainly not as *last* men, precisely because they are not “Englishmen,” that is not “human being[s]” (*Anthropology* 230).

The end of the world, then, cannot exist outside the text. It can only “occur” *within* the text, and it “occurs” only because the world outside the text gets *written out*, so to speak. This writing out of the world, however, never stops because the “work” always works despite or against itself: Lionel will never know for sure; he will never say once and for all (without apprehension or uncertainty) that he is in fact the last. When he does call himself “last,” his doubt (perhaps it is his guilt) compels him to hesitate, reminding him that the other might still be “out there,” that there is still a chance that someone—the future offspring of an otherwise extinguished race—will read his miserable tale. Forever undermining its desire to be last, Lionel’s text never stops writing itself. It remains open to the possibility that it might just have a critical heritage after all.

2. *Animal Hospitality and the “Lure” of Language*

Before he is finally willing to give up on (English) humanity, Lionel makes efforts to leave behind a few beacons of sorts. Still confident in the power of the written word as well as in the possibility that there are still readers *yet to come*, Lionel decides to write a message—what Johnson calls a “please forward” (263)—on the walls of the towns that he passes on his way to Rome, with “white paint, in three languages”: “Verney, the last of the race of Englishman, had taken up his abode in Rome” (355). McWhir’s editorial comments insist that by writing the message in “three languages,” Lionel is most likely alluding to the Rosetta Stone (discovered in 1799), which bore an inscription in three languages, Greek, “demotic Egyptian,” and Egyptian hieroglyphics, and which “allowed

scholars to interpret hieroglyphics for the first time” (355 n.100). Communication and translatability of his message are clearly an issue for Lionel.¹⁴ Perhaps balking at his instinct to proclaim his *own* death from the retrospective perspective of the future (as though his message were actually an instance of the future perfect simple), and perhaps further recognizing the growing inadequacy of the English word in a world without Englishmen, Lionel decides to append to his message a more direct plea, which he writes in the *present* tense, and which is followed by its more universally recognizable Latin equivalent: “Friend, come! I wait for thee! –*Deh, vieni! Ti aspetto!*” (355). Victoria Middleton claims that the “friend” to whom Lionel refers is “most assuredly” *death*, and that by articulating his plea, Lionel “wants to die, either to rejoin he beloved friends or else simply to escape the enormous pain of being ‘alone of my race’” (61). I would argue, however, that Lionel’s message is much more complex than Middleton allows. First, it can be understood in much the same way that Derrida reads the declaration, “O my friends, there is no friend,” generally attributed (by Montaigne) to Aristotle (*Friendship* 2). It is a declaration that both affirms and denies the existence of friends, only in Lionel’s case, the address to a “friend” reveals less about his interests in the philosophical impossibility of friendship, than it does about his remorse not so much over *being* the last man, but over having to *announce* the condition of his lastness: his

¹⁴They are also issues for the narrator of the “Introduction.” Upon examining the Sibylline leaves that contain Lionel’s story (albeit in scattered form), the narrator exclaims: “What appeared . . . astonishing, was that these writings were expressed in various languages: some unknown to my companion, ancient Chaldee, and Egyptian hieroglyphics, old as the Pyramids” (3). The Sibyl’s leaves require a Rosetta Stone of their own.

invitation to follow him to Rome is perhaps an invitation for the reader of the message to attend his or her own death at the hands of a last man narrative (i.e., to attend his or her own beheading *as reader* of a text that proposes never to be read). Second, Lionel's message can be understood, like the entire narrative itself, as a kind of "note-to-self" that alludes to the fact that in addition to seeking to "live the death of humanity," Lionel seeks to greet *himself* in Rome, where he will write a book that only he could read before accompanying himself on an ocean journey—living the rest of his days in a community of *one* which could never be *just one*.¹⁵

And finally, Lionel's message, with its English expression and its Latin translation, also reveals the last man's failing faith in language as an affective structure on which to ground his relation to otherness in a world without other English subjects. For the message is quite literally self-divided. Under the weight of its overdetermined desire to broaden the scope of its readership, the message fractures into at least five separate languages, each different from the other and each the other of itself. Knowing not to *whom* it speaks, the message knows not *what* it speaks. Both itself and not itself, it cannot contain its own message. If we take seriously the allusion to the Rosetta Stone, the English portion of Lionel's message is quite literally surrounded by a cluster of

¹⁵The moment that Lionel decides to append a second message, which invites a "friend" to meet him in Rome, is in fact a moment in which he senses himself *as reader* of the text he writes. It is only when he has had time to reflect on his initial message, "Verney, the last of the race of Englishmen, had taken up his abode in Rome," that it occurs to him that someone might actually read his message. Someone *has* read it already, namely, *himself*. Only after *he* has read (or reflected on) the message that he wants to write does the "childish" and "fantastic" idea occur to him that there might still be an other to whom he might speak (355).

“dead” languages (Latin, Greek, demotic Egyptian, and Egyptian hieroglyphics). One dead language supplements the next. Is not the crisis of the message, then, the very fact that English has become itself a dead language? And so we find another crisis that is also an impossible paradox: how to witness the death of a language from *within* that language? Would it be to *pronounce* a language dead—to wish it, render it dead, to kill it, in effect? The apocalyptic tone, to cite Canuel once again, necessarily writes “for one more beyond the last.” Caught in the discursive loop of both announcing and effacing its lastness and the lastness of its author, Lionel’s “friendly” invitation reveals Lionel’s desire to continue writing despite himself, its multilingualism being itself a Rosetta Stone of sorts that Lionel leaves for the other as a translation “key” to his narrative.

Lionel’s “please forward” is not the only sign of his obligation to express himself when there is no one left to talk to. Nor is it even the most obvious of these signs. In a scene that critics of the novel have virtually ignored, Lionel has a most heartbreaking hospitable encounter with a family of goats that powerfully captures the anguish of his newfound situation of isolation and non-relatedness. The scene (which I cite in its entirety) occurs on the first morning of Lionel’s arrival in Rome, and it follows one of his most depressing monologues on solitude. Woefully remarking that he “cannot express to any companion [his] many thoughts,” he is startled by the creaturely movements of another presence:

Just then, there emerged from a near copse two goats and a little kid, by the mother’s side; they began to browse the herbage of the hill. I

approached near to them, without their perceiving me; I gathered a handful
 of fresh grass, and held it out; the little one nestled close to its mother,
 while she timidly withdrew. The male stepped forward, fixing his eyes on
 me: I drew near, holding out my lure, while he, depressing his head,
 rushed at me with his horns. I was a very fool; I knew it, yet I yielded to
 my rage. I snatched up a huge fragment of rock; it would have crushed my
 rash foe. I poised it—aimed it—then my heart failed me. I hurled it wide of
 the mark; it rolled clattering among the bushes into dell. My little visitants,
 all aghast, galloped back into the covert of the wood; while I, my very
 heart bleeding and torn, rushed down the hill, and by the violence of
 bodily exertion, sought to escape from my miserable self. (358)

The most striking aspect of this passage is the domestic metaphor of goats as family
 unit—a metaphor that calls to mind Mellor's autobiographical analysis of *The Last Man* as
 a novel which “tests Mary Shelley's ideology of the family against the realities of human
 egotism and temporal mutability” (*Mary Shelley* 148). For Mellor, much of Shelley's
 fiction is fueled by a “fundamental tension” inherent in her idealization of the concept of
 an “egalitarian bourgeois family,” of which Shelley herself had been deprived as a child
 and as an adult (148). This tension, I argue, is placed under a kind of deconstructive
 pressure by Lionel's description of his encounter with the goats. For it is precisely the
 assumption of the domestic metaphor and its humanizing effects that guarantee the tragic
 results of the encounter. Lionel immediately identifies the female goat with motherhood

("the mother's side"), and the metaphor is quickly embellished as the "little one" *nestles* close to its mother, who "timidly" withdraws as the male (who is never explicitly named as father, but whose actions are firmly presented as fatherly) steps protectively forwards to shield his "family." It is, perhaps, not unusual to speak of animals in this way. As David Perkins argues, "compassion for animals was part of an ethos urged by middle-class intellectuals" that, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, strove to corral animals and humans into a familial "fraternity of universal nature" (937). In the context of a narrative that is searching for other subjects, however, the metaphor is hardly innocently executed. If it is a commonplace, then the efficacy or naturalness of the metaphor of goats as family unit is precisely what is being tested. Lionel's deployment of the metaphor is an expression of his anxieties and desires as a subject without other subjects. Anthropomorphizing, and thus interpellating these creatures as human-like, Lionel posits a hospitable relation which enables him to interact with the goats. He compensates for a lack of other subjects by subjecting a group of non-subjects whose very otherness resides partly in their impossibility *as subjects*.

As Lionel soon learns, however, there *is* no relation (or, at least, if there is one he misunderstands it), even if his language promises to give him one. Language in this instance is the real "lure"—a word which might at first seem out of place in a passage that evokes a discourse of generosity and hospitality, but which fits only too well in light of Lionel's attempt to interpellate his "visitants" and their resistance to such interpellation.¹⁶

¹⁶In the early nineteenth century the double meaning of this word, "lure," would have been readily available to Shelley. On the one hand, the *Oxford English Dictionary* states that as

The word “lure” suggests Lionel’s attempt to narrate the scene from the impossible perspective of the goats, who might very well have understood the affair as a trap and acted accordingly—that is, if they had the capacity to understand as such. There is no understanding of Lionel’s generosity in the “minds” of the goats, and there is (domestic metaphor aside) no understanding the “hostile” actions of the male goat. The entire ordeal reveals to Lionel that his mis-encounter with the goats is, and always was, a *self*-encounter which fails miserably, driving him into a fit of self-loathing: “I . . . sought to escape from my miserable self,” he writes (358). If this scene begins with Lionel’s benevolent desire to be hospitable to animal others, then it ends with the goats generously bestowing upon Lionel a great lesson for living in a world without other subjects: others renders *as* objects (including goats and mirrors) are but reflectors of the subject’s other selves, its humanity, its inescapable consciousness. With no one left to address except a “family” of non-responsive goats (or goats that respond differently than expected), the last man turns to the abyss, that great vastness of absolute otherness, and gives himself unto the world. Hospitably, he again lifts up his “unanswered cry,” this time as words written on a page which he later stashes as a gift for whichever other can find it.

If Lionel gives himself and his narrative to the other, his narrative is also a gift *of* or *from* the other—and not simply because it is *received* by the fictional author of the

early as the fifteenth century the word referred to “an apparatus used by falconers, to recall their hawks, constructed of a bunch of feathers, to which is attached a long cord or thong, and from the interstices of which, during its training, the hawk was fed” (1680). On the other hand, based on an earlier fourteenth century definition of a “lure” as “something which allures, entices, or tempts,” another meaning circulates in the early eighteenth century which describes a “lure” as “a means of alluring animals to be captured” (1680).

preface. It is, rather, a gift from the other insofar as it is born from another earlier gift which passes through Lionel, so to speak, calling on him, obliging him to re-gift the gift. As I noted earlier, Lionel *receives* the idea of writing a book from another author, now dead, whose “writing materials” are left cluttered on the table of his/her study. The exact nature of these “writing materials” Lionel leaves unclear, except to say that they consist of paper and some kind of writing instrument. On the table beside these materials—or, as I would like to speculate, included *as a part of* these materials—lies “parts of a manuscript . . . scattered about” (364). The manuscript contains a “learned disquisition on the Italian language” (364)—which, like English, has now become another dead language. On one of the pages of this manuscript, Lionel discovers an “unfinished dedication to posterity” (364), which inspires him suddenly to compose, with “silly flourish,” what will become his own dedication: “TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS DEAD. SHADOWS, ARISE, AND READ YOUR FALL! BEHOLD THE HISTORY OF THE LAST MAN” (364). Where Lionel writes these words, again, he does not make clear. Given the impulsive spontaneity of his “silly flourish,” it is quite possible that he writes his dedication on the very page on which the Italian author began his unfinished dedication (perhaps just below the original)—and, in a sense, finishes the dedication, directing it not to posterity (which is no longer possible) but to antiquity, to those who have come and gone. The note that Anne McWhir appends to Lionel’s dedication in the Broadview edition of *The Last Man* lends some weight to this speculation, claiming as she does that the phrase “‘Illustrious Dead’ ironically echoes William Godwin’s, scheme for immortalizing the dead in *Essays on Sepulchres: or, a*

Proposal for Erecting Some Memorial of the Illustrious Dead in All Ages on the Spot where their Remains have been Interred (1809)” (364n.115).¹⁷ Lionel erects his own textual “monument” literally on the spot where the remains of a preceding text lay—a text which, through a kind of self-sacrifice, *enables* him to write his own, affording him the materials and, more importantly, the inspiration necessary to write one last text for humanity.

Writing itself over top, or just on the reverse side, of this generous Italian manuscript, Lionel’s text dramatizes (consciously, I would argue) the enormous intertextual tapestry it weaves. Aside from mimicking Lionel’s “urge” to write through “the now-obsolete paradigm of ‘enchainment,’” as Webb claims (129), the large number of intertextual references in Lionel’s narrative enacts another of the novel’s scenes of hospitality—one that should, by now, remind us of the description of the “author’s study” that we encounter in Coleridge’s *Biographia Literaria*. Like the Coleridgean marginalist, Lionel figuratively “borrows” the homes of others when borrowing their words, just as he literally borrows the empty studies and hostless palaces of Italy as places in which to live his final days. Evidently, both Coleridge and Shelley portray the “study” as a place of infinite generosity; it is a place in which the subject is subject to the benevolence of the other, despite the absence of another person, and despite any feelings of isolation and/or lastness. In fact, the “paradigm of ‘enchainment’” may not be as obsolete as Webb

¹⁷As William St. Clair observes, *Essays on Sepulchres* was one of Shelley’s favorite works by her father (367), often taking her own copy, as Webb adds, to read by her mother’s grave in St. Pancras Churchyard (256n.14).

insists; for while the idea of a post-pestilential race may or may not be illusory, Lionel's "enchainment" to the past (that "chain of flowers," as Coleridge calls it) is quite substantial. Indebtedness to history—to the "ILLUSTRIOUS DEAD"—compels and obliges him to write in a manner that is not unlike Shelley's own obligation to write in the memory of her deceased husband.¹⁸ As I argued in the previous chapter, the study is never quite a still home, resting as it does on the spaces of numerous others whose voices call out to the subject, reiteratively reminding it that the "blank paper" and all the "implements" of writing are gifts bestowed upon it by the enormous benevolence of the past and by the generous expanse of a limitless future yet to come.

In any case, it is the incompleteness of the Italian author's manuscript that inspires Lionel to seek the last word on the topic of the human and to pursue a narrative that will finally posit the completion of writing as such. Such a project is, as I have suggested, doomed to fail. If there is a "lure" to language, then that lure hooks the subject invariably to an intersubjective community, even if that community exists in the form of memories and/or (inter)textual memorials. Welcoming into his narrative the voices of a whole host of other authors, Lionel erects a community of hospitality where one no longer exists; he invokes the presence of words which continue to speak to him, and which promise an otherness that remains inexhaustible even in this post-apocalyptic world. Addressed not so much to the future as to the past, Lionel's narrative is found, perhaps not surprisingly, two hundred and eighty-two years before it is written.

¹⁸Percy (whose own words echo throughout *The Last Man* in the form of citations and intertexts) is, we might say, one of Mary's "Illustrious Dead"—perhaps the *most* illustrious of her dead.

