

STRANGERS AT THE GATE: HOSPITALITY IN A TIME OF TERROR

by

Lindsay Anne Balfour

B.A., The University of British Columbia, 2009

M.A., The University of British Columbia, 2011

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Abstract

My dissertation offers a reading of hospitality that suggests the encounter with strangers is at the core of cultural production and culture itself in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. My argument for the necessity of hospitality after 9/11 holds in tension the notion of a Law of hospitality – a welcome to whoever or whatever will arrive, however unexpected and however violently – and an attentiveness to a discourse of unconditional welcome that is challenged and even made unbearable by the particular conditions of social and cultural life in a time of terror. I have selected works of cultural memory, film, art and literature that show the breadth of hospitality's influence across a variety of cultural forms but that offer a depth of insight, historical specificity, and theoretical intensity that only a product created in the aftermath of 9/11 allows. The National September 11 Memorial and Museum in New York City is, I argue, best understood as an institution defined by the question of hospitality, particularly as hospitality is engaged or disavowed through an experience with loss. Moreover, I consider how hospitality might function in consideration of the violence perpetuated against bodies marked by discourses of race, gender, and sexuality, as is the case in the 2011 film, *Zero Dark Thirty* and separately explore how alternative modes of hospitality are enabled by the fluid and dynamic space of the street and the urban art found there. Examining Don DeLillo's 2007 novel *Falling Man*, I argue for a sustained engagement with hospitality through the figure of organic shrapnel, a metaphor that suggests the possibility of being literally and figuratively embedded by another. The purpose of this project is not to furnish an ideal practice or program of hospitality; rather, it is to point out the diverse and even devastating ways that hospitality appears in ways that remind us that, if hospitality as we understand it is failing, it matters more than ever how we deploy it.

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Dedication

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Chapter 1 Introduction: Hospitality in a Time of Terror

In December 1999, on the fringes of Central Park in Manhattan, names were etched into stone at each of the park's twenty entrances, names that were chosen in 1862, but never used beyond the old and yellowed maps of the park. The original architects of the park, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, resisted the idea of gates entirely. Olmsted argued that "an iron railing always means thieves outside or bedlam inside," while Vaux imagined "how fine it would be to have no gates" (qtd. in Chace). The names given to the gates reflect those who would have used the park as a respite from hectic metropolitan life in the late 19th century; they are as charming as one might expect and speak to New York's history of innovation and industry – Children's Gate, Miner's Gate, Mariner's Gate, and Scholar's Gate, to name a few. One of the most prominent gates is the large, wrought iron entrance to Central Park's Conservatory garden. Located at 106th Street and 5th Avenue, Vanderbilt Gate was originally constructed in France for the home of Cornelius Vanderbilt II ("Vanderbilt") – whose mansion at 5th Avenue and 58th Street is the current home of the upscale Bergdorf Goodman department store on the Upper East Side. Yet, although Vanderbilt gate is striking in stature and design, there is another entrance to Central Park that I wish to draw attention to. Directly through the park, also on 106th Street but on the Upper West Side, is a gate with far less notoriety and scale: Stranger's Gate. It is a gate that is compelling in name, design, and location. For instance, it directly faces another historic architectural landmark – a castle like structure that was originally built and dedicated to cancer treatment (regarded at the time as a contagious disease), that eventually became a symbol of "Manhattan decline" due to its reputation as a "death trap" and a haven for addicts and the homeless (Beger). While the structure – known as "455 Central Park West" – was eventually refurbished in late 2002, it has never shaken its status as one of

Manhattan's most haunted buildings where ghosts still seem to linger in the gothic style architecture (Berger). Directly across the street from this castle-like structure – that more readily signifies a haunted house than a hospital, and carries a history of sheltering the downtrodden, the rejected, and the infirm – the facing “Stranger’s Gate” entrance to Central Park is curiously named and its proximity to 455 Central Park West suggests that while it is a gate for all strangers, some enter under stranger conditions than others. At first glance, Stranger’s Gate appears as most of the Central Park gates do; a low and unobtrusive wall, adjacent to – but not blocking – the entrance, with its name etched into sandstone. A stairway provides access to the park, as visitors ascend the steps that wind through trees and rock that obscure the park itself from the street. It is a gate that suggests strangeness not only by its name but by its structure and location as well, and it stands apart from the rest of Central Park’s entrances in its vague yet evocative homage to New York’s history of immigration and a fear of strangers; moreover, it positions ghosts, outsiders, and the infirm as central to Manhattan’s history and identity. All who enter here, the gate seems to suggest, are strangers yet, at the same time, the use of possessive naming offers the usually disposed stranger a home among the miners, scholars and mariners who give the other gates their names. Stranger’s Gate may, at first, seem like a bastion of *inhospitality*, as it seems to exclude those who may already consider New York and Central Park their home. It ignores residency and welcomes residents only as strangers. Yet, at the same time – and for reasons that will soon become clear – it is precisely *because* the gate welcomes strangers (and welcomes them only as strangers) that it becomes such a powerful figure for hospitality – a hospitality that cannot exist without the stranger.

Stranger’s Gate speaks to a number of questions, concerns, and problems that are deeply embedded in what I term a post-9/11 cultural archive. As a physical gate, it conjures

a multitude of images and interpretations: a space of admission and exchange; the impossibility of entry for certain people; the designation of strangeness as distinct from other, more familiar, categories of naming and recognition; the political realities of immigration and tourism in a city that both compels and repels foreigners; the ways in which a gate signifies something particular and even foreboding in an otherwise natural setting; the physical and temporal passing through on one's way to, or back from, elsewhere; and the delimiting of private space from public, and individual from community. The gate also signifies both a spatial and temporal cordoning off, passing through or framing; it both contains and exposes. It is a barrier but one potentially overcome by simply passing around, over or, in this particular case, walking straight past. Theoretically, the gate offers the image and impasse of a perpetual threshold, at once cultural, temporal, institutional and methodological. Ultimately, however, Stranger's Gate speaks to a deep preoccupation with a philosophy of hospitality and living with others. It is a preoccupation that seems more relevant than ever – its aporias greater and, as I will explore, its contradictions all the more devastating.

I want to suggest that the encounter with strangers or strangeness is at the core of cultural production and, indeed, culture itself in the aftermath of terrorist attack and in an era that is often conceptualized as “after 9/11”. The term – “after 9/11” – might seem to suggest a specific temporal and thematic gateway; however, the effects of 9/11 reach back *before* September 11, 2001, and have also prompted cultural responses that may not immediately appear to have anything to do with the event at all. “After 9/11,” then, often seems to suggest a general era in which the world – or, at the very least, the dominant, American conception of the world – changed, rather than a specific historical period. The task of containing 9/11 within temporal, aesthetic, or thematic frameworks is nearly

impossible as the event itself has both prompted entirely new ways of understanding the world and living with others, as well as re-ignited older conversations surrounding immigration, the treatment of prisoners, the decline of American hegemony and the ethics of producing art after atrocity. The sheer volume of cultural texts that gesture in even the smallest ways to 9/11 – and in ways as simple and brief as the ever-ubiquitous New York skyline establishing shot that has dominated television and movies since the Twin Towers were built and continues to do so in their absence – raise a question of the archive: is “post-9/11” simply a placeholder for every cultural artifact produced since September 11, 2001? Conversely, can there be a cultural product that represents terrorism, war, New York City, George Bush, Iraq, Afghanistan, and an infinite number of related subjects, without being subsumed by the post-9/11 label? Rather than address the question of what, or even when, “post-9/11” culture *is*, I am interested in the ways in which the archive, however vast and indefinable, reignites a different debate – the debate over hospitality and living with others in a time of terror. In other words, what does the post-9/11 cultural archive suggest about the ways we engage or disengage in the lives of others, and how might these texts and artifacts bring us closer to an understanding of both the possibilities and dangers of hospitality now?

Looking at the aspects of culture produced in response to 9/11 and the “gates” to strangeness within its texts allows me to think the question of hospitality again, and think it differently when tethered to a particular cultural moment and *momentum* – the implications of which reach back across history and forward into an undeterminable future. While attending to the work of hospitality outside the distinct yet indefinable temporal frame of “post-9/11” cultural production, this project interrogates the possibilities and limits of hospitality *now* – in an era of racial profiling, terror alert and immigration reform. How,

for example, are the tensions between host and guest, selves and others, and conditional and unconditional structures of hospitality exacerbated and destabilized by the complex social bonds formed and severed by an event like 9/11? This question, among many others, is posed to a number of cultural texts over the course of this study; yet, while the culture produced in response to 9/11 necessitates crucial new questions and interrogations of a philosophy of welcome, hospitality has – as I will show – *never* been a stable, uncontested, or purely altruistic figure. What hospitality *is* is a intricate structure of ethics, violence, promise, threat, and impossibility that has been worked through, tested, and struggled over by thinkers such as Immanuel Kant, Emile Beneviste, Emmanuel Levinas, and, later, Jacques Derrida and Richard Kearney, among others, all of whom provide patient and thorough articulations of hospitality’s complexity and to whom this study is greatly indebted.

1.1 Hospitality’s Enduring Legacies

We think we know what hospitality is – we refer to it using common language and we can recognize it by ubiquitous rituals of welcome and invitation, sheltering and protection, asylum and immigration. We also know what it is not – evidenced by the denial of refuge to asylum seekers and by the mistreatment of immigrants and guests around the globe. We also recognize its figures – doors and thresholds, entrances, gates, and stoops. These figures, we can “comprehend” because, in Derrida’s words:

[T]hey belong to the current lexicon or the common semantics of hospitality, of all precomprehension of what “hospitality” is and means, namely, to “welcome,” “accept,” “invite,” “receive,” “bid” someone welcome “to one’s home,” where, in one’s own home, one is master of the household, master of the city, or master of

the nation, the language, or the state, places from which one bids the other welcome (but what is a “welcome”?) and grants him a kind of right of asylum by authorizing him to cross a threshold that would be a threshold...a threshold that is determinable because it is self-identical and indivisible, a threshold the line of which can be traced. (“Hostipitality [sic]” 6)

As Derrida infers, we have a shared vocabulary and sense of the laws of hospitality as they unfold in the political and juridical sphere, and even in our visual imagination. The rhetoric of invitation and reception, the gifting of food and drink, and the opening of doors to one’s home or nation – these are the images of hospitality enshrined predominantly in a rhetoric of etiquette and entertainment. Even, however, as these rituals are bound in relations of exchange, reciprocity, and (often conspicuous) consumption, surely they still provide a framework by which we can identify ethical relations between hosts and guests. Why then does Derrida insist (emphatically and at length) “we do not know what hospitality is” (“Hostipitality” 7). Could it be he is referencing an event of hospitality that we have yet to (and may not ever) see? Or, are the meanings of hospitality across time and cultural locations too diffuse to be of any stable and prescriptive philosophical or ethical use? In order to address these questions, it is crucial to return to hospitality’s conceptual, historical, and etymological origins, not only to fully explore the ways in which the relations between hosts and guests, strangers and selves, matter more than ever in the context of contemporary political cosmopolitanism, but also to consider hospitality’s future as well. Indeed, hospitality is ubiquitous but also singularly historical, and there is something in *this* moment – an era of both terror and promise – that attends to global universality *and* temporal and spatial specificity while retaining hospitality’s internal complexities that cannot (and must not) be diminished.

1.1.1 Hosts, Guests and Hostiles: An Etymology of Welcome

One need not look too far to discover why hospitality is such a contested, unstable, and even contradictory concept – it is found in the word itself. The most conventional philosophical¹ understandings of the term are likely aligned with the definition provided by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, in which hospitality - *hospitalité* in French and, in Latin, *hospitālītās* – is described as “the act or practice of being hospitable; the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers, with liberality and goodwill” (“Hospitality”). “Hospitality” as it is used in this sense, however, glosses over a series of complexities that must be accounted for, and, in what follows, I will be testing a theory of hospitality over a series of unsteady cultural topographies. The word *xenia*, of course, in Greek – as well as its Latin counterpart, *hospitium* – refers to the rituals of hospitality and is translated as “guest friendship” (“Friendship, Ritualized”). Significantly, such friendships were not configured around common languages, familial affinities and the use of shared space or property. Rather, the Homeric epics, upon which this lexicography is based, show us that *xenos* is most often characterized as a “friend from abroad” (“Friendship, Ritualized”) and is evident in both classical philosophy and literature. Hospitality itself is rooted in the Latin, *hospes*, which the linguist Emile Beneviste divides into *hostis* and *potis*. *Potis* represents “the power exercised by the master of house” while *hostis* “means the stranger who has equal rights *before* it means ‘enemy’” (Still, *Enlightenment* 5). Curiously, *hostis* in

¹ There are, of course, even more conventional and popular understandings of hospitality made more ubiquitous by the rapid globalization and expansion of travel, tourism and their associated industries of commercial airlines, hotels, and retail and culinary services. While this study is not about the hospitality industry, that is not to say that the provision of safe passage, shelter, and food are not crucial ports through which a philosophical or ethical hospitality is alternately lived and disavowed. Conrad Lashley and Alison J. Morrison’s edited collection, *In Search of Hospitality: Theoretical Perspectives and Debates* is a comprehensive intersection of both commercial and philosophical expressions of hospitality, as covers everything from ethical and anthropological theory to hospitality management in the tourism sector (Boston: Butterworth Henemann, 2000).

Latin finds its equivalent *gasts* in pre-Germanic Gothic. The meaning of *gasts*, however, is ‘guest’, whereas the Latin *hostis* translates as ‘enemy’. According to Benevise, “to explain the connexion between ‘guest’ and ‘enemy’ it is usually supposed that both derived their meaning from ‘stranger’” (75). The seeming opposition of language in the above examples demonstrates what is, for David Simpson, an interpretation of the uncanny – “what is *unheimlich* is also, at the same time, *heimlich*” (*Romanticism* 55). Simpson also cites Derrida’s interest in the translations of *xenos* (Greek) and *hôte* (French) which designate “either host or guest or both at once, so that those who appear to differ – one at home and the other coming to the house and requesting hospitality – are bound together etymologically as codependent and perhaps even interchangeable: every host is a guest in the making, every stranger is familiar” (Simpson, *Romanticism* 55). Derrida raises the challenges of thinking through a word that seems to cancel its own purpose. As he notes, the word, “hospitality, has a “troubled and troubling origin, a word which carries its own contradiction incorporated into it, a Latin word which allows itself to be parasitized by its opposite, “hostility,” the undesirable guest [*hôte*] which it harbors as the self-contradiction in its own body” (Derrida, “Hostipitality” 3). Indeed, the corporeal resonance with which Derrida attends to hospitality’s internal contradictions will be important when it comes to interrogating the ways in which contemporary culture raises some of the most pressing questions about living with others, not in the larger social and political area, but in the intimate context of the body. Moreover, the etymological complexity of hospitality is crucial in unpacking the ways in which it engages with the figure of the stranger, particularly as the *question* of the stranger, as Kearney and Semonovitch suggest, always involves “a wager between hospitality and hostility” (5) and is – along with the definitions of the foreigner, self, other, alien, guest, and host – always changing and evading

confinement.

1.1.2 A Brief History

Returning to Stranger's Gate and its enduring insistence on discourses of arrival and welcome, what the original naming of Central Park's gates in 1862 – and their etching into stone in 1999 – should tell us, is that the figure of the stranger has neither subsided nor suddenly appeared. Hospitality, likewise, is a similarly resilient concept. According to Judith Still, “our conviction of [hospitality's] *universality* is indeed critical to our understanding of its historical structure: hospitality is traditionally defined as a universal (even *the* universal) human virtue” (“Figures” 194). Louis Chevalier de Jaucourt describes various expressions of hospitality practiced by a number of cultures including Abrahamic, Jewish, Greek, Roman, Persian, and Middle Eastern (“Hospitalité”). Universality, in this sense, need not suggest equivalency – a rendering of all figures, eras and cultures of hospitality as similar – rather, what Still points to is the breadth and durability of a concept whose roots can be philosophically traced back as far as Ancient Greece², from where we get our modern day concept of xenophobia. Both *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are heavily invested in figures of hospitality, in both conditional and more absolute forms. Travel and welcoming strangers into the home are common themes in Homer's work, as are moments of violence and hostage-taking, hosts abusing their position, hostiles posing as guests, departures and homecomings, and doorways and thresholds. The notion of hospitality is raised almost immediately in *The Odyssey* when, in Book I, the goddess Athene arrives in

² Louis Chevalier de Jaucourt, in his entry on “Hospitalité” for Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, traces this history of hospitality back further still, to the Abraham of Genesis, who “practiced noble beneficence towards foreigners” (“Hospitalité”). See also Genesis 18.

Ithaca where Telemachus “thought it blame in his heart that a stranger should stand long at the gates” and so speaks “[h]ail, stranger, with us thou shalt be kindly entreated, and thereafter, when thou hast tasted meat, thou shalt tell us that whereof thou hast need” (Homer 4-5). This scene is described by Steve Reece as a *theoxeny* – a case of a god appearing as a stranger who “comes to earth to test the hospitality of mortals” (10).

Elements of hospitality are present in Christian tradition as well – and its practice could be thought of as involuntary and unwilled as it is often espoused as a command, not unlike the popular directive to love one’s neighbor. According to Father Pierre-Francois De Béthune, Prior of the Monastery of Clerlande, who takes the notion of the stranger into the realm of the divine, “[t]he stranger and the guest have a right to Sanctuary and are considered directly connected to God, who is present in them” (1). The Bible, in particular, issues a number of commands with regard to hospitality, from the offering of food and shelter to guests in the Old Testament³ to the riskier forms of hospitality espoused by the New Testament that focus on welcoming angels, strangers, and enemies.⁴ Prayer and salvation are infused with the language of hospitality; the act of receiving Christ or inviting God to intervene, protect, admonish or encourage and the notion of a divine Other is one that has proved its durability in more contemporary philosophy as well, particularly in the work of Emmanuel Levinas, for whom “the practice of hospitality necessitates an embrace of a fraternalistic, monotheistic and messianic political vision” (Gauthier 160). Yet hospitality to the divine Other is complicated and, as a name through which “we are driven to extreme” and a “force that interrupts,” a name that “solicits us and visits itself upon us, like

³ See, for example, 2 Kings 4:8, Judges 19:20, and Job 31:32.

⁴ Hebrews 13:2, Romans 12:20, 1 Timothy 5:10 are notable examples.

an uninvited stranger knocking on our door,” the name of God is, for John Caputo “trouble” (83-84). Leaving aside Western Classical history, the expression of hospitality can also be traced through cultures of the Middle East. Judith Still works through this history using examples of both a Persian hospitality evolving out of the Abrahamic tradition that not only covers European travellers received as guests in the 18th century Persian empire but also, reciprocally, includes examples of Europeans serving Persian guests – relations that were, to be sure, characterized by a spectrum of “good” (appreciative and reciprocal) and “bad” (Orientalist and demanding) guests and hosts (*Enlightenment* 138-145). Still also details the experience of hospitality in the Ottoman Empire, particularly the space of the harem, which I will address at length in Chapter Three. Hospitality in Turkey is often represented by “either simple nomadic and rural practices or luxurious entertainment,” alternating figures that Still refers to as “bipolar” (“Figures” 197). Still also draws further attention to the example of the nomadic caravanserai – a roadside inn meant to welcome [all] travellers in the midst of a journey “with little regard for rank or wealth” (“Figures” 197). The caravanserai is an etymological reference to both notions of “travellers” and “returners” (Still, “Figures” 198) that operates outside in a nomadic capacity but one never far from an imaginative homeland, and it is a particularly useful illustration for thinking about what I am trying to trace here – that is, the historical, etymological, and philosophical *complexity* of hospitality.

1.2 Hospitality Since the Enlightenment: Thinking with Kant

Contemporary western thinking about hospitality can be traced back to Immanuel Kant and his influential Third Definitive Article in *Toward Perpetual Peace* (1795). For Kant, hospitality is a question of right and not of philanthropy. Rights, however, are never

unlimited nor are they absolute. Surely, hospitality is universal and “means the right of an alien not to be treated as an enemy upon his arrival in another’s country” (Kant 15).

However, there is somewhat of a paradox in Kant’s original formulation, for his hospitality is one premised on “behave[ing] peaceably” (Kant 15) and, thus, Kant’s cosmopolitan right is limited to the visitor who does not yet become a guest – it is a right to temporary visitation but only a right to *request* permanent residence (itself an assumption that all guests can *ask* for welcome or asylum, in so far as asking assumes a particularly agency and power of voice that not all guests have upon arrival, if ever). The earth is open to travel and exploration, as Kant sees it, and he frames his version of hospitable welcome in explicit contrast to those who exploit and displace those who already occupy the land through projects of colonial and economic expansion. In this way, the definition of hospitality in *Perpetual Peace* is very much tethered to the social and historical milieu in which Kant was writing. Indeed, as Still points out, it is important “to remember the context of a period of exploration in the New World where Europeans could be dangerous guests more than hosts” (*Enlightenment* 12). While usefully drawing us back to Kant’s frame of reference, Still also points us to an Enlightenment hospitality that is contingent rather than categorical. Significantly, Kant’s hospitality is *not* unconditional – if the would-be guest is not harmed by the denial of entry, the host is under no obligation to accept him. In Kant’s words, “if it can be done without destroying him, he can be turned away” (15). For Simpson, Kant’s conditions of universal hospitality pose significant limitations to the ethics of open and absolute welcome. It goes beyond the formalities of obligation and the meeting of basic needs. As Simpson claims, however, Kantian hospitality is certainly “not a guest-host relation, with its more or less elaborate rituals, but a species-right of the most pared down kind” yet it requires little more than “the foundation for a commercial relationship”

(*Romanticism* 38). Strangers, therefore, particularly from foreign lands, can expect to visit freely but cannot claim to be a guest protected under the laws of absolute welcome. According to Still, Kant's hospitality is "both too universal and not universal enough" (*Enlightenment* 2), yet, while his formulation of hospitality is certainly not unconditional, Kant also reveals some crucial complexities in the figure of hospitality, complexities which can be unsettling, violent and even sinister. Indeed, Kant's entire treatise begins with his musings on the Dutch Innkeeper's sign, one that contains the image of a graveyard at the same time as it advertises "Perpetual Peace" (Kant 1). If perpetual peace is, truly, the desired outcome of hospitable relations between states and individuals, then what Kant seems to suggest is that the goal of hospitality is not, in fact, lively relations but, rather, death. Kant seems to gesture, beyond this, towards two figures of hospitality that are otherwise absent in his largely political theory. The first, a sign on an inn which presumably collects money in exchange for welcome, suggests there can be no hospitality without reciprocity and commerce – yet pure hospitality fails once subsumed into rituals of exchange and value. However, it also reaches towards a conception of hospitality in which the purest and most unconditional welcome does not only inadvertently result in death; it *must* lead to death or it is not pure, nor perpetual. Indeed, if absolute hospitality is an openness to whoever or whatever arrives, then included in that is a hospitality even to the one who comes to kill. Hospitality, in fact, must be offered precisely on this basis – to the "worst" of what the guest may bring, including death – or there is no hospitality at all. Yet if Kant's suggestion of death hints at a possible *outcome* of hospitality, it contrasts the thinking of Emmanuel Levinas who, while attending to the possibility of violence in all hospitable relations, suggests that hospitality exists *prior* to politics and is either a condition or an outcome of peace.

1.2.1 Levinas: Hospitality and the Face

While Kant's formulation of hospitality is political and juridical, Emmanuel Levinas offers a more abstract conceptualization⁵ – one that both responds to Kantian ethics but also precipitates more contemporary philosophies of hospitality, particularly those espoused by Jacques Derrida and Richard Kearney. For Levinas, ethics are premised on an encounter with the face of the other and cannot be subsumed by logic. Before any peace process, before the refugee arrives seeking shelter, before an invitation is ever extended, there is the face. The face of the other, as conceptualized by Levinas, is crucial to his deployment of hospitality – a term he rarely uses but one that nonetheless dominates his work through his theorization of an ethics of welcome. The face is not a literal human face but, rather, the figure Levinas uses to signify absolute and irreducible alterity, and the figure through which the Other makes the demand “do not kill.” The face is crucial to Levinas' concept of a stranger whose arrival displaces the primacy of the self. As a rhetorical figure through which otherness is apprehended, the face “defies comprehension” and “shocks” but also “awakens and teaches” (Bloechl 235). In speaking of the arrival of the face of the other, Levinas is speaking about the event “in which the subject might truly welcome the Other without doing violence to her otherness” (Bloechl 236). Hospitality, in other words, is not an outcome of welcome or invitation, rather, is “pre-originary” (Still, *Enlightenment* 262). Any relation to the other, in other words – before determination of intent, origin, or assessment of guilt or innocence – demands an infinite responsibility that is also a phenomenological imperative. Indeed, as Bloechl explains, “being in the world is

⁵ It is also important to note that hospitality, for Levinas, is profoundly religious. As Jeffrey Bloechl notes, the Levinasian sense of “being in the world is not only being for the other person, but also – and most deeply – being toward God” (234).

always and already being in a relation with other people” (234). Moreover, an ethics of welcome is one that does not preserve or protect the stability of the self. Ethics, on the contrary, is a radical vulnerability to the other, “a being put into question by the alterity of the other. It is a pre-original not resting on oneself, the restlessness of someone persecuted...to the point of substitution for others and suffering both from the effect of persecution and from the persecuting itself” (Levinas, *Otherwise* 75). Again, this pre-original exposure establishes itself before the scene of encounter. As Simpson echoes, in his reading of Levinas, the self is “always and *a priori* in a state of substitution in and for the other, a hostage, an entity already including the stranger and bearing responsibility for all strangers, in a moment beyond and before all sentiments about alienation and reconciliation” (*Romanticism* 5). As Simpson infers, Levinasian ethics blur the distinction between host and guest, the strange and the familiar, and alter the limits of not only hospitality, but ontology itself, by positing as stranger who exists – and demands consideration – prior to the self, effectively framing the self as hostage rather than host.

Important, however, for Levinas, is that this other – this *a priori* stranger who precedes the phenomenological scene of address – retains his or her alterity. The face is that which is singularly other and must *remain* other in order for hospitable relations to be established. “The strangeness of the Other,” Levinas notes, is “irreducible to the I” (*Totality* 43). Ethics, then, is an “invitation to allow the Stranger to remain strange” (Kearney and Semonovitch 10). Such a conception of hospitality to the other complicates the Kantian notion of a universal right to hospitality that is extended, not *a priori*, but *a posteriori* – in response and as a condition of world citizenship and cosmopolitan justice. As theorized by Levinas, the face-to-face encounter is not the encounter with the neighbor or stately visitor with shared notions of language, culture, trade, and travel, but, rather, “my relation to any

other person, however alien, in all his or her inability to be known” (Miller 37). Indeed, it is precisely by way of this unknowable, unfamiliar and irreducible alterity that the other comes to demand ethics. In Levinas’ own words, “[t]he being that presents himself in the face comes from a dimension of height, a dimension of transcendence whereby he can present himself as a stranger without opposing me as obstacle or enemy...The Other who dominates me in his transcendence is thus the stranger, the widow, and the orphan, to whom I am obligated” (*Totality* 215). It is an obligation that remains firm even in the (literal) face of violence and the demand for hospitality issued by the face of the other presupposes the violence that other might bring. It suggests, to borrow from Derrida’s lengthy eulogy of Levinas, “that war, hostility, even murder, *still* presuppose and thus *always* manifest this original welcoming that is openness to the face” (Derrida, *Adieu* 90). It is this possibility of violence – this extension of ethics from self to other even in the face of the destruction of self – that defines a Levinasian ethics of welcome, a thesis that Still finds far “more frightening” than Kant’s (*Enlightenment* 262-263).

1.2.2 Derrida: The Impossibility of Hospitality (to Come)

As *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas* illustrates, Levinasian ethics – indeed, Levinasian *hospitality*, even though it is not framed as such – is highly influential for Derrida’s own work. What Levinas posits as an ethics of the face, or the epiphany of the face-to-face encounter, Derrida reads as a constant and deep preoccupation with hospitality. He argues in *Adieu* “although the word is neither frequently used nor emphasized within it, *Totality and Infinity* bequeaths to us an immense treatise *of hospitality*” (21). Here Derrida highlights not only the presence of the subject of hospitality in Levinas’ work but also its practice. *Totality and Infinity*, in other words is concerned with a notion of hospitality but

is, in itself, a hospitable act – a moment of hospitable thinking and risk. For Derrida, Levinas’ work “opens itself to the infinity of the other, an infinity that, as other, in some sense precedes it, the welcoming *of* the other will already be a response: the *yes to* the other will already be responding to the welcoming of the other, to the *yes of* the other” (*Adieu* 23). Levinas writes, then, with a “yes” to the other, a “yes” that is issued even before the writing begins. Like Levinas, Derrida positions the basis of hospitality at this scene of address, an utterance that precludes any context, naming, language, or condition.

Derrida’s own writings on hospitality are extensive – particularly his later work; indeed, hospitality, for Derrida, is indistinguishable from culture and even ethics itself:

Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic among others. Insofar as it has to do with the *ethos*, that is, the residence, one’s home, the familiar place of dwelling, inasmuch as it is a manner of being there, the manner in which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as our own or as foreigners, *ethics is hospitality*; ethics is so thoroughly coextensive with the experience of hospitality. (*On Cosmopolitanism* 16-17)

Hospitality is deeply connected to culture itself; its reach is definitive, if not always apparent and it is part of all social, cultural, and political life in one form or another. There is no culture or social relation devoid of the influence of hospitality or, in Derrida’s words, “*Toutes les éthiques de l’hospitalité ne sont pas les mêmes sans doute, mais il n’y a pas de culture ni de lien social dsans un principe d’hospitalité*” (qtd. in Dhombres). Perhaps Derrida’s most significant contribution to the philosophy of hospitality – the tensions of which this dissertation explores at length – is the distinction between unconditional hospitality, which is never possible, and a hospitality that can only ever arrive with conditions attached. He terms these the Law of hospitality and the laws (plural) of

hospitality, respectively. The relationship between the two, however, is not one of negation. Indeed, any measure of practical hospitality can only be offered because it is extended in the shadow of its idealized and impossible version. Even in the *denial* of hospitality to others “one sees a glimpse of an alternative absolute, an unconditional hospitality fended off by conditional hospitality” (Deutscher 69).

As an absolute and unconditional Law, hospitality is a *yes* to whoever or whatever arrives. In Derrida’s words: “Let us say *yes to who or what turns up*, before any determination, before any anticipation, before any *identification*, before an unexpected visitor, whether or not the new arrival is the citizen of another country, a human, animal, or divine creature, a living or dead thing, male or female” (*Of Hospitality* 77). Here, Derrida distinguishes himself from Kant by framing hospitality as an event that is more than a reciprocal relation of protection and commerce and one that can never be withheld or revoked. Derrida clarifies this assertion a number of times in *Of Hospitality* and elsewhere that “absolute hospitality requires that I open up my home and that I give not only give to the foreigner, but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I give place to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names” (*Of Hospitality* 25). Moreover, unlike Kant’s universal hospitality to guests, Derrida speaks here of the arrivant who is not an invader, colonizer or neighbor – who is not even a guest. This arrival “surprises the host – who is not yet a host or inviting power – enough to call into question, to the point of annihilating or rendering indeterminate, all the distinctive signs of a prior identity, beginning with the very border that delineated a legitimate home and assured lineage, names and language, nations, families and genealogies” (*Aporias* 34). This arrivant, then, disrupts both the identity and sovereignty of the would-be host in his own

home. Derrida clarifies elsewhere, “the master, the one who invites, the inviting host, who becomes the hostage—and who really always has been. And the guest, the invited hostage, becomes the one who invites the one who invites, the master of the host. The guest becomes the host’s host” (*Of Hospitality* 125). Ultimately, then, there is no hospitality without a surprise that interrupts and surpasses the identity of the host him or herself.

A number of figures of hospitality recur at length throughout Derrida’s late oeuvre – particularly figures of surprise and ambiguity. The arrival without warning, for one, is crucial in Derrida’s theorization of hospitality, and a visitation for which we cannot prepare is perhaps what most accurately differentiates a conditional hospitality from an unconditional one in which the implications or nature of the guest, along with the never-quite prepared host, inscribe a dynamic that exceeds anticipation and preparation. The visitor comes to be “where s/he was not expected” (Derrida, *Aporias* 33) and arrives “without any horizon of expectation” (Derrida, “Hostipitality” 17n). Derrida makes frequent mention of the aporias of hospitality, its internal contradictions and paradoxical incongruities. Not only does hospitality deconstruct itself when put into practice (Derrida, “Hostipitality” 5), it is internally inconsistent – that which it requires to make possible is the same thing that renders it impossible. As Derrida explains using the figure of the door, for there to be hospitality, “there must be a door. But if there is a door, there is no longer hospitality” (“Hostipitality” 14). For Derrida this is the difference – “the gap” – between a “hospitality of invitation and the hospitality of visitation”, the latter of which has yet to arrive in its absolute form and thus, “we do not know what hospitality is. Not yet” (“Hostipitality” 14; 6). Ultimately, however, it is this aporia that keeps the promise of a hospitality-to-come alive. Derrida refers to this as the double law of hospitality – the necessity of calculating risk “but without closing the door on the incalculable, that is, on the

future and the foreigner” (“Principle” 6). Much like Derrida’s work on mourning, forgiveness and the giving and receiving of gifts, hospitality is also configured as impossible. In other words, the other who arrives without invitation, without determination or identification, never actually arrives. As Penelope Deutscher explains, “the other is always to some extent understood by my horizon of expectation” (73). Kearney and Semonovitch elaborate further: “the face that appears is always the face of the Foreigner-for-me” (11), even when that stranger appears from within – a distinction that I will take up in depth in Chapter Five alongside Julia Kristeva’s notion of “strangers to ourselves.” Absolute hospitality is therefore impossible not only because practical ethics makes it so, but also because we are unable to encounter the stranger as radically other. Far from terminating any conversation on hospitality however, Derrida’s thinking invites us to imagine new ways of conceptualizing hospitable relations and to search for examples of hospitality in odd, unfamiliar and unexpected places. Cultural production – the films, literature, art, and public institutions created in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks – provides us with new ways of apprehending the complexities of thinking through the concept of hospitality that are not entirely unrelated but promisingly untethered from strictly political and/or philosophical understanding. Indeed, as Derrida himself apprehended the 9/11 attacks he increasingly attended to an absolute sense of hospitality as an impossibility but one that is always worth searching for.

1.2.3 Hospitality now

What Derrida’s reading of Kant and Levinas – as well as his own theorization and questioning of the possibility of an absolute hospitality (to come or not to come) – ultimately suggests is that hospitality is so thoroughly, ambiguously and paradoxically

enmeshed in a complicated politics of difference, and in the tension between a philosophically potent ideal and the realities of deploying practical ethics to real social, cultural and political phenomena. While not a gap in Derrida's thinking (indeed, he certainly acknowledges, even embraces these aporias), a number of theorists have addressed this lacuna in order to make sense of some of the more ethical and geopolitically pressing realities of our contemporary moment. One significant point of debate is Derrida's insistence, following Levinas, that any attempts to identify the other renders hospitality defunct. According to Richard Kearney, this notion that to "represent the alterity of the other is a betrayal" underestimates "the legitimate need for recognition and reciprocity and renders virtually impossible any attempt to develop a critical hermeneutics of narrative imagination and judgment" (*Strangers* 108). What is needed, Kearney suggests, is a way to distinguish those who require our hospitality from those who really do intend to do us harm – a strategy that balances immanence and transcendence and does not "let the foreign become too foreign or the familiar too familiar" (*Strangers* 11). It is difficult, in other words, to escape the practical realities of the world we live in, hence Kearney and Semonovitch ask, of Derrida in particular, "if deconstruction is good for thought, is it good for life?" (13). If hospitality uncovers something "good," it does so within an understanding that the idea of good – whether for life or thought – is itself an unstable and highly contested construct and, thus, returns us to the complex and often paradoxical attempt to put ideals into practice, all the while recognizing that such practices never fully guarantee a "good" result. For Sara Ahmed, hospitality is deconstructive – good for thought – but also "good for life." In her view, the Law of hospitality must be both absolute *and* particular. Ahmed argues "we need to recognize the infinite nature of responsibility, *but the finite and particular circumstances in which I am called on to respond to others*" (147).

Hospitality based on an ethics of welcoming the “stranger,” then, assumes that the stranger is, in fact, un-assimilable yet simultaneously “assimilates others into an economy of difference” (Ahmed 150-151). Thus, Ahmed claims we need analyses both of how this economy is established as well as how to offer hospitality *before* the stranger is assimilated into this exchange (151). Moreover, while Derrida seems to address this in his notion of the arrivant, who appears as a figure of unexpected and unidentified singularity, Ahmed suggests this is an ethics based on the forgetting of names that locate or identify the stranger – what is needed, she argues, is “a hospitality that remembers the encounters that are already implicated in such names...and how they affect the movement and arrival of others” (151). Still, however, distinguishes between absolute (and impossible) hospitality as an ideal and a hospitality that is expressed and experienced as a social, cultural and political structure. For Still, the need to differentiate between harmful and benign guests that both Kearney and Ahmed point to, is an attempt to apply the laws of hospitality – the practical expressions of hospitality as applied to possibilities within the political domain and social structures of belonging – to Derrida’s Law of hospitality which is “an impossible structure” (*Derrida* 10). Indeed, as Mark Westmoreland notes, a “new understanding of hospitality requires a rethinking of the laws of common, conditional hospitality in contrast with the law, or perhaps we should say ethics, of unconditional hospitality” (1), a point Gideon Baker seems to echo in his theorization of “cosmopolitanism as ethics,” in which “the ethics of hospitality” is “always and already a politics” (15). These theorizations of hospitality become even more significant when explored in the specific contexts that post-9/11 cultural production provides and prompt questions such as: What does it mean to encounter hospitality in the context of public memory and in which modes of memorialization are interrupted by undesired guests? How does hospitality rely on certain

representations of structures of intimacy that can be violent as often as they are affirming? What happens when hospitality is taken out of its most familiar metaphor – the home – and read in the context of art in dynamic and fluid urban space? Finally, what is at stake in imagining lives as irrevocably and inevitably embedded by (and in) other lives and in ways that challenge the ontology and intentionality of a stable self?

I point out all of these debates surrounding hospitality to, again, illustrate its universality without equivalence. It is a discussion that is certainly not new but has become increasingly important as the event of 9/11, its aftermath, and the seemingly perpetual war on terror have only intensified a global preoccupation with strangeness. This dissertation, then, reads hospitality in the context of the culture produced in response to 9/11 but does not do so on the shoulders of any one theorist. To be sure, my argument for the necessity of hospitality after 9/11 follows Derrida's claim that "hospitality is ethics," but I also draw on the complexities raised by others and hold in tension the notion of a Law of hospitality – a welcome to whoever or whatever will arrive, however unexpected and however violently – and an attentiveness to a discourse of unconditional welcome that is challenged and even made unbearable by the particular conditions of social and cultural life in a time of terror.

1.3 Methodology and Objects of Analysis

My dissertation offers an interdisciplinary exploration of the philosophy of hospitality in a time of terror. Its objects of analysis are the figures of hospitality that lie at the center of cultural production and often vary in the ways that they readily signify the event of 9/11 and its aftermath. Indeed, some of the texts I work through may well have been produced had the event itself not happened; nonetheless, they are important moments in shaping 9/11 and post-9/11 culture. I turn to these texts in order to examine the extent to

which they present us with figures emblematic of the potentials and pitfalls of hospitality. How, I wonder, do these texts engage with questions of otherness and the stranger and give those who encounter them an opportunity to reflect deeply on rituals of welcome, invitation, and openings to care and hospitality? Conversely, how does this particular and idealized set of ethics fail in the context of relations between strangers after 9/11 but, in that failure, reveal significant implications of hospitality itself?

I use the idea of hospitality, in the general sense that I have outlined in the preceding pages, as a complex figure that is promising, challenging, and can never simply be contained within a particular frame of thought or era. Moreover, the purpose of this project is not to perform an assessment of the degree to which the cultural texts in question succeed or fail to furnish an ideal practice or program of hospitality – to the extent that ethical relations can ever be prescribed; rather, it is to point out the diverse and even devastating ways that hospitality appears in the archive over and over again and in ways that remind us that if hospitality as we understand it is failing, it matters more than ever how we deploy it, even and especially if that deployment can only ever take shape as a set of laws that never fully amount to *the Law*. As Peggy Kamuf writes, “to think the unconditionality of such concepts is not at all to remove thought from the practical experiences we wish to call hospitality, gift, forgiveness, or justice. On the contrary, this thinking registers the very desire to go on calling to these names for that which remains impossible as present experience” (207). It is only because we have sight of what an unconditional hospitality might look like, however distant and seemingly impossible, that any practical expression of hospitality might take place; thus, we look elsewhere or awry to see how hospitality might be working unnoticed in places where we have only seen it fail such as in the more reactionary and retributive responses to 9/11. Absolute hospitality,

while still unrealized, remains “the condition for the possibility of hospitality—the hospitality that we have always known” (Westmoreland 3). Thus, my own use of “hospitality” refers to both the laws and the Law – though I do distinguish, at times between the conditional and unconditional – simply in order to acknowledge that one cannot exist without the other. Such reasoning follows Derrida’s claim that hospitality is “an art and a poetics, but an entire politics depends on it, an entire ethics is decided by it” (“Principle” 7). Indeed, hospitality is so thoroughly entangled in both ethics and politics, yet my aim is to hold these complexities in continual tension rather than resolve them. It is to see the cultural texts of 9/11 as deeply enmeshed in the politics and aesthetics of the event itself but as gesturing beyond those politics and aesthetics as well in order to ward off the impulse to see only the foreclosure on and withholding of conditional hospitality on the surface of these texts rather than the complex and provocative operations of absolute hospitality occurring below.

1.3.1 Strangers, Aliens and the Politics of Difference

To be sure, there are a number of related figures of both conditional and unconditional hospitality that this project is invested in: mourning, the arrival, naming and identification, the home, and the uncanny, among others. There are, however, two features of absolute hospitality that resurface over and over again in the cultural texts produced after 9/11 and they are given much attention in this dissertation. I want to emphasize both here as they address why hospitality matters (now and now more than ever) and, in particular, why thinking about hospitality has intensified after 9/11. The first of these is the increased preoccupation with strangers, guests and aliens that appears at length in both cultural texts and contemporary theories of hospitality. Still, for example, notes not once, but three times,

the significance of asylum seekers, immigration, xenophobia and globalization to contemporary interest in hospitality (“Figures” 194; *Derrida* 1; *Enlightenment* 8). Ahmed also takes up the question of the stranger at length in *Strange Encounters*, and argues that a hospitality to the alien might “allow us to become human” (2). The stranger, for Ahmed is alternately displaced (as a figure of abject difference) or fetishized (as in multiculturalism) and thus becomes a figure “that is circulated and exchanged in order to define the borders and boundaries of given communities” (150). Strangers serve to manage borders for Kearney as well – in particular the borders of the self. They remind the ego “that it is never wholly sovereign” (*Strangers* 1) and are represented in increasingly monstrous ways as part of the Manichean rhetoric that has developed after 9/11. The War on Terror, for Kearney, is a “war with *difference*,” that is reflected in the need to create monsters, others and aliens as “surrogates” to put a “face on phobia” (*Strangers* 113; 121). The language around strangers and others has become indispensable from the ways in which we now understand ourselves in the (Western) world and, as Simpson notes, “[t]he cluster of words describing those who are (or are made to seem) different from us (whoever ‘us’ is) – the foreigner, the alien, the strangers – has also been critical in the articulation of how we live life in the North Atlantic sector after 9/11” (*Romanticism* 2). Indeed, Baker suggests that contemporary questions about terror and immigration have forced “the ethics of hospitality” back “into a politics” (116). In the cultural works produced after 9/11, then, questions about the stranger are not only prominent; they are unavoidable, whether they address inhuman and dehumanized others, abject figures of gender and sexuality, enclaves of cultural difference, or the uncanny return of others long buried.

What this sustained preoccupation with the figure of the stranger after 9/11 reveals is that hospitality must continue to be tested and theorized in consideration of a politics of

difference that, for various reasons, deems some strangers *more strange* and differentially deserving of hospitable care and protection. Yet for Anne Dufourmantelle, it is precisely the stranger who engages our sense of ethics, not in spite of the uncertainty such figures bring, but precisely because of it. She elaborates: “Our anxiety grows out of these questions: What/who is the foreigner? What does he/she/it mean? Where do you come from; where are you going? What are your intentions? What is it you want from me? The foreigner, indeed, does not pose the question – he/she/it is the question – a question that begs my response and my responsibility” (Dufourmantelle 21). Indeed, so many of the questions raised by the texts explored here concern difference: How do these works engage with an absolute hospitality at the same time as they respond to and as lived and embodied social relations? What would it mean to recognize figures of difference as a moment of potential hospitality rather than a scene of fear and suspicion? And how can an ethically engaged but politically and culturally relevant hospitality operate in ways that respond to the irreducible alterity of the other without incorporating that alterity into a regime of familiarity, however practical?

1.3.2 Hospitality and Violence

The other figure of hospitality that this dissertation emphasizes at length is perhaps a more disturbing one. The 9/11 cultural archive is intimately concerned with notions of strangeness, to be sure, but within that seems to be an enduring fixation with figures of death; ghosts, torture, redaction, invisibility, illness, and suicide operate at length in this archive yet not in the ways that we might initially expect. Often over the course of this dissertation I will be looking at hospitality’s failure – and failures that, no doubt, lead to violence and even death – but these so-called failures also expose some of hospitality’s

most persistent engagements with an absolute and pure ethics of welcome. These moments are perhaps more devastating than hopeful, more implicating and unsettling, but they remind us what is at stake in pursuing an unconditional hospitality to the stranger.

Dufourmantelle clarifies these stakes: “Hospitality under compassion *and* violence – that is to say, hospitality under the violence of radical ethics, caused by radical (com)passion – is unconditional hospitality” (23, emphasis added). Here, Dufourmantelle recalls a crucial realization that is necessary on the part of the would-be host; namely, that hospitality will never, can never, be a promise of safety or freedom from harm. Hospitality may, in fact, be the very opposite. As Michael Naas reminds us, “there can be no law or formula, no categorical imperative, to ensure that hospitality does not cross into hostility” (10).

Moreover, in his study on *Romanticism and the Question of the Stranger*, Simpson suggests that “reckoning with the strangers ‘in theory’ very soon produces a sense that one cannot be either welcoming or rejecting without risking some degree of self-harm, and that a whole range of possibilities opens up between the extremes of unconditional hospitality (Derrida’s term) and absolute aversion” (9). Indeed, even when the hospitable encounter is initiated on the basis of goodwill and genuine care, even when all conditions seem to have been met, the specter of death lingers to test how pure these hospitable bonds really are. Even classical experiences of hospitality always hovered on the threat of violence. As Reece points out in his study of Homer, while the *Odyssey*’s homecoming scene is structured around figures emblematic of hospitality – a meat basket, a footstool for visitors to rest their feet – these become tools for destruction when they are weaponized and thrown at guests (11). What Reece points to here, is not the ways in which hospitality (in its pure sense) always seems untenable but, rather, that host and guest themselves are unstable categories and protection is not guaranteed for or from either party. Thus, in the readings

that follow, I will explore at length, the implications of a hospitality that slides so easily into violence only to conclude that (according to the Law) it must. This is not, finally, an endorsement of violence, but, rather, an acknowledgement of the myriad of ways in which hospitality calls us to be open to the possibility of harm and to recognize that such harm is not necessarily an immediate and irredeemable foreclosure of ethics in the sense that violence documents the pressing and real difficulties of any hospitality worthy of its name – difficulties that demand attentive and ongoing consideration.

1.4 Structure and Selection of Texts

Bearing in mind the relationship between a politics of difference, violence and death, and the complexities of an absolute hospitality, the 9/11 cultural archive is compelling for a number of reasons. First, the event of 9/11 (and the discourse surrounding it and the subsequent War on Terror) lends itself well to a discussion of encounters with strangers. The event functions as a kind of temporal and spatial gateway, marking out “here” from “there” but also before from after while the gate itself, swinging forward and backward, renders such distinctions porous. Second, these cultural texts are saturated by images of and references to, both literal and not, figures of hospitality whether it be gates, borders, doors, openings, permeabilities, invitations or closures. While hospitality has been explored in terms of its philosophical significance, this project presents it as an aspect of social and cultural life made more explicit and necessary by the context of 9/11 and its aftermath. In this archive, we are repeatedly confronted by the figures and failures of hospitality. Yet rather than make 9/11 the focus of my study, I look at the ways in which these texts reveal themselves to be artifacts intimately concerned with questions of hospitality rather than the event itself. There are a variety of existing studies on the range of

cultural responses to 9/11, none of which broach the subject of hospitality. Existing criticism on 9/11 culture takes two predominant forms representing both the depth and breadth of the archive: volumes dealing with a particular medium – television, for example – and volumes that address a number of mediums at once – often structured as an introductory and survey approach to the archive. Both the literary and popular culture analyses seem to suggest that the effectiveness of a cultural text after 9/11 is measured by its fidelity to history and its role in mediating individual or collective trauma.⁶ Using this as a general guiding principle, these studies often offer separate chapters based on the most established genres of post 9/11 culture (art, film, television, music) with some notable exceptions – in *September 11th and Popular Culture*, Sara Quay and Amy Damico offer a chapter on “Everyday Life” and Andrew Martin and Patrice Petro (*Rethinking Global Security: Media, Popular Culture, and the War on Terror*) include radio and even satellite imagery as aspects of 9/11 culture in need of scholarly reflection. These obvious and not-so-obvious objects of study reveal both the pervasiveness and productivity of 9/11 culture as well as the challenge of defining or containing the genre as a whole. Moreover, this literature illustrates the ways in which popular culture becomes a significant way of understanding and mediating recent history. Jeff Birkenstein, Anna Froula and Karen Randall (*Reframing 9/11: Film, Popular Culture and the ‘War on Terror’*) are both “encouraged and dismayed” by the fact that the important geopolitical issues arising from 9/11 are being discussed in popular culture venues and not by world leaders (2). Indeed, what this growing body of work reveals is that the cultural work produced in the wake of

⁶ This is particularly the case in the context of “post-9/11” fiction, a debate I will explore in more depth in Chapter Five, *Organic Shrapnel: Hospitality, Incorporation, and Infirmity in Don DeLillo’s Falling Man*.

9/11 should give us more than a survey of the diverse creative responses to the terrorist attacks: it might also be an opening to new conversations about crucial aspects of social and cultural life.

Likewise, hospitality is a concept that has yet to be fully applied to the 9/11 cultural archive but one that is ideally suited to unpacking the strange encounters that continually crop up in these cultural forms. It gives us a new lens through which to think the question of the stranger after 9/11 and the role of popular culture in mediating and, at times, exposing that relation – questions which, while directed towards cultural products, have ultimately ethico-political implications. As Kearney notes, “the ethic of hospitality replies that the stranger is precisely the one who reminds us – not as enemy but as host – that the self is never an autonomous identity but a guest graciously hostaged to its host” (“Beyond Conflict” 101). In mapping the significance of hospitality in the 9/11 archive then, I take up the work of Kant, Derrida, Levinas and Kearney, in particular, to utilize, question and ultimately extend their thinking into a more contemporary arena. Indeed, much of the influential theorizations of hospitality pre-date the event of 9/11 and, while they certainly address debates surrounding violence, terror, and strangers, they do not – indeed, cannot in many cases – address terror in all of its situated and culturally contextual complexity. There are also more recent theoretical criticisms that address a host of issues adjacent to hospitality in the post-9/11 milieu. Notable examples are: Judith Butler’s work on precarity and vulnerability, Simpson’s theorization of the “culture of commemoration,” Giorgio Agamben’s conceptualization of both bare life and the state of exception, and Marc Redfield’s exploration of the role of rhetoric in eclipsing and, at times, exacerbating the effects of trauma, virtuality, and a genealogical understanding of “terror.” All of these theories and theorists, as well as the cultural criticism on 9/11 texts are indispensable to my

study – they inform, contextualize, and challenge my argument without overshadowing the centrality of hospitality to this archive of post-9/11 cultural production. In other words, while well-studied in terms of representation and mediation, and in conjunction with a variety of other, crucial theoretical concerns, I argue that this archive prompts us, most significantly, to ask new questions about how we engage with others and strangers and claims hospitality as a imperative political concern as well as a social and ethical one in an era that remains a time of terror.

I am, therefore, particularly interested in texts that do not immediately, if ever, recall a moment in which hospitality prevails. I have selected works of cultural memory, film, art and literature that show the breadth of hospitality's influence across a variety of cultural forms but that offer a depth of insight, historical specificity, and theoretical intensity that only a product created in the aftermath of 9/11 allows. That is not to say that texts produced outside of this context do not concern matters of hospitality, nor does it suggest that the texts chosen here more readily signify the *event* of 9/11 than the countless other examples of popular, literary and artistic expression created in the wake of terrorist attack. The list here is not comprehensive nor does it attempt to “solve” the problem of hospitality after 9/11. Rather, it moves *towards* a theory of hospitality after 9/11 and suggests that in a milieu characterized by an intensified politics of difference surrounding known and unknown others after 9/11 as well as a influx of cultural texts from which we are increasingly deriving our understanding of terror and the event itself, it matters now more than ever how we think of hospitality, ethics, and living with others. In my reading of texts, then, I follow Simpson, who argues that

[t]hinking upon the stranger can thus produce an awareness of thought itself as a moving event, a process of adjustment or dialogue, and not a preservation of

boundaries and given definitions. When this movement stops there is violence, and then the discussion turns to the legitimacy of that same violence, that is, to states of exception and who decides them. (*Romanticism* 9)

Moving away from liberal discourses of multiculturalism and tolerance, as well as moral discourses of compassion and philanthropy, my intention is to work towards a theory of hospitality that is philosophical and ethical – a hospitality that is unwilled, unbidden and from which we cannot turn away – and one that recognizes the political and cultural stakes of an unconditional welcome that may fail or, perhaps terrifyingly, may succeed. Indeed, the possibility of hospitality and the possibility of violence are never far from each other, yet as Derrida claims, “this is necessary, this possible hospitality to the worst is necessary so that good hospitality can have a chance, the chance of letting the other come, the *yes* of the other no less than the *yes* to the other” (*Adieu* 35). It matters that we keep that possibility alive, particularly when we are living increasingly in a culture of fear rather than welcome. Where better to go looking, then, than in the places so often thought to foreclose hospitable relations?

In Chapter Two, I take up the recently opened National September 11 Memorial and Museum in New York City. I argue that the structures of commemoration (including Freedom Tower, the memorial pools and the museum itself) that fill the void left by the towers offer compelling texts through which to think the question of hospitality, particularly as hospitality is engaged or disavowed through an experience with loss. At the memorial site, hospitality traverses a number of strange concerns that make and unmake the borders between living and dead, presence and absence. The crypt-like caverns that house the bulk of the museum's displays and exhibitions host both acknowledged and unacknowledged artifacts – dust, remnant objects, selective histories and even human

remains – that raise crucial questions for the relationship between hospitality and memorialization; in particular, what are the “guests” that show up unannounced to insist that hospitality is central to thinking about the ways in which we mourn and memorialize known and unknown others? While these concerns seem abstract and distant from the visceral and physical realities of real human loss, they are vital components to an understanding of the ways in which 9/11 – and the notion of “terror” in general – have transformed both the meaning and the practice of hospitality.

Chapter Three offers a reading of the 2011 film, *Zero Dark Thirty*, directed by Kathryn Bigelow, and asks how hospitality might function in consideration of the violence perpetuated against bodies marked by discourses of race, gender, and sexuality. *Zero Dark Thirty* is punctuated by continual references to gates, doors and thresholds but also reflects a more nuanced engagement with hospitality in the rituals of gift-giving and invitation as well as in the depictions of prisoner interrogation. In particular, I look at the relationship between hospitality and intimacy in the context of prisoner violence and argue that the film welcomes the viewer into a regime of intimacy that seeks to project difference onto the other but inadvertently reveals the singularity of that other instead. I suggest that the film offers some compelling opportunities for thinking about how hospitality is unwilled and unbidden, as well as how intimacy can slip into hostility when exercised within frameworks of colonial desire and disdain.

In Chapter Four, I look at street art in London and, in particular, the work of Stik (who operates under a pseudonym). I argue that street art mediates broader anxieties about the terror of strangers and the ways in which the figure of the stranger has intensified after 9/11, producing fascinating effects in terms of how hospitality is both lived and disavowed. The anonymity of the artist, the displacement of the home as a locus of art collection and of

the street as something to be owned, and the careful arrangement of stick figures in doorways and on walls all speak loudly to the complexities of hospitality that this chapter is deeply invested in – complexities that seem to intensify when examined through the prism of urban space. I turn to these figures, and others that crop up in various artworks and movements, in order to investigate if and how alternative modes of hospitality are enabled by the fluid and dynamic space of the street. What does urban space tell us about the work of hospitality, its complex relations, strange proximities and even stranger canvases for expression? In other words, how does our thinking of hospitality change when viewed through the lens of a practice that is, essentially, home-less? I argue that street art transcends political and legal understandings of hospitality and insists that learning to live with strangers is at the core of our being in the world.