3. *Visiting the Sibyl*

If the novel's conclusion marks the incompleteness of Lionel's life as he prepares to live on and beyond the narrative, then it also points to its beginnings (to its fictional recovery) in the "Introduction." As more than a few critics have pointed out, the logic of the novel's elliptical structure recalls what Derrida says about the nature of prefatorial material: "the preface," he writes, "would announce in the future tense the conceptual content or significance . . . of what will *already* have been written" (*Dissemination* 7). For Derrida, the preface enacts a strategy which projects the illusion of a *telos* organized before the fact which claims to prefigure and determine the course of the text. In other words, the preface represses the *writing* (that is, the "textual displacement" [7]) of what has been written, much the way that the narrator of *The Last Man*'s "Introduction" must repress the sheer multitude of the leaves ("unintelligible in their pristine condition") that he/she finds on the floor of the Sibyl's cave in order impose onto them "form and substance" (3).¹⁹ As a kind of parody of the preface's projection of prescience,²⁰ Shelley's "Introduction" not only *foresees* the Derridian commentary, it also divines the obligatory nature of prophetic discourse: with foresight comes responsibility. To be shown the future is paradoxically to be called on to change its course. The narrator of the

¹⁹From the "Introduction": "We made a hasty selection of such of the leaves, whose writing at least one of us could understand; and the laden with our treasure, we bade adieu to the dim hypaethric cavern" (3-4)

²⁰I call it a parody for its conspicuous implausibility. Unlike the "Introduction" of a novel like *Frankenstein*, *The Last Man*'s introductory fable of the text's supernatural recovery in the cave of the Sibyl takes a much greater effort to suspend disbelief than the total apocalypse figured in Lionel's tale.

“Introduction” is obliged to disseminate her discovery of the Sibyl’s prophecy, lest humanity repeat its foretold demise: “I present the public with my latest discoveries in the light Sibylline pages. Scattered and unconnected as they were, I have been obliged to add links, and model the work into a consistent form” (4). If the narrator’s “labours have cheered long hours of solitude, and taken [him/her] out of a world” (5), it is because he/she is compelled to do so despite being “depressed [and] agonized at some parts of the recital” (5). And while the narrator expresses reservations over the “merit” of the “adaptation,” its relative “imperfection” is not the issue (5): the real power of Lionel’s narrative lies not in its accuracy, but in its demand for what I will call a “hospitality *to come*”—a way of registering and negotiating the difference between a *calculable* future for which one believes there might be something like a “preface” and a future for which there is no calculation, no pre-judgement. Without this incalculable future to come (the *a-venir*, as Derrida calls it) there can be no hospitality, no welcome of what is other than one expects, a future that arrives whether one foresees it or not.

This demand in Lionel’s narrative for a hospitality to come is first made possible in the “Introduction” by the reluctant welcome of what Thomas calls the “unvisitable cave of the Sibyl” (33). The cave “scarcely admit[s]” the narrator and his/her companion (2).²¹ Despite the cave’s initial resistance, however, and perhaps as a sign of its visitors’ persistence, the first described action of the novel is one of admittance: “I *visited* Naples,”

²¹The initial impassivity of the cave’s hospitality has much to do with the absence of its host—a circumstance which serves as a paradigm for similar situations at the end of the novel in which Lionel, Adrian and their pack of wanderers find refuge in empty homes that offer the welcome of what Lionel calls a “sightless host” (353).

says the narrator (1, *emph. added*). The verb “to visit,” and other verbs like it, are repeated frequently in the “Introduction.” In Naples, the narrator and his/her companion “*visited* the so called Elysian Fields and Avernus” (1, *emph. added*). After “*entering*” the gloomy cavern of the Cumaean Sibyl,” they ask their guides if they “could not *enter*” through the “natural archway” separating the first and second galleries. Examining the Sibyl’s cave with care, “as if its blank, rocky walls could still bear the trace of celestial *visitant*,” the couple espy a “small opening”: “whither does this lead?”, they ask their guide, “can we enter here?” (2, *emph. added*). “*Questo poi, no* [That won’t do],” the guide responds: “nobody *visits* it” (2, *emph. added*). The narrator’s companion declares, “Nevertheless, I will try it . . . it may lead to the real cavern [of the Sibyl]” (2). Their guide warns them of the inhospitality that will greet them should they continue to penetrate the Sibyl’s caverns: “there are spectres . . . the roof would fall in . . . it was too narrow to admit us . . . there was a deep hole within, filled with water, and we might be drowned” (2). Ignoring these warnings, the two proceed:

The passage . . . quickly grew narrower and lower; we were almost bent double; yet still we persisted in making our way through it. At length we entered a wider space, and the low roof heightened; but, as we congratulated ourselves on this change, our torch was extinguished by a current of air, and we were left in utter darkness . . . our only resource was to return as we came. We groped round the widening space to find the entrance, and after a time fancied that we had succeeded. This proved

however to be a second passage, which evidently ascended. [The cave detains them; it will not let them leave.] It terminated like the former; though something approaching to a ray, we could not tell whence, shed a very doubtful twilight in the space. By degrees, our eyes grew somewhat accustomed to this dimness, and we perceived . . . that it was possible to climb one side of the cavern to a low arch at top, which promised a more easy path, from whence we now discovered that this light proceeded. With considerable difficulty we scrambled, and came to another passage with still more of illumination, and this led to another ascent like the former. (2)

After much groping in the dark, the two finally “*arrive*” at a “wide cavern” with an “arched dome-like roof,” which promises a more hospitable space (an “aperture in the midst let[s] in the light of heaven” [3]), but which continues to retain an unpleasant residue of the inhospitable (the aperture is “overgrown with bumbles and underwood, which act[s] as a veil, obscuring the day” [3]). The cavern is spacious and is “furnished,” interestingly, with a “raised seat of stone, about the size of a Grecian couch, at one end” (3). Housing a couch that is also a stone, the cavern also bears a single “sign of life” which is also a sign of death:

the perfect snow-white skeleton of a goat, which had probably not perceived the opening as it grazed on the hill above, and had fallen headlong. Ages perhaps had elapsed since this catastrophe; and the ruin it had made above, had been repaired by the growth of vegetation during many hundred summers. (3)

In the Sibyl's cave, the only sign of life is no longer alive—*has* not been alive for quite some time. With its mixed imagery of spacious comfort and catastrophic ruin, this scene of Cumaean hospitality anticipates a similarly conflicted scene near the end of Lionel's narrative in which Lionel enters a cottage near Ravenna, Italy, and finds therein a feast prepared. "What sightless host had spread the materials for my repast, and my repose" (353), he wonders as he draws a chair to the table to examine the "viands" of which he is to partake. Much to his surprise, he soon discovers that it is a "death feast!": "The bread was blue and mouldy; the cheese lay in a heap of dust" (353-4). In the absence of their own "sightless" host, the narrator of the "Introduction" and his/her companion find not rotting victuals, but a rotted carcass, to the side of which lies another of the Sibyl's ancient *remains*: the "fragments of bark" that are in fact her prophetic leaves (5). This immeasurable discovery will likewise anticipate Lionel's visits to another hostless abode, in which, as we have already seen, he finds the writing materials he uses to compose his memoirs. Beyond foreshadowing various scenes in the novel as well as anticipating the *human* "catastrophe" figured therein, the image of the lifeless goat heightens the issue of non-relatedness in the novel to which I referred earlier. For not only does this goat resonate with the goats that Lionel (mis)encounters in *his* narrative, but its "perfect snow-white skeleton" renders it resolutely alien to the narrator and his/her companion—perhaps as a reminder of the *temporal* remoteness of the narrator to both the Sibyl (their "sightless" host) and Lionel (whose words they will appropriate and translate into their own).

The narrator reacts to this goat much the way Lionel reacts to his, only instead of imposing on it a metaphor of domesticity, he/she will nevertheless endow it with consciousness by speculating on its ancient and all-too-humanly “catastrophic” origins. Facing its unrelatedness to wasted objectivity, subjectivity faces its desire to manufacture the significance of the encounter: it *must* have been a catastrophe; it *must* be anticipatory of the apocalyptic narrative scattered across the floor of this in-hospitable cave. In the space of a few lines, the narrator produces a strange kind of non-human goat-history that spans the length of “many hundred summers.” He/she imitatively projects into the past what the Sibylline leaves will project in to the future. If Lionel anthropomorphizes his cloven-hoofed “family” of goats, then this speculative moment of a kind of goat-historicization humanizes the non-relatable bones of an ancient goat. For what are summers to a goat? If a goat falls in a cavern, does anybody hear? What is the *gravity* of such a thing? As a kind of omen, the goat’s carcass portends (and is thus associated with) the catastrophe that will befall the human. But is the goat’s fate really a catastrophe? Could there be such a thing as a *last* goat? The fact of the matter is that the goat’s history, like the novel itself, speaks more to the present than it does to the past or to the future. The construction of animal catastrophe is a way to anticipate and thus make sense of the present after the fact. Whence came this goat? What does it mean? What does it suggest about the infinitely generous gift that the narrator receives in the form of the Sibyl’s leaves? The one crucial thing that the goat’s story has in common with Lionel’s (besides death, that is) is that both emerge from the now, one as speculative history, the

other as celestial prophecy.²² As speculative figures for where we are going and from whence we came, goat-past and human-future equally motivate us to welcome the other by enabling us to experience or to see the present *differently*.

This is the gift of the Sibyl's prophecy. This is the gift that humanity gives to itself. The text's history (how and when it is found) is but a pre-text to the actual composition of *The Last Man* which takes place in the present, in the nineteenth-century study of the "Introduction's" author. That narrator's offering of the text to his/her readers is always current—demanding what Tilottama Rajan calls the "supplement of the reader" (*Supplement* 10). "Here, I give this to you *now*," the narrator seems always to say: "do with it as you will." The text's offering is to speak of the present using the future as an alibi. Its prophecy predicts a lesson on obligation: you had better take note of this story, it warns its readers; you had better reflect on the nature of obligation—on your own givenness to the others who surround you and who call you to responsibility. If by describing the novel as a prophecy, the "Introduction" allows the reader "to see the work as a warning against allowing history to repeat a story of the repression of women and their erasure from the record," as Eberle-Sinatra speculates, then it also enables its readers to read the hospitable crisis that it portrays in the wake of an all-consuming pestilence as a reminder that the subject must remain open to the other, that it must prepare for a hospitality *to come*, a hospitality looks always toward and embraces an unpredictable

²²Actually, these two tales do have at least one other thing in common: goat past and human-less future are equally unimaginable from *within* (human) consciousness. This inconceivability once again speaks to the paradox of writing the end of writing or recording the end of historical record.

future. To read the novel in this way, then, let us now turn to complex associations between the novel's Plague and its depiction of the hospitable event.

England's Hospital: Homeland Security and the Crisis of Hospitality

Our party at length broke up; "We are all dreaming this morning," said Ryland, "it is as wise to discuss the probability of a visitation of the plague in our well-governed metropolis, as to calculate the centuries which must escape before we can grow pine-apples here in the open air."

—*The Last Man* (173)

1. *Plague as Metaphor and the History of Disease*

As we can glean from the "Introduction," metaphors of "visitation" run rampant in *The Last Man*—which is perhaps inevitable in a novel about plague epidemics.²³ In this section, I want briefly to historicize this metaphor before proceeding to read the various instances in which Shelley's novel links hospitality to contagion. The *Oxford English Dictionary* associates "visitation" with pestilence as early as 1380: "so as to afflict with sickness or other trouble, esp. by way of punishment or wrong doing" (XII, 254). This punishment is typically the action "of God or some supernatural power," and is characterized as precipitating from above: "the fact of some violent destructive agency or

²³To list only a few examples: because of the airborne nature of the Plague, Raymond contracts the disease only after he *enters* the empty, hostless city of Stamboul; recollecting the "ravages" of a prior pestilence which had "visited" in "every quarter of the world," the English Parliament meets to discuss "the dreadful consequences of a second visitation" (172); and when the last few hundred survivors of North America sail across the ocean, meet up with a famished Irish multitude, and proceed to sweep across and ravage the English country side (as far as Manchester and Derby), Lionel describes their procession not only as a foreign infestation, but also, more specifically, as a kind of "locust visitation" (233). When Adrian addresses this hostile band of "locusts," he beseeches them: "will you be more pitiless than pestilence" (236)

force falling upon a people, country, etc.” (254). Critics such as Audrey Fisch and Mark Canuel have challenged the punitive aspects of Shelley’s Plague, arguing that the Plague in *The Last Man*, like deconstruction, can be read as a “social leveler” (Fisch 272), and similarly that the “destructive gesture” of the Plague is also “in part *reconstructive*” (Canuel 164).²⁴ The *OED*’s image of the precipitative epidemiology of a pestilent “visitation” (i.e., as “falling on a people” instead of moving laterally from person to person) nevertheless calls to mind the theoretical debate raging in the early nineteenth century over the infectious nature of diseases, out of which *The Last Man*, as McWhir argues, emerges partly as a statement of Shelley’s “anti-contagionist” position on the “airborne” origins and spread of plague epidemics—a position that understood (or *desired* to understand) disease not as moving from one body to the next, but as descending or falling upon a body via the air it breaths.

According to McWhir, two main theories of disease transmission were prevalent in the early nineteenth century: “the contagionist views that underlay quarantine laws and that were based on the belief in a particular source of infection—the contagium vivum—transmitted by contact or body fluids; and ‘anti-contagionism,’ which located the

²⁴This association between the Plague and deconstruction no doubt originates in J. Hillis Miller’s playfully reaffirming response to M.H. Abrams’ negative characterization of deconstruction as “simply parasitical”: see “The Critic as Host” (1994). To recall Snyder’s argument, however, whether the Plague is read as deconstruction or as a return of the repressed (a notion to which I will return momentarily), it is ultimately resistant to representation. The characters in the book know as little about it as we do. It defies interpretation, including the reading that would see it as punitive or, as Sterrenburg and others have read it, as symbol of man’s revolutionary folly. More importantly, this impoverished representation—this cliché—of deconstruction as a destructive “leveling” force needs to be tempered by an *other*, more complex notion that understands deconstruction not as annihilation, but as the *multiplication* of differences.

source of disease in a quality of the air itself, often a 'miasma' generated in particular but remote places and carried on the winds" ("Anti-Contagionism" 23). Contagionists were suspicious of what the trade routes would bring home to England, and, accordingly, strove to close or quarantine these routes in times of pestilent visitation (something that does eventually happen in *The Last Man*). Anti-contagionists, on the other hand, felt that "goods shipped from one port to another could not spread disease (and, perhaps, that bodies washed ashore on Italian beaches, like Percy Bysshe Shelley's in 1822, could be safely reclaimed by survivors" (McWhir, "Anti-Contagionism" 25). Espousing the assumptions of an anti-contagionist, for instance, Lionel insists that "the plague was not what is commonly called contagious, like the scarlet fever, or extinct small-pox, was proved" (182). For Lionel, the Plague proliferates through the air: "O wind," he laments at one point, "whether thou comest destroying from the east, or pregnant with elementary life from the west; thee the clouds obey; the sun is subservient to thee; the shoreless ocean is thy slave" (181). Apart from revealing the general thrust of the novel's Orientalism (a topic to which I will return), Lionel's fearful ode to the wind is underwritten by the novel's convictions about the epidemiology of man's last infection: "if infection depended upon the air, the air was subject to infection" (182).

McWhir's interest in the debate over the nature of infection is primarily to discuss the novel's privileging of theories of airborne contagion in relation to novel's intertextual "emphasis on the spread of words, ideas, and narratives" ("Anti-Contagionism" 23). Distinguishing Shelley as an anti-contagionist, however, does hold interest for our present

discussion of obligation in the novel especially as it relates to caring for plague-victims. While, historically, the contagionist perspective would come to dominate medical discourses in the late nineteenth century with the advent of microbiology, the anti-contagionism of Shelley and others like her was the ruling medical opinion earlier in the century. On the one hand, the initial success of anti-contagionism was due partly to the fact that it “seemed to support political and mercantile interests” (McWhir, “Anti-Contagionism” 26); closing trade routes, after all, is quite costly. On the other hand, anti-contagionism was also thought to be more democratic in nature: “it is a less judgemental and stigmatizing explanation than contagionism” since “lack of access to ventilation” and atmospheric conditions “make the difference between a victim of infection and one who resists it” (31). What is more, anti-contagionism expressed an interest in society’s responsibility to those afflicted by disease (Cooter 91). If a plague was considered to be airborne, then contact and hospitality—which is to say, *hospital* services—could be extended, as of course they *should* be.²⁵ Even if they could not account for the ways in which a plague operates internally *within* the body of its victim, the anti-contagionists’ understanding of a pestilent “visitation” as an external phenomenon enabled society to think about preventing the spread of disease while at the same time containing the spread

²⁵And yet if anti-contagionism is the more hospitable response to an epidemic, then it also has other ideological consequences to which I will return. Suffice it to say for now that anti-contagionism has the capacity to treat the plague as the other’s problem. We are safe to treat our own, the anti-contagionist seems to say, for the actual cause of disease lies elsewhere, in the bad air of some far away place—somewhere like the East. Lionel’s various representations of Constantinople stand as the embodiment of this idea: “prey of pestilence” (150), the city almost exhales the Plague on its breath. As far as Ryland is concerned, the Plague is not an issue until it finally arrives in London.

of opinion that conflates, into a single threat, disease and diseased body. The threat of pestilence compelled the anti-contagionists to question not only how a plague spreads and how it might be contained, but also to what extent a plague places on society's members an obligation to care for its weaker members who have unwittingly become hosts to their own death.