Chapter Five looks at Don DeLillo's 2007 novel *Falling Man* and argues that the novel offers a profound and sustained engagement with hospitality through the figure of organic shrapnel, a metaphor deployed by DeLillo to designate the possibility of being literally pierced by the flesh of a suicide bomber upon detonation. As a metaphor, organic shrapnel suggests the possibility of being embedded by another and, as a result, has significant implications for thinking about the ways in which we engage or disengage with the lives of strangers. In particular, this chapter takes up *Falling Man*'s persistence on a discourse of infirmity that is characterized by the possibility of organic shrapnel but also by figures of suicide, dementia and autoimmunity that raise provocative questions when thinking about a hospitality that might – even must – bring violence.

Chapter 2 Guests and Ghosts: Spectrality and Hospitality in the September 11

Memorial and Museum

“There would be no hospitality without the chance of spectrality. But spectrality is not nothing, it exceeds, and thus deconstructs, all ontological oppositions, being and nothingness, life and death – and it also gives”

(Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas* 111-112).

In St. Paul’s Chapel, adjacent to the September 11 Memorial and Museum and in the shadow of the soaring World Trade Center One, tens of thousands of bright paper cranes hang off of rows of cubicle-like partitions along the wall. They are divided into looped chains of one thousand of the small origami figures, a popular symbol in Japanese mythology and one that is perhaps best known through the story of Sadako Sasaki, a young girl who suffered from Leukemia as a result of the atomic bomb dropped by American forces in Hiroshima in 1945 (Barnge). Her mission, to fold a thousand paper cranes before her death, is seen as a plea for peace in Japanese culture and was taken up after the 9/11 attacks as Japanese school children sent cranes to relief workers and volunteers in New York City. It is a curious addition to a display that relies overtly on a notion of 9/11 as an American tragedy deserving of international recognition and sympathy. The display in St. Paul’s Chapel conveys appreciation for these global expressions of support but does not include any acknowledgement of American’s role in the history of these cranes in the twentieth century. As a gesture of peace towards those suffering in New York, but one that cannot help but call up a history of American violence, the display of cranes in St. Paul’s

Chapel is a complicated example of the variety of the ways in which 9/11 is remembered, particularly as it occurs in an iconic spiritual and historical landmark.

The cranes offer a number of significant figures for thinking about the function of hospitality at the National September 11 Memorial and Museum (hereafter the 9/11 Museum)⁷ and, in particular, the ways in which the museum is hospitable to diverse narratives of memorialization and history. They also reflect a larger trend of public memorialization in the aftermath of 9/11 and have retained much of the haphazard and collaborative spirit that initially characterized public tributes after the attacks. The displays inside St. Paul's Chapel are a somewhat impromptu and, like the many memorials that appeared in front of homes, stores and both fire and police stations, they act as an unofficial monument to the event of 9/11 and, in particular, those who participated in recovery efforts or volunteered in various service capacities. In the days, weeks, and months following the September 11 terrorist attacks, makeshift memorials became a way for people to express their collective grief, hope and disbelief in tangible ways and in the absence of any official monument. These memorials ranged in size and content but reveal significant trends in the ways that the events of that day have been publicly remembered. Much like the artifacts now preserved in St. Paul's Chapel, street memorials are also emblematic of the ways in which patriotism, violence, loss, and collective memory converge in a particularly Christianized spiritual expression. Martha Cooper's extended photo essay, *Remembering 9/11*, contains a number of examples of this relationship between remembrance, nationalism and religion. Cooper's photos depict a multitude of Christianized messages,

⁷ While the official title of the site is the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, site documents, admission tickets, signage, visitor guides, and employee uniforms alternately use this full title alongside "9/11 Museum", "9/11 Memorial Museum", "the Museum," or "9/11 Memorial".

including references to going “home” (5), “God Bless America” (15; 52; 70), “In our prayers...” (24), pictures of rescue workers holding photographs of a cross (50), and a number of images of candles lit in front of American flags. While spirituality is certainly not reserved for the Christian faith, it is expressed in these memorials through an almost exclusively Christianized lens. Cooper’s essay does include a few images of other expressions of faith such as a Buddhist monk leading a group in prayer (46-47) and an Orthodox Jew playing a ceremonial *shofar* (ram’s horn) to commemorate the first anniversary of the attacks (74-75), for instance. Such images speak to the ways in which remembrance and memorialization almost always make themselves legible via other available discourses, whether those are spiritual, patriotic, or something else entirely. The memorials erected on street corners and in front of shops, as well as the somewhat haphazard exhibition of artifacts in St. Paul’s Chapel raise some important questions not only about the rituals of memorialization in a mediation of trauma that is at the same time political and deeply personal, but also about the borders of commemoration and a curious hospitality to what lies beyond it that defines but also exceeds memorialization. They suggest that processes of remembrance are not confined to official, or even visible, markers of tribute, and while many of these impromptu memorials were found in New York, commemoration is not a merely local concern. Where does the memorial museum start and end – bordered as it is by St. Paul’s Chapel and by the remnants of impromptu memorials that populated this territory in the days and weeks following September 11 – and at which point do the functions of the site become separated in such a way as to distinguish, for example, between the memorial fountains and the memorial museum, for instance? Does memorialization occur at the first sight of the sunken pools in the towers’ footprints? Or at 5,000 feet on final decent into the city where the void in the skyline becomes obvious?

Does a trip to the museum conclude after a visit to the gift shop or does it continue as a result of every visitor's recruitment into a living history that has no end? These are questions about commemoration and politics, to be sure, but in thinking around the boundaries of memorialization, history, space, and time, they are also questions about hospitality and about how the process of commemoration is also a process of cordoning off and selective inclusion. The museum represents a culmination of public mourning and remembrance, research, debate, and recovery in the aftermath of 9/11, and in some way signals the end of the critical phase of the War on Terror (although this war is, to be sure, far from over) – the death of Osama Bin Laden, the passing of the ten year anniversary of the attacks, the opening of the central landmark of memorialization, and the completion of One World Trade Center,⁸ which has become the most prominent signifier of the financial revitalization of lower Manhattan – are all notable moments in the culmination of more than a decade of recent history. Yet the opening of the museum also marks out a beginning and perhaps initiates a time when we might start thinking differently about the preoccupation with strangers that continues to dominate social, cultural and political life. In the rush to revitalize and commemorate, both the range of ways of encountering this event as well as a tendency toward conventional and normative expressions suggest the fascination with strangers is of vital concern yet has gone curiously untested and, if anything, has often resulted in fear, suspicion and violence rather than any sustained reflection. If there was ever a time for hospitality in the aftermath of 9/11, in short, the time is now, not only in consideration of the museum's official opening, but because, as the War on Terror shifts away from Iraq and Afghanistan and towards other nations, it matters

⁸ Officially opened for business on November 3, 2014.

increasingly how we deploy strategies of apprehending others – particularly as those strategies are learned from the legacy of the 9/11 attacks. The 9/11 museum is, primarily, a memorial to the World Trade Center and the attacks that took place there; it is also, however, a museum that, more generally, documents what it means to live with others in a time of terror. The museum provides, then, a timely way of beginning this conversation not only because it deals with hospitality so intimately and surprisingly, but also because it offers up figures for analysis that reverberate with other aspects of cultural production including film, art, and literature. Structures of being and belonging, figures of spectrality and bodies that are “spirited away,” and the relationship between hospitality and violence – these are all occasions for thinking about ethics that are made possible in the space of the museum but are certainly not limited to that site alone.

The 9/11 Museum is a complex site for thinking about how religion, patriotism and public memorialization operate alongside the more formal operations of an institution that deals with a relatively recent history. Yet the museum also provides an occasion to think about the ways in which hospitality is acutely engaged in processes of mourning and commemoration, particularly so in the aftermath of terrorist attack when the fear and suspicion of strangers is arguably in its most critical phase. Moreover, the museum reveals the range and complexity of an ethics of hospitality that manifests through 9/11’s cultural texts and moments in ways that are not always hospitable – that is, it calls up figures of hospitality that are strange, awkward, and even uncomfortable yet that demand recognition nonetheless. The preoccupation with hospitality is evident in so many cultural texts produced in the aftermath of 9/11, but the museum offers an especially effective context for framing this preoccupation as it is actually *designed* to offer some sense of hospitality as an institution of public memory. Thinking these questions initially through street memorials

offers an interesting and complex study of the relationship between hospitality and memorialization, particularly as these memorials do not adhere to the rigorous processes of screening, identification, and assessment that exist in the larger and more sanctioned spaces of memorialization, such as the museum itself. The memorials that sprang up on the street after the terrorist attacks introduce a range of questions, moreover, important for thinking about the ways in which the museum reacts, hospitably or inhospitably, to the diversities of narrative, experience, and loss as forms of public memorialization are taken up into the larger and likely more enduring narrative of 9/11, and for interrogating which visitors, guests, strangers and others are left uninvited in this process and which arrive regardless.

2.1 Hospitality to public memorialization

While the message of street memorials is often in keeping with conventional structures of remembrance – drawing on familiar elements such as photographs, flowers, and candles – the process of their creation is not. Street level memorials spring up spontaneously with little regard for security or architectural design. They often operate as un-curated or un-vetted expressions of individual and collective grief and bring “an awareness of the city’s public spaces as scenes of unsanctioned vernacular performance” (Haskins and DeRose 378). Unlike museums and official memorials, these unregulated spaces of remembrance do not charge fees, nor do they limit the number of visitors that can enter at once, or cordon them off using gates and vestibules. Where gates or fences do exist, they are incorporated into the memorial itself, the barrier serving to enhance the visibility of the display rather than restrict access. They are works of public memory but also public commemoration and public performance, as they grow larger with each person who visits and leaves a piece of memorabilia behind. After the terrorist attacks, slogans such as “God

Bless America”, “9-1-1”, and narratives of strength, endurance and courage dominated the walls, sidewalks and stairwells dedicated to these impromptu outpourings of grief.⁹ As Jan Ramirez describes, New Yorkers “consoled” each other through memorials “that formed a kaleidoscope of color, fresh scents, and fervent grassroots sentiment in our shared public spaces” (qtd. in Cooper 7). Similarly, Ann Kaplan describes venturing out with her camera to take photographs of makeshift shrines, in an attempt “to make real what I could barely comprehend” (2). As Kaplan and Ramirez both note, these memorials become a way not only of remembering the dead but also of learning to live again with those around them, which may very well include the dead. Street memorials and the activities that correspond to them – prayer, storytelling, lighting candles, and speaking to those who are lost – blur the line between living and dead in providing an interstitial kind of space, a meeting point of sorts for those who mourn and those who are mourned. In this way, street memorials became a way of, in Kaplan’s words, feeling “a connection to strangers that I had never met before” (9) and possibly a connection to the lives that were lost. While these lives might go otherwise unknown, the particular connections of their memorialization make the dead more familiar. The importance of street memorials for thinking about hospitality is clear: if memorialization is a process of incorporating certain shared and individual memories, then the street-level memorial – its patriotic and spiritual rhetoric, and the inclusion of photos and, at times, even objects belonging to victims – suggests that such expressions of remembrance are deeply invested in the practice of living with others. Moreover, they are practices of memorialization that arrive uninvited and unannounced and, due to their

⁹ Martha Cooper’s *Remembering 9/11* (Brooklyn: Mark Batty, 2011) and Ann Kaplan’s introductory chapter “9/11 and Disturbing Remains,” in *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2005) offer comprehensive auto-ethnographies on the public memorials that dominated the city landscape after the attacks.

exposure to the elements, city by-laws and passersby, reflect more deeply the urgency of the moment. They seek no approval and answer no summons, yet demand that a space be opened to them. They are about making the lives of strangers known more intimately, as suggested by the many photographs included in the displays, yet they carve out this space and produce this knowledge in a very public way and suggest that the public sphere itself must be hospitable to loss and grieving and memorialization in ways that reflect official modes of remembering but are also never fully subsumed by them. Street memorials, in other words, rely on certain structures of feeling and commemoration tied to the larger discourses of patriotism and religion that permeate 9/11 memorialization on every level; they offer alternative conditions in terms of both those who mourn and those who are mourned but are not so radically unconstrained as to present an absolute foil to the official modes of commemoration represented in the museum. These spaces of public memorial, then, have everything to do with the work of hospitality in the aftermath of terrorist attack and the choice to open or close one's self, home and nation to encounters with strangers – who both remember and are remembered – and to welcome others into a reciprocal exchange of grief and memorialization.

The encounters with strangers – and with the strange lives of others that are made more intimate through makeshift memorial – is but one of many ways in which processes of memorialization engage with hospitality. Yet the larger and more open these memorials become in recognizing diverse expressions of grief, the more they draw the attention of official institutions of public memory and challenge official narratives of memorialization that are sanctioned by curators and board members in such a way that a singular version emerges. Indeed, when it comes to preserving aspects of these memorial sites in more permanent exhibits, their diverse narratives often seem to be funneled through an ever-

narrowing variety of disciplinary and exclusionary passageways, yet they are still heralded as “collective” mediations of grief in the efforts to secure a “common sense” process of memorialization that, in reality, is not that common. On the street, for example, public 9/11 memorials were initially less concerned with promoting mainstream political rhetoric but soon developed into larger and more organized tributes to victims and heroes and, in the rhetorical shift from loss to hope, diverse expressions of grief began to take similar shape. There are displays in the museum that speak to the plethora of street-side memorials and, to be fair, some of the actual artifacts collected from the street have been preserved for the museum’s “After 9/11” exhibition hall. The items on display, however, are only a fraction of what sprang up in the aftermath of the attacks and offer a representative approach to the diversity of impromptu responses collected on the street. To be sure, it is not the street itself that establishes makeshift memorials as a more ideal site of public engagement; likewise, when memorialization is taken off the street and placed in the institution, it is not a *de facto* turn away from meaningful encounters among strangers and a diversity of expression. However, there are significant operation of power at work in the vetting and administration of these artifacts and selecting only certain pieces of public memorization for display in a “National” museum only complicates the attempt to establish a sense of what public commemoration might look like. In reality, it is difficult to decipher where the street ends and the institution begins, as the swell of grassroots memorials, when combined with a proliferation of news and entertainment media releasing a steady stream of 9/11 material, has contributed to a plethora of understandings of the event itself as well as a complicated desire – misguidedly compulsory and perhaps even dangerous – for a more structured and authorized version of events.

To fill the gap in official and institutionalized processes of memorialization and, I would argue, to control the narrative, the National September 11 Memorial & Museum at the World Trade Center Foundation was, according to its official website, formally incorporated in 2005 and soon after began preparations for an official memorial and educational museum on the former World Trade Center site. As a result of this shift from impromptu to more regulated memorials, not only were the objects from the street often removed and incorporated, after careful vetting, into larger museum displays, but they began to be subsumed by the larger disciplinary processes of museum policy and security. In planning these exhibits, the museum planning committee enlisted the help of Dr. Edward Linenthal, and his experience (gained from his consultation on the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum) in “documenting the often thorny, though always-redemptive paths to the realization of America’s public memorials to traumatic events” (“On the Civic Nature”). Yet, while Linenthal seems to accept the inevitability and utility of “controversy” as evidence of public engagement (“Civic”), the actual remnants of public commemoration that have been taken up into the museum are more one-dimensional than they are controversial. They include an array of cultural and religious responses but with far less surprise and public focus than when they existed on the street, for the simple fact that they are contained within the museum’s parameters of both purpose and practicality. Yet it is their specific location within the museum that is most interesting, as they appear as part of a succession of historical displays documenting the “before” and “after” of the attacks. The examples of public memorials, specifically, act as a bridging section between a brief history of Al Qaeda¹⁰ and the exhibits detailing the immediate response by police and firefighters.

¹⁰ The “Rise of Al Qaeda” exhibit and, in particular, the 7 minute video exploring the roots of radical Islam

In this way, the public reaction is seen as a direct reply to terrorism rather than a grasping with a multitude of emotions related to the events of that day. Moreover, the examples of public commemoration are overshadowed by more official timelines and stories of heroism. The notion of a street memorial, while open to greater interpretation on the street itself, is thus viewed within the framework of a much larger historical exhibit that is very direct about the narrative of memorialization it wishes to offer: an example of an outpouring of grief that was *caused* by Al Qaeda terrorists and *suffered* by innocent victims and, most poignantly, by NYPD and FDNY heroes.

The 9/11 Museum also engages with a conditional form of hospitality by extending an invitation to visitors to be a part of an ongoing project of public commemoration. While street memorials were open, for the most part, to flowers, artifacts, stories, and other offerings from anyone passing by, the museum itself only *appears* to promote a similar collaborative approach to memorialization. Museum Director Alice Greenwald certainly invites guests to contribute, noting “our visitors have a voice in this Museum, reinforcing the idea that each of us is engaged in the making of history” (“Director’s Message”). Indeed, throughout the museum’s exhibitions, there are opportunities for visitors to offer memories, stories, and sentiments. At the entrance to the cavernous Foundation Hall, for example, four digital “smart” screens invite guests to add a statement. There are no posted restrictions on what can be written; however, the screen plays a continuous loop of

has been the subject of much controversy since the museum opened with Muslim leaders and even museum visitors claiming the video fails to properly distinguish between Islam as a peaceful faith and a radical fundamentalism (Otterman). There is a text panel beside the video that notes the distinction – citing Al Qaeda as a “small fraction” of Islam. Sharon Otterman points out a number of disturbing omissions in the video and accompanying displays. Not only is the discussion of Islam in the museum taken up almost entirely in the context of terrorism, but the video commentary positions Osama Bin Laden as struggling to “defend Islam” (indeed, the only Muslims who speak in the video are Al Qaeda leaders) and does not provide any information on Islam that is not related to terrorism (Otterman).

messages that have been previously provided. These messages overwhelmingly offer words of hope, support, love, and grief that align closely with the mission of the museum itself – to “bear solemn witness” and to attest “to the triumph of human dignity over human depravity” (“Mission”).¹¹ A more formalized process takes place deeper in the museum where visitors can record their own message in one of several state-of-the-art recording studios. The studios are open to any visitor to the museum, yet they are small and dimly lit spaces, accessed through a set of glass doors.¹² In the recording studio there is no notice as to what will be done with the recorded statements, where visitors might obtain their own copy, or how they could possibly delete the message if they changed their mind at a later date. According to Greenwald, a visitor’s recorded message “not only gets integrated into [the] archive, but can actually be *selected* for the memorial exhibition” (qtd. in Vega, emphasis added). Greenwald’s words seem to suggest that while visitors to the recording studio are tacitly agreeing to their voice being used as the museum sees fit (there are no waivers, disclosures, or permissions forms), the process resembles somewhat of a contest, with only some narratives being selected for use in the public exhibitions. How are these decisions made and what room, if any, is there for perspectives that counter the museum’s expressed mission? If the recording itself is free, open, and unregulated, how much so is the process by which they are adopted as official museum material? What are the conditions upon which visitors’ stories can be incorporated into the sanctioned 9/11 narrative?

¹¹ These observations are based on an in-person visit to the museum on October 17, 2014. During this visit, all four digital screens were operational and displayed messages that, while not exact copies, reinforced one another in their emphasis on conventional words of remembrance. “We will never forget”, “You are Loved”, “God Bless”, and “You are Heroes” were some of the more common sentiments expressed. During the ten minutes I observed, I did not see any messages that did not follow this pattern of memorialization.

¹² When I visited the recording studio, there were no other museum visitors inside, and none of the studios were being used, despite the huge crowds visiting the museum that day.

If street memorials provide a more surprising, collaborative, and perhaps even unbidden engagement with the lives and grief of others, then the promise of this engagement is surely altered when one's sympathies, knowledge, and mediation of collective memorialization are hostages to the administrative bodies that govern the production and use of the exhibit. While the informal street memorials and institutionalized examples of public commemoration appear to be similar, they function in entirely different ways. On one hand, the street memorial is impromptu – its collection of artifacts is continually built up in a more arbitrary fashion and, in that process, it assembles together a variety of meanings that can be continuously contested or altered. The museum exhibit of civic memorialization, on the other hand, gathers artifacts together in response to the established mandate of the museum. The opinions and experiences of visitors are, to be sure, not uniform and the exhibit is altered in some way by the visitor experience. However, the exhibit acts not as a memorial itself but as a curated historical snapshot of an *idea* of what an appropriate memorial *may have been*. This memorial exhibit, assembled inside the museum, is no longer contingent on the comings-together of strangers but, rather, is regulated by more formal operations including, but not limited to, surveillance, admission costs, directions, line-ups, and the rhetoric of ownership inscribed within a planning committee that includes a board, directors, a chairman and even a president. What is lost in this incorporation, itself a gesture that welcomes unofficial history into the official narrative, and how does it pose a significant challenge to ways in which hospitality may be thought to operate at the memorial site? Indeed, how do these public expressions cease to be memorials at all but, rather, offer historical *evidence* of public mourning after the attacks? And what possibilities for hospitality may still exist in the sanctioned and regulated spaces of the memorial museum? To be sure, the memorial and museum do not

make explicit claims about their contribution to the work of hospitality. The expressed “mission” of the museum is simply “to bear solemn witness” to the terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center in both 2001 and 1993 (“Mission”). The museum, however, is selective in who and what it bears witness to as well as in the testimonies it incorporates into its carefully arranged interpretation of both the 1993¹³ and 2001 terrorist attacks. Indeed, in most cases, the memorial and museum are understood as committed to the retelling of events and to operating as a space for collective understanding and healing. Yet, intentional or not, the museum engages with matters of hospitality on many levels and raises crucial questions about how strangers are encountered after 9/11 and how certain spaces function to limit or enhance the possibilities of hospitable welcome. There is much to read in how spaces shape, facilitate and, at times, foreclose on ethics and the exhibits that fill the void left by the towers offer compelling texts through which to think the question of hospitality, particularly as hospitality is engaged or disavowed through an experience with loss.

2.2 Strange hospitalities and the arrival of the ghost

While the museum often seems to reject the ongoing centrality of hospitality to thinking and understanding social and cultural life after 9/11, the site is overflowing with examples of hospitality that are perhaps more unconventional and surprise us with not only a shocking arrival, but also a haunting absence. Indeed, memorial museums often alert us to

¹³ While this mandate suggests that the 1993 bombing is a crucial component of the museum’s overall exhibition it is not heavily emphasized either in physical presence or historical significance. While there is a small explanation of the events of 1993, they serve to emphasize other histories that are more related to the 2001 attacks; namely, the history of Muslim extremism and its American targets, and a retrospective of the towers themselves, in particular, their engineering and placement in both the New York skyline and American popular culture.

the ways in which mourning is always preoccupied, in some way, with a desire to reclaim a trace of what has been lost. Martin Heidegger refers to this as *alētheia*, which “signifies the concealing and revealing work of memory: we remember traces only – the remains of what we have forgotten” (Engle 25). The memorial genre of museums, in particular, represents an emotional and lucrative attempt to mediate collective or cultural loss by inviting visitors to witness and vicariously experience the suffering of others or, in some cases, revisit their own suffering, as if as a stranger. One particular strand of this memorial “mania” is ideally suited to unpacking what increasingly reveal themselves to be spectral traces that function within the September 11 Memorial and Museum. “Dark” tourism – or “Thanatourism”¹⁴ offers a brand of museum tourism premised on the especially gloomy or even eerie aspects of memorial culture. Despite being built below ground and in the foundations of the towers that remain, quite literally, a tomb, the 9/11 Museum, however, only admits some of these elements into its displays and any of the more haunting aspects of the site are included only to add emphasis to the notion of Ground Zero as a sacred site and to reinforce the dominant narrative of memorialization and heroism rather than invite questioning of what these spectral traces might mean. Indeed, there are figures of hospitality – specters, things “out of

¹⁴ Phillip Stone defines thanatourism as “alluding to a sense of apparent disturbing practices and morbid products (and experiences) within the tourism domain...dark tourism may be referred to as the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre” (“Dark Tourism Spectrum” 146). This form of tourism is premised on a heightened interest in death, torture and suffering that are the result of real-life scenarios. The concept of thanatourism is especially useful in tracing the more ambiguous figures of hospitality at the former World Trade Center site precisely because, like dark tourist sites, the deaths represented in displays, monuments and memorials are not at all *real* deaths, they are “(re)created deaths” (Stone, “Dark Tourism Experiences” 25). In the twentieth century, there has been a lofty increase in tourist interest surrounding things related to death, and thus dark tourism signifies “a fundamental shift in the way in which death, disaster and atrocity are being handled by those who offer associated tourism ‘products’” (Lennon and Foley 3). Thanatourism has a particular influence on the viewer that brings the museum visitor into conversations that become compellingly spectral in the context of 9/11 culture and the encounter with strangeness. As Seaton and Lennon suggest, “the media and tourism offer opportunities for legitimate, vicarious contact with death, and through it, imaginative meditation on mortality” (69). Significant to this project, then, Stone refers to dark tourism as a “mediating experience” that links the living with the dead (“Dark Tourism Experiences” 25).

place” and odd remnants – at work in the September 11 Memorial and Museum that are not entirely recognizable and perhaps not even welcome. The site is permeated by a sense of strangeness, not only in the more eerie or macabre rhetoric of a sacred burial ground but in less obvious figures of dust, sacrament, invisibility and virtuality. The site itself, as built *into* the ground in uncharacteristic contrast to the surrounding cityscape, plays on notions of what is visible and what is hidden and prompts queries into what lingers, or even perhaps haunts, below the surface of things. Hospitality in this context, then, traverses a number of strange concerns that make and unmake the borders between living and dead, presence and absence. And while these concerns may seem abstract and distant from the visceral and physical realities of real human loss, they are vital components to an understanding of the ways in which 9/11, commemoration, and the notion of “terror” in general have transformed both the meaning and the practice of hospitality.

2.2.1 Hospitality in the Memorial Quadrant: Freedom Tower and Reflecting Absence

Certainly, the exhibits in the museum, as well as the processes by which those exhibits take shape, suggest that the museum often fails to extend a hospitable welcome to certain figures and narratives of memorialization. Yet is there more to the discourse of haunting than the museum itself allows that might offer a way of thinking the question of hospitality outside of its apparent failures? The incorporation of street memorials into the museum’s exhibits alert us to the ways in which hospitality is limited – any process of selection with limit or condition is, after all, is inhospitable – but this does not render the entire site inhospitable. Indeed, arriving at the site, even before entering the museum, we are greeted by other figures of strangeness, discourses of welcome and invitation that

suggest the museum may be more deeply and more surprisingly invested in an ethics of hospitality than at first thought. It is the memorial quadrant, in particular, with its soaring tower and sunken fountains, that initiates thinking about the complexities of less conventional and even, at times, uncomfortable hospitality.

Perhaps the most visibly striking aspect of the memorial design is the towering World Trade Center one – also known unofficially as Freedom Tower – designed to stand 1776 feet above the city in stark contrast to the sunken memorial pools which reach downward and constitute what Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimlett calls “negative space” (12). “Freedom Tower” suggests a rising out of ruins at the same time as it pays homage to the splendor and scale of the twin towers. To be sure, the rhetoric of sacrament and holiness that has dominated recovery and reconstruction efforts is certainly not a new way of characterizing the Trade Centre’s most prolific structures. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, written long before the towers’ collapse, Michel de Certeau reflects on the World Trade Center, suggesting “the tallest towers in the world compose a gigantic rhetoric of excess in both expenditure and production” (91). De Certeau’s description is not unlike that which might be used to refer to the great cathedrals, particularly as he describes one’s position in the towers as being “like a god” (92). Interestingly, however, the destruction of the site has not resulted in the absence or banishment of God but, rather, has Christianized it further. The presence of towers in Lower Manhattan has always invoked a kind of nationalized spiritualism and perhaps it is no coincidence that the site is bordered by both Church and Liberty streets. The ways in which the former towers are both reduced and, at the same time, heightened to a humanized kind of loss as well as the oscillating need for a hallowed site versus an economic revival situates the construction of Freedom Tower in a complex position of having to account for the political, spiritual, economic, and symbolic needs of a

population still becoming acquainted with the new skyline. Marita Sturken hints at this impasse when she notes that “the idea of architecture as renewal was seen to be in conflict with the sense of Ground Zero as a sacred site of loss” (“Tourists” 233). Yet the construction of a tower that is part functional, part memorial and meant to invoke the patriotic *and* the spiritual, works to provide a sense of the haunting former towers at the same time as it suggests a step forward into a new economic and patriotic renaissance. Yet it is the spire affixed to the top of Freedom Tower which, when added to the already spectacular scale of the building, represents not only a display of economic grandeur and revitalization but also an expressive religious patriotism. Moreover, in its primary function as a television antenna, this spire broadcasts more than news and entertainment frequencies. Not only is this display suggestive of the ways in which America has long been haunted by the ghosts of religious zealotry; it continually pays homage to this ghostly presence by highlighting the “spire” or “skeletal steeple” (Nash 191) of the Tower using language that is saturated with spectral metaphors.

While it calls to mind the relationship between religion, nationalism, and capitalism in the process of memorialization, Freedom Tower also recalls some crucial tensions that inadvertently reveal the centrality of hospitality to the site. This relationship between the tower and the complex workings of hospitality is often invoked through the language used to describe the building itself. Architect Daniel Libeskind, for example, promotes his concept of open fretwork on the tower as incorporating not just sky or air but a “world” above. He describes it as “this very open, ethereal building that lets light right through it” (qtd. in Nash 191). Yet, at the same time, Libeskind recognizes a kind of danger in “opening” the building – and, by extension, the people and the spiritualized and patriotic ideologues within it – to exposure. The danger, he explains, is a spiritual one that

outweighs the functional uses of the structure itself: “Nobody really needs skyscrapers, but there is something visceral and spiritual to put yourself at risk from the cosmos” (Libeskind qtd. in Nash 191). Libeskind’s words here seem to acknowledge, if not the necessity, then the inherent instability of an architecture designed to open itself and its inhabitants up to the cosmos, an architecture of hospitality that, understood as a practice, relies precisely on risk rather than surety. As Derrida reminds us, the foreigner who arrives (either as corporeal or cosmological guest) is one who “encroaches...on my sovereignty...the other becomes a hostile subject and I run the risk of becoming their hostage” (*Of Hospitality* 55). Sturken also invokes this language when she describes what is perhaps an unconscious desire underlying the design and construction of Freedom Tower which, while beautiful, is meant to shelter from the potential of another terrorist attack. It is a beacon of the revitalization of the economy and the American spirit yet is simultaneously an impenetrable fortress. As Sturken suggests, “Freedom Tower will most likely end up being a symbol not of U.S. power, but of its fear, deeply embodying the new aesthetics of security” (“Tourists” 254). Yet security, as Renée Jeffery claims, is the antithesis of hospitality. In her words, “the very possibility of hospitality rests on the idea that hosts and guests must grant each other the benefit of the doubt, trusting without basis that the unknown other will not cause them harm” (Jeffery 126). Freedom tower, then, seems to contradict itself – opening to risk while, at the same time, closing itself to attack – and ultimately raises a question prompted by its very name and so crucial to the ethics of an unconditional welcome: freedom for and from whom? Libeskind’s descriptive language certainly alerts us to the possibilities of hospitality as an opening of oneself to risk yet the tower, as a beacon of (fortified and protectionist) freedom, ultimately exposes a dominant patriotism and spiritualism rather than a kind of vulnerability that might inspire a new way of thinking about hosting others.

Nevertheless, it reveals a particular orientation towards thinking about hospitality that suggests the arrival of strangers and others remains a deep concern and, crucially, hints at the arrival of an other that we cannot prepare for anymore than we can see it coming.

2.2.2 Reflecting Absence

Arriving at the site via subway in Fall 2014¹⁵, my visit¹⁶ to the museum required I walk around the entire World Trade Center site and access the memorial quadrant from the side opposite the museum's entry pavilion. I then walked between both the North and South tower footprints to reach the crowded stanchions that held those waiting to be admitted into the museum and that organized visitors according to entry time. Designated time slots make it difficult to linger at the fountains or in the memorial gardens unless one makes plans to do so in advance. Yet even glanced at briefly before entering the modern and reflective entry pavilion, the surface level memorial offers compelling context for the museum that awaits. While the exhibits below the surface fill the space left by the towers with a thoughtful, spacious, and beautiful network of ramps, pathways, exhibition rooms, and hallways – an overall stunning repurposing of space – the sunken memorial pools seem to highlight a sense of loss and make literal the profound emptiness of what once was. It is an emptiness that is virtually impossible to miss as it highlights a tremendous and conspicuous void.

¹⁵ It is worth note that upon completion of the new WTC “PATH” (Port Authority Trans-Hudson) transportation hub, many visitors to the site will not encounter the memorial before entering the museum. The station is directly adjacent to the museum entrance and will not require visitors to walk through the memorial quadrant to access the museum itself, although guests may still choose to enter the museum by walking around the block and entering via Liberty and West Streets, or by Fulton Street at the base of World Trade Center One.

¹⁶ The observations and details noted in this chapter are derived from museum planning documents and articles written on the development of the site, but also from my own visit to the museum, on October 17, 2014.

It is in this spirit of contemplation and almost seclusion (despite the large crowds wandering around the grounds) that the most prominent feature of the memorial quadrant appears and reveals the need for a deeper investigation of hospitality at the site – one that is not concerned solely with the limits to a political welcome of strangers but explores the relationship between hospitality and mourning in more (literal) depth. The official memorial was designed by architects Michael Arad and Peter Walker, whose proposal was selected from a group of over 5200 entries from 63 nations as part of a design competition hosted by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC). It is carved directly into the footprints of the former towers and consists of four walls of water that fall into giant pools. The edges of these granite pools are inscribed with the names of victims from the September 11th attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania, as well as those who lost their lives in the 1993 World Trade Center bombings. Perhaps simple in comparison to other structures at the site, the memorial – much like Freedom Tower, calls up a particularly spectral notion of hospitality in both its spatial configuration and its name. Called “Reflecting Absence,” the memorial suggests not only a contemplative space, but a space that recognizes its own void. Its haunting title invokes the presence of something felt but not seen, of loss and, most importantly, a vacuum that can never be filled. Haskins and DeRose note that “a memorial is...a material expression of mourning for lost lives and opportunities...[it is also] a stage for cathartic closure and critical reckoning” (278). Yet what happens when the process of mourning and remembering involves something that, according to its very structure, cannot be closed? Indeed, the abysmal openness of the pools reflects a wound that can never be sutured and thus a critical lack of surety, comfort and sense that other aspects of the memorial site (the tower, for instance) seek to foster. Where the security and patriotism of the tower foreclose on the possibility of an unconditional

welcomes to strangeness, “Reflecting Absence” opens to a notion of hospitality – though perhaps not the one that is expected – by acknowledging that what has been made strange can never be reconciled. Indeed, it speaks convincingly to a disorienting loss – an enduring figure of difference that is so crucial to hospitality. Moreover, so long as the pools remain voids in the landscape and are not covered, they will testify to the ongoing wounding of that loss, rather than the healing that would be representable by a kind of scar. The distinction is an important one for hospitality. As Richard Kearney puts it, in his lecture on “Narrative Imagination and Catharsis,” “while the wounds remain timeless and unrepresentable, scars are the marks left on the flesh to be seen, touched, told and read” (“Narrative”). This permanent wounding and resistance to scarring is an intentional feature in the memorial landscape that suggests an openness to unending trauma, even a hospitality to loss, that is in keeping with the ethic of hospitality espoused by Kearney, Derrida, Levinas and others. That is, it opens itself to the ongoing risk of letting trauma in rather than trying to cordon it off or reconcile it within familiar structures of understanding. It remains a testament to the utter distinctiveness of a loss that, while often manifesting in the form of American exceptionalism, demands a hospitable recognition of trauma’s strange singularity. The pools offer a new way of thinking about the presence of hospitality and offer an invitation to another kind of strangeness. Yet more than challenge the way hospitality is understood, the reflecting pools alert us to a series of crucial questions about what lays beneath the “surface” of hospitality. What kinds of encounters, for example, are faced when venturing even deeper into the memorial site and into the underground museum itself? Are there other figures of hospitality and strangeness within the text of the museum that the underground museum alerts us to? Surely the museum has a rigorous screening process for the items it includes and emphasizes a very particular narrative of events, often

at the expense of other narratives. Yet what of the displays themselves – the strange passages, curious absences, odd juxtapositions and artifacts that seem generally out-of-place, either in the structural flow of the museum or in their detachments from the bodies that once gave them animation? In other words, where in the museum might we read other incidences of invitation or exclusion, things that seem foreign or odd, and find “guests” that show up uninvited and unannounced?

2.3 Hospitality Unearthed: Cryptic Remains

While the museum itself is housed underground, it is entered via a bright atrium at ground level. Described by Craig Dykers, its principal architect, this entry “pavilion” is intended to provide a transition from the “future” of the outdoor memorial to the “past” that is the largely historical purpose of the museum: “Our building is about the present moment in time. It is the bridge between these two abstract worlds” (Dykers qtd. in Ryan). My own experience of entry, however, is more rushed than reflective, and, as visitors file in and passes are scanned, there is little room for a sustained “transition” between these worlds. After walking through the memorial quadrant, I am greeted by a complex network of black security stanchions, with signs directing me to entry lines for the “top” and “bottom” of the hour. Choosing the correct line, I weave back and forth until I reach the museum personnel waiting to confirm my entry time before admitting me into the pavilion. Once inside, the pavilion looks less like a transitional bridge, however, and more like an airport screening station. Security personnel wear the same light blue uniform of the museum’s general staff – on the whole, not unlike the royal blue hue of the familiar TSA uniforms found in airports across the United States. The museum officer instructs me to place my bag on a belt to be x-rayed as I step through a sophisticated full body scanner. It is a perhaps necessary but

nonetheless jarring disruption from the transition described by Dykers, although the museum is designed in such a way that the screening process is fairly removed from the actual exhibition space. Indeed, once security is cleared, I descend into the dimly lit caverns and corridors of the museum's exhibitions that are both serene and beautiful. The last set of stairs leading from the entrance to the main landing and information area parallels the "survivors' staircase" that is not operational but provides a chilling reminder of the number of people who used those steps when the elevators in the towers became impassable, not to mention conjuring the familiar images of firefighters running *up*. At the bottom of these stairs, I encounter the first series of displays – a photograph of the towers as they were minutes before the first plane hit, a virtual timeline of events, and the digital recording of survivor and witness memories. The corridor is crowded here, and as I walk through slowly, I am, in Adi Robertson's words, "greeted [by] fragments of speech" that detail the experiences of those on the ground, as well as those watching television and hearing about the attacks via telephone (Robertson). The experience begins with the date, September 11, 2001 being spoken by multiple people, predominantly in English, in voices that layer over one another. These voices then describe where they were as the attacks took place, each description culminating in the phrase "twin towers" which echoes repeatedly. Key phrases are emphasized as witnesses describe what they see and feel. They express disbelief: "This is really happening" and "*impossible, impossible, impossible*" in French; emotion: "I was so angry...I never felt so alone and lost"; and they make references to the end of history: "As if time had stopped...the world had stopped...what was going to happen next" with the words "stopped...stopped...stopped" echoing behind as visitors move through the chamber (Robertson).

The initial experience of the museum is certainly different than a visit to the surface memorial as the names etched into the granite walls begin to reanimate. Yet it is these very first moments underground that suggests the museum is defined by a provocative and haunting discourse of hospitality – one that can be interrogated in many of the museum’s exhibits. For the first time, I acutely register that this crowd of people is shuffling deeper into what essentially remains a crypt. While such spaces are traditionally housed within cathedrals, the language used to describe Ground Zero has been riddled with the language of the crypt. In both the public and political expressions of mourning following 9/11, the site is often referred to as a cemetery, burial ground, or final resting place. As former mayor Rudolph Giuliani argues in his editorial for the anniversary edition of *Time* in September 2002, “Ground zero is a cemetery. It is the last resting place for loved ones whose bodies were not recovered and whose remains are still within that hallowed ground” (“Getting It Right at Ground Zero”). Somewhat distinct from the housing of tangible remains within conventional crypts, the museum crypt is an especially fraught place of burial, particularly because the space was not intentionally created to house the remains of victims; instead, it was carved out in the very process of their demise. The crypt, in fact, was what killed them. Lee Clarke, too, reflects on this ambiguity: “There were piles of dirt and debris around where the digging was going on, as if they were digging a giant grave, although, of course, you dig a grave to put a body in it rather than to get one out of it” (203). According to Clarke, the former World Trade Center site is “purely frightening. Not just because so many people died there, but because almost all those people were still there, in pieces or in spirit. It was frightening to think that so many people had been there but now even their bodies were nowhere” (202). It is this ambiguous and even disturbing function of remains at the site that extends a compelling invitation to think about how hospitality might

continue to operate in the crypt of the museum, even when its more conventional operations are limited by patriotic sentiment and political exclusion. To be sure, there are a number of ways in which the museum engages and/or disavows an ethic of hospitality, which I will address in what follows. Yet I begin in this crypt, where hospitality makes its two most significant gestures, through the cordoning off of human remains that refuse to go unnoticed and in the unlikely placement of artifacts that are displayed in an extraordinarily out-of-place fashion.

2.3.1 Foundation Hall and the Hiding of Human Remains

The 9/11 Museum, without question, is unequivocally dedicated to the memory of the heroes and victims of the terrorist attacks and offers a narrative heavily invested in the memory of the dead whom, we are made to feel, still exist in the grand passages and exhibition chambers and whose presence can be felt on the personal items such as shoes, watches and wallets that bear so much human trace. There are traces, however, that refuse to be contained in the displays themselves. Indeed, in its capacity as a crypt, the museum offers a place for the dead to rest but cannot account for where they might be within the cavernous space. Indeed, how certain can one be, in the presence of so many microscopic traces, that all have been accounted for and are not still lingering in the bedrock, dust-covered exhibits, and cavernous atmosphere seven stories beneath the ground? As such, the museum conjures a particularly haunted imagery that serves to render the site both sacred and terrifying and, while the storage of human remains on site raises significant possibilities for the work of hospitality, the combination of sacrament and fear also manifests in an anti-hospitable cordoning off of the site from other purposes. This particular crypt, in other words, is reserved and closed to any kind of trauma or loss not

associated with the 9/11 attacks. Even when bodies cannot be found and identified, the site remains dedicated to the purpose of their commemoration and burial; this crypt, in short, is only for the “innocent” 9/11 dead. Yet what does it mean that this crypt is afforded sacred status only as a resting place for those specific victims? What crypts, remains, memories are elided in this process and deemed un-sacred as a result? Surely there have been other deaths on that site and while bodies were likely recovered in those instances, 9/11 remains are not the first to be contained in that space, nor did the historical and archival spaces of the original towers contain artifacts of only American importance. In fact, they also acted as a storage facility for materials from a number of other cultures that were destroyed when the towers fell. Kirshenblatt-Gimlett, in particular, laments the loss of materials excavated from, among other places, an eighteenth century African-American burial ground that was found to have an original location somewhere in the vicinity of the World Trade Center complex (24).¹⁷ Some 1600 boxes of historical artifacts from this excavation were kept in Tower Six of the World Trade Center – also known as the former U.S. Custom’s House. Most of these were destroyed by the damage suffered by the building in the Twin Towers collapse and, even after recovery efforts, most of the contents of these boxes could not be retrieved (“African Burial Ground”). The lack of certainty regarding which remains and traces of life are conclusively lingering in the burial ground of the museum raises a problem

¹⁷ While the burial ground in question did not occupy the exact space of the towers, it was located in Lower Manhattan and the items excavated from the site were stored in 6 World Trade Center, destroyed by debris from the North Tower and later demolished. According to a Washington, D.C. based Heritage Preservation organization, the burial ground was discovered in 1991 and included over 400 skeletal remains along with thousands of artifacts (“African Burial Ground”). While the majority of the biological remains are stored in a lab at Howard University, most of the other artifacts were housed at the Trade Center site. Still, the presence of archeological items rather than human remains does not necessarily mean that these “ghosts” or “souls” reside elsewhere – indeed, my discussion of the remains of 9/11 victims is not on their materiality. Rather, I am reading these items with or without the material DNA of biological remains in regards to the spectral presence produced by remnant objects.

for dominant understandings of the site in which the space is seen exclusively as a 9/11 resting place. What might it mean, then, to read the memorial as a crypt not only for victims of September 11th, but victims of another historical tragedy that is elided by the spectacle of the specific devastation known as 9/11? It would seem that the sacred space of the crypt functions to elide certain historical realities in the service of a more streamlined and patriotic message, a move that can be considered inhospitable in terms of the lack of welcome extended to these artifacts and the merely conditional inclusion of others. Yet these remains, regardless of historical referent, are there; they linger despite attempts to limit, disavow or contain them in official exhibits.

As the historical presence of an African Burial Ground – that sacred space *before* 9/11 – reveals, the significance of a museum at Ground Zero for thinking about a hospitality to and of the dead has a more complicated relationship to the museum’s design than visitors may immediately suspect. After descending below the initial landing area and gallery of voice recordings, visitors wind down a series of mezzanine ramps that look down over Foundation Hall, a vast and open space housing physical artifacts and digital displays against the backdrop of the original slurry wall.¹⁸ As I exit the ramp into the main exhibition space, the ground levels into what the museum maps refer to as “Center Passage,” a space in which the main exhibit is a massive art installation that covers the entire central wall connecting the North and South tower exhibitions. The only commissioned piece of art for the museum, *Trying To Remember the Color of the Sky on*

¹⁸ One of the only structural components of the World Trade Center site to remain somewhat in tact, the slurry wall is a massive retaining barrier meant to protect the towers’ foundation and PATH subway lines from the Hudson River. While the wall did not collapse as the towers did, it was weakened and received much needed reinforcement – the bulk of which was completely in time to prevent Hurricane Sandy from flooding the almost completed museum in 2012 (Dunlap).

That September Morning, by Spencer Finch, is created from 2,983 hand painted sheets of Italian paper – the number of total victims from the 1993 and 2001 attacks (Cascone). Visitors take in the sheer volume of the installation, the poignancy of the Virgil quote incorporated into its design – “No day shall erase you from the memory of time” – and the diversity of cool tones that represent the imagination of New Yorkers looking at the sky that September morning. Meant to represent the lives lost on 9/11, these individual panels of paper offer a symbolic gesture toward the museum site as a final resting place. What is not immediately obvious (and, for some, never known) is what is behind the wall: an actual crypt that houses the dead. Stored since 2001 in a Manhattan medical examiner’s office, the as-yet unidentified human remains of 9/11 victims were transferred on May 10, 2014 in a ceremonial procession to the 9/11 Museum and their “final resting place” (Farrell) – a 2,500 square foot repository *behind* the massive art installation and inaccessible to the public (“Remains Repository”).

While the actual lab cannot be accessed as part of the museum tour, it is adjoined by a reflection room where family members can gain access, by appointment, to the general repository but not to the remains themselves. In the original museum design, the repository wall was to be marked by an empty urn meant to represent the traces of unidentified victims, a display that Williams calls “the cloaking of human remains” (45). The urn would have operated as a curious distraction device, meant to conjure a particular kind of spirit – one guided by the assumption that the urn contains the remains of those the museum intends to commemorate. The decision to include not an urn but, rather, a large-scale art piece, with no overt reference to the repository behind it, has a far more fascinating outcome. While the urn would certainly refer to the physical presence of unidentified bodies in some way, the art installation is symbolic of lives lost but not of bodies hidden

only steps away. In this sense, the wall functions as a kind of sleight-of-hand, shielding visitors from the reality that not only are the bodies of 9/11 victims stored on site – and quite possibly not only *victims*¹⁹ – but that officials do not know exactly which remains they are still sorting through. Fewer than 300 intact bodies were recovered after the terrorist attacks and nearly 20,000 pieces of victims were recovered from the wreckage – 6000 of these pieces small enough to fit into a test tube (Williams 43).²⁰ As of the Museum’s opening date in May 2014, of the 2,753 people reported missing at the World Trade Center alone, 1,115 are still not identified, yet 7,930 individual remains fragments are housed in the repository (Farrell). Where DNA testing has not been successful in identifying particular remains, grieving families have been given a small urn of dust in place of a body to bury. There is, of course, no telling if these urns contain actual human biological trace and, if they do, what or whose trace that might be. It is a prospect that surely confirms the museum as hallowed and haunted ground, but also one that speaks powerfully to the incorporation of an unbidden and perhaps unwelcome other.

The spectral scenario offered up by the repository wall – its ambiguity, indiscernible materiality and ghostly implications – conjures a particular kind of hospitality that runs deeper and is more haunting than that which is practiced on the surface of the museum. No longer is the presence or absence of hospitality being measured against the exclusion of particular guests from the site or the increased surveillance tactics inspired by the design of

¹⁹ The nature of unidentified remains – particularly remains that exist as the result of a suicidal terrorist attack – raises a chilling prospect that such remains *could* be those of the hijackers themselves. This is a possibility that will be explored in much greater depth in Chapter 5, where I address the traumatic incorporation of alterity in Don DeLillo’s *Falling Man*.

²⁰ These remains were transferred from their storage facility to their permanent home at the museum on May 10, 2014. This process was marked with ceremony and solemnity. 7930 individual and unidentified remains contained in three coffin-size steel cases were carried by Fire Department, Police Department and Port Authority vehicles in a slow procession to the museum (Farrell).

Freedom Tower. It is also suggestive of more than the conditional inclusion of certain histories and tributes into the official museum displays. The inclusion of human remains at the site is, on some levels, a simultaneous disavowal of particular remains yet it is also, on a deeper level, a *removal* of any conditions for welcome; that is, the museum must be hospitable to *all* remains, or to none at all. The implications of this are significant, particularly in terms of the likelihood that each urn or lab sample might contain remains of victims of a number of different nationalities and cultures, not to mention the possibility of those remains being mixed together with those of the hijackers themselves. It is a chilling prospect, to be sure, but one that has intimate and irrevocable ties to the work of hospitality. According to Derrida, “nothing could be worse, for the work of mourning, than confusion or doubt; one *has to know* who is buried where – and it is *necessary* (to know – to make certain) that, in what remains of him, he *remain* there” (*Specters* 9). As Derrida points out, mourning is challenged when the remains of loved ones cannot be identified or distinguished from one another, but even more so when such remains fail to do what their namesake suggests – that is, to stay in their proper place. Indeed, these particular remains, in so many case buried for months under the rubble of the towers, have not rested since the day of the attacks and have been moved from Ground Zero, to Fresh Kills landfill, to the Medical Examiner’s office in Manhattan and, finally, back to the museum. The entire process suggests that the final resting place for 9/11 victims is anything *but* final and the storage of these remains is permeated with uncertainty. What has been lost in these 14 years of movement between locations – in the sifting and sorting, the extraction of DNA and the cleaning of bones? Equally as disconcerting, what has been gained? What particles, dust, refuse, cleaning solutions, and remnants of human touch have been added in this long process? These remains, in other words, never simply *remain*, and nor are they *only*

remains. The exhibition of remains, thus, must be thought of as an unintentional but nonetheless unconditional hospitality to whatever or whoever's remains might arrive, whether by official transfer or not, and what trace particles and parasites accompany them. Moreover, the word "remains" itself suggests not only a piece or part of something that was once much larger; it refers more emphatically to what is *leftover* – a term more often given to what is unwanted, residual or discarded. Interestingly, however, these remains have been welcomed and, while attempts have certainly been made to identify them, this has not become a condition of their entry. They are included, without a name, and without the assurance that they could be distinguished between guest and hostile. The presence of remains, thus, has significant implications for thinking about how hospitality *does* operate at the memorial site – despite the surface tactics that seem to render the notion of an unconditional welcome impossible – and in ways that are perhaps at odds with how we are accustomed to seeing hospitality exercised. It would seem that the traces of the dead offer an especially complex figure of hospitality, particularly when, as Derrida infers, these remains do not remain – that is, when they are found not only in the carefully demarcated displays and offices in the museum, but also in the other exhibits, staircases, walls and even atmospheric ether of the entire memorial site, from Tower to Crypt.

The uncontained trace of victims, the notion of unidentified remains, and the fear and ambiguity that accompanies the denotation of the entire site as a crypt or final resting place suggests that the presence of spectral traces are not limited to the sanctioned displays of the museum. Indeed, there are traces that cannot be accounted for, even in the specially designed containers through which they are welcomed and incorporated into formal narratives of memorialization where they cannot surprise or interrupt. To be sure, the planning committee attempts to acknowledge the "implications of presenting artifacts in the

Museum that, because of the particular, historical circumstances of 9/11, include a range of objects that might, potentially, contain microscopic traces of human remains, whether in dust or other forms” (“Human Remains” 3), yet the emphasis of such sensitivities continues to be tethered to the material and the scientifically discernable – a hunt for fact and certainty that the sheer numbers of unidentified remains defy. In the absence of bodies to identify and claim, this dust becomes a substitute, a symbolic or spectral presence, but also something that can be held, felt, and, when placed in an urn for safe keeping, feels weighty in hand. Indeed, this seems to be the impetus behind allowing families of unidentified victims to take from the site, an urn filled with symbolic ash along with a “certificate of presumed death” to give families both a sense of closure and a document necessary for practical realities of loss (P. Doss 16). The gift of a symbolic urn does not replace a body, but it gives gravity and form to an otherwise ephemeral and sublimated abstraction. As Sturken notes, “[o]nce it became clear that very few people had survived the cataclysmic collapse of the two buildings, the dust was defined not simply as the refuse of the towers’ destruction, but also as the material remains of the bodies of the dead” that are necessary for the process of grief (“Aesthetics” 312). While the urn given to family members may have fulfilled this material need, I want to think about the dust inside in a more philosophical sense, as a spectral presence that signals an ethic of hospitality, particularly when it is *not* contained in an urn or sterile lab. Dust can be read as an expression of hospitality in terms of immateriality and uncertainly rather than its symbolic yet materially imbued reassurance. There is safety in storing such dust in defined exhibits and sealed urns, a security that may distract from the reality that dust has been floating around uncontained at the site since the towers collapsed. It may be a crude realization, but it must also be considered that those close to the site in both its recovery and rebuilding stages have

already encountered more of this dust than they ever will in the sanctioned spaces of the museum. What might it mean, then, considering its status as a “replacement” or “stand-in” for material bodies, to open one’s life and process of memorialization to an incorporation of dust when it is never fully known if the dust in question is worthy or hazardous or even whose dust one is surrounded by? Indeed, this is the contradiction that lies at the heart of hospitality – the question of whether that which is being welcomed in has come to do harm or good – a question I will return to in Chapter Four where I take up the literal and figurative metaphor of organic shrapnel as a symbol of how we are embedded within the lives of others.

The presence of dust at the former Trade Center site is certainly acknowledged and the phenomenon is explored in depth in terms of its relationship to health and contamination but not in terms of its implications for the work of hospitality. The ghostly presence of the dust surrounding, blanketing, and lingering at Ground Zero following the collapse of the towers has dominated many readings of the recovery effort and it has been referenced in terms of both the towers and the human victims. Yet in both symbolic thought and literal memorial, the separation of human and architectural dust is almost impossible. One notorious example of the intertwining of both is the “Tribute in Light” memorial which dominated the New York skyline from March 11 until April 13, 2002 to mark the six-month anniversary of the attacks. Shooting powerful beams of light up from the tower’s footprints and into the sky, this temporary memorial was referred to as the “Phantom Towers” and the two beams have been described by Julian LaVerdiere, one of the artists involved as “ghost limbs [that] we can feel...even though they’re not there anymore” (in Kirshenblatt-Gimlett 39). Indeed, the towers certainly appear to be there but exist not as steel and concrete but in “incandescent dust,” a spectral rendering of the “pulverized

towers” in “beams of light” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 39). While it could be argued that the tribute memorializes the towers rather than the dead, it nonetheless operates as what Sturken calls “a ghostly shadow of the past” (“Tourists” 226) that raises questions about the function of dust itself as both spectral and material. Unlike the dust that is contained in symbolic urns on display and given to victims’ families, the dust that permeates the site itself is far more ambiguous. It is always present but only made apparent when illuminated and the light appears to gather the particles together as if there is still some life force in them that is drawn to or re-animated by the beam. Thus, the dust collected in the form of the towers is not only residual debris but, rather, a collection of material *in* decay, the implications of which are both exciting – to think there once was and perhaps still is “life” amidst so much death – and alarming. As Patricia Yaeger writes, “[d]etritus is frightening *and* animated” (191, my emphasis), a description that gives dust eerily anthropomorphic qualities. Indeed, while dust signifies the transparent and fleeting character of potential human and structural remains, it also is tangibly material in the ways that it clings to shoes, clothing and hair, and infects lungs with its very real particular hazards. This dust is complicated and unsettling. It is “simultaneously ashes, refuse, evidence, and a fatal contaminant. Its status remains ambiguous and troubling” (Sturken, “Tourists” 166), and it contradicts the notion of dust as a material means by which to grieve and compensate for the loss of a loved one. Not only does the unidentified nature of the dust resist the certainty and closure that comes from knowing who is represented by those particles; it also challenges the status of the dust as a component of healing. It turns potential hostiles into guests while rendering victims possible hostile contaminants. Those who receive this dust, even as willing hosts, are inadvertently opening themselves to the possibility of more grief and less closure. In other words, the presence of dust suggests that symbolic remains of a

loved one could also carry severe consequences – not only in terms of dust’s status as “refuse” (each urn likely contains various forms of debris²¹ rather than human remains) but in the threat it poses to the health of whoever accepts it.