As for the Plague as an *internal* hospitable phenomenon, the metaphor of the body as a "host" on which a virus, a parasite, or bacteria is said to feed is, strictly speaking, unavailable to Shelley in 1826. The *OED* cites the first English use of the term "host" as signifying "an animal or plant having a parasite or commensal habitually living in or upon it" from the *Intellectual Observer* in 1862 (1336).²⁶ The term becomes more popular and widely accepted in the late nineteenth century with the development of germ theories, which according to medical historians "shifted the cause of disease away from internal organs to external invaders" (Duffin 82). A body of knowledge that would fly in the face of anti-contagionist views, germ theory enabled society to begin thinking about disease as a "living 'enemy'" that passes from one host to the next and—in the true spirit of the paradigmatic bad guest—eats the host out of house and home (82). Prior to this, in the height of anatomical pathology, disease was attributed to "localized pathological changes" (often the result of environmental or psychological conditions) in a patient's "suffering organs" (Magner 228). Prior to the late nineteenth century, that is, disease was

²⁶From the *Intellectual Observer* I, 115: "The mode in which the liver flukes gain access to their hosts, or in other words to the bodies of the herbivorous animals they frequent" (*OED* 1336).

thought to be the result of an “altered anatomy,” the agony of which would consume the life of the sufferer unless “specific diagnostic and surgical interventions” could somehow correct the problem (Duffin 75, Magner 228). Lois Magner goes on to argue, however, that the *concepts* of “contagion and germs or seeds of disease” predate the development of germ theory—indeed, that many germ theorists of the late nineteenth century mobilized Girolamo Fracastoro’s 1546 publication *On Contagion* as a precursory text for germ theory (305, *emph. added*). While Magner is skeptical about what she believes to be a largely anachronistic linkage between Fracastoro and the germ theorists, she notes that “the first convincing demonstration that a contagious human disease was caused by a minute parasite close to the threshold of invisibility” was provided by Giovanni Cosimo Bonomo’s research on scabies in 1697 (306). But as Magner points out, despite Bonomo’s findings and despite the “popularization of the microscope” in the late seventeenth century, most physicians continued to view the notion of “disease-causing animalcules” as “little better than ancient superstitions about elf-shot, worms, and flying venom” (306). Bonomo was never able conclusively to apprehend whether the “animalcules” in question were the product or the cause of disease; but the relegation of his theories to the domain of superstition and folk-lore speaks volumes about the cultural and scientific imagination of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century: if there were no supportable hypotheses for living “enemies” spreading disease through the various bodies of Europe, then the idea was certainly imaginable, even if the idea had not secured for itself a viable foundation in scientific discourse.

But is this not the path that scientific developments often follow? Consider, for instance, the rise of vaccination in the late eighteenth century—a development which bears much significance for the idea of foreign bodies as the source of bodily disease. Long dismissed by physicians as “barbaric superstitions,” homegrown or “folk practices” of inoculation (also known as “variolaion”) imported from the East²⁷ caught the attention of not only the Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (who would transform the “so-called Turkish method” of variolaion into a “fashionable practice among the English elite”), but also physicians such as Edward Jenner, whose ethically questionable experiments in 1796 on an eight year old boy named James (inspired as they were by Lady Montagu’s radical faith in the triumphs of inoculation) lead to the discovery of the cowpox vaccination that would eliminate smallpox from the world (Magner 240, Friedman 78). An intriguing hospitable scene in which the body (as a host) welcomes a foreign contagion if only to turn defensively hostile to it, vaccination itself enabled physicians to inoculate the body without knowing precisely either the cause of a disease or the reasons for the success of vaccination. Above and beyond being the result of comparing symptoms and empirical observation, the success of vaccination seemed also to be a matter of intuition—inspired by the same sort of non-knowledge, as it were, of invading disease-causing entities that would propel physicians in the early nineteenth century to pursue “microbe hunting” long before Louis Pasteur and the germ theorists made their discoveries later in the century.

²⁷From Magner: “Experience taught illiterate practitioners in Africa, Asia, India, and Turkey that deliberately exposing their patients to a significant risk at a propitious time provided long-term benefits” (240).

These pre-germ theory forays into the world of microbiology suggests the possibility that the culture out of which *The Last Man* emerges was already somehow thinking about pestilence in ways that would render bodies as hosts and germs as guests. In other words, the early nineteenth century already had a kind of bio-hospitality on the brain.

Nevertheless, the connections forged in *The Last Man* between hospitality and the Plague occur, for the most part, through the metaphor of visitation. Shelley is interested primarily in the social aspect of disease—that is, the ways in which, as Fisch points out, a plague comes not “merely from germs or viruses,” but “from a society’s inability to handle those germs”—again, even if that society does not, properly speaking, *know* germs as such (270). Shelley’s novel concerns itself with society’s obligation to remain hospitable to its citizens, while at the same time remaining hostile to “visitation”—a contradiction which, I argue, severely complicates and quickens the novel’s meditation on the hospitable relation. The visitation metaphor understandably takes precedence in *The Last Man* over any kind of bio-metaphor of the body as a host of a disease that “eats” the body from the inside.²⁸

²⁸That does not, however, exclude the possibility of reading the novel’s characterization of the Plague as a guest that infects the body politic. While critics speculate that Shelley was thinking about the “westward progression” of cholera which “reportedly began in India” and which was raging through Russia and toward Europe in the 1820s at an alarming rate (Lew 263, Fisch 270), the inexplicability of the Plague in *The Last Man* affords the reader a kind of freedom of interpretation. As Snyder observes, “like its victims” we are ultimately able to “understand neither [the plague’s] origin nor its mode of transmission” (440). The Plague’s indeterminacy, in fact, makes the staging of arguments like contagionist and anti-contagionist theories a moot point. Thus, while “visitation” is the primary hospitable metaphor in the novel, a hospitality scene of an infectious guest who ruins the host from within is still thinkable. I would argue that any modern use of the concept of a (national) body housing an alien guest/enemy is a hospitable drama which is already made possible or thinkable in *The Last Man*.

2. “Visitations” of the Plague

In her “Introduction” to the Broadview edition of *The Last Man*, McWhir is quick to point out that the Plague “enters” the novel late with Evadne’s “dying curse” on Raymond (“Introduction” xviii). Lying fatally wounded on the Greco-Turkish battlefield, a disguised Evadne murmurs to Adrian in a “sepulchral voice” her final message intended for Raymond:

This is the end of love! . . . O Raymond . . . I expire, thy victim!—By my death I purchase thee—lo! the instruments of war, fire, the plague are my servitors. I dared, I conquered them all, till now! I have sold myself to death, with the sole condition that thou shouldst follow me—Fire, and war, and plague, unite for thy destruction—O Raymond, there is no safety for thee. (142)

Evadne’s curse is certainly hostile, announcing the future visitation of a pestilence that will not only mean the end of love, but also the end of civilization as such. There will be no safety for *anyone*. For McWhir, this passage attests to the very infectiousness of words that travel like the wind, contaminating the narrative, spreading through the novel like an epidemic. Narratively speaking, however, Evadne’s curse follows etiologically, as it were, from a prior invasive and potentially disastrous visitation of the “literal” kind. The discord between Raymond and Evadne begins when Evadne, whom Raymond has tried to forget throughout the years of his marriage to Perdita, “returns” to him like the repressed object of desire that she is. Their reunion takes place in a peculiarly intrusive,

yet also benevolent, scene of hospitality. In his impatience to learn the identity of the anonymous “artist” whose “elegant” architectural plans for the national gallery “delights” Raymond “the more he gaze[s]” upon them (83), Raymond follows the artist’s emissary to the artist’s abode in “one of the most penurious streets in the metropolis” (84). The “artist” turns out to be Evadne, of course, who has done all she can to remain anonymous due to the great “misfortunes” that have befallen her and her father, leaving her disgraced and impoverished. With benevolence in his heart, Raymond ruins Evadne’s efforts at anonymity by entering her home unexpected and without permission. (Raymond, in fact, is paradigmatically associated with unexpected intrusions throughout the novel—which is, of course, a pestilence’s preferred *modus operandi*. Prior to this home invasion, Shelley twice describes Raymond’s visits as invasive: while Lionel visits his sister’s “alcove” near Windsor early in the novel, “Lord Raymond enter[s] unannounced” [41]; and later, during a late night in London, Lionel recalls, “Suddenly, unannounced, Lord Raymond entered my apartment” [48].) In any event, standing at “the highest room” of the house where the “artist” is presumed to live, Raymond enters Evadne’s meager room unannounced:

After trying vainly to enter the other apartments, he perceived just within the threshold of this one, a pair of small Turkish slippers; the door was ajar, but all was silent within. It was probable that the inmate was absent, but secure that he had found the right person, our adventurous Protector was tempted to enter, to leave a purse on the table, and silently depart. In

pursuance of this idea, he pushed open the door gently—but the room was inhabited. (84)

Raymond quickly realizes that the apartment's "inhabitant" is none other than Evadne, his old love object. Having "never visited the dwellings of want," the "sight of her, in her present situation, pass[es] like an arrow into his soul" (84, 85). He tells Evadne that "a friend" has come, to which she laments: "Thus . . . kindness can do, what no want, no misery ever effected; I weep" (85). His unwelcome, "unannounced" intrusion fills her with uneasiness; she is *dis-eased* by the visit—and this, despite Raymond's assurances that "her sufferings were now over" (85). As Evadne's insight into the misery of kindness suggests, however, this is just the beginning of suffering, and not only for herself. After offering her "warm offers of service" and promising "to repeat his visit the next day," Raymond returns home "full of mingled feelings, of pain excited by Evadne's wretchedness, and pleasure at the prospect of relieving it. Some motive for which he did not account, even to himself, prevented him from relating his adventure to Perdita" (86). The visit will inspire Raymond's guilt and contaminate his spirit, which was previously "as a pure fire, which fades and shrinks from every contagion of foul atmosphere: but now the contagion had become incorporated with its essence, and the change was the more painful" (98). His visit *infects* his thoughts; it infects his marriage, and ultimately leads, through heartbreak, to the curse that promises to unleash pestilence on the world.

Evadne's curse on the Greco-Turkish battlefield is not even the first message to unleash a plague-like power in the novel. The *marital* infection instigated by Raymond's

unannounced visit is spectacularly captured in the party scene celebrating the first anniversary of his exaltation to the office of Protector. On the day of the party, Raymond secretly makes plans to visit Evadne before returning to the palace where his wife will greet him as hostess of the celebration. Arriving at Evadne's "luckless" abode, however, Raymond quickly gleans the effects—the symptoms—that his visits have bestowed upon Evadne's physical condition like some kind of contagion: "she lost the heart to pursue her usual avocations; pride forbade her every application to him; famine was welcomed as the kind porter to the gates of death, within whose opening folds she should now, without sin, quickly repose" (101). Upon seeing Evadne in her wretched state, Raymond calls for medical assistance, spends hours lamenting by her side, and finally sends a woman with a message to Perdita (who "would expect him") excusing, but not altogether explaining, the nature of his detainment: "he wrote a few incoherent words on a scrap of paper, testifying that he was well, and bade the woman of the house take it to the palace, and deliver it into the hands of the wife of the Lord Protector" (102). This message will have poisonous effects, as the messenger woman unwittingly confirms Perdita's suspicions about Raymond's extra-marital activities by giving her "an account of Raymond's frequent visits" to Evadne: "his absence from the festival [in his honour]," writes the narrator, "his message wholly unaccounted for, except by the disgraceful hints of the woman, appeared the deadliest insult" (102). Outraged by Raymond's inexcusable *faux pas* of failing to arrive and even more so by his preference for and dedication to another hostess/lover, Perdita painfully recalls her own duties as hostess; she returns to the assembly, glides into

an obscure recess, and mutters to herself as well as to the flowers that hang therein: “Ye droop not, neither do ye mourn; the despair that clasps my heart, has not spread *contagion* over you!—Why am I not a partner of your insensibility, a sharer in your calm!” (102, *emph. added*). As if to confirm McWhir’s insistence on the infectiousness of words in the novel, Raymond’s message contaminates and infects the mind of his hostess and wife. And while Perdita marvels over the immunity of flowers to her despair (it is after all only humans who will suffer in this book), she nevertheless understands the threat that her mental contagion might pose to the festival’s company. Accordingly, she takes action to contain the infection, as it were, by quarantining her despair: “my guests must not perceive the reality,” she exclaims, “either as it regards him or me; I obey; they shall not, though I die the moment they are gone” (102-3). Suppressing the gush of her tears, Perdita suffers for her guests as her despair consumes her from within. She strives to “play the part of a courteous hostess; to attend to all; to shine the focus of enjoyment and grace” (103). For the most part, Perdita succeeds in this task: “Every one remarked her exhilaration of spirits; . . . her guests surrounded her applaudingly” despite Raymond’s absence (103). And yet there is, as the narrative admits, a “sharpness in her laugh, and an abruptness in her sallies, which might have betrayed her secret to an attentive observer” (103). Rephrase this admission by mixing the metaphors of contagion and hospitality already at work in the scene: try as she will, the hostess fails ultimately to sustain her hostile containment of her despair; her laugh, her sallies, expose her contagion like infectious sores, presenting themselves (as telling symptoms) to the all too “attentive”

observer, the guest who would look too closely, who would contract her despair with a single penetrating stare. Thus does the scene encapsulate the novel's interest in questioning the limits of the efficacy of hospitality and obligation to overcome and contain the threat of foreign pestilence.

There are still other scenes which similarly complexify the literary connections between "contagion" and hospitality in the novel. When Lionel, for instance, enters the empty, diseased city of Stamboul searching for Raymond, the city's air, "impregnated with dust," lulls him to sleep like some noxious drug, inducing "disturbed dreams":

Methought I had been invited to Timon's last feast; I came with keen appetite, the covers were removed, the hot water sent up its unsatisfying steams, while I fled before the anger of the host, who assumed the form of Raymond; while to my diseased fancy, the vessels hurled by him after me, were surcharged with fetid vapour, and my friend's shape, altered by a thousand distortions, expanded into a gigantic phantom, bearing on its brow the sign of pestilence. The growing shadow rose and rose, filling, and then seeming to endeavour to burst beyond, the adamant vault that bent over, sustaining and enclosing the world. (158)

Lionel's "diseased fancy" attests once again to McWhir's thesis about the infectiousness of words and the spread of a kind of intertextual contagion throughout the novel. The injection of this misanthropic mock-hospitality scene from Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* alters the anatomy of the text, as it were, by re-presenting it in a kind of foreign

language.²⁹ not unlike Timon, Raymond has been the benefactor and redeemer of the Greek people; but also like Timon, he suffers the ingratitude of the Greeks as they refuse to follow him into the plague-ridden city of Stamboul. In Lionel's "disturbed" dream, text and intertext, host and parasite, become one. Raymond "assumes the form" of Timon; his story becomes Timon's story: failing to garner the loyalty of the Greek soldiers in return for leading them into victory over the Turks, he is transformed into the hostile host who invites his disloyal guests—his hostages—to dine on his misanthropic wares, the fetid vapours of which will carry the foul odor of pestilence throughout the world. If Timon hangs over Athens like the black cloud of thanklessness, Raymond will similarly hover over the post-apocalyptic world of the novel like a "gigantic phantom"—perhaps the same "giant" "Black Spectre" that later haunts Lionel and Adrian and their band of wanderers like "death himself" as they head south for their final days (321). The hospitality of Stamboul is thus diseased (I will return to this "Orientalist" inscription), and its host, Raymond, bears the "sign of pestilence" on his brow. Stamboul is now Raymond's city. No longer Lord of England, he "becomes," like "Death," "lord of Constantinople"—host of a dead city and the ensuing Plague (150).