Yet to receive the dust in a spirit of hospitality is to receive the risk that accompanies it. For those who visited the site following the attacks, this possibility was not abstract. Kirshenblatt-Gimlett acknowledges this in her own visit to Ground Zero: “We breathed that dust and inhaled particles of the dead that floated in the air” (25). Yet the implications of this were not immediately apparent. As Sturken reveals, “dust was initially understood as a substance that had to be cleaned away so that life could continue...[then] later produc[ed] what became known as the ‘World Trade cough,’ now understood to be a symptom of debilitating and potentially fatal respiratory disease” (“Tourists” 178).²² Dust, then, functions on many sides of the guest/host relation. While readily welcomed as guest via its containment in a symbolic urn, it also functions as a “host” – or a conduit of human memory – and even, at times, as a “hostile”, actively limiting life rather than affirming it. Dust demonstrates, *par excellence*, the danger and ambiguity of hospitality. It is the revenant that, pushed to the periphery, excluded from ritual and contained in the crypt, always returns and often does so in another form entirely. Sturken suggests that dust “is about circularity, the impossibility of things disappearing, or going away, or being gone” (“Tourists” 180). One can never fully banish the healing nor the hazardous aspects of this

²¹ Indeed, much of the material used to fill the symbolic urns came from the tons of debris that were sifted and sorted at Fresh Kills landfill, on Staten Island. While the name of this site, originally a repository for household and industrial garbage, is derived from the Fresh Kills estuary close by, it conjures an unfortunate allusion to both waste and death. Many relatives of 9/11 victims continue to believe that the landfill still contains human remains mixed in with the pulverized steel and concrete from the towers, making Fresh Kills (and plans to revitalize it as a memorial park) “the world’s most controversial trash heap” (DePalma).

²² The Trade Center cough, as well as a number of other ailments thought to be caused by the dust from 9/11 will be explored in much greater depth in Chapter Five.

dusty presence; it may return as welcome guest or ghost, but it *will* find a way in. If hospitality is concerned with measures of concealment, limited contact and security, then the figure of dust offers a compelling way to think about how risk becomes not the antithesis but, rather, the necessity of an unconditional ethic of welcome. It is the attempt to banish or contain the otherness of figures like dust that thwarts the possibility of hospitable relations. As Jean-Michel Rabaté notes, “‘modern’ philosophy has always attempted to bury [its] irrational Other in some neat crypt, forgetting that it would thereby lead to further ghostly reappearitions” (qtd. in Luckhurst 80). Indeed, the many functions of dust reveal that when the other is either confined to the crypt, as a tidy way of presenting the containment of the dead, or when certain ghosts are uprooted from the crypts they have always occupied, they return in other forms to haunt anew and, as the presence of a single brick from Abbottabad Pakistan reveals, in the most unsettling and unexpected ways.

2.3.2 Unlikely Cryptfellows

As a crypt, the 9/11 museum also inadvertently engages with remains that administrators and politicians would likely prefer to keep buried, even while they stand on obvious display. While the art installation, although shrouding the presence of human remains on site, still speaks symbolically to the human loss of 9/11, there is another exhibit – a brick from a compound in Pakistan – that relies so heavily on the banishment of other ghosts and histories in order to function alongside the larger narrative of the museum. It is this sense of disavowed spectrality that Anne McClintock points to in her reading of the historical ghosts of 9/11 and the War on Terror. She asks, “what secret in the crypt of the past had so forcefully to be forgotten? What inadmissible trauma rose like an unmourned revenant to haunt the tragic ruins of the Twin Towers? (McClintock 820). Although

McClintock is speaking here to a wider terrain of spectral omission – the ghosting of imperial histories of violence and exploitation from indigenous cultural genocide, to Hiroshima, to the War on Terror – her argument can be extended in the context of the 9/11 Museum, of which she does not speak but that nonetheless draws attention to a similar discourse of absence. While the museum is punctuated by these moments of “inadmission,” particularly with regards to the essentialization of 9/11 as an American tragedy, McClintock points to a provocative question regarding the possibility of hospitality: What happens when the display of an item representative of American military violence tries to frame history in a direct and amnesic kind of way but instead conjures a ghost far removed from the museum’s official mandate and purpose? This is precisely the case in the display of a single brick from Osama Bin Laden’s Abbottabad compound. It is placed alongside a Navy Seal uniform and is intended to be a symbol of both those responsible for the attacks and ultimately America’s victory over them; unintentionally, however, it offers much more.

Continuing along the most common path through the museum, and leaving behind the art installation and repository wall, visitors walk through the “Center Passage”, into Foundation Hall where the brick from Abbottabad is displayed. The hall is a curious and cavernous space with only a few exhibition materials. Between the slurry wall and the excavated North Tower – of which the original bedrock support columns are still visible – visitors can have a closer and more in-depth look at the artifacts visible from the mezzanine ramp above. On the way, visitors pass by the mangled wreckage of the Ladder 3 fire engine and the steel beam from Flight 11’s point of impact. Four digital screens inviting personal messages stand at the entry to Foundation Hall, across from the entrances to the historical galleries and recording studio. The most prominent of the Foundation Hall exhibits is the last column, a 30 foot section of steel beam that, as a “symbol of resilience” and tribute to

rescue workers, became the last portion of the tower to be removed from the excavation site (“The Last Column”). Preserved now in the museum, the last column stands alongside interactive features such as recorded testimony from rescue workers, and touch screens that provide close up images of the inscriptions, and posters affixed to the column itself. At the end of Foundation Hall is an interactive timeline that uses a complex algorithm to search news reports from all over the world that contain material related to 9/11. Yet it is what is next to this timeline that is the most curious addition to Foundation Hall. In a glass case – the only exhibit in the Hall that is enclosed – is a Navy Seal uniform and a brick chiseled from Osama Bin Laden’s compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. While the brick is certainly part of the larger narrative of 9/11, it seems out-of-place in a space so heavily invested in emotional commemoration and the personal narratives of victims and rescue workers. There are exhibits detailing the rise of Al Qaeda, the timelines of each hijacking, and history of the War on Terror, yet they are all located elsewhere, part of the historical exhibition, and the brick stands out in stark contrast to the overwhelmingly somber, commemorative, and deeply personal Foundation Hall displays.

However, the brick also calls up significant and likely unintentional similarities that are particularly compelling in a museum narrative that seeks to establish a common identity among visitors that is easily distinguishable from 9/11 perpetrators. Indeed, there is an overwhelming rhetoric of “us” and “them” that immediately interpellates the visitor into the museum’s memorial imaginary. One of the ways that the display of the brick accomplishes this is through its accompanying context. The audio guide provided by the museum in the form of a smart phone “app” provides additional details on a number of items in the main exhibition space, including the “Brick from Abbottabad” (*9/11 Museum Audio Guide*).

Narrated by actor Robert DeNiro, the mobile application has an extended explanation of the

brick that begins with “you are standing...” (*Audio Guide*). Not only does this opening phrase immediately call the visitor into a shared discourse of understanding between the creators of the audio guide and the larger political narrative surrounding the killing of Osama Bin Laden, it also raises crucial questions about the hailing of a presumably sympathetic guest. Who is the “you” in this case, and, moreover, who is the “we” that FBI investigator Mary Galligan, for instance, refers to in the ongoing commentary on the brick when she decrees “we had to find him” (*Audio Guide*, emphasis added)? The museum presumes that the brick comes to stand for a difference with which no visitor will identify. The audio commentary, moreover, acts as a way of announcing the arrival of the guest/visitor – who is initiated into a sameness shared by DeNiro, Galligan, and museum curators – as well as the arrival of the brick, an other/hostile who is invited into the museum, conditionally, and only in its capacity to stand as a marker of murderous and irredeemable difference. What is the museum asking of us who visit then? To align ourselves with victims, families, and Americans, regardless of the shaky definitions of each, and to push aside difference? To unite in grief, memorialization, and, ultimately, victory? Indeed, the circumstances and commentary surrounding this particular brick – one of thousands to fall from the compound – present it as a historical artifact but also as a spoil of war. Indeed, part of the brick’s curious placement is due to its value as a testament to vengeance and revenge; it is an enduring reminder of the combined efforts of the CIA and the SEAL team and a symbol of justice served. In this way, the brick breaks from the narrative of memorialization and resembles, much more closely, the rhetoric of revenge and retribution that characterized so many of the cultural responses to Bin Laden’s death.²³ By

²³ The rhetoric of revenge was prominent following the news of Bin Laden’s death on May 2, 2011. The *New*

doing this, the symbolism of the brick inadvertently links the museum with a project of revenge, even if this is not its expressed purpose, and suggests that the attacks need to be not only remembered but also perpetually avenged. What is also significant are the ways in which the brick's placement and context draw attention to a revenge that can only be enacted through violent means. Bin Laden's death is represented here not in the form of an obituary, a birth and death date, or images of his burial; rather, it is represented as a death that was specifically carried out as a targeted killing and in direct retaliation for the 9/11 attacks. A recent study by Mario Gollwitzer et al. confirms that acts of revenge tend to carry more symbolic weight when the act of vengeance is directly linked to the original crime. Bin Laden's death, in other words, is more meaningful to seekers of vengeance because he was assassinated as opposed to a death brought about by natural, pathological, or accidental causes. Gollwitzer et al. found that Americans, in particular, experienced more "satisfaction" at Bin Laden's death by assassination than they would had he died by other means, yet a feeling of "justice" does not necessarily preclude the desire to see additional acts of vengeance (Gollwitzer et al. 9-10). From this perspective, then, the brick from the Abbottabad compound not only serves as a symbol of delivered vengeance; it also points to a desire for revenge that is open and ongoing. Justice has been served, in other words, but perhaps not in full. We might consider this brick then as a nod to victory but simultaneously a reminder of a war that will never be won.

York Post employed this discourse emphatically on its front page with a bold "GOT HIM" in block letters and beneath that: "Vengeance at last! US nails the bastard." *Newsweek* used a white and red image of Bin Laden with the title "Mission Accomplished" for its May 16, 2011 cover and the Seattle weekly magazine *The Stranger* highlighted the old-adage of "an eye for an eye" the week of May 4-10, 2011 by depicting Bin Laden much like a black and white tower against the blue backdrop of the sky, a lone bullet approaching from his left side bearing resemblance to an airplane flying much too low. Even President Barack Obama employed the language of revenge when, on television and announcing Bin Laden death to the world, he proclaimed "Justice has been done" (qtd. in Phillips).

At the same time that the brick recalls a sustained preoccupation with vengeance and victory, it gestures towards another set of unintended consequences. The brick is most certainly a symbol of revenge but it is not contained by that symbolism either. In other words, it is much more than the revenge that it signifies, and more than the narrative made possible through its final display location. Indeed, before the arrival of the museum visitor, however, before the integration of written context, audio commentary and glass casing, and prior to being set alongside a Navy Seal uniform, a brick arrives at the gate of the crypt. Like all artifacts arriving at the museum, it is treated carefully, possibly handled with gloves so as not to disturb its fragile state of decomposition. At once an object of abjection, slated for demolition, and one of celebration, this artifact is meticulously preserved, even protected. It is an oddly generous, we might even say hospitable, welcoming of an artifact that was intended for destruction and carelessly chiseled with little regard for its conservation. Stripped of context and down to its irreducible singularity, then, the brick announces something besides its affiliation with terrorism – something else entirely – that may not eliminate but certainly exposes the conditional hospitality leveled upon it. Furthermore, it calls on visitors to recognize the scene by which they will be interpellated, and that has already been determined, calling into question Foundation Hall's emphasis on a shared narrative of events, and, more crucially, a shared vulnerability to attack. The display assuages difference by asking visitors to participate in a collective identity that is not directly victimized but closely and somewhat arbitrarily aligned. But who is the "we" or the "us" that visits the museum as opposed to the "us" that died there – an "us" that, if the brick is any indication, is far more complicated than the official narrative allows?

The audio commentary on the brick, as well as its placement next to a Navy Seal uniform and in a case that also details the ongoing threat of global terrorism present the

“terrorist” as a figure of abject difference. Yet that is not all the brick is and does. At first glance, it appears like any brick, although lighter in color than a traditional red brick. Its edges are not perfectly squared and the color of the natural rock from which it was excavated shows through. It is stamped with an indistinguishable imprint and several indented marks can be seen, perhaps from the destruction of the compound or from the chisel used to separate it from other bricks. On its own, it appears innocuous and unthreatening – De Niro admits it is “small”, “unassuming,” and “humble” (*Audio Guide*). Importantly, the brick is not from the top of the three-story compound but, rather, a piece of its fortified foundation (“Brick from Compound”). Accompanying context reveals its origin, purpose, and journey from Abbottabad to the museum and provides visitors with a substantial amount of factual information. It functions, thereby, as a kind of bookend to the museum’s meta-narrative that opens with the attacks on the towers and concludes with the death of Bin Laden – the perpetrator of those attacks. The brick, however, operates far more than evidence of “justice served”; it also inadvertently raises provocative questions about the nature of remnant objects, which function in often-unintended ways. What are the accidental effects, for example, of including an artifact that is also from a place of ruin – an item that, if positioned without its context, could easily be mistaken for a chiseled piece of bedrock from one of the towers? Indeed, the brick shares an eerie affinity with the excavated support columns of the towers that are on display throughout the museum. Similar in color and composition, the “Box Column Remnants” lie at intervals around both the North and South Tower excavations (*Audio Guide*). As the anchors for the steel beams that supported the towers, these remnants have been cut in such a way that the grooves in the surface resemble the chisel marks on the Abbottabad brick. Moreover, much like the brick from Bin Laden’s compound, the box column remnants are support structures,

excavated from the *foundation* of the towers. They are, like the foundation bricks in Abbottabad, what anchored the towers in place and, just as the foundational bedrock at Ground Zero is not simply inanimate rock, neither is the brick. Both carry meaning far deeper than their physical composition and function, and it their curious placement in such proximity that allows us to think about a hospitality to difference precisely through their similarities. There are compelling comparisons to be made between the brick and the tower bedrock. Both are stone, both are preserved for eternity (presumably), and yet both represent vulnerable buildings and bodies. Moreover, neither was *intended* to be excavated and put on display in this fashion, and the exhibition of geological material seems more appropriate for a natural history museum than a memorial one. Curiously then, in their similarities, the brick and the bedrock are both figures of difference; they are both out-of-place and not entirely at home in this space, even if part of the original structure.

The placement of the brick in Foundation Hall could possibly stand as a reminder of by whom and how the 9/11 attacks were perpetrated. Perhaps it is not enough to recount the rise of Al Qaeda in a historical display – it must also be continually referenced through the museum so that the process of memorialization and the threat of terrorism are never distinct from one another. The brick could also serve as a point of victory and celebration, as it sits alongside the Navy fatigues as a testament to the bravery of the Seal team and resilience of counterterrorism intelligence. Indeed, the intended function of the brick could be any one or all of these things. Yet why is it remembered here – in an area so invested in tribute? Incredibly, while many visitors can turn around and walk back through the Foundation Hall the way they came, it is also possible to walk from the display of the brick, around the perimeter of the North Tower back to the center passage between the two towers. There is only one possible route around this excavation area and after the brick, the dedicated

walkway follows the angles of the former tower (alongside box column remnants) around to Spencer Finch's art installation that obscures the repository for 9/11 remains. There are, in short, no additional exhibits between the brick and the repository adding to the peculiar and unexpected positioning of the brick on the far side of Foundation Hall. The repository and the brick, in other words, are literally next to one another; they are neighbors in this space and they share it as most unlikely cryptfellows. The brick's location in Foundation Hall, rather than in the history of Al Qaeda and as a stranger *alongside* established victims, is so crucial and, while it is surely not the intended function, the location of brick positions it not as history to be told but as a trace *to be remembered*. It is, if both its original location and final resting place are any indication, *foundational* to the ways in which we come to think about ourselves in relation to strangers.

In addition to its function as a marker of difference (yet not fully subsumed by the difference given unto it), the brick also conjures a rhetoric of hospitality in its original location. As Alex Drakakis points out, Bin Laden's compound was often referred to as a "safe house" ("Brick from Compound"), an interesting turn of phrase when considering the implications of an ethical hospitality in which a host is not always secure in his own home. Indeed, to this point we have considered what it means for the Abbottabad brick, and even Bin Laden himself, whose presence is so powerfully evoked by this fragment of his final home, to be considered a guest (albeit a hostile one) in the museum. It is an object that recalls another scene of guests and unwelcome arrivals, particularly when the narrative shifts away from the museum and backwards in time to the raid on Bin Laden's compound

in 2011.²⁴ It is an interesting perspective that considers that compound as not the wellspring of violence but a site subject to harm and destruction itself. Bin Laden's safe house was certainly on the radar of intelligence officials for some time prior to his assassination there but that does not alter the significance of a home razed by an unexpected guest. It is an uncomfortable avenue of thinking, while walking within this hallowed space, to contemplate contemporary culture's terrorist *par excellence* as a host, in his home, *at home*, even when we are reminded by Peter Melville that "hospitality means being hospitable to the absolutely inhospitable" (178). It is a surprising domestication of terror that does not make light of the acts of terror committed by Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda globally but, rather, highlights one of hospitality's more troubling realizations – that safety is, in fact, the antithesis of hospitality. Gideon Baker reminds us that "providing entry only to known individuals defined in advance as not posing a security risk might be many things, but it is not hospitality" (117). To be sure, Bin Laden's compound is a difficult example to think through, particularly as it has come to be identified with a perpetrator of decidedly inhospitable acts of aggression and violence. Thinking hospitality through the safe house is perhaps strange, but is it any more strange than including a brick from this house in the 9/11 museum? Almost everything about the Abbottabad brick seems out-of-place; its resemblance to the excavated bedrock, ordination in regards to the repository wall, and its affiliation with perpetrator rather than victim in an exhibition hall (with this solitary exception) dedicated to meaningful tribute. The proximity between the brick and the remains of 9/11 victims, not to mention the resemblance between the brick and the bedrock – not to mention the particles of dust from both that mingle indistinguishable from one

²⁴ This is a narrative that will be articulated in far greater detail in the next chapter, where I investigate the complexities of hospitality in the 2012 film *Zero Dark Thirty*.

another – are particularly strange scenarios in a museum that seeks, on every occasion, to highlight the difference between victim and perpetrator. Yet what would it mean to think of the destruction of the towers and the victims who died there as similar to the destruction of Osama Bin Laden’s compound and *his* death? Conversely, what can be made of this inadvertent, or perhaps careless, juxtaposition of artifacts within Foundation Hall that actually prevents such an unthinkable equivalence and how do we think through this similarity in order to maintain a difference that does not level the ethical demands of each? It is possible to test the conventions, possibilities, and limits of hospitality without dissolving completely the difference between brick and bedrock. By some force of theoretical alchemy we might try to meld the two together; they would, by all material appearances, be indistinguishable and there is certainly something provocatively productive in thinking through a would-be object²⁵ whose material remains are ambiguous. Yet despite the important ethical questions raised by similitude – the ways in which they both represent a kind of structural and corporeal vulnerability, for instance – such questions need not detract from the singularity of each and their unique demands. If these objects appear similar, that must not eliminate their differences. To see both as representative of loss, in other words, is not to hold those losses in equity. Both are differentially complex. Indeed, the victims of the 9/11 attacks, whose remains are stored behind the repository wall, are unidentified yet easily mourned. Osama Bin Laden, on the other hand, is strategically

²⁵ This possibility is not simply imaginative as the museum does contain an object precisely of this sort. Part of the historical exhibition includes a large section of the former towers known simply as “the composite”. The composite is a 15-ton section of compressed granite, steel and other material which fused together during the collapse of the buildings. Scientific analysis has proven that there are no biological remains present in the composite, yet while no human DNA has been found in the composite, officials do admit that comprehensive testing is difficult. It is, after all, comprised of four or five floors and includes pieces of paper with discernable human writing that, despite the lack of official DNA, offer “trace” remains of human contact and industry.

located, forensically identified, and yet nearly impossible to mourn. Thus, the utility of thinking through difference lies not in rendering these artifacts, bodies or losses equal but, rather, in leveraging a comparison – an effect produced by the ordering and display of the 9/11 Museum – in order to think through the complexities of hospitality more comprehensively and trace its prevalence more than its solution across a number of complicated terrains.

2.4 Conclusion: Hospitality and the Ghost of Traumas Past

There is, perhaps, no more complicated terrain in a memorial museum than the “museum store.” Most visits to a cultural institution, whether art gallery, museum or monument, are not complete without a trip to the gift shop and the 9/11 museum is no exception. Located near the exit of the exhibition, visitors pass by the museum store on their journey back to the surface of the memorial. It is difficult, after exploring the depths of the museum itself – including preserved store front windows, caked in dust but not entirely dissimilar from the gift shop’s retail displays – to shake the specter that seems to linger even in the spaces reserved for retail rather than burial. Promoted by officials as a way to fund the museum’s ongoing programs and operating costs, and critiqued by victims’ families as “catharsis consumerism” (Kingston), the gift shop sells everything from women’s scarves, emblazoned with graphics of the towers, to FDNY dog vests. More conventional gift shop items are also available, including books, coffee mugs, t-shirts and even children’s toys. While the museum itself is dark, with dim lighting, dark wooden floors and many grey and narrow corridors, the museum store is bright, open and well-lit. It gives visitors time to transition between the crypt-like underground exhibits and the cloistered memorial gardens and, importantly, gives them an opportunity to take something

tangible home. It may not be a symbolic urn, but a piece of jewelry, a postcard, or a photograph becomes an item that visitors can possess.

Yet the gift shop alerts us to a possession of another kind, one that we cannot simply “dust” off as we leave the museum. Indeed, to dwell in the presence of human remains, dust, remnant objects and virtual displays would seem more like a visit to a haunted house were it not for the lingering of actual specters. A visit to the museum, then, is an experience with multiple levels of hospitality at once – an invitation to share in a narrative of memorialization and tribute but, on a more compelling level, an unbidden haunting. In *Seeing Ghosts: 9/11 and the Visual Imagination*, Engle notes “[i]n as much as *we are, we are* by virtue of others passing through our lives, memories, and bodies” (115). What is this *passing through* – the ultimate expression of hospitable welcome, and the literal and metaphorical giving oneself over to an other – if not the very definition of ghostly possession? Hospitality is, unequivocally and even traumatically, possession of another, by another, for another. To travel beneath the surface of the memorial and into the literal crypt of 9/11 trauma is to discover that the memorial and museum are powerfully, intimately and irrevocably concerned with matters of haunting, and, more specifically, the figure of the ghost. The ghost becomes such a crucial figure for hospitality not because it appears as an invited guest in the space and archive of the museum but, rather, because hospitality is not based on invitation at all but on visitation. The museum can certainly limit its scope of invitation through a variety of practical and discursive practices, but it cannot limit the visitation(s) that an ambiguous figure such as the specter make possible. It would seem that the most provocative figures of hospitality are the ones that show up despite the attempts to banish them, to render them invisible, and despite the refusals to acknowledge their lingering presence. Ultimately, while certain narratives are rendered ghostly (or

ghastly) and excised from the memorial space, these ghosts return as virtual specters or trace phantoms in remnant objects such as bricks and are never fully exorcised in order to pose serious questions about how we encounter strangers after 9/11. If hospitality is concerned especially with what or who does not belong, then the museum and memorial provide ample evidence of things “out of place”: obscene images of falling bodies, eerie artifacts, human remains, disembodied objects and voices, and the faces of the perpetrators. These are the *revenants* of the museum – the things that are not invited into the official narratives of memorialization but that “come back precisely because [they] have been buried or concealed” much like memory (Kearney, *Strangers* 142). While there has been much discussion around the presence of ghosts haunting the hallowed space at Ground Zero, there is also much to be said about the work of the spectral and its function as a social and cultural (rather than exclusively gothic) figure that expresses a philosophy of hospitality. Avery Gordon, for instance, suggests that “the ghost is not simply dead or a missing person, but a social figure” (qtd. in Ladwig 90) and that “[g]hostly matters are part of social life” (Gordon 23). As Ladwig elaborates, “ghosts can here be understood as strangers to the realm of the living who through the crossing of an ontological boundary intrude into a world to which they usually do not belong” (91). Thus, in their deconstructive efforts, ghosts become both the invited and uninvited guests in the process of making and unmaking meaning. As figures demonstrative of the impossibility of absolute ideological suppression, they deconstruct the very processes that seek to annihilate them. In short, they challenge what we know and understand about the world, whether they are summoned or not.

While the ghost may be discovered in the crypt of the museum, it is certainly not confined to that aspect of the site by any means. In fact, in ascending the stairway back to

the surface, past the museum store and out into the memorial gardens with the reflective pools and Freedom Tower looming near, it becomes apparent that these strangers can be found on the surface as well. They are not only in the dust, illuminated and brought (back) to life in the beams of the “tribute in light,” but also in the ethereal nature of the entry pavilion, the skeletal steeple of the new tower, the haunting name “Ground Zero”, the phantom footprints of the reflective pools, the scuffmarks of boots on pews in St. Paul’s Chapel, and the shape of a skyline that, when viewed from a distance, will remain unfamiliar for a long time to come. The entire memorial quadrant is heavily invested in a rhetoric steeped in spectrality. The crypt may surprise with its moments and figures of unlooked-for hospitality, but it also alerts us to the specter that has been haunting the surface of things all along. It may well be, for example, that the ghost arrives not only to challenge our processes of commemoration and rituals of mourning but also our official claims to history and historical record. As Jeffrey Weinstock suggests, the haunting of ghosts “indicates that, beneath the surface of received history, there lurks another narrative, an untold story that calls into question the veracity of the authorized version of events” (5). These ghosts do not only show up in the most obvious places, for example, in the emphasis on Ground Zero as a graveyard and the purposeful display of symbolic remains; these are the conjurings that attempt to reinvigorate a nationalist or commemorative spirit by the confining of ghosts to a particular function. What is even more compelling are the ghosts that go largely unacknowledged – the phantoms and uninvited guests that show up in the museum’s displays, behind the screens, in the posters and leaflets, in the gift shop, inorganic objects, and in the traces and touch of the dead on all these artifacts. What these unacknowledged ghosts might reveal is not so much how they have managed to creep up unannounced, giving weight to a more conventional reading of the site’s haunted house of

horrors but, rather, that these ghosts have been there all along, long before the towers fell and in the historical hauntings of American imperialism and violence. That is, there is a specter that has curtailed the work of hospitality since long before the terrorist attacks but one that the aftermath of attack makes all the more noticeable.

As the specific texts and archives of the memorial and museum reveal, the ghosts that turn up in the museum's spaces and displays, indeed in the very notion of a memorial museum itself, reinforce the centrality of the ghost to hospitality and the question of the stranger. Moreover, these specters expose a preoccupation with strangers and strangeness that extends far beyond the walls of the museum, or the four corners of the memorial quadrant. At stake in the welcoming (back) of uninvited ghosts to the former World Trade Center site is the possibility that such ghosts arrive not only to teach us something about hospitality, but to demand that we exercise such hospitality before we know what the consequences might be and regardless of where we might be. It is no coincidence that the very language used to describe strangers invokes the spectral. For example, Anthony Steinbock describes encountering the stranger as a "different way of sensing" that involves "visions", "locutions", and experiences of "affliction" (109) and what are such descriptors if not risky and ghostly sensations? Undoubtedly, the ghost is the unannounced, unexpected and uninvited stranger *par excellence* who defies all attempts to render it familiar or predict its arrival. Derrida defines this arrival of the stranger as "[a]waiting without horizon of the wait, awaiting what one does not expect yet or any longer, hospitality without reserve, welcoming salutation accorded in advance to the absolute surprise of 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" (*Specters* 81-82). Derrida's definition is even more apt when reading the ghost at the memorial and museum

site, as a specter who not only comes uninvited but arrives before the notion of awaiting such an arrival ever enters the imagination. It is the ghost too that, in a sense, is always waiting, existing perpetually on a threshold between here and there, life and death. Indeed, the specter forces us to confront important questions, among them: is the ghost a welcome guest, a hostile threat, or perhaps both? Indeed, in addition to challenging the borders of what we know or expect, the ghost also confronts questions of being and reality that are integral to a deeper understanding of (and intervention in) post 9/11 culture. For Derrida, ghosts are crucial to working through these questions. He states “the dead can often be more powerful than the living; and that is why to interpret a philosophy as philosophy or ontology of life is never a simple matter” (Derrida, *Specters* 60). Indeed, these are questions that only increase in consequence as we move further away from September 11th, 2001, the date, and towards a notion of 9/11 as a defining cultural milieu – one whose meaning reverberates and recurs endlessly. As a moment, the event shapes and haunts the present, even (and especially) as the completion of the museum and official missions of the “War on Terror” have been scaled back yet at the same time renewed, especially in Iraq and Syria, with a different yet familiar enemy. The figure of the ghost reminds us that this past is not dissociated from even the more philosophical questions about others and strangers. Finally, exposing the centrality of the ghost to both hospitality and the 9/11 Memorial and Museum reveals that while the ghost appears unannounced and without warning, its presence in both the theory and the archive are not new. Thus, it must be recognized that ghosts are neither emergent in, nor original to, literary and cultural criticism. They do not suddenly appear after 9/11, in the text of the museum, and in places where they did not already haunt. What I argue through my reading of these texts and spaces is that, when welcomed into the cultural criticism surrounding the memorial and museum, there is

something the ghosts can teach us about how we respond to and read the culture of 9/11, and it is something intimately and provocatively invested in relations of hospitality.

The September 11 Memorial and Museum is a compelling text through which to think the specter's relation to hospitality and exclusion as it is saturated with the ghosts of what is left out of the archive itself as well as the politics surrounding how the event of 9/11 and its aftermath are to be remembered, commemorated and taught. Yet the ghost does more than pose critical questions about politics and culture; it is also a decidedly ethical figure – a sign of alterity that makes significant demands. Despite the attempt to exorcise ghosts from the memorial site or, at the very least, force them to conform to acceptable positions as harbingers or protectors of nationalist culture and ideology, the ghost is a figure that resists such containment and, if accepted under conditions of absolute hospitality, can teach us much about how we encounter strangers and strangeness in a post-9/11 world. More, such ghosts return to teach us something about the past, a past we may not be familiar with and thus demands an openness to the kinds of memories that ghosts may bring along that challenge not only the enduring and decidedly exceptional narrative of 9/11 but other global instances of violence and inequity as well. In *Parting Ways*, Judith Butler asks what it might mean “to have the history of the oppressed enter, to interrupt, transfigure or light up, stall, reconstellate the time of the present otherwise understood as a kind of marching on” (104). Later, she suggests this “flash” is “decidedly not substance” but that which opens the gate to a “memory that takes fragmented and scattered form” (Butler, “Parting Ways” 106). Butler does not name this move explicitly as a form of hospitality, but the language she uses certainly conjures both the spirits of unconditional welcome and those of the specter. Perhaps it is the ghost that opens this gate for us and interrogates our openness to the oppressed histories elided in the service of a narrative of

9/11 memorialization that, however official, remains incomplete. Indeed, as Gordon argues, “the ghost cannot be simply tracked back to an individual loss or trauma. The ghost has its own desires” (183). Gordon’s recognition is crucial in the context of memorialization and the individualization of diverse desires for the museum and memorial. We must ask of our memorials, in other words, what the ghosts – guests or hostiles – might want and offer a hospitality to history that accounts for those omissions.

The September 11 Memorial and Museum, through its conjuring of some ghosts and exorcism of others, reveals not only the complexity but the absolute necessity of a hospitality towards the specter. Ultimately, despite the “ghosting” of certain narratives and other forms of exclusion, the presence of human remains, strange artifacts like the Abbottabad Brick, and the immaterial figure of dust, reveal that the specter is anything *but* contained in this archive. This is a realization – and perhaps the most appropriate kind of *memorialization* – of an event that continues to have effects, reverberating in New York and around the globe, and is not in any rigorous sense finished. The specter sneaks though, changes form and resists attempts to impose conditions on its arrival. The ghosts at Ground Zero pose ethical as well as ontological questions about how we mourn a traumatic event and what that mourning might mean in terms of how we incorporate or disavow remnants, or revenants, be they the return or residue of memory, artifacts or the living dead that are buried in the crypt like foundations of the museum and aspirated as dust into the lungs of New Yorkers. While its initial associations may be of hearth and home, hospitality is always, first and foremost, a haunting and it is a haunting brought on by mourning which makes the processes of memorialization at Ground Zero an ideal site upon which to practice an ethic of unconditional welcome to whomever, whatever (ghosts, guests, strangers or hostiles) might turn up, for even in that extreme risk there is something to be learned that

transcends the scene of the museum and makes tangible the possibilities of hospitality across the complex topographies of social and cultural life after 9/11. As Jodey Castricano elaborates, “[t]o learn to live *with* ghosts is to rethink ourselves through the dead or, rather, through the return of the dead (in us) and thus through haunting” (19). This living with, as a kind of living *through* and *for*, is not about tolerance, nor is it about charity. It is not about welcoming the stranger in, as kind of benevolent extension of the privilege of the host but, rather, about an unreserved welcome to a figure from whom we require nothing but whom nonetheless comes with much to offer.

Chapter 3 Surprised by Hospitality: Violence and Intimacy in Kathryn Bigelow's *Zero Dark Thirty*

“At such thresholds of experience, we stand in an event: an opening onto hospitality. But doors can be opened or shut. Or stand ajar...the event might lead to a welcome kiss or a violent struggle...who can recall who spoke or reached out first?”

(Kearney and Semonovitch, *Phenomenologies of the Stranger* 4)

In 2006, five years to the month after the 9/11 attacks, *Vogue Italia* released their September issue, which included a multi-page fashion editorial by famed photographer Steven Meisel. In the piece, entitled “State of Emergency,” models wear designer fashion while photographed in various stages of undress and discomfort. In the title image, a brunette model wears a concerned look as she steps into (or possibly out of) a leather skirt after walking through an airport screening gate. Under the careful watch of three guards – and one salivating dog – she leans forward into their gaze. Her face is visible, as are bits of her flesh – in particular, her upper thigh and hip but also her chest, which is seen under a sheer blouse that appears to be untied and falling open from neck to navel. Her contorted and exposed body appears in stark contrast to the relatively relaxed postures of the (fully clothed) guards. One stands with hands authoritatively on hips and another with arms crossed – both have two feet planted firmly and securely on the floor. A third guard, mostly outside of the shot, leans leisurely on a security stanchion, legs crossed, and his arm, knee and holstered baton border the shot on three sides and contain the model within a crude frame. She steps through the metal detector, so often seen as a routine and benign pre-flight ritual, and into a scene of interrogation, surveillance and violence. Yet this is a still image;

there is no *act* of violence, per se, that might be traced or followed through to its ultimate implication. It is a frozen moment in time, staged but leaving little doubt about what happens before or after in the realities the image evokes. Likewise, the title of the editorial confirms this is not one isolated moment – an anomaly perhaps – rather, it is the ongoing “state” of things in a new climate of security.

Meisel’s image certainly seems to offer a critique of post-9/11 paranoia and uses a white woman – so clearly unable to conceal anything in her stage of undress, let alone any kind of restricted object – in order to address the absurdity of racially targeted profiling, particularly in airports which operate as loci of the new security paradigm. As a white woman, the model calls attention to a process of profiling often rendered invisible and naturalized – this is, in fact, accomplished simultaneously with the positioning of a black, female security guard who is in a position of power in the image yet curiously remains more exposed than her male counterparts with sunglasses. The image implicates the viewer as not only witness to the events unfolding (yet suspended); it also asks viewers to see this scene, not as one they are familiar with (a banal encounter with the TSA), but as an encounter punctuated by figures of defamiliarization: the black woman in power, the white woman in expensive clothing as a security threat, and the overall sexualization of the scene, represented by the strip-search scenario and the baton, at once phallic and authoritative. Yet the image also alerts us to an entirely different, yet related, set of problems and contradictions; that is, the complexities of hospitality in a time of terror that underwrite even the most banal and routine encounters. These are the figures that so often pose a problem for hospitality – the gate itself, the exposure of both guest and host, the complex operations of framing and enclosure, and the entangled figures of proximity, violence, race, and gender that suggest hospitality is not only philosophical; it is *embodied*. The set of

conditions imagined by Meisel, at once strange *and* familiar, not only reveal a crucial tension between hospitality and security, they also alert us to a hospitality that exceeds the frames that seek to contain it – be it the physical barrier of the gate or the standard designations of moral “good” that are too readily equated with hospitality or, rather, to which hospitality is too readily reduced. Moreover, Meisel’s photograph alludes to the ways in which human dignity is sacrificed in the name of security, and how such processes expose a fraught tie between our desires for both security and hospitality. Overall, the image confronts its viewer with a startling amount of violence but also calls to mind a disturbing intimacy that raises a number of questions for the ways in which closeness is experienced and represented in a culture where terrorist attack is perpetually imminent. How, for example, do moments such as this one call up other histories of terror, and of racialized and gendered violence and how might hospitality function within those relations? And as representations, how do such images reflect a social and cultural reality at the same time as they disavow real incidences of torture and interrogation and hierarchize some violence as acceptable? Also at stake in the relationship between intimacy and hospitality is the distinction between an intimacy that is welcomed and invited, and one that confronts and arrives without warnings or permissions – if, that is, it arrives at all. I use intimacy, here and elsewhere, to refer to a set of practices and movements in which selves are brought together in a closeness that is proximal, though not always physical; a giving over of oneself to another, though not always reciprocal; and a relation characterized by transparency, vulnerability and, often, desire. Meisel’s photograph and, indeed, the scenes in *Zero Dark Thirty* that will unfold in what follows often do not give us a choice; they force their viewer into an intimate relation that is unwilling, suggesting that even within a practice of hospitality, intimacy is not always exercised or experienced freely. To be sure,

we may willingly decide whether to look or turn away, but we remain hostages to an injunction posed by the image that cannot be disavowed or unseen, though it may be a source of pleasure or pain. With that in mind, then, how do representations of violence welcome viewers into what are, effectively, *regimes* of intimacy, in which events such as torture startle and confront while, at the same time, the violent and powerful undertones of the security paradigm are filtered through the political liberalism of romanticized (and award-winning) artistic narratives?

3.1 Hospitality and Terror in Television and Film: Contexts and Questions

At the same time as Meisel's editorial calls up figures that suggest a practice or ethics of hospitality is anything but simple, it also gestures towards the significance of such an ethics that finds timely resonance in our current social and political milieu but, at the same time, exceeds this context. The fight against terror, for example, is permeated by references to hospitality, whether it be the ways in which people are welcomed differentially according to perceptions of race and gender, or in the establishment of closed sites, states of exception, and the classifying of individuals outside the law. These figures of hospitality are also reflected in the cultural representations of the War on Terror and, while they are certainly leveraged as reflections of reality, they respond to and are created within a set of real conditions and have much influence over how 9/11 and the War on Terror are encountered, taught, and remembered. More specifically, these figures come to account for a variety of ways in which a fascination with and anxiety over strangers is perhaps more pronounced than ever. The threat of terrorism around the globe has been appropriated into a vast archive of television and filmic representation from the amusing (one might place the satirical publication *The Onion* or the television programs *South Park* and *Family Guy*

here) to the more serious, commemorative and, at times, even critical – an archive that is far more expansive given contemporary media’s penchant for counter-terrorism narratives and the prevalence with which New York is used as a backdrop for countless television and film texts. For instance, much like the fiction written in the aftermath of 9/11, the event finds its way in to dramatic programs such as *Blue Bloods* (2010-2014), where a family of police officers refers often to the loss of one of their brothers on 9/11, or *Fringe* (2008-2013), which imagines an alternate universe in which the towers still stand. These programs, much like Meisel’s “State of Emergency,” are but a few examples of how the event of 9/11 reverberates in cultural production and signals the ways in which contemporary cultural forms remain deeply invested in questions of what it means to respond to others in a time of terror, and, indeed, to terror itself. Yet while these texts mediate the relationship between terror and hospitality – a relationship that is, crucially, always in tension but not always in opposition – they do so often by way of aesthetic pleasure or enjoyment – a process made more complex when such texts depict violence.

One particularly powerful example of this that has been the focus of both critique and acclaim (collecting 5 nominations at the 85th Academy Awards)²⁶ is the 2012 film, *Zero Dark Thirty*. Based on real-life events, Kathryn Bigelow’s blockbuster narrativizes the decade long hunt for Osama Bin Laden, told through the perspective of a young, female CIA operative named Maya. The film documents many aspects of the search for Bin Laden, including internal CIA politics, ongoing acts of terror and the process of intelligence

²⁶ *Zero Dark Thirty* received Oscar nominations for Best Picture, Best Actress, Best Writing, Best Film Editing and won in the category of Sound Editing. In terms of other awards, actress Jessica Chastain was awarded best actress at the Golden Globe Awards and the Screen Actors Guild Awards. Director Kathryn Bigelow was awarded a BAFTA, among other prizes for her work. Bigelow also won an Oscar for her direction in *The Hurt Locker* (2008), which earned another five Oscars in various categories.

gathering, but what is particularly compelling are the more surprising moments of hospitality that are found throughout the film. Indeed, the film offers a sustained encounter with figures of the stranger and strangeness that appear by way of continual references to gates, doors and thresholds but also in the rituals of gift-giving and invitation and, most remarkably, in the depictions of prisoner interrogation. The representation of torture in *Zero Dark Thirty* is, of course, the main source of controversy over the film and critics have referred to such scenes as celebrating prisoner violence and offering a misleading picture of the intelligence received using such methods.²⁷ It seems unlikely, at first, that the depiction of torture – especially torture that calls real historical violence to mind – would offer anything on the subject of hospitality other than its abject failure. What is it, then, about the act of torture or the moment of violence that opens to the possibility of hospitality? What encounters are enabled, foreclosed and made explicit by these moments of forced or coerced intimacy? *Zero Dark Thirty*, to be sure, reinforces dichotomous thinking emblematic of War on Terror rhetoric and positions violence as justifiable in the service of the “greater good,” yet it offers some surprising turns toward a philosophy of hospitality,

²⁷ While reviews of the film tend to sidestep important matters of race, gender and sexuality, they are fairly consistent in their criticism. Reviewers overwhelmingly read the film as not only a glorification of torture, but a misleading one at that, in terms of the film’s suggestion that such interrogation techniques aided in locating Osama Bin Laden. David Edelstein, for example, claims the film “makes a case for the efficacy of torture” (in Fox), a critique supported by Jesse Fox who adds that such torture is presented as being “universally supported within the intelligence community” (Fox). Other reviews take a more traditional route, breaking the film down into its many components and assessing each individually. Alex Von Tunzelmann, for example, gives the film letter grades, granting a respectable B- for “Entertainment” but a less-than-average C for “History” (Von Tunzelmann). One of the more critical reviews hints at a critique rooted in gender and queer analysis, claiming unapologetically that “[t]he first third of *Zero Dark Thirty* is unadulterated torture porn” (Kassem). Responding to these critiques, Bigelow is quick to defend her choices, claiming that “depiction is not endorsement” (qtd. in Von Tunzelmann) while at the same time appealing to artistic license, a strategy for which there is no excuse, according to Steve Coll. He argues that “filmmakers cannot, on the one hand, claim authenticity as journalists while, on the other, citing art as an excuse for shoddy reporting about a subject” (Coll). Moreover, Coll points out that, while many of the real-life CIA officials and Senate Intelligence Committee members expressed reservations about the use of enhanced interrogation techniques, the “only qualms any of the CIA characters in the film express about torture are oblique and self-protecting” (Coll). Overall, these reviews highlight the contentious nature of depicting torture but do not fully address some of the more significant implications of prisoner abuse that this chapter seeks to uncover.

even when it appears we are looking at its failure. This is but one way in which hospitality often exceeds the containers of narrative and understanding that seek to delimit its possibility. Hospitality, of course, has no limits, but even as we encounter its figures over and over again, we are forced to remember that hospitality never promises safety, nor does it guarantee freedom from violence, making *Zero Dark Thirty* a provocative example of a text preoccupied with a hospitality that arrives precisely *through* violence.

3.2 Intimate Invitations: Framing *Zero Dark Thirty*

The creators of the film, for their part, play on this promise of strange encounter, offering a closer look at the search for Bin Laden than the history books allow – though fidelity to history here is another debate entirely. The film not only brings the viewer a more personal perspective; it actively relies on the intimacy of personal relationships of all kinds to sustain its narrative. The strangers that are encountered, moreover, appear stranger still in the context of the friendships and working partnerships privileged by the film. In her introduction to the published screenplay, Bigelow praises the script and its writer, Mark Boal, for “allowing us to experience this epic story through a lens that is both intimate and, at the end of the day, totally human” (Bigelow, qtd. in Boal viii). Indeed, Boal’s screenplay, born out of years of research and revision (and beginning even before Osama Bin Laden was killed), manages to condense a number of historical, cultural and political complexities into a narrative accessible to a general movie audience. The drama in *Zero Dark Thirty* is, as Bigelow suggests, a human one but one that is decidedly selective in who it chooses to humanize. When Bigelow speaks of the “totally human” experience of the film, then, she refers to a *totalized* idea of the human – one that readily fits into the grand narrative provided by the film – rather than the diverse and differential assessments of humanity that

operate in social reality. By allowing viewers access to scenes that, in actuality, existed in darkness and behind closed doors – or, perhaps, never “existed” in any official capacity at all – the film brings an intimacy to a subject most in North America have only witnessed from a distance and offers an invitation to be a part of history, yet ignores the ways in which those always living under conditions of terror in the Middle East have intimately and unwillingly been a part of (and victimized by) this history for some time. Nowhere is this more clear than in the film’s countless scenes of interrogation, and it is *Zero Dark Thirty*’s tangling of intimacy and humanity that draws philosophical attention to prison violence and raises important questions about what it means to be hospitable in a time of war while, at the same time, confronting the viewer with moments of hospitality that crack open the tightly controlled narrative and expose some of hospitality’s most complex operations.

Zero Dark Thirty does not welcome its audience from a place of comfort and good cheer – hospitality, of course, never promises such a warm welcome and is “never backed by certain assurances” to borrow from Derrida (qtd. in Borradori 129). The film, then, much like hospitality, begins in darkness, a black screen greeting the viewer before any opening credits or context emerge. Then, from the “black,” as Boal describes, “voices emerge” (1). There is no establishing shot – only the muffled sounds of voices off-screen before a title panel appears to set the scene: “The following motion picture is based on first hand accounts of actual events” (Bigelow). The film then cuts to black again as the voices gradually become clearer until we hear fragments of numbers and words and, finally, a decipherable phrase: “United 93” (Bigelow). The words are repeated a few times as the viewer gathers his or her bearings by decoding the telling and now familiar shorthand of an airline flight number that for many – much like the name-date 9/11 – will always only signify one event. The voices become louder and convey a range of emotion – some plea

for help, some panic and others accept their hopeless situation. Another panel of text appears and confirms what we already know: it reads, simply, “September 11, 2001” (Bigelow). More fragments of conversations are heard including the phrases “we can’t breathe” and “I think we’ve been hijacked” (Bigelow). The voices grow more distressed, some scream, and one woman tells a 9-1-1 operator she is “burning up” before the line goes dead – the operator’s distressed “oh my God” ending the one minute and thirty second scene that passes in total blackness. The familiar language, the date, and the documentary-like recordings²⁸ of *real* emergency calls all take us, as viewers, out of the fictional world of a film contending for an Academy Award and remind us that all the special effects, creative alterations, and the use of a well-known cast cannot escape the magnitude of the towers collapse and the reality of lives lost on 9/11.

This opening scene is compelling, then, for a number of reasons, including the amount of controversy²⁹ it provoked in using the real telephone recordings of calls made to emergency personnel or loved ones and the tension it sets up between artistic representation and the reality to which it refers – whose documentation, however realistic, will always be

²⁸ These are the same techniques employed in the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, where survivor, victim, and witness testimony and calls to both emergency lines and loved ones are included in the historical displays. At the 9/11 Museum, these displays are prefaced with a warning of the disturbing content to follow and are often found behind dividing walls or in alcoves set aside so as not to force every visitor to listen against their will. In *Zero Dark Thirty*, however, there is no warning, no wall to muffle the voices.

²⁹ While the film studio acknowledges the sensitive nature of using real recorded messages, it claims the film is a “tribute to those forever affected” (in Edelman). Moreover, the studio maintains that, while attempts were made to inform families that the recordings would be included, they are, according to one representative, public domain (Edelman). For many family members of victims, these last messages are sacred and should not be intended for public consumption and certainly not for profit. According to the brother of flight attendant Betty Ann Ong, one of the victims whose voice is heard in *Zero Dark Thirty*’s opening scene, these recordings should not be used without permission. They refer to their inclusion in the film as “poor judgment and an abuse of the voices” (Harry Ong, qtd. in Cieply). The family’s requests, however, are not monetary; they do not want compensation but rather, requested an acknowledgement of the victims at the Academy Awards, if the film received any honours, as well as a donation to a charity set up in Betty Ann Ong’s name. They also requested, perhaps more interestingly in the context of this chapter, that it be made clear that the Ong family did not support the torture of prisoners (Cieply).

a form of representation as well. That the film captures the last moments of a life is both poignant and terrifying. Not only does it bring the viewer back to the events of that day; it sets up the remainder of the film as a factual depiction of a real moment in history. Yet it uses a Hollywood cast, takes creative and cinematographic liberties, edits ten or more years of events into a two-hour shooting script, and, in so doing, blurs the line between representation and reality. Boal seems to embrace this hybrid blend of “fact” and fiction, offering his hope that the film is still “naturalistic” but remains “more comfortable in adding spin on the ball in terms of theatricality” (109). *Zero Dark Thirty*, as he puts it, is “drawn from life” (Boal 109). The opening scene, however, offers ninety seconds of real (albeit parsed) trauma – a beginning that suggests authenticity and truth, but one that is carefully arranged, presented, and selected with a particular storyboard, budget, and aesthetic aura in mind – to say nothing of the *unintended* range of effects the scene also produces. In other words, while the opening of the film is created within a certain frame set up by the filmmaker, using the resources at his disposal, a reading of this scene can certainly exceed this framework. It is not an innocent or objective nod to the historical reality upon which the film is based, even if the dark screen provides more room for viewers to interpret without conventional visual cues. Instead of the methods used by so many other films – for example, an establishing shot (often aerial) to give viewers a particular geographical orientation – this film offers an emotional but also explicitly *political* orientation – one that immediately asks viewers to identify with the victims of the 9/11 attacks and to continue to do so throughout the film, regardless of what scenes come after. It demands, in fact, an immediately hospitable response to the film on the part of the viewer whose reception is manipulated by the reference to those who actually died in the September 11th attacks.

In this way, the opening sequence not only introduces the event back into the minds of the viewer; it actively frames the entire narrative of the film. It becomes the reason the film exists, the motivation for its characters and, ultimately, means that when the unspeaking and entirely soundless figure of Osama Bin Laden is shot at the end of the film, it is still those victims voices that echo in our ears, rather than the dying sounds of someone referred to only as a target. As a framing device, then, the opening scene reveals a specific historical and political context but also inadvertently reveals the film's perhaps unconscious engagement with hospitality. Indeed, the figure of framing alone is of great concern to hospitality, as is the implicit rhetoric of welcome and visitation carried within the film's first moments. The scene is constructed in such a way that we are invited to experience the events again, perhaps closer than ever before, even though all we can experience is its representation. Moreover, it is a visual representation that uses the dark space as a rhetorical structure meant to give viewers the *illusion* of an openness to interpretation. It encourages us to imagine the lives behind the voices, and initiates and receives us, as it were, into a shared sense of panic; we feel our hearts race as if we are there, in the towers or planes, or perhaps on the other end of that telephone call. Boal describes these opening scenes as the hardest he has ever written: "I've had to revisit it over and over again...and I still don't think I've totally shaken [these voices] off" (qtd. in Buchanan). Boal's use of language imbued with ideas of hospitality is particularly telling as he transfers his own unsettling experience making the film to the viewer by asking us, too, to "revisit" the events of that day and beyond. We are but guests in this landscape and offered a ringside seat to the culmination of a decades-long pursuit.

The first ninety seconds of *Zero Dark Thirty* may be aesthetically masterful, but they do not offer an invitation without conditions that would constitute an absolute

hospitality. To watch the film, as Boal and Bigelow have constructed it, is to be welcomed into a particular and U.S.-centric way of interpreting and understanding the global War on Terror. Moreover, the subsequent scenes invite us into the inner workings of this war; they ask us to be a part of the hunt for Bin Laden, and, by watching, we tacitly accept both the challenge and the earnest aims of the film's central characters – they are often frustrated and flawed figures but none of the film's "heroes" are particularly unlikeable enough to cause us, as viewers, to support the opposing side, even if we fall prey to the film's techniques in setting up a too-easy dichotomy that positions 9/11 victims and their CIA champions on one side, and Bin Laden and his terrorist army on the other. However, even as the film welcomes the viewer into regime of ostensible choice – a "with us or against us" scenario from which we can freely disassociate – it simultaneously, and perhaps unintentionally, ushers us into the more disturbing and clandestine space of the black site prison that, regardless of our pre-determined political stance on prisoner interrogation, nonetheless offers up some startling and challenging figures for thinking about the function of hospitality in the film. In asking us to recognize primarily the victims and the characters who work passionately and tirelessly to bring Bin Laden to justice, the film also asks our complicity in the strategies used to achieve that goal. What the construction and framing of the film cannot account for, however, are the ways in which a text is never entirely subject to the aims of its creators, and *Zero Dark Thirty* is no exception, revealing a disturbing acquiescence to torture but simultaneously propelling hospitality to the surface of debates over violence in ways that do not so simply suggest that such violence is hospitality's failure. Instead, *Zero Dark Thirty* calls up a complex range of social conditions and ethics – via this invitation to view the "inside" of the conflict – aspects of which we may not want to accept, but that speak to a particularity of hospitality that is deeply concerned with

notions of intimacy and violence, as the film makes clear in a scene of interrogation that unfolds after the somewhat delayed introduction in darkness. This interrogation, importantly, is not only of the prisoner but also of the assumptions made by viewers about the function of interrogation and violence, and the ways in which such intimate encounters confront a problem inherent to hospitality; namely, the extent to which hospitality always operates on the threshold of violence. For Richard Kearney and Kascha Semonovitch, the stranger is always encountered at the threshold, be it of the body, the mind, the thresholds of pleasure and pain, or the limits of culture (4). The scenes of prisoner interrogation in *Zero Dark Thirty* operate precisely at this threshold; a scene that is always a place of negotiation, the frontier of ethics and politics, and a place where difference is assessed and waged.

3.3 Intimacy and Hospitality in the Black Site Prison

Following the voices that emerge in blackness to open the film, the scene cuts to another title, “Two years later,” and the dark screen is illuminated by a bright, swaying light. Another title reading “THE SAUDI GROUP” [sic] appears superimposed over the darkness (Bigelow) which fades to reveal what Boal acknowledges in his screenplay is a “black site” (1). We hear a metal door swinging loudly and footsteps moving closer. They belong to an American man, later revealed as a CIA interrogator, who walks confidently into the room, the camera panning around behind him to reveal who he is walking towards – a prisoner, dressed entirely in white and chained in a standing position. The interrogator pauses, considers his prisoner, and then speaks the first words in the film other than those belonging to the 9/11 victims: “I own you” (Bigelow). Later, we learn that this man is Daniel, described in the screenplay notes as “the CIA’s man in Islamabad – a big

American, late 30's, with a long, anarchical beard snaking down to this tattooed neck” (Boal 1). He speaks these words to his prisoner, Ammar, who stands on a dirty and disintegrating mat on the floor and is surrounded by four other guards who wear black ski masks over their heads. The prisoner looks up and reveals his beaten and bloody face while Daniel continues: “You belong to me. Look at me.” The guards move in and begin striking blows at the unresponsive Ammar as Daniel’s voice begins to shout: “If you don’t look at me when I talk to you, I hurt you...Now look at me” (Bigelow). Ammar looks down and away from Daniel, and instantly the hooded guards rush toward him, dragging him to another point in the room where they chain him up again in a forced standing position. Daniel and his guards then exit the room, leaving the prisoner in darkness.

While not technically the opening moment of the film, this scene in the black site prison is both the initial *visual* introduction as well as the beginning of the actual narrative of the film. The scene introduces some critical figures and establishes context for the events to come but also exposes a relation between two characters that is unexpected, not in its deployment of violence but in what that violence comes to signify in the context of hospitality. To be sure, the scene establishes violence as a central feature of the narrative and reveals the lengths the CIA is willing to go to obtain information but, perhaps more compellingly, it conjures a provocative degree of intimacy that is overlooked in the debate over the depiction of torture in the film and suggests the film is quietly yet persistently concerned with what it means to live with others. The phrase, “Look at me,” repeated over and over by Daniel, is designed to elicit compliance and, ultimately, information, from Ammar, but it also suggests a closeness that comes by way of facing someone directly. Looking someone in the eye is not only a form of non-verbal communication, it is an invitation, but one complicated by its utterance here as more of a demand. Further, the

cultural meanings associated with eye contact often vary, and lowered eyes or looking down could be viewed as a sign of deference rather than disrespect. Ammar's reaction, then, must not be thought of immediately as disobedience but rather as the actions of one towards whom human rights and cultural sensitivities have been suspended. Regardless, eye contact is a bodily act that carries immense meaning and intimacy. In "Sociology of the Senses", Georg Simmel unpacks the social significance of eye contact:

The eye is destined for a completely unique sociological achievement: the connection and interaction of individuals that lies in the act of individuals looking at one another. This is perhaps the most direct and the purest interaction that exists...[it] weaves people together, does not crystalize in any objective structure, but rather the unity that it creates between them remains directly suspended in the event and in the function. This connection is so strong and delicate...what this first sight of that person conveys to us cannot be dissolved or transposed into such conceptual and expressible things. (111-113)

While Simmel clearly situates his reading of eye contact within a Western cultural paradigm, his description is useful in unpacking how the desire for eye contact functions in the scene of interrogation. Simmel suggests that beyond (and even before) language, there is a primary tie established when two parties look at each other. Before the other speaks, his eyes bring him into this relation. Yet, in the case of Daniel and Ammar, only one responds to this tie. While Ammar bows his head, Daniel insists upon being seen. Indeed, while the other guards all wear ski masks, disguising their identity, Daniel does not – his face and eyes are readily exposed and further suggestive of his desire to meet Ammar's gaze. Thus, while it may be tempting to read this scene as an indication of Daniel's desire for information and need to exhibit the power he has over the prisoner, it is curious that he uses

language so tellingly evocative of intimacy – “Look at me” – and the eye contact he seeks reflects a desire for closer rather than more distant relations with the prisoner.