3. *Ryland's Pineapples*

If hospitality is linked metaphorically to the Plague in the novel, then the image that best captures this linkage (as well as embodies the crisis of hospitality that the Plague

²⁹I use the word "injection" here to signal the idea that Lionel's dream—indeed, his entire visit in the city of Stamboul—has the effect of a kind of inoculation. Many critics have marveled over the fact that Lionel seems to be immune to the Plague. Lionel himself often wonders at his own good fortune of remaining "free from contagion" (205).

brings so prominently to the fore) is the novel's depiction of England as a hospital, as the final refuge and last bastion of humanity. Despite the growing number of refugees seeking asylum from the Plague in England, many of England's politicians remain coolly indifferent to the threat that the Plague poses until it is too late. For instance, Ryland, leader of the pragmatic popular party and modeled after William Cobbet, initially dismisses Lionel's and Adrian's concerns for the startling advancement of the Plague in Greece: "We are all dreaming this morning," he quips, "it is as wise to discuss the probability of a visitation of the plague in our well-governed metropolis as to calculate the centuries which must escape before we can grow pine-apples here in the open air" (173). The analogy is extraordinary for many reasons, not least because the pineapple, as we recalled in an earlier chapter, is the very symbol of hospitality in western cultures (see Chapter One). It is a symbol, moreover, which would have been readily available and familiar to Shelley and her readers, especially in its connections to and origins in Caribbean colonial encounters. Comparing the probability of a *visitation* with the likelihood of growing pineapples on English soil, Ryland clearly, if inadvertently, raises issues of hospitality and England's responsibility with regard to the spread of pestilence. While he effectively shirks any such responsibility, his analogy (as though its recourse to the exoticism of pineapples were charged with an intense kind of unconscious or subliminal power) immediately triggers in Lionel an emotional response to open himself to and welcome the plight of others in the world: "but, though it seemed absurd to calculate upon the arrival of the plague in London," he ponders, "I could not reflect

without extreme pain on the desolation this evil would cause in Greece . . . these reflections would not allow me to rest” (173). While Lionel’s time spent in Greece has significantly expanded his world view (as well as his compassion for others beyond the borders of his homeland), Ryland is not only shortsighted with respect to the world outside England, his politics and methods for reacting to the Plague also grow increasingly insular as the novel unfolds.³⁰ (Ryland’s fate, we remember, is to perish alone in a desperate attempt to radically insulate himself from all human contact.) As popular democrat, he reflects the English attitude to foreign lands: “for the most part,” writes Lionel, “[they] talked of Thrace and Macedonia, as they would of a lunar territory, which, unknown to them, presented no distinct *idea* or *interest* to the mind” (173, *emph. added*). Apart from inspiring Lionel to reflect on the plight of others, then, Ryland’s equation between plague visitation and tropical fruit also reminds Lionel of England’s fear of strangers from strange lands. (Again, we think of Kant’s evaluation of English hospitality). Exoticized as being as far removed and foreign as tropical fruit, the Plague and its victims (the Turks and the Greeks) might as well be on the moon for all England cares. Even Raymond has the capacity to dismiss the Plague: “Does not the plague rage each year in Stamboul?”, he asks (152). Why should this plague be any different? Why, essentially, is this *our* problem? Wherein lies *our* obligation?

³⁰If Ryland’s world shrinks, then Lionel’s could be said to grow larger than is perhaps comfortable for him. As Wright argues, his narrative testifies to developing early nineteenth-century anxieties over “coping with imperial space” (131). It acts, to some extent, as “an extended refutation of reassuring representations of England as a well-defended sanctuary” (129). Lionel and Ryland, then, each represent related, if contradictory, attitudes to a world that appears to expand and contract under the pressures of maintaining an empire.

It is primarily this early cynicism expressed by Ryland toward the remote insignificance of the Plague that has led critics of *The Last Man* to question some of the more covert or obscured political aspirations of Lionel's narrative. Audrey Fisch, for instance, compares England's initial indifference to (or unwillingness to consider the immediacy of) the Plague with the initial reaction to AIDS in late twentieth-century America, which "consisted of attempts to understand the disease by constructing it as a plague emanating from some place *other* than the safe ship of America" (268). This kind of rhetoric, which Fisch characterizes as part of a "plaguing politics," is exactly what Ryland pursues: the seeds of the Plague are like the seeds of the pineapple—neither can be sown in England's harsh northern climate. Ryland seeks to other the Plague and to plague the other, so to speak. Pestilence becomes associated throughout Lionel's narrative with all things foreign (i.e., the feminine other, the Asiatic other, etc.):³¹ it stands "as a spectre conjured up by xenophobia" (McWhir, "Introduction" xxviii). Not unlike Raymond's phantasmatic form in Lionel's Turkish nightmare, foreignness (especially that which emanates from the East) bears the sign pestilence on its brow. Presenting "no distinct idea" to the mind of the Englishman, Thracians and Macedonians,

³¹Jane Aaron writes: "Throughout the novel, this monster, the Plague, is personified as female, and referred to as 'she' . . . the femaleness of the Plague seems to indicate its function as a destructive and vengeful 'return of the repressed' in Freudian terms . . . The Plague in *The Last Man* appears to symbolize the eruption of pent-up female discontents, no longer affecting only the interior psychological balance of the individual, but exteriorized, on a vast scale, to threaten the continuity of the human race as a whole" (17-8). Alan Richardson, on the other hand, writes: "Shelley's plague seems, in large measure, a reflex of English disgust at the colonial other, a disgust inextricable from commercial domination—and dependence—as John Barrell has noted in relation to De Quincey" (par. 4). I will return to this idea of the Plague as a return of both female and colonial oppression.

lunar landscapes and foreign pestilence, all blend into one indistinct image of alterity—one that few Englishmen wish to face. They simply have no “interest” in such a face, except to hold it at a distance.

Curiously enough, the so-called “anti-contagionist” view of the spread of pestilence could be said to harbour some of this xenophobic hostility—and certainly, Ryland’s pineapple analogy, with its reference to an inability to grow tropical fruit in the “open air” of England, calls to mind the fundamental principles of this medical doctrine. When Ryland and his fellow countrymen do eventually take an “interest” in the Plague, that interest expresses itself primarily as a concern over keeping England’s “air” clean. They “enter upon serious plans for the better keeping out of the enemy” (182)—a citation which is eerily prophetic of a twenty-first-century preoccupation with homeland security. As I have said, they consider closing trade routes that would otherwise bring to England commodities *like* the pineapple. Critics associate the fears behind such political action with Shelley’s specifically “Romantic anxieties” about the “dangers of Oriental ‘infection’” for the body politic in an age of imperialist expansion (Lew 262, Cantor 194). While Ryland’s pineapple is not, properly speaking, “oriental,” it does associate the Plague with the literal produce—the fruits—of England’s imperial encounters. Shelley’s anti-contagionism notwithstanding, Paul Cantor reads *The Last Man* as a testament to the author’s conservative reactionism against the imperialist enterprise—trade routes, pineapples, and all. The novel, he argues, reflects her very real “fear of contracting strange diseases while conquering and occupying distant lands” (198). *The Last Man*, he

argues, “reads like an atlas of European colonialism: “the ‘channels of commerce’ become virtually indistinguishable from the channels of the plague” (197, 198). In a movement that Cantor wittily refers to as “the Empire Strikes Back,” the Plague enacts “a kind of retribution for the economic sins of the modern world” (198).

While Cantor’s reading is persuasive in its consideration of Shelley’s infamous conservatism, and while his argument is essentially corroborated by other critics including Joseph Lew, Fisch, and Wright,³² he does tend to overlook the optimism of Shelley’s text (which is easy to do considering the apocalyptic tone of the novel). Arguing, for instance, that *The Last Man* “goes further [than *Frankenstein*] in bringing out the dark side of Romanticism,” Cantor claims that “in Mary’s [third published] novel the material pressures of disease work to bring out the worst in humanity, especially a competitiveness for dwindling resources that eventually results in armed conflict” (195). Cantor is no doubt referring to the “locust invasion” of the North Americans and even to the conflict that Adrian encounters when he enters the city of Paris. Both instances of “bad” humanity, however, give rise to more generous modes of being. After the American/Irish mob sweeps the country “like a conquering army, burning—laying waste—murdering,” they are met by Adrian, who, blocking their advance into London, admonishes them: “will you be more pitiless than pestilence?” (236). He then convinces them to “[throw] down their arms” and embrace their fellow brothers in humanity: “even

³²From Fisch: Shelley’s novel binds a “purely feminist critique” with “*a less common critique of Empire*” (274, *emph. added*). From Wright: “Shelley offers astronomical instruments, globes, and calculations that are destroyed by *reverse colonization*” (145, *emph. added*).

the veterans wept, and our party held out their hands to their foes, while a gush of love and deepest amity filled every heart. The two forces mingling, unarmed and hand in hand, talking only how each might assist the other, the adversaries conjoined; each repenting, the one side their former cruelty, the other side their late violence” (236-7). Similarly, when Adrian and Lionel enter Paris, their arrival interrupts a potentially gruesome battle between feuding mobs: “the females, wives, mothers and daughters, rushed between; they seized the bridles; they embraced the knees of the horsemen, and hung on the necks, or enweaponed arms of their enraged relatives; the shrill female scream was mingled with the manly shout, and formed the wild clamour that welcomed us on our arrival” (297). Aside from underlining the internal, self-divided conflicts between peoples and nations that the Plague inspires, these two instances of the “worst” leading to the “best” in human conduct demonstrate how the English and humanity at large (often synonymous terms in the novel, as I have suggested) contract a crisis of hospitality *in addition to* the Plague: how to greet my fellow men and women in times of impending catastrophe—with “manly” aggression or “womanly” compassion? This gendered construction is, of course, a kind of sexist cliché. If the Plague can be read as a return of the repressed, not only in the sense of a repressed empire that strikes back, but also in the sense that it embodies “pent-up female discontents” that threaten “the continuity of the human race as a whole”(Aaron 17), then womanliness is not strictly speaking synonymous with benevolence. (As Aaron argues, with the Plague “the female principle . . . is released to live on, uncontrolled and unpossessed”—which is also to say, ultimately unrepresentable [20].) The question of

hospitality that accompanies England's pestilent visitation is therefore quite insoluble. For neither the selfishly malevolent nor selflessly benevolent response to the Plague is victorious in the end. The Plague remains indiscriminating: everyone dies regardless of their actions—and, indeed, regardless of their sex.

The fact remains, however, that the Plague does invoke a crisis of hospitality insofar as it will, at the very least, *problematize* the nature of obligation. Neither aggression nor compassion will lead to survival; but the Plague will nevertheless force England hold itself accountable for its actions—to become responsible to and for itself. It is not a coincidence that the most persuasive leader in post-plague Europe is Adrian, a character whom, as we have already noted, represents the very “spirit of benevolence” (20). Shelley's novel never loses its focus on the irrepressible call to obligation. Even in this darkest of futures, the human subject continues to struggle to be hospitable; it never ceases to feel obliged. England will not remain a free-for-all state. Under Adrian's guidance, the English, along with the many others who join their ranks, become what Canuel calls a “community of share-risk” (162). To explore this obligation to community, I turn (as promised) to the central metaphor of England as hospital.

4. England's Hospital

Needless to say, Ryland is gravely mistaken about the remoteness of the Plague, as it will arrive in London long before its citizens will be able to cultivate the seeds of the pineapple—indeed, long before they are ready to grasp the idea for which that gracious

fruit of the tropics stands as a symbol. The Plague comes: it arrives, and its visitation will generate, as I have said, a crisis of hospitality and hospitable services. Traveling on the eastern wind, the Plague soon loses its standing as the exclusive problem of the Other—or, at least, if it *is* the other's problem that other is now my neighbour; he/she is *me*. What characterizes a plague, we remember, is not the specific nature of the contagion, but how society deals with it—or more specifically, how society *fails* to deal with it. Plagues are, necessarily, problems of hospitality and hospitalization. Ryland is one character in *The Last Man* who knows this only too well. In answer to Adrian's question, "What are your plans, my Lord Protector, for the benefit of our country?," a dejected Ryland responds: "do not mock me with that title. Death and disease level all men. I neither pretend to protect nor govern an hospital—such will England quickly become" (192). Fearing that "there is no refuge on earth," Ryland quickly renounces his title for fear of becoming a "plague-spotted corpse" (191, 192). It is "[e]very man for himself," Ryland bellows, before eventually escaping the capital (192).

If Ryland's cowardice reveals another dark, self-serving side of humanity, then his characterization of England as a hospital is nevertheless profoundly perceptive of an alternate response to the Plague—a response that will not fail to face the responsibilities engendered by human calamity.³³ For England does become a hospital as Ryland

³³The history of the modern hospital in Britain is troubled by a conflict which is not unlike that between Ryland's earlier insistence that the Plague is so distant so as to be the problem of the other versus the embracing attitude of openness adopted by others in the novel, including Lionel and Adrian. According to medical historian, Lindsay Granshaw, medical services in England towards the end of the eighteenth century favoured the establishment of dispensaries for outpatients (205). The idea behind these dispensaries—that "patients should be

predicts. Preparing to fortify itself against the foreign threat of pestilence, England opens itself in an oddly doubled gesture to become an asylum “filled even to bursting,” as Lionel says (186), with foreigners seeking refuge from the Plague. At first, it is the English people themselves, fleeing from countries which are exposed early to the ravages of the Plague, who come “pouring in one great revulsive stream, back on their own country” (186). They are soon followed by countless foreigners, “Italians and Spaniards” who have no place else to turn (186). As if to observe the Kantian rule of hospitality and the stranger’s right of visit, the English are *obliged* to welcome these strangers: in a world pursued by pestilence, the nation could not, as Kant would argue, “refuse to receive” the foreigner; for to do so would lead unquestionably to the stranger’s “destruction” (*Perpetual* 320). Accordingly, referring specifically to the adversaries and victims of the French Revolution who, as McWhir points out, “took refuge in England in 1794” (*Last Man* 186n.82), Lionel writes: “as at the conclusion of the eighteenth century, the English unlocked their hospitable stores, for the relief of those driven from their homes by political revolution; so now they were not backward in affording aid to the victims of a

treated in their own homes”—aligned them with contemporary ideas about disease: “illness was unique to an individual in his or her setting, and could not easily be understood outside that setting” (205-6). The success and prevalence of outpatient dispensaries would no doubt testify to the dominance of the anti-contagionist way of viewing contamination as the result of one’s physical environment—i.e., the air in which one lives and breathes. But they also easily fit into a kind of cultural apparatus that effectively distances both disease and disease victims, rendering them elsewhere and other-wise. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, however, there occurs what Granshaw calls a “massive increase in the number of hospitals established in Britain”—hospitals in the modern sense of an institution which treats patients “on site” for extended periods of time. What is occurring in the history of the hospital in and around the publication of *The Last Man*, then, is a shift in the hospitality of the hospital—one which sees the hospital become a domicile or refuge for the sick, a place in which to seek asylum from disease.

more wide-spreading calamity” (186). The comparison of the French Revolution to the Plague is suggestive, and only confirms Sterrenburg’s conviction that *The Last Man* stands as Shelley’s rejection of the “meliorative political views of her parents’ generation” (328); but it also points to the novel’s interest in the “foreign” as a figure which simultaneously elicits contradictory responses of both fear *and* sympathy. In addition to spreading disease, the Plague spreads an irrepressible sense of obligation to come to the aid of human suffering—Ryland’s withdrawal from public office notwithstanding. As Lionel asserts, “benevolence” is among “our best medicines” (194).