There is something in this scene of encounter that disturbs, even defies, the expectations of the prisoner/interrogator dynamic, particularly as we consider that Daniel’s desire here could very well be for a sadistic intimacy and a failure to expose the prisoner rather than open himself to the risk that intimacy so often entails. As viewers, we expect confrontation, even violence, and we are accustomed to seeing different degrees of intimacy played out on screen, but this moment in *Zero Dark Thirty* challenges the way we understand both. This intimacy is more unsettling in its deployment and confronts the viewer with entirely new questions about what possibilities may lie in an intimate encounter. In this case, intimacy is enacted in the event of torture against the prisoner’s body, yet it also suggests that hospitality is almost always an encounter with violence that is often, but not always or entirely, physical. Daniel’s claim that he “owns” Ammar, however, suggests a different kind of violence – an assault not on the physical body of the prisoner but on the very alterity that Daniel loathes so fiercely. By “owning” Ammar, Daniel translates him into something knowable – the stranger becomes the foreigner – and mitigates his difference by incorporating Ammar into his own schema of identity. Rather than expel him as something wholly other, and in so doing actually preserve that difference, Daniel transforms Ammar into someone “who can be tracked, classified and computed, someone who is no longer uncanny, frightening, or surprising” (Kearney and Semonovitch 6). “Owning,” in this case, is also a way of knowing and, in a perversion of hospitality, Daniel arranges the scene in such a way as to ensure Ammar is at home – albeit it, in an entirely unsafe home – in order to draw Ammar from the realm of unknowability into a regime of familiarity. Indeed, as Kearney and Semonovitch elaborate, “once the Stranger

finds a home – even if it be a home away from home – it loses its otherness and becomes an ally or adversary” (6). In providing this “home” for Ammar, then, Daniel is not ensuring that Ammar’s difference is preserved; rather, he is containing his alterity in order to know it and eliminate it.

3.3.1 Historical Hospitality: Violence and Intimacy in the Ottoman Harem

Why then, is this particular violence of intimacy – an intimacy designed to mitigate absolute alterity – so crucial for thinking through the ways in which strangers are encountered? Is intimacy not one of the ways in which the self opens to hospitality and thereby engages in a more ethical set of relations? Surely Daniel’s exposure, eye contact and close proximity reveal, at the very least, his need for the prisoner who fulfills Daniel’s desire for racial, gendered and sexual superiority. But how is a turn toward such possibilities complicated in the context of an intimacy that can slide so easily into violence? To be sure, *Zero Dark Thirty* does not convey a desire for hospitality towards others. Its central narrative is one of strength and perseverance rather than vulnerability, yet these moments of intimacy linger to offer questions more important than how Bin Laden was killed or how the CIA’s supposedly defunct detainee program operates. While the opening scenes of victimization and torture certainly attempt to establish context and historical justification for the narrative events to follow, they also immediately set the film up as one intimately concerned with hospitality, even and especially if we remember that host and hostage are closely connected concepts – indeed, they stem from the same root, *hostis* which means both benign host and hostile enemy (Kearney, *Strangers* 68). Looking someone in the eye, the scene’s figure for an ambivalent welcome, stages important questions about the structures of visibility that operate in black site prisons and, indeed, any

scene of violence. What is it, for example, that lurks behind these structures of visibility and concealment, and behind the tenuous relationship these structures have with the practice of intimacy – in particular an intimacy that highlights difference? What might we make of the genealogy of representation that makes the depiction of torture in *Zero Dark Thirty* intelligible in a particular way?

Such powerful and ambivalent scenes of encounter, structured within the confined spaces of the black site prison are not new within Western narratives of life in the Middle East. *Zero Dark Thirty* evokes significant preoccupations with discourses of gender, knowledge, visibility, and power that suggests the black site is a figure with multiple lives. Through the black site, the film attends to a number of diverse figures of failed and potential hospitality but in order to do so, draws upon a number of latent and wide-ranging discourses, some oddly familiar, that call up a much older psychic animation of the Ottoman harem as it is produced as a figure of Western fantasy, and that render the prison not nearly as exceptional or foreign as it may first appear. Indeed, this scene calls to mind a number of figures representative of the harem³⁰ – a peculiar but instructive counterpart to the figures of hospitality operating within the black site prison. Yet it is not the historical and cultural harem *per se* that provides such a useful lens through which to read hospitality but rather, the ways in which the harem operates as a figure of a western and Orientalist

³⁰ Etymologically, *harim* refers to the part of the house that is sealed off or forbidden from anyone but the owner (Schick 70), yet both scholarly and literary accounts characterize this seclusion in much less simple terms. The harem actively breaks down distinctions between inside and outside, guest and host, as much and as often as it reinforces them. As Schick explains, “women routinely engaged in social, economic, and even political activities from behind harem walls, suggesting that the word *private* in the sense commonly given it in the Western context today fails to capture the full range of experiences in which women participated there” (77). Although Schick does not refer explicitly to a discourse of hospitality, he complicates the notion of harem as a cordoned off or secluded space, an inference that has significant implications for hospitality for it reveals that such borders are more porous than dominant language and representation often allow. Indeed, while hospitality is often framed as a relation between inside and outside spaces, the harem illustrates how it might operate in lieu of such distinctions and, indeed, might fail when such distinctions are too readily enforced.

imaginary. As a trope of enclosure and concealment, and always hovering on the edge of violence, the Orientalist harem may recall a historical figure, but must be understood a symbol of Western assumptions and knowledge about the East, and it is this *fantasy* - not its historical referent – that emerges again as the unacknowledged ghost behind crucial operations of power at work in the War on Terror. At first glance, the Orientalist harem does not seem to have much to do with these contemporary cultural texts, yet it actually provides a stunningly compelling figure for thinking about hospitality’s crucial relation to the discourses of intimacy that operate in *Zero Dark Thirty*. The harem is not meant to be read here as a specific location of a set of cultural and/or religious practices, nor should its metaphoric figuration be confined to a particular era. Rather, it is a figure – an imaginative conjuring – that underwrites and even haunts the representation of torture in *Zero Dark Thirty* and is found lurking in the notions of inside and outside, visibility and concealment, and intimacy and strangeness that permeate the film’s depiction of prison violence.

As an enclosed space for women, often removed from the quarters and vision of men, the Ottoman harem certainly existed as a space of gendered exclusion but took on entirely new descriptions via an Orientalist imagination that operated in consistently inhospitable ways towards the diverse realities of life in the Middle East of the 18th century. In many ways, the harem came to be represented in art, fiction and travel writing as the locus of Western and binarized fantasies about the east. In particular, the harem functioned as a container of Orientalist notions about veiling (and unveiling), aberrant sexuality and excess. Eric Meyer describes the harem as “the obscure object of Western desire” (667), a fitting characterization of Western attempts to know and control the East – it is an object, in other words, that does not so much contain as it *is* contained by an Orientalist imaginary. In her much cited text on the representations of the Ottoman harem, Mary Roberts suggests

that visitors to the harem viewed themselves as “intimate outsiders.”³¹ Such a term highlights not only the deep fascination that travellers – and women in particular – had with the harem; it also “emphasizes the tension between the two ideas, intimacy and outsidersness” (Roberts 10). As a figure of enclosure, however, the harem offers even more, containing Western orientalist desires and projections but not so rigidly that they do not surface over and over again. Such tensions are crucial in unpacking the complexity of hospitality and reveal hospitality to be a philosophy deeply embedded, but not always recognizably so, in structures of intimacy.

The harem also calls up another figure of tenuous hospitality – the postcolonial city of refuge, in which refugees “are expected to be set aside, excluded, banned from the community. They are not total outsiders, but their mode of belonging makes them eternally fragile guests” (Rosello, *Postcolonial* 165). Originally configured, in biblical times, as a space of protection and asylum for perpetrators of violent crime, the city of refuge is deployed in the context of postcolonialism by Mireille Rosello as an expression of a more political or cultural asylum; namely, the extension of hospitality towards those who have already experienced *inhospitality*. Unlike the historical city of refuge, in which the identity of the refugee “remains ambivalent, complex and contradictory,” the postcolonial seeker of refuge is more readily seen as innocent (Rosello, *Postcolonial* 155-156). As Rosello notes, limiting hospitality to only innocent guests is not hospitality at all but places the asylum seeker in a precarious position of being neither welcomed guest nor hostile enemy: “this need to be a victim is what makes the status of international or political refugees so

³¹ See *Intimate Outsiders: The Harem in Ottoman and Orientalist Art and Culture* (Durham: Duke UP, 2007. Print), in which Roberts takes up the representations of the harem constructed by a variety of visitors who were given access to the inner quarters of Ottoman households.

problematic” (Rosello, *Postcolonial* 156). Moreover, the “ambivalent, complex, and contradictory” guest is what defines a true or pure – and perhaps impossible – act of hospitality *par excellence*. Rosello’s claims do not discount the possibility of hospitality in a cultural climate saturated with suspicion; rather, she points to the necessity of recognizing the guest who may, indeed, be hostile, a risk perhaps exacerbated by intimacy. Such risks are also highlighted in the space of the harem which operates not only as a barrier to what is outside but potentially holds that which is foreign or even dangerous *inside*, as hostage rather than guest. Both the city of refuge and the harem call up a complex genealogy of hospitality that reaches towards our contemporary moment. Indeed, the harem operates as a site of containment similar to that of the black site prison and yet the harem is also a useful lens through which to read other particularities of intimacy within *Zero Dark Thirty*, among these, the many ways in which hospitality operates within a discourse of desire.

3.4 Hospitality and desire

Certainly, there are moments and figures of hospitality in *Zero Dark Thirty* that exceed the metaphor of the harem, yet it remains a compelling construct through which to unpack the ways in which the representation of violence towards prisoners operates within historical frameworks of race, gender and sexuality. While the depiction of torture in *Zero Dark Thirty* certainly frames such acts of violence as part of the coercive mechanism of interrogation, these are scenes of violence that are permeated by moments of desire conditioned by forces inherited from the past. These acts call up an overt violence in the way they are encountered within a conventional framework of recognition, but upon close reading, it is not violence *per se* but, rather, desire that seems to underwrite every moment, line of dialogue, and cinematographic technique used in building the scene. This framing of

intimacy and desire is established immediately as Daniel walks into the interrogation room for a second time and, while there are others watching, assures Ammar that “it’s you and me, bro” (Bigelow). Ammar, for his part, refuses this incursion of intimacy and accuses Daniel of being merely a “mid-level guy...a garbage man in the corporation” (Bigelow). His superiority challenged, the next time Daniel returns to the interrogation chamber, he is armed with a new strategy for asserting his dominance. He walks in confidently to loud, heavy-metal music and illuminates the dark room by shining a spotlight on Ammar, exposing him to the guards while keeping them hidden from view. The entire *mise-en-scène* calls to mind a film-set within the larger narrative of *Zero Dark Thirty* itself, though a scene more akin to pornography than political drama as Ammar is made to perform his difference – not an expression of his irreducible otherness but a difference made familiar through the work of stereotypes and Orientalist imagining – for the pleasure of those watching. Daniel proceeds to feign hospitality, offering Ammar a chair, food and drink, and seat across from him, yet when the prisoner again proves resistant to Daniel’s techniques, the chair is kicked out from under him and Ammar is forced to his feet. Daniel stands behind him, holding him, and speaks into his ear “you don’t mind if my female colleague there checks out your junk, do ya bro [sic]?” (Bigelow). He then strips Ammar from the waist down and leaves the room, ordering Maya to remain. The close up images of individual faces – Maya’s uncertainty, Daniel’s defiance, and Ammar’s shame – are interspersed with repetitive images of the room shot from behind Ammar, who stands, his back to the viewer, legs apart and arms extended outward in a crucifixion like posture. Daniel then returns with a dog collar and wraps his arms around the struggling prisoner to place the collar around Ammar’s neck. Daniel undoes the shackles on Ammar’s arms and proceeds to lead him, crawling, around the cell by way of a chained leash. Several times, Daniel leans into

Ammar, pressing his body to Ammar's back and the prisoner's still-naked body into the ground, and as he moves closer with each warning, he whispers into Ammar's ear. These are threats, to be sure, but they are uttered in forced intimacy and closeness.

Both shots, of Ammar being led by a leash and of his arms outstretched, call up the photographs of real-life torture taken by guards at Abu Ghraib prison and publicly exposed by *Salon* magazine in 2004.³² The image of Ammar standing shackled by his arms is almost an exact replica of the staged photo of a prisoner at Abu Ghraib, who also stands, naked and facing away, his arms spread and covered in his own waste. Interestingly, the iconography of the prisoner's pose in both cases subscribes to notions of the suffering Christ in both posture and in the use of ritualistic and humiliating violence. Yet the posture is complex as it offers the potential humanization of the detainee by reconstructing the Christian scene as one born of a desire to watch the suffering of an innocent other and suggests a possible subversive act on the part of the detainee as he stretches out his arms in what is perhaps a mocking acceptance of his fate just as Christ accepted his. Similarly, the placement of a dog collar around Ammar's neck reminds the viewer of the infamous images of Private First Class Lynndie England pulling an Abu Ghraib prisoner from his cell while tethered to a leather strap. The familiarity of the scene of torture in *Zero Dark Thirty* blurs the distinction between reality and representation in cyclical fashion, creatively

³² The visual archive of Abu Ghraib includes hundreds of photographs of United States soldiers – Charles Graner, Lynndie England and others – and reveals a multitude of abuses. These include but are not limited to, sexual abuse and humiliation, electrical torture, dog attacks, sleep deprivation, stress inducing positions, subjection to chemicals and bodily fluids and beating leading to severe injury and even death. Images of these offenses, recorded by guards at the prison, came to the attention of the American military at the beginning of 2004, when Specialist Joseph Darby handed over photographic evidence of the abuse to the military's Criminal Investigation Command (CID) ("The Abu Ghraib Files"). While the photos first appeared to the public several months later via CBS News and the *New Yorker*, *Salon Magazine* hosts an online archive where 279 of the images are stored and painstakingly organized with the times, dates and details of abuse uncovered by the CID's investigation.

framing a moment of torture (in which two actors perform) that harkens back to an incident of “real” torture that was also, in many ways, a staged performance. The performance on film, then, becomes reminiscent of reality while the real event comes to be understood as staged. Both the representation and its referent in “real-life” contain elements of true and performative violence, as fact and fiction sustain one another and, thus, the violence perpetuated at a nameless and un-locatable place in the film must be read with an understanding that these sites *are* somewhere and, in that somewhere, real suffering occurs. The recognition of the real violence lurking behind the staged alerts the viewer, then, to his or her own desire and simultaneous shame. What does it mean to view the film as entertainment whose entire climax depends on the event of torture to propel the narrative forward? Moreover, how do we, as viewers, distinguish our act of watching here from the watching of real visual representations (photographs and video) of torture that were produced and disseminated primarily for their entertainment value? Shame, then, operates on a number of levels but ultimately the treatment of Ammar is recognized as shameful – be it the shame of the guards, the viewer, or Ammar himself – because the filmic representation of torture operates within the language of “prison scandal” made familiar by the infamy of Abu Ghraib. To respond to the film as simply a justification of violent interrogation, however, is to miss what is operating alongside the violence; that is, a sense of desire that is made far more complicated by the shame cast upon it by that which it recalls in real life.

3.4.1 Gender and Difference

In the case of *Zero Dark Thirty*, the attempts to render the prisoner sexually deviant produce more shame – initially, for Ammar and then, later, for Daniel and the viewer – than

actionable result and whatever humiliation he feels, it fails to materialize in the form of delivering what the interrogator wants. Or, perhaps, it is *precisely* what the interrogator wants, as his rituals of interrogation are far more useful in constructing an abject deviance than they are at producing intelligence. It is particularly telling that Daniel uses the presence of his new colleague, Maya, to further expose his prisoner under the assumption that he may be more vulnerable to a particularly gendered form of humiliation. Yet it is Maya, the female observer in this scenario, who seems the most unsettled as she refuses to make eye contact with the prisoner who, instead, engages *her* when the interrogator leaves them alone together in the cell. He pleads for help and, while Maya suggests only that he “can help [him]self by being truthful” (Bigelow), she certainly represents a more tempered approach to detainee interrogation, a difference that must be interpreted as gendered within the frame made available by the film. Even the notes in the screenplay suggest that, as a woman, Maya is not equipped to deal with the realities of her job – an assumption that, to be sure, is prevalent in a variety of entertainment media in both inflammatory and benign ways. In Boal’s notes, Maya “flinches,” “struggles to meet [Ammar’s] eyes,” and realizes that Daniel is “testing her resilience too” (Boal 13-14). In this scene, power is conferred not only upon those who are willing to enact the most violence but on those who are willing to get the closest *to* that violence. It is specifically the suggestion of sexual violence that causes Maya to back away while Daniel presses on. Torture, then, comes to be coded as intimate precisely through its association with, and perversion of, sexuality that often and readily signifies intimacy. It is a violence, however, that ultimately betrays intimacy and is complicated by the way in which it is witnessed by the viewer, not through Daniel but, rather, through Maya who becomes nearly as powerless as Ammar in the relations of interrogation depicted by the film. Yet at the same time, the scene suggests women are not

able to sustain the violence that occurs in the black site prison, it also offers the audience a more moderate character through whom to view the scene, not as torturer but as witness. Thus, while the scenes of torture must be viewed within frameworks of racialized and sexualized violence, their engagement with matters of intimacy need also to be situated within a broader and incredibly complex gender paradigm in which women are intimately engaged in acts of torture while excluded from the larger processes and successes of war – not to mention the ways in which those who do not or will not engage in torture are subsequently feminized.

Zero Dark Thirty presents an oddly feminist narrative – one that places its central female character in a position between a patriarchal intelligence complex and a war claiming to exist in some part for women’s rights. Gender is another way of establishing difference in the film, but one that exists in hierarchical proportion to other discourses of alterity and violence. One of the ways that the film establishes difference is in the juxtaposition between Maya and the men to whom she reports. The assumptions made on the basis of her gender alert the viewer to the ways in which operations of superiority and difference are not limited to the intimacy of prisoner/interrogator relations. Despite Maya’s decision not to conceal her identity beneath a black hood like the other guards, she is still mocked for “rockin’ her best suit” to her first interrogation and questioned on her ability to handle “the hard stuff” (Bigelow). She is introduced in stark contrast to Daniel, the “paramilitary hipster...with a glock”, particularly in the screenplay notes where she is described as “beautiful...[with] “a pale, milky innocence and bright blue eyes, thin and somewhat frail looking” (Boal 1). This description, coupled with her pained expression while observing the torture of Ammar and in comparison to the ease with which Daniel seems to inflict pain on the prisoner, seems to suggest that violence comes more naturally

to men. While Daniel's knowledge about a low-level prisoner is unquestioned by his CIA colleagues, Maya's narrative becomes one of relentless perseverance despite the continual doubts of her superiors. Later, after being reassigned to work the Bin Laden case from CIA headquarters, Maya and her boss, Steve, go to present their case for the fugitive's whereabouts to the director of the agency. Walking into a large conference room, Maya moves confidently towards a seat at the table, only to have Steve tell her that she should take a seat against the wall instead. He apologizes at the same time as he points her in the correct direction, wagging his finger back and forth as if she is an errant child. She complies, with a tense smile, and proceeds to sit at the back of the room, arms crossed. She stands to greet the CIA director, who does not acknowledge her, and he is briefed by Steve on the intelligence that Maya has compiled. None of the eight men in the room ask for Maya's input, yet she interjects regardless when the facts are presented too vaguely for her taste, correcting a measurement of "about a mile" to a precise "4221 feet...closer to eight-tenths of a mile" (Bigelow). Her voice is authoritative but still met with an annoyed "who are you?" from the Director, to whom she responds, confidently and with full eye contact: "I'm the motherfucker who found this place...sir" (Bigelow).

While the gendering of hospitality – that is, a hospitality that is both offered differentially according to markers of gender and within a haremized discourse of the domestic – is made apparent by the film's plot and its relations between characters, it is also evident in the structure of the film itself, as a narrative that invites its audience to participate in a historical chain of events. The film frames the viewer within this gendered narrative and greets its audience with particular expectations as to how one should respond to gender relations in the War on Terror. The narrative is, at many moments, a feminist one, as we see a woman fighting against male dominance – a model perhaps for the larger

rhetoric that posits the War on Terror as a battle against a religious fundamentalism represented as profoundly patriarchal. While the film fits within a discourse of what Jasbir Puar calls “sexually progressive multiculturalism” (336), that narrative canopy is challenged by the more intimate and paradoxical means of achieving that end. In dominant War on Terror rhetoric, prisoners – and those held at Abu Ghraib are the most notorious example here – are seen as deviantly and excessively queer yet simultaneously critiqued for their own pre-modern beliefs about women and homosexuality. Rather than confront this paradox, a hierarchy emerges where some relations of subordination are excusable – the treatment of Ammar, for example – while others are not. As Ahmed reminds us, difference is not always represented or assigned in equal fashion. *Zero Dark Thirty* certainly highlights this economy of difference by positioning Maya as different but not aberrantly so, as is the case in the depiction of Ammar. That Boal and Bigelow position Maya as the only woman at a table full of men only serves to reinforce this economy – she is a subject who is almost the same, but “not quite” in Bhabha’s famous words – and she is simultaneously coded as feminine (young, white, emotional, and presumably heterosexual) but capable of playing a man’s game. This is, importantly, a cinematic feature; in reality, the CIA team tasked with finding Bin Laden was comprised of “mostly” women (Bergen, qtd. in “Hunt”), rather than one woman struggling to be heard in a room of men. Yet reality still follows suit in this economy of difference as these women remain anonymous and unglorified, in stark contrast to the Navy Seals, for instance, whose actions are well-documented.³³ National Security Analyst for CNN, Peter Bergen, echoes these gendered

³³ The most recent examples of these are, of course, Robert O’Neil, recently identified as having fired the shots that ended Bin Laden’s life, and Chris Kyle, who is portrayed by actor Bradley Cooper in the film *American Sniper* – nominated for the 2015 Best Picture Oscar.

hierarchies of difference and recognition in a summation of women's roles in the CIA. While he acknowledges the increasingly degree to which women are securing leadership positions within the CIA, Bergen suggests "[Women] don't tell war stories. They're more focused and they get the job done... [I]t was a small group and it was a group that was regarded as being somewhat overly interested in bin Laden, almost *maniacally* so" (qtd. in "Hunt," emphasis added). It is Bergen's adjective of choice here – "maniacally" – that exposes the gendered dimensions of labour in the CIA. To be sure, Maya's subordinate position is internally critiqued in the film; we sense her palpable distaste at being thrust aside to make room for men's ambitions and her character is, indeed, a sympathetic one who can "keep up" so to speak with her male counterparts yet also experience moments of understandable vulnerability. Yet her "success" is attributed to her hardline stance on Bin Laden's location and her willingness to use violence to find him, traits that are dominantly associated with masculinity.

If Bigelow's intention is to provide a more "human" narrative to supplement what was, in actuality, a clandestine military operation – a notion that inadvertently suggests that military operatives and intelligence personnel are *not* human – what does it mean, then, that this narrative is filtered through Maya's experience? Does the "human" in this case refer to a more "emotional" or "softer" version of events and, if so, how do we interpret the decision to convey this softness through a woman who is never fully embraced by other characters as a valuable operative? Maya's containment within the gendered narrative of the film, as well as the ways in which the audience is invited to observe yet not fully participate are closely connected as Maya becomes a proxy for the audience's experience. She is the guide – even the host – of the viewing process, and we experience the narrative through her. Her distaste for moments of violence renders the film hospitable to the

viewer's qualms without apologizing for the torture itself. She mediates the experience as a knowledgeable insider, hosting the viewer while remaining perpetually a guest herself. In this way, Maya functions in similar ways to women writers who reported home on their experiences in the Ottoman harem.³⁴ As a locus of infinitely complex gender relations, the harem complicates the ethic of hospitable welcome and troubles the too easy distinctions made between guest and host. Women, indeed, any gendered "others" who fall under the hegemonic masculine gaze in this context, occupy a tenuous position between hospitality and hostility, often taking on the role of hosts who themselves are not quite at home. Indeed, as Rosello points out, relations of hospitality, while relying in a sense on the placement of women in the household, often eliminate women in such a way that their crucial enabling of hospitality is rendered invisible (*Postcolonial* 119). Likewise, Maya becomes a host for the viewer's experience, but she is never fully at home in the narrative. Her purpose, it would seem, is not to further the CIA's search for Osama Bin Laden but, rather, to provide a more palatable experience for the film's audience – one that neither challenges nor replaces masculine self-sufficiency as the driving force behind counter-terrorism.