Not unlike the devastation unleashed by political revolutions (or even catastrophic events in our *own* twenty-first century), the Plague of Lionel’s world has a leveling effect on society, bringing together all sorts of people (bearing all sorts of differences) into a community of “shared-risk,” to once again borrow Canuel’s phrase. We remember that Ryland, of all people, claims that “death and disease level all men” (192). Granted his intention is quite different than Canuel’s (he uses his own insightfulness to escape rather than to embrace responsibility), but he nevertheless alludes to the indiscriminate nature of the Plague.³⁴ While the plague does not negate the irreplaceable singularity of the death of each person it kills, its “all-embracing” destructiveness does tear down social hierarchies, forcing the English people to reorganize society as though disease were a

³⁴Strangely, I often find myself resorting to the richness of Ryland’s comments, even (and especially, it would seem) when he is at his most cowardly or when he remains coldly indifferent to the suffering of anyone other than himself. In this respect, I would argue that Ryland has an ingenious, if unintentional, kind of skill for theorizing many of the larger issues in the novel—this, despite himself!

catalyst for social change. To recall Canuel once more, the “destructive gesture” of the Plague is “in part *reconstructive* (164). Speaking to a gathering of Londoners, for instance, Lionel admits: “My friends . . . our risk is common; our precautions and exertions shall be common also” (193). If the English, under Ryland’s leadership, are initially unconcerned about what phenomenologist Alphonso Lingis calls “the dying of people with whom [we think] we have nothing in common” (i.e., the Turks, the Greeks, anyone who is *not* English), then the arrival of the Plague in London, and the suffering it brings unapologetically before the eyes of the nation, reminds the English of “the community one has with dying” (x, xi).³⁵ To “catch sight” of this “*community in death*,” argues Lingis, “we should have to find ourselves . . . in a situation at the farthest limits of kinship” (157). Lingis refers to this kinship as the sign of one’s social, national, and religious separation from others with whom one is at war; but what further limit of kinship could manifest itself than that which accompanies a plague-infested world in which the situation becomes, as the saying goes, *every man for himself*?³⁶

³⁵On the effects of seeing the other suffer before one’s own eyes, Lingis writes: “In the immediacy of their presence, they are irremediably exterior: the surface of a sensibility, a susceptibility, a pleasure, and a torment that is irremediably alien to one and exposes a vulnerability and an alien mortality that summons one” (177).

³⁶As Fisch argues, the limit of the reconstruction of the “community of risk” in England pivots around gender. She argues that the political leaders who would attempt to reorganize society (both before and after the Plague) “are flawed in their emphasis on the idealization of the male leader” (273). The novel, she claims, is a feminist critique in that it ironizes a situation in which “unreconstructed men . . . want to reconstruct the world” (273-4). Aaron agrees when she writes: “it is of the utmost importance, that, even in the face of the Plague, the polarisation of gender roles be maintained” (18). Race, as I will argue shortly, is another limit to England’s reconstructive effort to build a common community through “shared risk.”

When the Irish and North Americans clash with Adrian and his troops on their way to sack London, it is not until Adrian raises in his arms a man who has been killed in the encounter—proclaiming “He is dead!”—that the two armies desist (236). At this point, Lionel writes: “The fate of the world seemed bound up in the death of this single man” (236). Upon seeing (and identifying with) the dead man, the two armies realize that death is the one thing that they still have in common; it is the one thing that they continue to share as they greet the onslaughts the Plague. Talking “only of how each might assist the other,” as I have noted,” the armies “conjoin” forming what becomes a reconstructed community through the commonality of death. Even those “of high rank in their our countries” eventually become *common* (187). “With hoe in hand,” they “turn up the soil;” they “unlocked their hospitable store” (187). “It may be imagined,” Lionel writes incredulously, “that things were in a bad state, before this benevolence could have struck such deep roots” (187). Humanity becomes a community whose only others are the others within itself—those who share in one another’s death. This community travels south (despite Morton Paley’s advice!) until, finally, there is but one man whose only other is himself, both the reader and the writer of the last text humanity will ever transcribe.

Conclusion: Foreign Bodies/Foreign Infections

While it is true that Ryland is accused of cowardice and of “receding” from his “duties” as Lord Protector in this “time of peril” (192), he is right about one thing: there

is, in the end, no refuge from the Plague. Everyone, with the unique exception of our narrator, dies. If death is the one thing that brings humanity together in a community of exposed risk, then it is also the limit to the novel's optimism—which is to say, the limit to its faith in the benevolence and hospitality of humanity's (and, more specifically, England's) reconstructive efforts in the face of immanent disaster. For not all deaths in the novel are as "common" as it would at first seem. There are always bodies that will be ex-communicated, as it were, from the community in death, and which thus represent the impossibly conflicted nature of England's desire to repel the threat of foreign contamination (its version of homeland security), while at the same time welcoming, embracing, and coming to the aid of *victims* of the Plague—as though these two things (victim and disease, foreigner and foreign pestilence) could be so easily differentiated. It is interesting to note, for instance, that when describing the flow of foreigners seeking asylum in England from the Plague, Lionel mentions only refugees from European and other Western nations. There are returning English internationals, "Italians and Spaniards" (186), and, eventually, the ruthless mob of Irish expatriates and North Americans. Eastern bodies (or, at least, non-Western bodies), on the other hand, not unlike the Plague itself, remain for the most part invisible in *The Last Man*. When Raymond enters the gates of Constantinople, for instance, the city is vacant, emptied of its original inhabitants. The Turks simply vanish—never to be heard from or seen again. Their only legacy is to leave a lingering airborne contagion—a "foreign body," as we would say today, that infects and devours the bodies of the West. If there is a community

in death in the novel, it seems to manifest only after many of those who have little or nothing in common with the English have perished.

There is, in particular, one non-Western body in the novel that, in its dying breaths, figuratively embodies the impossibility of England's conflicted attempt to secure the homeland insofar as it straddles the limit separating the foreign(er) from foreign infection. Lionel encounters this body on the very threshold of his home when returning to find "an assemblage of persons under the portico of [his] house" (265)—the reason for which, Lionel will soon learn, being the sudden change in health of his "eldest darling," Alfred:

I snatched a light, and rushing up stairs, and hearing a groan, without reflection I threw open the door of the first room that presented itself. It was quite dark; but, as I stepped within, a pernicious scent assailed my senses, producing sickening qualms, which made their way to my very heart, while I felt clasped, and a groan repeated by the person that held me. I lowered my lamp, and saw a negro half clad, writhing under the agony of disease, while he held me with a convulsive grasp. With mixed horror and impatience I strove to disengage myself, and fell on the sufferer; he wound his naked festering arms around me, his face was close to mine, and his breath, death-laden, entered my vitals. For a moment I was overcome, my head was bowed by aching nausea; till, reflection returning, I sprung up threw the wretch from me, and darting up the staircase, entered the chamber usually inhabited by my family. (265)

McWhir's editorial comments associate this passage with a remarkably similar one from Charles Brockden Brown's first hand account of illness in *Arthur Mervyn, or Memoirs of the Year 1793* (1799-1800). The figure of the "negro half clad," however, is Shelley's own invention. (In Brown's account, the victim encountered remains behind the cover of a curtained bed, invisible to the eye, like the poisonous air that flows from its lungs.) In a "dark" room located *between* the sets of stairs that lead to the room wherein live Lionel's family, this mysterious, plague-devastated "negro" lies at the threshold of Lionel's home like an infectious foreigner appearing—ominously, threateningly—on the border the nation. He stands (or "writhes") as a kind of harbinger announcing the arrival of pestilence in the home: herein lies the Plague, his body seems to say. But more than a sign of the Plague's proximity, the body of Lionel's "negro"—with its "pernicious scent," "naked festering arms," and "death-laden" breath—verges on the threshold of being indistinguishable from the disease it harbours. If the only presence of the Turks in the novel is felt in the "invisible death" left in their absence, then the Plague's invisibility could be said to physically manifest itself in this African body whose racial profile aligns him dangerously close to the Plague. Claspings at Lionel's limbs, encircling his body, and breathing "death" into his lungs, this figure of the "negro" becomes the Plague *incarnate*. He is not just dying; he *is* death itself. In order to enter his home (now visited by Plague), Lionel must literally wrestle with this figure of death and "disengage" himself from its "convulsive grasp": "I . . . threw the wretch from me," he writes (265). Overcome by an irrepressible "aching nausea," Lionel falters in sickness just being in the presence this

man. If this man is not, strictly speaking, a foreigner (at least, we do not know the details of his citizenship), Lionel performatively alienates or others him with the label, “negro half clad.” To Lionel, he is clearly *not* English. To once again recall Kant’s assessment of the hospitality of the English, it is not even clear to Lionel whether this diseased man is discernibly human, evidence of which we see in Lionel’s inability to distinguish between the “wretch” from its wretched state—that is, between the sufferer and the cause of suffering.

Richardson argues that Lionel’s professed horror at the sight of a “negro half clad” is representative of “English disgust at the colonial other, a disgust inextricable from commercial domination” (par. 4). I would add to this charge that Lionel’s revulsion to this man marks the absolute limit of generosity—of homeland security—where foreign body and foreign infection become one. The (con)fusion of these two things testifies to the impossibility of a hospitable gesture that welcomes one thing (a foreigner or refugee), while at the same time excludes another (a foreign contagion). Conditional generosity such as this can only go so far before it opens itself to its own impossibility, before it becomes self-conscious, as it were, of its inability to sustain its conditionality—indeed, before it buckles under the pressure of knowing that, in the end, one cannot make a guest feel entirely welcome any more than one can entirely refuse another. The stranger to whom one *denies* entry will always arrive in one form or another, as Derrida says; and the visitor to whom one *grants* entry will—at a certain point and to a certain degree—be withheld, rejected, opposed. Lionel’s “negro” embodies this contradiction, for in addition

to being “half clad,” he is half guest and half “enemy.” He is half-way up the stairs: half welcomed as lodger, half renounced (discarded in disgust) as foreign body, the host of a foreign plague.

I am not suggesting that England’s conflicted response to the Plague is entirely worthless, nor even that it is futile in the face of an inescapable apocalypse. Rather, Lionel’s disgust at the site of a “negro half clad” reminds us that if, as Judith Butler insists, “there is a violence necessary to the language of politics” (and here we can substitute the “politics of hospitality” for the “language of politics”), “then the risk of that violation might well be followed by another in which we begin, without ending, without mastering, to own—yet never fully to own—the exclusions by which we proceed” (*Bodies* 53). The call to hospitality and responsibility in *The Last Man*, I contend, is an obligation that is impossible to fulfill but also impossible to ignore. The impossibility of the obligation is precisely what compels the subject; it is what makes the attempt to fulfill that obligation *meaningful*. Shelley’s *The Last Man* presents itself as an object lesson on how the subject is obligated to welcome the other even when all hope is lost, even when to do so might lead to one’s destruction. Presenting the failure of English hospitality in the rejection of a diseased African body, *The Last Man* attests to the fact that even a seemingly optimistic or ideally self-sacrificing hospitality must re-think its limits, must “own” the furthest reaches of its own in-tolerance to being open. “Tolerance” is, of course, another word for inhospitality; for it obscures the fact that the other is always already in our midst, and thus can lay claim to any space to which we lay claim *before*

anything like “tolerance” can take place.³⁷ The other, as I have argued throughout this thesis, is always already upon us, even and especially if that other is none other than ourselves, the first (and sometimes the *only*) readers of the text we write. In a word or two, Shelley’s novel compels us not only to speak for it (as Lionel speaks for us) and to redress the novel’s anonymity, but also to reflect on what Derrida would call a hospitality *to come*—a form of hospitality that is always arriving, that welcomes its own limitations and impossibility, and that is always seeking to improve and reshape its (in)ability to welcome the other.

³⁷For an elegant deconstruction of what we might call the supposed embracing hospitality of terms like “tolerance” and “multiculturalism,” see Werner Hamacher, “One 2 Many Multiculturalisms” (1997).



CONCLUSION:

Toward a Romantic Hospitality To Come

1. Guest as Allergen

In an “improvised” lecture on “Kant and Schiller” delivered at Cornell University in March of 1983, Paul de Man reflects hesitantly on his invitation to speak and on the reception of his arrival: “You are so kind at the beginning and so hospitable and so benevolent that I have the feeling that . . .” (131). De Man pauses cautiously, manages to utter a few broken phrases, before continuing finally to say: “But it doesn’t take long before you get the feeling that you’re getting under people’s skin, and that there is a certain reaction which is bound to occur, certain questions that are bound to be asked, which is the interesting moment, where certain issues are bound to come up” (131-2). Fondly recalling the incident, J. Hillis Miller takes advantage of his old friend’s “oral performance” at Cornell, reconstructing the “scene” as a way to characterize de Man’s presence and his work “as allergen”—that is, as “something alien, other, that works to bring about a reaction of resistance to that otherness” (“Allergen” 183). Miller’s analogy of the guest as irritant is intriguing for many reasons, not the least of which is that it calls to mind *The Last Man*’s insistence on the complex connections between contagion and hospitality.¹ As Miller writes, the “best antihistamine” to a de Manian irritation “might

¹The analogy is intriguing also for its reversal of Miller’s own formulation of “the critic as host,” a formulation through which he challenges M.H. Abrams’s and Wayne Booth’s insistence that the “deconstructionist” reading “is plainly and simply parasitical” on the “obvious or univocal reading” (Booth 457, Abrams 441; cited in Miller, “Critic” 217). It would seem that

be to forget his essays altogether” (183). “The trouble,” warns Miller, “is that once you have read de Man seriously it is difficult to do that without a vague uneasy feeling that you are laying traps for yourself and others” (183). As guest lecturer, de Man inspires a feeling of dis-ease; his work is as infectious as it is irritating.

And yet if his reception “provokes fits of coughing, sneezing, and burning eyes,” as Miller playfully contends (183), then de Man has an allergic reaction of his own, choking as he does on the suffocating formality of the guest lecture, on the language of placating one’s hosts. Troubled by the offence that his words promise to inspire, de Man is made to feel uneasy; he barely manages to speak—evidence of which can be found in the high number of ellipses that surround and interrupt this moment of awkwardness in William Jewett’s and Thomas Pepper’s transcription of the lecture for de Man’s *Aesthetic Ideology*. More interestingly, however, if an allergic reaction amounts to an aggressively hostile reflex to the source of an irritation, then we might say that de Man reacts inhospitably by foreclosing the conditions of his reception both before and after it has occurred. On the one hand, his talk on “Kant and Schiller” is the fifth in a series of “Messenger” lectures. He has already “had questions” from his audience, as he says, and has “felt some resistances” (131). Thus, he is reacting to these resistances *after the fact*. On the other hand, reflecting on the benevolence shown to him by Cornell, de Man claims

now, with Abrams seated in the lecture hall at Cornell listening to de Man’s lecture (Abrams is the first to ask de Man a follow-up question [155]), the deconstructionist critic transforms from “host” back to “guest.” Such a transformation does not discredit Miller’s argument for the critic as host; he does claim that the critic is both guest *and* host (224). But one does wonder about the convenience of the reversal, and even more so about Miller’s reluctance to provide a commentary on (or, at the very least, to signal his awareness of) this reversal.

to “know *from experience*” that this kind of reception is not altogether genuine, that an unreserved welcome has “not [been] the case” (131, *emph. added*). Reacting to Cornell’s resistance, de Man now insists on having anticipated the reception *in advance*. “There’s *always* an interesting episode in a series of lectures like that,” he says (131, *emph. added*). There are always “*certain*” reactions that are “*bound*” to occur, “*certain*” questions that are “*bound*” to be asked—this word “*certain*” curiously sliding in meaning from something that is “unnamed” to something that is “inevitable,” something that is *bound* to happen (131, *emph. added*). De Man’s reaction to “the resistance to [his] theory” is to *contain* or *accommodate* his audience’s reaction by characterizing their “resistances” as “interesting” but predictable nonetheless. Refusing to see these resistances as anything more than ordinary, de Man is always already unfriendly to what he deems to be the unfriendliness of his hosts—thus, in a sense, resisting their resistance in a kind of preemptive strike. Predicting his reception, “knowing” it in advance, de Man inhospitably refuses to welcome the future, the *a-venir*, as Derrida would say. He refuses to greet the impending “Discussion” that he knows will follow his talk (and which is included in Jewett’s and Pepper’s transcription of the lecture) with an “open” mind.²

²Thus, the “irritability” to which Miller refers could be said to work in two directions—and not just here in de Man’s reception at Cornell, but also, more generally, in the reception of de Man’s work in both the United States and abroad. There is, on the one hand, de Man’s own scholarly irritability: his work contains what Miller calls “rejections” of “received ideas about literary study” which, in addition to being “dismayingly rigorous and plausible,” can “best be characterized” as often “joyfully insolent” but at other times defiantly “contemptuous” (184). In this light, de Man is himself irritably hostile to the established norms of literary practice. On the other hand, there is the irritation produced by reading (or listening to) de Man which has lead a number of critics with particularly acute allergies to his work to mobilize de Man as a figure for the destructive pathologies of what gets unilaterally labelled as “Yale” or “American” deconstruction. This double irritation, moreover, gets re-doubled, as it were, in the

The frictional contest between guests and hosts evident in Miller's narrative of "de Man at Cornell" acts as a paradigm for the moments of "hospitable inflation" (Rosello 173) that the preceding chapters locate in various hospitality scenes in Romantic writings of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. As Rosello claims, "hospitality without risk usually hides more serious violence" (173): the mutual defiance on the part of both de Man and his auditors, for instance, guarantees that *neither* de Man's otherwise irritable work nor the resistance to that work get thoroughly *contained* or *accommodated* in the exchange. Thus the question arises: is Miller's narrative of "de Man at Cornell" a scene of Romantic hospitality itself? If Jerome McGann is correct when he criticizes Romanticists for being too Romantic (that is, for reproducing various Romantic ideologies) in their own readings of Romanticism (3), then perhaps the answer to this question is *yes*. As I mentioned earlier, this dissertation can only claim to work *toward* a theory of Romantic hospitality without ever claiming to speak comprehensively about such a theory—except to say that we (Miller included) continue to feel its influence.

controversy that continues to be fueled by Ortwin de Graef's discovery of de Man's "Wartime Journalism" in 1986 (*Wartime* 2). Otherwise known as "the de Man affair," this controversy holds much significance for what Marc Redfield calls the "politics" of de Man's reception—which is to say, the ways in which de Man functions as a figure for both the "monumentalization" and the "ritual sacrifice" of "theory" ("De Man" 50). Consisting of articles written for two Belgian newspapers, *Le Soir* and *Het Vlaamsche Land*, between 1940 and 1942 when both papers functioned as collaborationist presses under German occupation, de Man's "wartime journalism" has been hailed (perhaps "predictably," as de Man might preemptively have said) by several *irritated* sources as the "smoking gun" in the war against de Man. The "de Man Affair" thus crystalizes a series of irritations and refusals which render the "scene" of de Man's lecture at Cornell both eerily prophetic *and* reminiscent of that affair: aggressively anticipating (and thus aspiring to *silence*) "certain" reactions to his lecture, de Man might very well have been "remembering" (albeit in the form of a repression) the conditions of his own inhospitable silence, which is to say, his absolute refusal to speak of the antisemitism of his early writings and the "reactions" which would be "bound" to occur were he to do so.

Working *toward* a theory of Romantic hospitality necessarily implies that the *work* of this dissertation is still very much of the kind *to come*. My earlier foray into the poetry of Anna Letitia Barbauld, for instance, highlights the impending direction of this work to come—as do its modest references to writers as diverse as William Godwin, William Wordsworth, Thomas De Quincey, and Percy B. Shelley. The dissertation has always *already* been part of a larger project on Romantic hospitality—a project, incidentally, that I plan to continue pursuing as a Postdoctoral Fellow at Cornell University, thus returning, as it were, to the “scene” of de Man’s “reaction.” Accordingly, that project (always to come) would then begin to register not only the extent to which we continue to be influenced by a Romantic view of the stranger, but also, more importantly, what Romanticism has to teach us about our own responsibilities with respect to this heritage. Reading Rousseau, Kant, Coleridge and Mary Shelley has already taught me *how* one might read Miller’s scene of “de Man at Cornell”—that is, how one might (to use Miller’s own words) be “responsible to [this scene], responsive to it, respectful of it” (*Ethics* 4). Rousseau, Kant, Coleridge, and Shelley have each in their own way taught me to be more sensitive to the risks taken in a scene of hospitality, risks that equally expose hosts and guests to the violences, discomforts, and impositions of their relationship. They have taught me to think critically about my own troubled relationship with them, about the hospitable conditions and limits of my analysis, about the inevitable violences that I impose upon their texts. If there is work to come, then perhaps that work would involve reexamining my *approach* to the texts and contexts of Romantic hospitality—thus

remaining “open” and responsive to modes of inquiry that proceed differently or *other than* a deconstructive or “symptomatic” reading, for instance. For as Rousseau, Kant, Coleridge, and Shelley demonstrate, one can never be prepared for the other, the text which one welcomes to one’s analysis and about which one presumes to know a few things. There are always moments of surprise, moments that force one to think otherwise. Romantic hospitality, as I have endeavoured to show, occurs on the threshold of this surprise, when one must take certain unforeseen risks. It occurs when one is startled *despite* having prepared oneself (with *certainities*) for the arrival in advance.³

³I would like to pause for a lengthy personal footnote on this matter. While preparing (for) this dissertation I had one experience in particular that *introduced* me to this threshold of unpreparedness—an experience that painfully reminded me of my finitude, of my desire to exist on my *own* time. In the summer of 2001, my brother and his wife paid me a surprise visit on the day before I was to leave for Seattle to deliver a conference paper that I had only a few hours before their visit decided was in desperate need of revision. They could not have picked a worse time to visit. Anxious about what little time I *did* have to revise the paper, I tried to greet them with as much propriety as I could muster; but their visit soon “got under my skin,” to recall de Man’s phrase. The imposition was intolerable. The most ungracious of hosts (offering them nothing but impatience, and this, despite a thirstiness of which my brother would later complain), I became their hostage, imposing upon *them* to grant me a favour and leave. They were, in that moment, as Derrida says, the “host’s host . . . the one who invites the one who invites, the master of the host” (*Of Hospitality* 125). I begged for *their* understanding, for *their* hospitality, for *their* pardon—which they graciously granted, leaving me with a promise to return at some other, more “convenient” time—and (regrettably) not without a phone call. As it turns out, exposing me to the enormous disparity between my *theory* and my *practice* of hospitality, their visit could not have been more timely. While it was “out of joint” with respect to *my time*—the time which I had prepared *in advance*, with a glance toward a predictable future—their unexpected arrival reminded me that *my* time was never really *mine*, that *my time* was nothing more than an imposition on the time of the (br)other. I can insulate myself; I can hide up in my apartment to write a thesis, a conference paper; I can postpone invitations to friends; but I cannot stop the time of the other; I cannot prevent him or her from arriving *unexpectedly*, or shield myself from his or her approach. To be sure, their visit continues to haunt me. My brother, my sister-in-law, seem always to be here, even as I write these sentences, offering me an immeasurable gift—a *house-warming* gift which continues to burn and fuel my thoughts. They seem always to be arriving, penetrating the apartment, lingering at the door way, reminding me of something that I cannot quite remember, something that unsettles my otherwise settled apartment—a promise, perhaps, to disrupt my time, my thesis, my life once more. Gratefully, I write this in dedication to them, and with an invitation: come again.

2. *Unspeakable Acts: Toward a Hospitality to Come*

I would be remiss if I were to let the events of 11 September, 2001, go unacknowledged in this dissertation—events for which few people could have been prepared.⁴ These events occurred while I was in the midst of finishing Chapter One, and have doubtless shaped and reshaped the dissertation in ways that I have yet to register. I have made only implicit (one might even say guardedly imperceptible) references to these events throughout the dissertation, especially in Chapter Four, but also in Chapter Two. I hesitate even now to say anything explicit. It makes one feel uneasy, uncomfortable, to

⁴I preserve this phrase “few people” as a way to signal the various commentaries on 9-11 that suggest that there are ways, *certain* ways, in which the events of 9-11 were at once utterly unprecedented and nothing but precedented. In his essay “Welcome to the Desert of the Real,” for instance, Slavoj Žižek argues that “the greatest surprise” of 9-11 was America’s (mis-) recognition that “in a way, [it] got what it fantasized about” (par. 3). Žižek’s comment is (perhaps intentionally) crass, one might even say intellectually dishonest: his qualifying clause, “in a way,” *in no way* excuses the offense, the *violence* of his overstated characterization of the murder of thousands as a dream-come-true. For Žižek, of course, one does not always fantasize about “good” things; one also dreams about what one deems to be “evil.” But Žižek no doubt knows the symbolic power of his harsh words; he knows that there is “bound” to be “certain” irritated reactions to them. In a similar tone, Jean Baudrillard, in “The Spirit of Terrorism,” argues that “everybody without exception has dreamt of [9-11], because everybody must dream of the destruction of any power hegemonic to that degree” (5). More subtly and perhaps less offensively, however, both Žižek and Baudrillard argue that, like the sinking of the Titanic, the annihilation of the World Trade Center was “already prepared in ideological fantasizing,” since the Towers had been actively vaunted as the symbol of the “might” of a post-industrial capitalist (i.e., American) economy (par. 3). The libidinal investment in such a symbol, Žižek argues, necessarily (if fearfully) anticipates its inevitable demise. It is the very nature of libidinal investment to stake one’s identity on something that always already promises one day to withdraw, perish, or be destroyed. Without this investment, without this “deep-seated complicity,” as Baudrillard calls it, “the event would not have had the resonance it has, and in their symbolic strategy the terrorists doubtless know that they can count on this unavowable complicity” (Baudrillard 6). Moreover, Žižek and Baudrillard aside, it must be said that, in terms of the unprecedented nature of the event, 9-11 was an event for which there was indeed *much* preparation insofar as it was also the site of a premeditated mass-murder, something so meticulously planned, so predictable, so acted upon by those who had murdered the future (by claiming to know its martyred ends), this, in the *name* of the future—of a *certain* future. But even in this, there must have been some radical element of surprise, some flash of unpredictability that not even the hijackers, their accomplices, the designers of this murder could have foreseen.

do so. And yet, as always, an *other* voice speaks to me (or is it *une autre écriture*?), forcing me to confront my discomfort, calling me to responsibility. How *not* to speak of 9-11? As Derrida intimates, hospitality means being hospitable to the absolutely inhospitable (*On Cosmopolitanism* 32). I have often thought that 9-11 has been the repressed object of this dissertation insofar as the sheer hostility of the event—with its terrible images of suffering and loss—continues to haunt my own thoughts and fears of an absolute or unconditional hospitality. Accordingly, I would, at the very least, like to open my text if not directly to the material violence of 9-11, then to its responses, to the ways in which 9-11 is mobilized rhetorically as a means to excuse “certain” reactions to it. In a word, I wish to be *responsive* to these responses, if only marginally, insufficiently, and (as always) much too quickly.

Like “the Plague” in Shelley’s *The Last Man* (but also singularly *unlike* “the Plague”), 9-11 could be said to have elicited, among other things, a crisis of hospitality—one that was, perhaps, itself unforeseeable and which expressed itself in a countless plurality of ways. One particular result of this crisis has been America’s heightened awareness and problematization of itself as a nation that is also a “host”—both in the sense that it seeks to regulate the comings-and-goings of its visitors and in the sense that it can be assaulted, devastated from within. Like “the Plague” in Shelley’s novel, moreover, the event that is 9-11 continues to be met, perhaps inevitably, with a mixture of benevolence and hostility. Producing what Lingis calls a “community in death” (which is to say, a community of “shared risk” and shared exposure to the other),

9-11 triggered not only an outpouring of compassion and solidarity (from across the nation, from across the globe), but also a defensive turn that projects inherent suspicion on all things strange or foreign—or, to be more specific, that *makes* strange, renders others strange so as to be objects of suspicion.

Historically *and* structurally speaking, we might say that this latter reaction *as* reactionary is hardly “new.” How, after all, can one *re*-act to something as singular, unprecedented, and unrepeatable as 9-11. For Caputo, this impossibility is what characterizes the “end” of a certain “traditional” notion of “ethics” in which the subject strives to prepare for catastrophe *after the fact* (“End of Ethics” 112). The first question of the event, “Where do we go from here in light of what has happened?” gets ruined by a whole host of others, asked much too hastily: how to *prevent* this event from happening again? What is it that we failed to do that brought on this disaster? How was it that certain intelligence was not intercepted? To *re*-act after the fact is to approach the event ass-backwards: as Žižek comments, in its post-9-11 incarnation, America has “opted to reassert its traditional ideological commitments,” and to “go back to its basics” (*Welcome* 47). So, why this *re*-action? Why this *re*-turn to some kind of “older” knowledge, some archaic set of guidelines that *would* have *prevented* the disaster had we only foreseen it? Is it not the spirit of Ryland that guides us thus in our attempts to insulate ourselves in advance and after the fact? Is it not the spectre of such a man that spearheads something like a department for “Homeland Security”? If there is an ethical moment in the event that precedes-without-preceding one’s actions—which is to say, that calls one to

responsibility with regards to one's foreign encounters—then that moment gets ruined with what we might very well call a “Ryland-effect,” a *re*-action to calamity in which we find ourselves *too quickly* in the midst of all sorts of assaults on the stranger, the foreigner, all those others whose “lunar” spectrality is suddenly made all too palpable, too close for comfort.⁵

In this time of heightened security, then, it is difficult *not* to reflect on our inheritance of something like a Ryland-effect, and to question its assumptions: from whence comes our desire to insulate the body politic and to characterize the foreign as threateningly alien? If the texts of Romantic hospitality teach us anything, then perhaps it is to reflect on the im-possibility of what Derrida *belatedly* calls a “hospitality without reserve” (*Specters* 65). For I believe that a hospitality *to come* or *without reserve* is the gift that Rousseau, Kant, Coleridge, and Shelley finally bestow upon us *well before Derrida*. Their texts open themselves absolutely to a time *to come*—a time like now, when we await “without horizon of the wait . . . what one does not expect yet or any longer . . . the *arrivant* from whom or from which one will not ask anything in return and who or which will not be asked to commit to the domestic contracts of any welcoming power . . . *just* opening which renounces any right to property” (*Specters* 65). If this time never comes—if it never arrives *despite* our impatience—it is due precisely to the unreservedness of the other, the absolute openness of the future, the *a-venir*. If, as *The Last Man*

⁵We remember that, “for the most part,” Ryland talks of foreigners (specifically, Thracians and Macedonians) as though they were from some “lunar territory,” which, “unknown” to him, “present[s] no distinct idea or interest to the mind” (173).

demonstrates, the obligation to fully embrace the other is as impossible to fulfill as it is unthinkable, then this obligation is also equally impossible to disregard. Referring, for instance, to “the Plague” and to England’s responsibility “to help our suffering fellow-creatures,” Adrian informs Ryland “with a gentle smile”: “To avoid it, we must quit the world” (191). If there is something like a Ryland-effect that *re*-acts to calamity by closing itself to the other in the name of “homeland security,” then perhaps what is necessary to counter such an effect is the persistence of something like an Adrianic voice that never ceases to remind us that we cannot ignore the other, that the other will always arrive, that it is *always already* in our midst—or that we must prepare (without ever truly being prepared) to greet its arrival with responsibility and with an acute awareness of the violence with which we embrace it. As Judith Butler claims, “speaking is always in some ways the speaking of the stranger through and as oneself” (242). Securing one’s homeland, closing oneself to the others *outside* one’s borders, is also a means of closing oneself to oneself, to a whole host of others who dwell *within* the subject and whose disavowal makes subjectivity possible. Avoiding one’s responsibility to the stranger, then, one necessarily quits oneself. To recall Adrian’s gentle humour, one would need to quit the earth—inhospitality meaning nothing less than a death sentence.

Works Cited

- Aaron, Jane. "The Return of the Repressed: Reading Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*." *Feminist Criticism: Theory and Practice*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991. 9-22
- Abrams, M. H. "Rationality and Imagination in Cultural History: A Reply to Wayne Booth." *Critical Inquiry* 2.3 (Spring 1976): 447-464.
- . "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric." *From Sensibility to Romanticism*. Ed. Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965. 527-560
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso, 1991.
- Anonymous. "The Last Book: with a Dissertation on Last Things in General." *The Monthly Magazine*. N.S. 1 (1825): 284-6.
- Axinn, Sidney. "Kant, Authority, and the French Revolution." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 32 (1971): 423-432.
- Balchazy, Ladislaus J. *Hospitality in Early Rome: Livy's Concept of its Humanizing Force*. Chicago: Ares Publishers, Inc., 1977.
- Barbauld, Anna Letitia. *The Poems of Anna Letitia Barbauld*. Ed. William McCarthy and Elizabeth Kraft. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1994.
- Barth, Robert J. "The *Biographia Literaria* as Conversation Poem: The Poetry of Coleridge's Prose." *Coleridge Bulletin: The Journal of the Friends of Coleridge* 16 (Winter 2000): 1-4.
- Baudrillard, Jean. *The Spirit of Terrorism: And Requiem for the Twin Towers*. Trans. Chris Turner. New York: Verso Books, 2002.
- Beer, John. *Coleridge the Visionary*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1970.
- Bennington, Geoffrey. *Jacques Derrida*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999.

- . "Postal Politics and the Institution of the Nation." *Nation and Narration*. Ed. Homi K. Bhabha. New York: Routledge, 1990. 121-137
- Berman, Antoine. *The Experience of the Foreign: Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany*. Trans. S. Heyvaert. New York: State University of New York Press, 1992.
- Bhabha, Homi K.. "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation." *Nation and Narration*. Ed. Homi K. Bhabha. New York: Routledge, 1990. 291-321
- Bohman, James. "The Public Spheres of the World Citizen." *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal*. Ed. James Bohman and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann. Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997. 179-200
- Booth, Wayne. "M. H. Abrams: Historian as Critic, Critic as Pluralist," *Critical Inquiry*, II, 3 (Spring 1976).
- Bowerbank, Sylvia. "Of Mice and Women: Early Modern Roots of Ecological Feminism." *WE: Women & Environments International* 52/53 (2001): 27-29.
- Brubaker, Rogers. *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Buell, Lawrence. "The Question of Form in Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*." *Critical Essays on Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. Leonard Orr. New York: G. K. Hall, 1994. 158-73
- Burwick, Frederick. "Coleridge, Schlegel, and Animal Magnetism." *English and German Romanticism: Cross-Currents and Controversies*. Ed. James Pipkin. Heidelberg: Carl Winter University, 1985. 273-300
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Bygrave, Stephen. *Coleridge and the Self*. London: MacMillan, 1986.
- . "Versions of British Romantic Writing." *Approaching Literature: Romantic Writings*. Ed. Steven Bygrave. New York: Routledge, 1996. 47-70
- Cafarelli, Annette. "Rousseau and British Romanticism: Women and the Legacy of Male Radicalism." *Cultural Interactions in the Romantic Age*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1998. 125-156

- Cantor, Paul A. "The apocalypse of empire: Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*." *Iconoclastic Departures: Mary Shelley After Frankenstein: Essays in Honor of the Bicentenary of Mary Shelley's Birth*. Ed. Syndy M. Conger, et al. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997. 193-211
- Canuel, Mark. "Acts, Rules, and *The Last Man*." *Nineteenth Century Literature* 53.2 (September 1998): 147-70.
- Caputo, John. *Against Ethics: Contributions to a Poetics of Obligation with Constant Reference to Deconstruction*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- . "The End of Ethics." *Blackwell Studies in Ethics*. Ed. Hugh Follette. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000. 111-128
- . *More Radical Hermeneutics: On Not Knowing Who We Are*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000.
- Casey, Edward S. "Smooth Spaces and Rough-Edged Places: The Hidden History of Place." *The Review of Metaphysics* 51.2 (December 1997): 267-96.
- Chatterjee, Partha. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World A Derivative Discourse*. London: Zed, 1986.
- Christensen, Jerome. *Coleridge's Blessed Machine of Language*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981.
- Clark, David L. "Kant's Aliens: The *Anthropology* and its Others." *The New Centennial Review* 1.2 (Fall 2001): 201-89.
- Clark, Lorene and Lynda Lange. "Rousseau: Women and the General Will." *The Sexism of Social and Political Theory: Women and Reproduction from Plato to Nietzsche*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979. 41-52
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Biographia Literaria*. Vols. 1 & 2. Ed. J. Shawcross. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- . *Coleridge: Poetical Works*. Ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge. London: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- . *Collected letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. 6 Volumes. Ed. Earl Leslie Griggs. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-1971.

- . *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Volume One: Lectures, 1795, On Politics and Religion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.
- . "William Pitt." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine. Volume One. June to November, 1850*. New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1850. 202-205
- Cooter, Roger. "Anticontagionism and History's Medical Record." *The Problem of Medical Knowledge: Examining the Social Frontiers of Medicine*. Ed. Peter Wright and Andrew Treacher. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1982. 87-108
- Cottle, Joseph. *Reminiscences of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey*. London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1848.
- Covell, Charles. *Kant and the Law of Peace: A Study in the Philosophy of International Law and International Relations*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- Cranston, Maurice. *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Early Life and Work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1712-1754*. London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1983.
- . *The Noble Savage: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1754-1762*. New York: The Penguin Press, 1991.
- . *The Solitary Self: Jean-Jacques Rousseau In Exile and Adversity*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- Critchley, Simon. *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*. 2nd Edition. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999.
- Crosthwaite, Jan. "Sophie and *Les Aventures de Telemaque*: Amorous Nymphs and Virtuous Wives in Rousseau's *Emile*." *British Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies* 15.2 (1992): 189-201.
- Darts, Gregory. *Rousseau, Robespierre, and English Romanticism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- de Man, Paul. "Kant and Schiller." *Aesthetic Ideology*. Ed. Andrzej Warminski. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996. 129-162
- . "The Resistance to Theory." *The Resistance to Theory: Theory and History of Literature, Volume 33*. Ed. Wlad Godzich. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986. 3-20

- De Quincey, Thomas. *The Last Days of Immanuel Kant and Other Writings. De Quincey's Works: Volume III*. Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1863.
- . *The Works of Thomas De Quincey: Volume XI: Articles from Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1842-3*. Ed. Barry Symonds. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*. Trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Nass. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- . "At This Very Moment In This Work Here I Am." *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*. Ed. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991. 403-439
- . "Débat: Une hospitalité sans condition." *Manifeste pour l'hospitalité, aux Minguettes: Autour de Jacques Derrida*. Ed. Mohammed Seffahi. Grigny: Paroles de l'aube, 1999. 133-42
- . *Dissemination*. Trans. Barbara Johnson. Chicago: University Press, 1981.
- . "'Eating Well'; or the Calculation of the Subject" (1988). *Points...Interviews, 1974-1994*. Trans. Peter Connor and Avital Ronell. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995. 228-254
- . "Economimesis." Trans. Richard Klein. *Diacritics* 11.3 (1981): 25-59.
- . *The Gift of Death*. Trans. David Wills. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- . "Hostipitality." *Angelaki: journal of the theoretical humanities*. 5.3 (2000): 3-18.
- . "Hostipitality: Sessions." *Acts of Religion*. Ed. & Trans. Gil Anidjar. New York: Routledge, 2002. 358-426
- . *Of Grammatology*. Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.
- . *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*. Trans. Rachel Bowlby. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- . "On a Newly Arisen Apocalyptic Tone in Philosophy." Trans. John Leavey, Jr. *Raising the Tone of Philosophy: Late Essays by Immanuel Kant, Transformative Critique by Jacques Derrida*. Ed. Peter Fenves. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993. 117-172

- . *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*. Trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- . *Politics of Friendship*. Trans. George Collins. New York: Verso, 1997.
- . *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: The University Press of Chicago, 1987.
- . *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- . "Typewriter Ribbon: Limited Ink (2) ("within such limits")." Trans. Peggy Kamuf. *Material Events: Paul de Man and the Afterlife of Theory*. Ed. Tom Cohen, et al. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001. 277-360
- . "White Mythology." *Margins of Philosophy*. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. 207-71
- Doyle, Michael W. "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part I." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12 (1983): 205-235.
- . "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part II." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12 (1983): 323-353.
- Duffin, Jacalyn. *History of Medicine: A Scandalously Short Introduction*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.
- Durham, Margery. "The Mother Tongue: *Christabel* and the Language of Love," *The (M)other Tongue: Essays in Feminist Psychoanalytic Interpretation*. Ed. Shirley Garner, et al. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985. 169-193
- Eberle-Sinatra, Michael. "Gender, Authorship and Male Domination: Mary Shelley's Limited Freedom in *Frankenstein* and *The Last Man*." *Mary Shelley's Fictions: From Frankenstein to Falkner*. New York, NY: St. Martin's, 2000. 95-108
- Edelman, Bernard. *The House that Kant Built: A Moral Tale*. Trans. Graeme Hunter. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.
- Fay, Elizabeth. *A Feminist Introduction to Romanticism*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1998.

- . "Mary Shelley and Sibylline Drag." *Romantic Circles Virtual Conference Series*: "Virtually Dead? Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*." 13 September 1997
<<http://www.rc.umd.edu/villa/vc97/fay.html>>.
- Fenves, Peter. "Introduction." *Raising the Tone of Philosophy: Late Essays by Immanuel Kant, Transformative Critique by Jacques Derrida*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993. 1-48
- Ferris, David. "Where Three Paths Meet: History, Wordsworth, and the Simplon Pass." *Studies in Romanticism* 30.3 (1991): 391-438.
- Fisch, Audrey. "Plaguing Politics: AIDS, Deconstruction, and *The Last Man*." *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. 267-286
- Foakes, R. A. "Coleridge, Violence and 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.'" *Romanticism: The Journal of Romantic Culture and Criticism* 7.1 (2001): 41-57.
- Foucault, Michel. "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress" (Interview). *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. Ed. Paul Rabinow. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: The New Press, 1997. 253-280
- . *The History of Sexuality: Volume One: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1980.
- . *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality, Volume Two*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.
- France, Peter. *Politeness and Its Discontents*. New York: University of Edinburgh, 1992.
- Frank, Frederick S. "Mary Shelley's Other Fiction: A Bibliographical Consensus," *Iconoclastic Departures: Mary Shelley After Frankenstein: Essays in Honor of the Bicentenary of Mary Shelley's Birth*. Ed. Syndy M. Conger, et al. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997. 295-350
- Freud, Sigmund. "Beyond the Pleasure Principle." Trans. James Strachey. *The Penguin Freud Library, Volume 11: On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*. Toronto: Penguin Books, 1991. 269-329
- . *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: Penguin, 1976.

- . "Repression." Trans. James Strachey. *The Penguin Freud Library, Volume 11: On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*. Toronto: Penguin Books, 1991. 139-158
- . "The 'Uncanny.'" Trans. James Strachey. *Sigmund Freud: 14. Art and Literature*. Toronto: Penguin Books, 1990. 335-376
- Friedman, Meyer and Gerald W. Friedland. *Medicine's 10 Greatest Discoveries*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Friedrichsmeyer, Sara. "Romantic Nationalism: Achim von Arnim's Gypsy Princess Isabella." *Gender and Germanness: Cultural Production of the Nation*. Ed. Patricia Herminghouse and Magda Mueller. Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997. 51-65
- Fulford, Tim. *Coleridge's Figurative Language*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991.
- Gasché, Rodolphe. *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986.
- Gigante, Denise. "Milton's Aesthetics of Eating." *diacritics* 30.2 (Summer 2000): 88-112.
- Girard, René. *Violence and the Sacred [La violence et le sacré]*. Trans. Patrick Gregory. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977.
- Godwin, William. *Essays on Sepulchres: or, a Proposal for Erecting Some Memorial of the Illustrious Dead in All Ages on the Spot where their Remains have been Interred*. London: W. Miller, 1809.
- Granshaw, Lindsay. "The Rise of the Modern Hospital in Britain." *Medicine in Society: Historical Essays*. Ed. Andrew Wear. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 197-218
- Greenfeld, Liah. *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Gulyga, Arsenij. *Immanuel Kant: His Life and Thought*. Trans. Marijan Despalatović. Boston: Birkhäuser, 1987.
- Hamacher, Werner. "One 2 Many Multiculturalisms." Trans. Dana Hollander. *Violence, Identity, and Self-Determination*. Ed. Hent de Vries and Samuel Weber. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997. 284-325

- Hamacher, Werner, et al. *Wartime Journalism, 1939-1943: Paul de Man*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988.
- Haneff, Marcel. "The Cannibalistic City: Rousseau, Large Numbers, and the Abuse of the Social Bond." *SubStance: A Review of Theory and Literary Criticism* 21.1 (67) (1992): 3-23.
- Hanley, Keith. "Crossing Out: The Problem of Textual Passage in *The Prelude*." *Romantic Revisions*. Ed. Robert Brinkley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Harding, Anthony John. *Coleridge and the Idea of Love: Aspects of relationship in Coleridge's thought and writing*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Trans. James S. Churchill. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962.
- Henderson, Andrea. "Revolution, Response, and 'Christabel.'" *English Literary History* 57 (1990): 881-900.
- Hoeveler, Diane Long. "Glossing the Feminine in The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." *European Romantic Review* 2.2 (Winter 1992): 145-62.
- . *Romantic Androgyny: The Women Within*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990.
- Holmes, Richard. *Coleridge: Early Visions*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989.
- . *Coleridge: Darker Reflections, 1804-1834*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1998.
- . *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Selected Poems*. Toronto: Penguin Books, 1996.
- Holstein, Michael E. "Coleridge's Christabel as Psychodrama: Five Perspectives on the Intruder." *Wordsworth-Circle* 7 (1976): 119-28.
- Homer. *The Odyssey: A Norton Critical Edition*. Trans. Albert Cook. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993.
- Honig, Bonnie. "Ruth, the Model Émigré: Mourning and the Symbolic Politics of Immigration." *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998. 192-215

- House, Howard. *Coleridge*. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953.
- Hunt, Luis. "Principle and Prejudice: Burke, Kant, and Habermas on the Conditions of Practical Reason." *History of Political Thought*, vol. XXIII, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 117-140.
- Jackson, H. J. "Coleridge's Women, or Girls, Girls, Girls Are Made To Love." *Studies in Romanticism* 32 (Winter 1993): 577-600.
- Jackson, Susan K. *Rousseau's Occasional Autobiographies*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1992.
- Johnson, Barbara. "The Last Man." *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. 258-266
- Kant, Immanuel. "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" Trans. James Schmidt. *What is Enlightenment: Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*. Ed. James Schmidt. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996. 53-57
- . *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* [*Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*] (1798). Trans. Victor Lyle Dowdell. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978.
- . *The Conflict of the Faculties* [*Der Streit der Fakultäten*] (1798). Trans. Mary J. Gregor. New York: Abaris Books, Inc., 1979.
- . *Correspondence*. Trans. Arnulf Zweig. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- . *Critique of Judgement* [*Kritik der Urteilstkraft*] (1790). Trans. Werner S. Pluhar. Indianapolis: Hacket Publishing Company, 1987.
- . *Lectures on Ethics* (1803). Trans. Louis Infield. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.
- . *Logic* (1800). Trans. Robert S. Hartman and Wolfgang Schwarz. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1974.
- . *The Metaphysics of Morals* [*Metaphysik der Sitten*] (1797). Trans. Mary Gregor. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- . "On a Supposed Right to Lie From Altruistic Motives" ["*Über ein vermeintes Recht, aus Menschenliebe zu lügen*"] (1797). *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*. Trans. Lewis White Beck. New York: Garland Pub., 1976.

- . "On the Common Saying: 'This May Be True in Theory, But Does Not Apply in Practice'" ["*Über den Gemeinspruch: 'Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis'*"] (1793). *Kant's Political Writings*. Trans. H. B. Nisbet. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1971. 61-92
- . *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* [*Zum ewigen Frieden*] (1795). *Critique of Practical Reason, and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*. Trans. and Ed. Lewis White Beck. New York: Garland Pub., 1976. 306-345
- Kaschuba, Wolfgang. "German *Bürgerlichkeit* after 1800: Culture as Symbolic Practice." *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Ed. Jürgen Kocka and Allen Mitchel. Providence: Berg Publishing, 1993. 392-422
- Kass, Leon R. *The Hungry Soul: Eating and the Perfection of Our Nature*. Toronto: Maxwell MacMillan Canada, 1994.
- Kavanagh, Thomas M. "Rousseau's *Le Lévyte d'Ephraïm*: Dream, Text and Synthesis." *Eighteenth Century Studies* 16.2 (1983):141-161.
- Keenan, Thomas. *Fables of Responsibility: Aberrations and Predicaments in Ethics and Politics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.
- Kelly, Gary. "The Last Man and Masculine History: between the Revolutionary Aftermath and the Founding of the Modern Liberal State." *Romantic Circles Virtual Conference Series*: "Virtually Dead? Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*." 13 September 1997 <<http://www.rc.umd.edu/villa/vc97/kelly.html>>.
- Kenyon-Jones, Christine. *Kindred Brutes: Animals in Romantic-Period Writing*. Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2001.
- Kneale, J. Douglas. *Romantic Aversions: Aftermaths of Classicism in Wordsworth and Coleridge*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999.
- Knox-Shaw, P.H. "The Eastern Ancient Mariner." *Essays in Criticism: A Quarterly Journal of Literary Criticism* 46.2 (April 1996): 115-35.
- Koenig, John. *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Strangers to Ourselves*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

- Kucich, Greg. "The Last Man and the New History." *Romantic Circles Virtual Conference Series*: "Virtually Dead? Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*." 13 September 1997 <<http://www.rc.umd.edu/villa/vc97/kucich.html>>.
- Kuehn, Manfred. *Kant: A Biography*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Lacan, Jacques. "Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in *Hamlet*." *Literature and Psychoanalysis: the question of reading, otherwise*. Ed. Shoshana Felman. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982. 11-52
- La Cassagnère, Christian. "The Strangeness of 'Christabel.'" *Wordsworth Circle* 32.2 (1997): 84-88.
- Lee, Debbie. "Yellow Fever and the Slave Trade: Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.'" *English Literary History* 65.3 (Fall 1998): 675-700.
- Levinas, Emmanuel. *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence*. Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1974.
- . "Meaning and Sense." *Collected Philosophical Papers*. Trans. Alphonso Lingis. Boston: Nijhoff, 1987.
- . *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. Trans. Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh: Duquense University Press, 1962.
- Levinson, Marjorie. *The Romantic Fragment Poem: A Critique of a Form*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986.
- Lew, Joseph W. "The Plague of Imperial Desire: Montesquieu, Gibbon, Brougham, and Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*. *Romanticism and Colonialism: Writing and Empire, 1780-1830*. Ed. Tim Fulford and Peter J. Kitson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 261-278
- Lingis, Alphonso. *The Community of Those Who Have Nothing In Common*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- Liu, Alan. *Wordsworth: The Sense of History*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989.
- Lomax, William. "Epic Reversal in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*: Romantic Irony and the Roots of Science Fiction." *Contours of the Fantastic: Selected Essays from the Eighth International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts*. New York: Greenwood, 1994.

- Louden, Robert B. *Kant's Impure Ethics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Luke, Hugh J. "The Last Man: Mary Shelley's Myth of the Solitary." *Prairie Schooner*. Lincoln, NE. 1966; 39: 316-327.
- Magner, Lois N. *A History of Medicine*. New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc., 1992.
- Magnuson, Paul. *Coleridge's Nightmare Poetry*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1974.
- Mahoney, Charles. "The Multēity of Coleridgean Apostasy." *Irony and Clerisy*. Ed. Deborah Elise White. College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 1999.
- Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Trans. W.D. Halls. New York: W.W.Norton, 1990.
- May, Claire B. "'Christabel' and Abjection: Coleridge's Narrative in Process / on Trial." *Studies in English Literature* 37 (1997): 699-721.
- McAfee, Noëlle. "Abject Strangers: Towards an Ethics of Respect." *Ethics, Politics, and Difference in Julia Kristeva's Writings*. Ed. Kelly Oliver. New York: Routledge Press. 116-134
- McCarthy, William and Elizabeth Kraft. *The Poems of Anna Letitia Barbauld*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1994.
- McDonagh, Josephine. "Barbauld's Domestic Economy," *Essays and Studies* 51 (1998): 62-77.
- McFarland, Thomas. *Romanticism and the Heritage of Rousseau*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- McGann, Jerome J. *The Romantic Ideology: a Critical Investigation*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982.
- McGavran, James Holt. "Glossing Over the Ancient Mariner: Perversion, Panic, and Collage-Texts." *Wordsworth Circle* 26.3 (Summer 1995): 162-64.
- McWhir, Anne. "Introduction." *The Last Man*. Ed. Anne McWhir. Peterborough, Ont. : Broadview Press, 1996. xiii-xxxvi
- . "Mary Shelley's Anti-Contagionism: *The Last Man* as 'Fatal Narrative.'" *Mosaic: a journal for the interdisciplinary study of literature* 35.2 (Jun 2002): 23-38.

- . "'Unconceiving Marble': Anatomy and Animation in *Frankenstein* and *The Last Man*." *Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley: Writing Lives*. Waterloo, ON : Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2001.
- Mead, George H. *Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957.
- Mellor, Anne K. *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters*. New York: Methuen, 1988.
- . "Response to 'The Last Man and the New History' (Greg Kucich)." *Romantic Circles Virtual Conference Series*: "Virtually Dead? Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*." 13 September 1997 <<http://www.rc.umd.edu/villa/vc97/mellor.html>>.
- Melville, Peter. "'Illumanism and Terrorism': Melancholia and Hypochondria in Kant's *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*." *The Dalhousie Review* 79.3 (Autumn 1999): 335-54.
- . "Kant's Dinner Party: *Anthropology* from a Foucauldian Point of View." *Mosaic: a journal for the interdisciplinary study of literature* 35.2 (June 2002): 92-109.
- Middleton, Victoria.. *Elektra in Exile: Women Writers and Political Fiction*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988.
- Miller, J. Hillis. "The Critic as Host." *Deconstruction & Criticism*. Ed. Harold Bloom, et al. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1994. 217-253
- . *The Ethics of Reading: Kant, de Man, Eliot, Trollope, James, and Benjamin*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.
- . "Paul de Man as Allergen." *Material Events: Paul de Man and the Afterlife of Theory*. Ed. Tom Cohen, et al. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001. 183-204
- Mileur, Jean-Pierre. *Vision and Reality: Coleridge's Art of Immanence*. California: University of California Press, 1982.
- Milnes, Tim. "Eclipsing Art: Method and Metaphysics in Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60.1 (January 1999): 125-47.
- Modiano, Raimondo. "Coleridge and Wordsworth: The Ethics of Gift Exchange and Literary Ownership." *Wordsworth Circle* 20.2 (Spring, 1989): 113-120.

- Moeller, Bjoern. "Book Reviews." *NOD & Conversion, International Research Newsletter*, no. 45. August 1998 <<http://www.comw.org/nod/>>.
- Nikolchina, Miglena. "Born From the Head: Reading Wolf Via Kristeva." *Diacritics* 22 (Summer-Fall, 1991), 30-42.
- Nussbaum, Martha. "Kant and Cosmopolitanism." *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal*. Ed. James Bohman and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann. Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997. 25-37
- O'Dea, Gregory. "Prophetic History and Textuality in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*." *Papers on Language and Literature*. Edwardsville, IL. 1992 Summer; 28(3): 283-304.
- Ogletree, Thomas. *Hospitality to the Stranger: Dimensions of Moral Understanding*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.
- Owen, W.J.B. "Crossing the Alps Again." *The Wordsworth Circle* 25 (1994): 100-107.
- Ower, John B. "Crantz, Martens and the 'Slimy Things' in 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.'" *Neophilologus* 85.3 (July 2001): 477-84.
- Oxford University Press. *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary: Complete Text Reproduced Micrographically*. Vols. 1 & 2. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Palacio, J. de. "Mary Shelley and the *Last Man*." *Revue de littérature comparée* 42 (1968): 37-49.
- Paley, Morton D. *Coleridge's Later Poetry*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
- . "The Last Man: Apocalypse Without Millennium." *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. 107-123
- Pekacz, Jolanta T. *Conservative Tradition in Pre-Revolutionary France: Parisian Salon Women*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1999.
- Perkins, David. "Compassion for Animals and Radical Politics: Coleridge's 'To a Young Ass.'" *English Literary History* 65.4 (Winter, 1998): 929-44.
- Plug, Jan. "The Rhetoric of Secrecy: Figures of the Self in 'Frost at Midnight.'" *Coleridge's Visionary Languages: Essays in Honour of J. B. Beer*. Ed. Tim Fulford and Morton D. Paley. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993. 27-40

- Rajan, Tilottama. "Autonarration and Genotext in Mary Hays' *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*." *Studies in Romanticism* 32.2 (1993): 149-76.
- . *Dark Interpreter: The Discourse of Romanticism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980.
- . "From Restricted to General Economy: A Kantianism Without Reserve." *Romantic Circles Conference Archive 1990 - 1999*. 16 November 1996
<<http://www.rc.umd.edu/features/conferences/archive/nassr96/rajan.html>>.
- . *The Supplement of Reading: Figures of Understanding in Romantic Theory and Practice*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Redfield, Marc. "De Man, Schiller, and the Politics of Reception." *diacritics* 20.3 (1990): 50-70.
- . "Imagi-Nation: The Imagined Community and the Aesthetics of Mourning." *diacritics* 29.4 (1999): 58-83.
- Reece, Steve. *The Stranger's Welcome: Oral Theory and the Aesthetics of the Homeric Hospitality Scene*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1993.
- Reiman, Donald H. "Coleridge and the Art of Equivocation." *Studies in Romanticism* 25.3 (Fall, 1983): 325-350.
- Reiss, Hans. "Introduction." *Kant's Political Writings*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1971. 1-40
- Richardson, Alan. "The Last Man and the Plague of Empire." *Romantic Circles Virtual Conference Series*: "Virtually Dead? Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*." 13 September 1997 <<http://www.rc.umd.edu/villa/vc97/richardson.html>>.
- Rosello, Mireille. *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Stranger*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.
- Rosenberg, Aubrey. "Rousseau's *Levite d'Ephraïm* and the Golden Age." *Australian Journal of French Studies* 15 (1978) 163-72.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. Trans. J.M. Cohen. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.
- . *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*. [*Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inégalité*] (1755) Trans. Franklin Philip. Ed. Patrick Coleman. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

- . *Emile; or, On Education* [*Émile; ou de l'Éducation*] (1762). Trans. Alan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1979.
- . *Julie, or, The new Heloise: letters of two lovers who live in a small town at the foot of the Alps*. Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 1712-1778. Vol. 6. (1761). Hanover : Dartmouth College / University Press of New England, 1997.
- . *Lettre à d'Alembert* (1758). *Politics and the Arts: Letter to M. d'Alembert on the Theatre*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1968.
- . *Oeuvres Complètes*. Pléiade Edition. Paris: Gallimard, 1959.
- . "The Social Contract." [*Du Contrat social*] (1762). *Rousseau's Political Writings: New Translations, Interpretive Notes, Backgrounds, Commentaries*. Ed. Alan Ritter and Julia Conaway Bondanella. New York: Norton, 1988.
- Ruf, Frederick J. "Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*: Extravagantly Mixed Genres and the Construction of a 'Harmonized Chaos.'" *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 75.4 (Winter 1992): 537-53.
- Rzepka, Charles J. "Re-collecting Spontaneous Overflows: Romantic Passions, the Sublime, and Mesmerism." *Romantic Circles Praxis Series: "Romantic Passions."* Ed. Elizabeth Fay. April 1999 <<http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/passions/rzepka/rzp.html>>.
- Saunders, Julia. "'The Mouse's Petition: Anna Laetitia Barbauld and the Scientific Revolution.'" *The Review of English Studies*, New Series 53, no. 212 (2002): 500-516
- Schapiro, Barbara A. *The Romantic Mother: Narcissistic Patterns in Romantic Poetry*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983.
- Schneider, Elisabeth. *Coleridge, Opium, and Kubla Khan*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.
- Shell, Susan Meld. "Cannibals All: The Grave Wit of Kant's Perpetual Peace." *Violence, Identity, and Self-Determination*. Ed. Hent de Vries and Samuel Weber. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997. 150-161
- . *The Embodiment of Reason: Kant on Spirit, Generation, and Community*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

- Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus*. Ed. M. K. Joseph. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- . *The Last Man*. Ed. Anne McWhir. Peterborough, Ont. : Broadview Press, 1996.
- Snyder, Robert Lance. "Apocalypse and Indeterminacy in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*." *Studies in Romanticism* 17 (1978): 435-52.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Starobinski, Jean. *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Transparency and Obstruction*. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
- St. Clair, William. *The Godwins and the Shelleys: The Biography of a Family*. London: Faber and Faber, 1989.
- Stelzig, Eugene L. *The Romantic Subject in Autobiography: Rousseau and Goethe*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000.
- Sterrenburg, Lee. "The Last Man: Anatomy of Failed Revolutions." *Nineteenth Century Fiction* 33 (1978): 324-47.
- Still, Judith. "Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Heloise*: Passion, Reserve, and the Gift." *The Modern Language Review* 91.1 (1996): 40-52.
- . "Rousseau's *Levite d'Ephraïm*: The Imposition of Meaning (on Women)." *French Studies: A Quarterly Review* 43.1 (1989): 12-30.
- Strong, Tracy B. *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Politics of the Ordinary*. London: Sage Publications, 1994.
- Sullivan, Roger J. *Immanuel Kant's Moral Theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Swann, Karen. "'Christabel': The Wandering Mother and the Enigma of Form." *Romanticism a Critical Reader*. Ed. Duncan Wu. Cambridge: Blackwell, 1995. 151-72
- Thomas, Sophie. "The Ends of the Fragment, the Problem of the Preface: Proliferation and Finality in *The Last Man*." *Mary Shelley's Fictions: From Frankenstein to Falkner*. New York, NY: St. Martin's, 2000.

- Turner, William. "Mrs. Barbauld." *Newcastle Magazine*, N.S., 4 (1825): 182-86, 229-32.
- Ungar, Steven and Tom Conley. *Identity Papers: Contested Nationhood in Twentieth-Century France*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
- Van de Pitte, Frederick P. *Kant as Philosophical Anthropologist*. Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971.
- Vinh, Jim. "The Economics of Hospitality: Circulation, Exchange, Debt, Other Transactions, and Transactions with the Other." *Foreign Body*. vol. 6 (1996) <<http://www.hydra.umn.edu/fobo/jim.html>>.
- Webb, Samantha. "Reading the End of the World: *The Last Man*, History, and the Agency of Romantic Authorship." *Mary Shelley in Her Times*. Ed. Betty T. Bennett and Stuart Curran. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. 119-133
- Weissman, Stephen M. *His Brother's Keeper: A Psychobiography of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Connecticut: International Universities Press, Inc., 1989.
- Wendling, Ronald C. *Coleridge's Progress to Christianity: Experience and Authority in Religious Faith*. Mississauga: Associated University Presses, 1995.
- Wheeler, Katherine M. *The Creative Mind in Coleridge's Poetry*. London: Heinemann, 1981.
- . "Disruption and Displacement in Coleridge's 'Christabel.'" *Wordsworth Circle* 20.2 (Spring, 1989): 85-90.
- Williams, Huntington. *Rousseau and Romantic Autobiography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Wordsworth, William. *The Prelude*. Ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, Stephen Gill. New York: Norton, 1979.
- Wright, Julia. "'Little England': Anxieties of Space in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*." *Mary Shelley's Fictions: From Frankenstein to Falkner*. New York, NY: St. Martin's, 2000.
- Youngquist, Paul. "De Quincey's Crazy Body." *PMLA* 114 (May 1999): 346-358.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London: Verso, 1989.

---. "Welcome to the Desert of the Real." *re-constructions: reflections on humanity and media after tragedy*. 9 September 2001. <<http://web.mit.edu/cms/reconstructions/interpretations/desertreal.html>>.

---. *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*. New York: Verso Books, 2002.