Gender is a crucial component, then, in the discourses of race and sexuality that rely on intimacy but deny hospitality to detainees in black site prisons. This is a distinction that

34 Some notable examples here are Mary Wollstonecraft who reads the harem, or seraglio as a site of both animalization (32) and a lack of female ambition (55), as well as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Lady Elizabeth Craven, both "Grand Tour" travellers to Turkey in the Eighteenth Century who extensively documented their visits to the harem and Turkish baths in the form of letters home. Montagu acknowledges the allure of the harem, writing after one visit that "I could not help fancying that I had been some time in Mohammed's paradise, so much was I charmed with what I had seen" (91). Moreover, she celebrates the ease with which veiled women can pass through the streets without being identified, claiming that "[u]pon the whole, I look upon the Turkish women as the only free people in the empire" (Montagu 72). Lady Craven, too, suggests that Turkish men have little say over the affairs of their household. She goes further to suggest that "no women have so much liberty, safe from apprehension, as the Turkish—and I think them, in their manner of living, capable of being the happiest creatures breathing" (Craven 305).

surely brings hospitality back to the harem – as a site of simultaneous containment and exposure, protection from and projection of colonial fantasy. Yet it also exceeds the figure of the harem and runs into a contemporary moment in which the placement of women in positions of power and authority continues to be called into question. Moreover, the role of women as both participating in the film's narrative and as audience proxy, filtering viewers' perceptions of torture, reflects a preoccupation with notions of difference and self-difference, particularly as the real conditions of conflict and the creative industries that represent such conflict both demonstrate a lack of hospitality toward gendered others at the same time as they demand intimate knowledge of them in order to sustain a notion of hegemonic masculinity. Clearly, the film reveals definitive patriarchal undertones within the intelligence community and, if Seth MacFarlane's host soliloquies at the 85th Academy Awards (awards for which *Zero Dark Thirty* was nominated) are any indication, this mentality is perpetuated outside the CIA as well. MacFarlane's commentary attempts to find humour in, among other things, gendered violence and the notion that men only attend movies headlined by women to see them undress. The desire for intimacy is, indeed, important to MacFarlane, but only insofar as it demands that talented actresses in serious roles "show us your boobs [sic]" (qtd. in Davidson). Overall, MacFarlane's humour criticizes women in the workplace, suggesting Maya's success in *Zero Dark Thirty* is not the result of grueling work, intelligence and, at times, trauma but, rather, is attributed to "every woman's innate ability to never ever let anything go" (qtd. in Davidson). He may be a "host" but MacFarlane's glossing over of gender relations in and outside the film are anything but hospitable. The treatment of gender in *Zero Dark Thirty* is, to be fair, far more complex, as the viewer is invited to critique unequal gender relations at some points and reinforce them at others. However, that we are made more familiar, we might say

intimately so, with Maya's journey not only funnels the viewer's sympathies in a particular direction; it also renders Maya an exposed and vulnerable figure, and as marker of difference – even if not to the extent of the prisoner subject to violence – that suggests there is little room for the alterity of women in a War on Terror that, paradoxically, is waged on behalf of women seen to suffer under patriarchal fundamentalism.³⁵

The juxtaposition between Maya and her male counterparts conjures a number of notions of hospitality, not the least of which is Maya's literal exclusion from the table, yet the moment must be also considered emblematic of the ways in which the patriarchal workplace is inhospitable to women. Called upon to both recognize her difference, yet succeed "in spite" of it, Maya is in a curious position of having to affirm others' projections of alterity onto her, while at the same time transcending those projections in order to be seen and heard in her pursuit. It is telling that Maya uses particularly gendered and violent language through which to make her role in gathering intelligence known. As the "motherfucker" who locates Bin Laden, Maya's choice of words is not only assertive but imbued with a violent sexuality. She may not physically inflict torture on the prisoners, but she has adopted its language nonetheless – revealing her willingness (and perhaps, in her position, a necessity) to subscribe to the same sexually violent discourse as Daniel does in the interrogation room. Rami Kassem notes that, in *Zero Dark Thirty* "we see its heroine paradoxically overcoming subordination in a male-dominated profession while participating in the subjugation of Muslim prisoners, as she comes to fully embrace her

³⁵ Krista Hunt and Kim Rygiel offer an extended analysis of the ways in which the War on Terror is gendered in *(En)Gendering the War on Terror: War Stories and Camouflaged Politics* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008. Print). See, in particular, Jasmine Zine's chapter "Between Orientalism and Fundamentalism: Muslim Women and Feminist Engagement," for a discussion of how the "rhetoric of Muslim women's liberation" is deployed within a War on Terror that itself relies on a "jingoistic chauvinism" (Zine 27; 29).

sadistic role” (Kassem). Yet to suggest this act is paradoxical is to deny that acts of sadism are always premised on some notion of overcoming subordination, or, more specifically, asserting some notion of self that is threatened by the difference of another. As Razack notes, “[t]he scene of self that is simultaneously required and produced by empire is a self that is experienced *in relation* to the subordinate other – a relationship that is deeply gendered and sexualized” (*Casting* 63). Indeed, there are many relations at work in *Zero Dark Thirty* that produce notions of self and otherness across sites as diverse as the black site prison and the CIA boardroom. These sites, the film reveals, are not as different as they appear and placing Maya at both scenes is indicative of a gendered double bind that positions her on *both* sides of that relation. That is, just as her self is affirmed through the construction of a difference that is projected onto the body of the racialized and sexualized prisoner, so too does Maya become the other and the foil for the authority and self-assured stability of the patriarchal relations of CIA intelligence. The figure of Maya leads us to the recognition that hospitality is, somewhat unsurprisingly, gendered but also exposes the paradox of a feminist narrative advanced at the expense of gendered and sexualized violence. In other words, this feminism is deployed as an aggressive welcoming tactic that invites the viewer to assess the differential experience of gendered violence as necessary in an ongoing battle in which the “greater good” of women’s liberation outweighs and even justifies the acts of violence toward prisoners. All of this operates within the context of a scopopic field in which shame and violence are registered not only physically but visually. More than strictly physical, it is certain visual cues to otherness and sexuality that expose the ways in which torture is viewed within a regime of intimacy that frames violence in a particular way.

3.4.2 Desire and Carnal Hospitality

In these moments of interrogation, there is certainly violence, but it is a violence that not only operates within, but is made possible by, a sphere of desire that encircles the interrogator/prisoner relation. Hospitality is, to be sure, shrouded in desire, particularly as we recall Derrida's reminder that the root of hospitality is desire – a desire for the unreserved and unconditional welcome of a guest ("Principle" 6). It is the impossibility of pure hospitality that keeps this desire alive yet, in this case, it is complicated by a violence underwritten by discourses of race and sexuality. For Daniel, the desire is to own or possess Ammar in some way, a need that manifests as physical intimacy when his own superiority is questioned. According to Robert Young, "disgust always bears the imprint of desire" (140) and in *Zero Dark Thirty*, the two are closely entangled. When Ammar insults Daniel's position within the larger world of the CIA, for example, Daniel responds in a way that reinforces not his corporate or even strictly physical superiority but, rather, his sexual dominance as he presses the naked prisoner face down on the ground with his own body. This proximity, while framed by a discourse of intelligence gathering and expressed as an abject revulsion of Ammar, is one Daniel nevertheless seems to crave; physically, he presses closer and uses his bare hands for violence but also to touch Ammar's face (Boal 7) and later he chooses a particular form of humiliation – the dog leash – that confers superiority upon Daniel more than it causes Ammar any *physical* distress. Even so, it is the emotional humiliation that ultimately satisfies Daniel's desire. Whether for information or to confirm his white and heteronormative masculinity, the torture exists for Daniel as much as it exists for information, and there is no relation in the film so intimate as the one he shares with his captive. Daniel's rituals are of both dehumanization and feminization such that even if the desire expressed by Daniel through violence *is* homoerotic, it is veiled by

the projection of a perceived abnormal sexuality onto Ammar. In the case of these post-9/11 and, more specifically, post-Abu Ghraib cultural texts, such an intimate encounter with the other makes possible an expression of desire under the guise of interrogation and routine surveillance, even when this desire is articulated within the framework of torture.

Although Daniel is quite literally pressing Ammar for information, the prisoner gives little away. On the other hand, much is revealed about Daniel, in particular his desire for both superiority and intimacy – which he can only express in a moment of violence, lest his own masculinity and sexuality are called into question. Indeed, as Razack notes, prison violence is often “a ritual that enables white men to achieve a sense of mastery over the racial other at the same time that it provides a sexualized intimacy forbidden in white supremacy and patriarchy” (*Casting* 62). Indeed, Daniel’s “mastery” over his prisoner is constantly in question and the ways in which he establishes his authority is imbued with colonial undertones that resonate in the sexual nature of the violence in particular.

Paraphrasing Anne McClintock, Melanie Richter-Montpetit points out, “torture practices are embedded in colonial narratives and practices that, first, paint the colonies or ‘dark corners of the earth’ as feminized and ‘spatially spread for male exploration’ or ‘penetration’; and, second, equate the lack of potency and domination of the male body (and the nation) with femininity and male ‘homosexuality’” (Richter-Montpetit 46). What Richter-Montpetit suggests, then, is that mastery over the colonial subject is always, in some way, a desire *for* the colonial subject³⁶, an intimacy that is veiled beneath the physical nature of the violence itself.

³⁶ Razack and Richter-Montpetit, of course are reformulating here (alongside McClintock) Robert Young’s earlier work on colonial desire in which he notes “colonialism was [is] always locked into the machine of desire” (Young 171).

These tensions between torture and desire, the focus on knowing, seeing and exposing the other, and the colonial and sexualized nature of interrogation, all call again on the harem imaginary as the moments of violence operating within the prison call on much older examples of gendered, racialized and sexualized notions of intimacy. Orientalist projections of the harem, of course, suggested such spaces operated as a repository for repressed desire, even if their mode of engagement was usually one of witness rather than active participation. Such a claim, of course, returns us to Roberts' notion of "intimate outsiders" and these "guests" who establish insider status on the basis of their entrance into space perceived by the visitor as a sexualized one. It is an intimacy predicated on sexual and racial difference that both reinforces and distorts conventional philosophies of hospitality and opens hospitality to the possibility that it is always operating on the threshold of violence. Indeed, speaking of the real-life incidences of torture at black site prisons (which bear striking resemblance to the representational forms observed in *Zero Dark Thirty*), Richter-Montpetit suggests that detainee torture follows a "pre-constructed heterosexed, racialized and gendered script" (39). This script, of course, finds its origins in the harem, so much so in fact that Joseph Pugliese claims prisoner torture to be what he calls a "haremized" site of encounter. He describes

the pyramid of nude male Arab bodies, lasciviously intertwined, reproduces the Abu Ghraib equivalent of Orientalist visions of the harem, with their excesses of naked and pornographically arranged Arab women's bodies. . . . Abu Ghraib embodies what Alloula calls...the very space of the orgy: the one that the soldier and colonizer obsessively dream of establishing on the territory of the colony, transformed for the occasion into a bordello. (Pugliese qtd. in Deb 13)

Pugliese's description calls up notions of violence and sexuality that find their roots in the Ottoman harem but also conjures a particular space of desire. Thus, the question of how hospitality operates in the black site prison must be taken up in the contexts of history, colonial fantasy, desire and intimacy all of which reinforce and complicate one another in the film's encounter with strangers. More than that, however, the scene of torture demands that we recognize hospitality as not only extended but viscerally *embodied*. As Kearney and Semonovitch describe, "to be incarnate in space and time, in flesh and blood, is to exist in a world of hostile as well as hospitable relations" (17). The prison is precisely this, oscillating between desire and disgust, a "black" and "nowhere" site, embodied not in geographical presence but in flesh – the perfect test ground for what Kearney and Semonovitch refer to as "carnal hospitality". The scene of torture, while unethical in its deployment of violence and failure to allow the other to remain as wholly other, nonetheless reminds us of the importance of the body in thinking about what is at stake in living with others. However failed, it recalls hospitality's persistence on the flesh as a site of ethical relations and a return to a hospitality of touch that breathes desire at every turn.

3.5 Intimate Encounters and Frameworks of Recognition

3.5.1 Snuff, Desire, and Violence

In another attempt at interrogation, Daniel enters Ammar's cell to loud and obnoxious music. The cell itself is dark but the light from the door illuminates Ammar, whom we see backlit, his hair dampened from perspiration. The daylight that filters into the room casts a glare over various pools of fluid surrounding the prisoner. Daniel turns a spotlight on and reveals the floor to be not just unclean, but stained, and the scene cuts to Ammar's face, dirty and covered in sweat and open wounds. We see Maya, in one corner,

who covers her nose and mouth, made clearly uncomfortable by the smell in the room. Ammar's bloodstained clothing and face, his perspiration and tears, are exaggerated by Daniel and Maya's relative cleanliness. Daniel increases the power of the spotlight as he strips Ammar from the waist down, and we are given a wide view of the cell. Ammar stands covered in and surrounded by a combination of fluids that could be urine, feces, blood, sweat or water left over from previous rounds of waterboarding. Daniel's statement "did you shit yourself? [sic]" only confirms the presence of one of the most abject human products. It is a scene that reads dehumanization even without the effects of dialogue and camera work.

By highlighting these bodily functions, the scene draws attention to the ways in which the performance of a body renders one human or not. Daniel comment "did you shit yourself?" not only draws the viewer's attention to the filth of Ammar's lack of hygiene, it actively constructs that lack as Ammar's failure rather than the failure of his captors to meet his basic human needs. In other words, if control over bodily functions is a marker of "civilization" or "cleanliness," then Ammar comes to represent the opposite. His difference, in this case, is not contained but spilling out on to the floor and himself – it is the material that is supposed to remain hidden, internal, and private that is seeping out into the open. While these effects are the result of violence, they are more than simply effects, as Ammar's condition is one crafted for him by his prison guards. The fluids that leak from his body – the blood, sweat, urine and feces – leave a trace just as a scar or bruise would and must be considered their own form of torture. They are part of the violence rather than its result. Indeed, while there is also physical violence that pierces the skin and inflicts pain, these fluids are not only symptoms of that violence but a form of abuse themselves. Humiliation, in this case, *is* the torture, not only its end result. Moreover, Ammar's

condition becomes a form of entertainment for the interrogator and guards, whose goal is not only information but dehumanization as well. Drawing attention to these fluids, as Daniel does, is designed to humiliate the prisoner and suggest he is less than human. The presence of fluids surrounding Ammar, when added to a rhetoric of sexuality, extreme violence and the entertained remarks of Daniel, all make the scene more reminiscent of snuff³⁷ than strictly physical violence. By reducing Ammar's humanity to the fluids that surround him, he is jettisoned from the human into the abject. As Kristeva describes: "A wound with blood and pus, or the sickly, acrid smell of sweat, of decay...[t]hese bodily fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death" (*Powers* 3). It is in these moments of life hovering on death and the markers of death infiltrating life that hospitality *could* be so powerfully articulated, were Daniel to respond to Ammar's pleading eyes and broken body. Yet, in this instance, it is Ammar that stands open and exposed as Daniel denies the intimacy between him and his prisoner – so provocatively established beforehand – by clearly setting a boundary around what constitutes the human.

Yet while Ammar's strangeness is noticed and evidenced by the complicated pleasure and power of those watching from inside the cell, it is also highlighted for the

³⁷ The element of snuff called to mind by scenes of prisoner interrogation is, again, reminiscent of real-life incidences of detainee torture. In many of the images from Abu Ghraib, for example, the presence of these markers of the abject are undeniable: prisoners covered in mud and feces, puddles of urine around shackled feet and blood stains on the floor. These elements are common in snuff films that depict "deaths that are simulated but increasingly realistic" (Sarracino and Scott 78-79). Snuff is designed, however, not to expose violence but to cater to those who are entertained, and even find pleasure in, the consumption of visual displays of violence and, in the case of Abu Ghraib, the visualization of sexual violence. According to David Kerekes and David Slater, "snuff films depict the killing of a human being...perpetrated for the medium of film and circulated amongst a jaded few for the purpose of entertainment" (7). While the photos taken at Abu Ghraib are not necessarily moving pictures, and while not all depict death, per se, they clearly subscribe to this rhetoric of snuff and, while the markers of snuff that appear in Ammar's torture are, to be sure, representational, they remind us again that prisoner torture is not a fictional event by calling up scenes that are already familiar to the viewer.

audience whose role must be considered when thinking about how the scene is constructed. What does it mean to consume these images, particularly in the frames in which they are offered to us? The humiliation is, to be sure, staged for Daniel and the guards, as the internal audience to torture, but it is also staged for us. How then do we respond? With horror? Distaste? Do we see the suffering body, the vulnerable guest underneath the bodily fluids and exposed flesh? Surely the scene alerts the viewer to certain realities of torture in black site prisons and exposes the extent of the violence committed as part of the detainee program, but this political critique does little to challenge the norms of race and sexuality that are constructed through the event(s) of torture. Moreover, while the real and historical violence to which the scene refers is itself widely condemned, its colonial undertones are not. However critical or reflective they are regarding prisoner abuse, viewers of this scene will struggle to remember the tempered critique but will have no trouble remembering the image of the naked prisoner surrounded by his own leaking fluids. While the film provides context for the use of torture and suggests that such methods were often not useful in obtaining information – Daniel’s violence, for example, fails to stop an upcoming terrorist attack – torture is critiqued for its inefficacy rather than its gendered, sexualized and racialized abjection of the other. In other words, in Ammar, the viewer reads difference (although staged), abjection, and deviance *before* recognizing suffering. Thus, the elements of desire that permeate most of the torture scenes fit more comfortably within frameworks that permit that desire to expose difference (even if manufactured and theatrical) more than they permit the desire to make suffering visible, particularly when those constructed as different are not read as suffering at all. Yet the torture is also easy to understand as an

anomaly or exceptional event rather than a sustained and widespread practice of the current security state.³⁸ Thus, what the viewer may disavow in this scene is not only the humanity of the prisoner but the uninvited intimacy with him as well – a move that slides too easily into an assessment of torture as simply “wrong” rather than prompt deeper questions about *why* this torture is so easily and readily able to occur.

3.5.2 Beyond Desire: Hospitality and the Possibility of Violence

Desire, however is not always what it seems and, while in *Zero Dark Thirty*'s representation of torture such desires are certainly played out across terrains of race and gender imbued within a discourse of sexuality, the film exposes other desires as well. Torture is used to gain control or superiority over a prisoner but also functions to bring that prisoner into a more familiar and comfortable way of understanding the world; it highlights difference but at the same time is threatened by it. In other words, the desire for intimacy is never entirely outside the desire to make the other known and familiar. The filmic project, as a whole, certainly responds to this desire – we might even consider it hospitable in the sense that it fulfills the public's desire to transform something as incomprehensible, even reprehensible, as prisoner torture into a more manageable event that simultaneously responds to the viewer's other, perhaps contradictory desire – that is, to see the inside of the

³⁸ There is a reason why torture occurs in prisons that are outside American judicial and geographical boundaries. When torture does occur, as Razack points out, the full implications of the abuse are overlooked when the event is interpreted as a series of unfortunate circumstances. In her words, however, “what we saw at Abu Ghraib was neither the aberrant behaviour of a few soldiers nor an overly aggressive approach to terrorism gone awry” (“White Supremacy” 342). Indeed, much of the Abu Ghraib scandal has often been described as a singular and unusual event that focuses on the soldiers and not on the detainee. By focusing on the individual perpetrators rather than the suffering of the prisoners the widespread issue of racism and othering in the War on Terror is avoided. In order for such prisoners to exist and for these interrogation methods to continue the scandal needs to be seen as simply that – a scandal that exposes the misdeeds of a few soldiers but does not draw attention to the suffering of the prisoners for such consideration might reveal the abuse to be not an anomaly but, rather, emblematic of the treatment of, and racial attitudes towards, Muslim others.

black site prison cell. It is voyeurism that, while perhaps not sadistic to the extent of those who inflict the torture, certainly raises question about what it means to observe torture, even if at a distance, and the degree to which a witness might be complicit in those violent acts – perhaps even more so because the torture is, in a sense, performed for those watching, be it behind a camera or a television screen. Moreover, within the film’s narrative itself, the desire for intimacy is reflected in attempts to know the other as a way to assuage the confrontation of difference. *Zero Dark Thirty* relies on structures of intimacy to position its characters within this confrontation and, at the same time, exposes the viewer to external difference, self-difference, and the lacunas in understanding that we face in our knowledge of one another. In thinking through the ways in which *Zero Dark Thirty* highlights the abjection of Ammar through the emphasis on his bodily fluids and the frameworks of difference through which the audience reads such moments, we can see that both seem to suggest that hospitality cannot operate in the expressions of intimacy at the black site prison. That is not to say, of course, that hospitality could not be possible in such an encounter. While it ultimately operates as a scene of disavowed hospitality, it could have been otherwise, a hosting rather than a hostage-taking or, perhaps even a reversal of the guest/host relation entirely. Indeed, the scenes of torture hover on this very threshold for Daniel – the thin line between violence and desire and the narrow precipice between his role as host/interrogator and becoming hostage himself, should he recognize the absolute alterity of Ammar, as Other rather than knowable stranger. But this moment never happens. In Kearney and Semonovitch’s words, once more, “the other as Other can never arrive. The face that appears is always the face of the Foreigner-for-me” (11). Likewise, Daniel retreats from this threshold – that where the absolute arrivant might be encountered – as he eventually wears the Other-in-Ammar down, until that alterity is almost gone and Ammar

becomes an asset rather than an Other, an identifiable foreigner-for-Daniel. Ammar's absolute alterity, then, remains hospitality's other, *par excellence*, one who has yet to arrive and hovers just out of reach.

The film seems to offer a depiction of torture that is, perhaps hospitable to a critique of violence in intelligence gathering, but fails to make that critique in such a way that retains the singularity of the other. Put differently, the film renders as necessary the destruction of difference in order to offer a quiet and often overworked critique that does not always know how to identify the violence of torture. But what else does the scene do in its representation of a body broken by torture? Does our initial response to viewing violence prevent us from reading something deeper beneath it? Or might this violence of exposure – the visceral and visual experience of a body spilling open – be perhaps another occasion to think about how hospitality operates in spite of the structures that seek to limit its reach? The highlighting of bodily fluids certainly invokes the visual rhetoric of snuff and reduces the victim to what his body expels, rendering him less than human or, in Kristeva's words, "death infecting life" (*Powers* 4). Yet how might we use the figures and moves of hospitality to also read, in these moments of exposure, a body that opens to the violence inflicted upon it? This is not to exonerate the violence of the interrogators or prison guards or to suggest their actions make possible a moment of hospitality. To be sure, this is not their intention and the violence itself forecloses the possibility of a hospitable encounter. It is, however, to turn away from the places in which we expect to see hospitality either succeed or fail; it is, in Žižek's words, to "look away" (3) to see what other possibilities lie within reach and ask, what if hospitality were to act on its own, untethered from intentionality and against expectation? What if this particular representation of violence in *Zero Dark Thirty*, then, *does* expose a hospitality of the body

that acts almost in spite of itself and against the desire for self-preservation. This is, perhaps, a problematic way of reading hospitality, as here we are made privy to the (non-psychological) interiority of the prisoner, to what is internal and intimate, but in such a way that is only made possible by the occasion of violence. More than proximity and deeper than eye contact, a body in pain and spilling itself onto the floor is an invitation, more intimate than ever, from which we cannot turn away.

This interplay between intimacy, desire and violence is crucial for thinking about how hospitality functions in the prison, particularly as we consider how these discourses come to play out over the most intimate terrain of the body. In particular, a body in pain seems to suggest the foreclosure of hospitality but at the same time asks us to think hospitality in alternative ways. How might we trouble the assumption that violence is always a foreclosure of hospitality by looking at the body in pain as the threshold of a very problematic hospitality; that is, a body that, through its suffering, opens itself to invasion by an other? Exposing the refusal of hospitality to racialized, gendered and sexualized bodies is not so simply to suggest that hospitality is absent from the prison site; it also opens up hospitality to alternative frameworks of understanding, made possible by considering how the opening or breaking of bodies might act as a threshold for hospitable relations as well as how a violent encounter enables a provocative intimacy not always observed in acts of torture. In other words, and perhaps quite disappointingly, torture is not necessarily opposed to hospitality in the ways we might expect. Not only does it rely on a measure of intimacy (one always infused with desire); it serves to remind us how close hospitality is to hostility and how we might resist making too-easy distinctions between the two. This also, of course, allows hospitality to act untethered from the moral and political paradigms where it is most often espoused. While these often serve altruistic ends, they also limit

hospitality's potential to transform relations between strangers and others in more surprising and unexpected ways. Connecting hospitality with only a moral "good" is, in itself, an inhospitable act as morality is too readily associated with intention and universality. As *Zero Dark Thirty* illustrates, hospitality often appears in situations that could easily be classified as "amoral" and materializes *against* the intentions of the film itself. *Zero Dark Thirty* reveals how easily intimacy slides into violence but, in so doing, raises entirely new questions and possibilities of thinking the idea of the stranger and strangeness, questions that transcend the internal narrative of the film and implicate the viewer in practicing hospitality toward both real and representational others, not to mention in the ways we think, read and consume. Intimacy acts in entirely different ways in the context of *viewing* torture in that the audience is placed not in the dichotomous roles of victim or perpetrator (and even these categories remain ambiguous and dependent upon the preexisting frameworks of understanding we bring to our experience watching the film). This is not an intimacy the viewer desires, but, rather, one he or she is forced to confront. Yet these acts of violence, whether they are presented critically as representational exposés of real violence or as justification of interrogation methods, are staged – and staged for *us*, as visual consumers and in this sense, are much different than the Abu Ghraib photographs that were taken for the pleasure of the guards and not intended for mass distribution. We are intended, of course, to be made uncomfortable and grateful, perhaps, for the somewhat distant vantage point that the film allows. But the staged and scripted nature of the film's violence also exposes something about the film in general, in that any intimacy offered by the narrative is a carefully constructed one.

3.6 Redaction and Regimes of Intimacy

Just as *Zero Dark Thirty* is purposeful in which references to real events make the film's final cut, so too is it careful to leave out certain elements that might alter the intended reading of the narrative. While the film liberally includes the voices of 9/11 victims, for example, it elects not to show the face of Osama Bin Laden, whose death is sanitized for the audience. The Navy Seals enter Bin Laden's compound, guns drawn, and the entire exercise is shot in almost complete darkness, with the occasional frame visible through night vision – a perspective we are offered, significantly, through the eyes of the seal. One seal member ascends a staircase in the dark, softly calling “Osama” as if he is a friend offering protection rather than attempting to draw him out into the open. As an unidentified man comes out of a room, he is shot immediately, the seals rushing in, pushing the women aside, and firing multiple shots into the man's chest. We see a fleeting glimpse of small circles of blood on a white shirt, and the bottom of a graying beard is visible at the very top of the frame from which the rest of the man's face is excluded. At no point does the man make a sound. We do not hear his screams – only those of his wives – nor do we see any trace of reaction to the pain. He is, in a sense, dead before he is established as living and is identified by the seals only as a “possible target” (Bigelow). Boal defends this decision, claiming that to show Bin Laden would be to break the narrative “rules”. Instead, Boal seeks to represent Bin Laden “as a specter” (Boal 109), a curious choice of words given the film's penchant for making people and things disappear. Indeed, even the sites of torture disappear in the narrative of the film and are left unnamed and un-located. They exist as ambiguous yet thrilling spaces, made more alluring by their mysterious whereabouts. These locations are introduced to us on screen with only the superimposed text “Black Site” or “Undisclosed Location” while other events, such as the London bombings of July 7, 2005

are introduced with specific dates and location details. These black sites, unlike London and New York are, by definition, no place at all. Set up by the CIA as “covert prisons” (Sadat 310), black sites are marked by a double bind of presence and absence; they are physical places with “nowhere” status. Pugliese describes such places as “literally off the map” (*State Violence* 165). Yet black sites *are* on the map, they do exist, even if unnamed, and their effects are written on the bodies of every prisoner who is transferred there, as well as for the soldier’s guards, interrogator and observers, whose experiences are anything but invisible.

Interestingly, while violent interrogation comprises a bulk of the film’s early scenes, its presence gradually fades into the background of the narrative. In the second half of the film, after the detainee program is cancelled, there is never again any scene of prisoner violence or allusion to coercive interrogation techniques. The narrative, in a sense, shifts drastically away from the process of gathering intelligence and moves onto Maya’s relentless appeals to her superiors to act on the information they now have. Never again is the process by which this information was gathered addressed, as the memories of the torture that occurs in the first half of the movie fade in time for the film’s culminating and victoriously patriotic scene in which Bin Laden is killed. Viewers are encouraged to remember the success of the mission while the violence and the prisoners upon whom it was inflicted are merely part of a shadowy, indefinable past that exists only in traces, officially nowhere, and erased from history. We might think of this as a kind of redaction, not unlike the ominous black boxes that permeate official documents³⁹ regarding the torture

³⁹ A massive volume of memos, emails and other previously classified documents, *The Torture Papers* is an attempt to compile and bring to light the attempts of the US Government and its various agencies to both conceal the reality of prisoner torture as well as find ways to justify and/or legalize its role in intelligence

of prisoners only, in this case, what is redacted are the narrative moments that might alert the viewer to a different way of understanding the events in question. To redact is to “reduce to a certain state” (“Redact,” *OED*), a fitting description in consideration of the ways in which the bodies of prisoners and even Bin Laden are reduced to a less-than human-status. While he was given burial rites in accordance with Islamic tradition, the decision not to bury Bin Laden on land was made to prevent his final resting place from become a shrine or site of pilgrimage (Black and Whitaker). Instead, he was buried at sea, a practice seldom used in Islam (Hakim Murad) and his death remains shrouded in mystery, his body forever absent. To acknowledge these processes and discursive blind spots is to ask significant questions of the film’s representation of violence; namely, how might our viewing change if we were given a glimpse of Bin Laden’s face, could see a gravesite covered in tributes from the followers we know he had, or if we were reminded in the latter half of the film how intelligence was gathered over the broken bodies of prisoners who rarely supplied any actionable leads?

These absences all reflect what Gillian Rose refers to as the “scopic regime,” a process of carefully selecting and arranging visual cues, in particular, in such a way that “what is seen and how it is seen” are constructions of dominant social relations (2). *Zero Dark Thirty* invites viewers to observe the film’s representation of events within a particular framework that renders certain figures and characters more “readable” than others. In other words, while the film has the opportunity to provide a compelling and hospitable interpretation of the search for Bin Laden, it is selective in which details and

gathering. As Anthony Lewis writes in his introduction to the volume, *The Torture Papers* seeks to expose the “extraordinary paper trail” that provides evidence of the ways in which the Bush Administration “sought to argue away the rules against torture” (xiii), yet much of this evidentiary material remains shrouded by redaction.

representations it chooses to incorporate. In so doing, it grants the viewer a certain intimacy – a figurative look at the inside of the black site prison and an internal perspective on CIA operations – but shields the viewer from other realities of those processes. This is an intimacy that forces the viewer’s reading to fit within a predetermined and subscribed framing of events, and one that misleads the audience with moments of intimacy intentionally designed according to the ideology of the film – an ideology the viewer then tacitly, if not readily, welcomes.

The regime of intimacy engendered by *Zero Dark Thirty*, then, is an intimacy of misdirection rather than exposure. It offers some compelling opportunities for thinking about how intimacy is unwilled and unbidden, as well as how intimacy can slip into hostility when exercised within frameworks of colonial desire and distain. Yet it cordons that experience of intimacy within dominant frameworks of recognition and understanding – it simultaneously depicts and redacts. Redaction, however, has a slightly different translation from Latin, in which its etymological root *redigere* means, “to bring back” (“Redact,” *OED*). Indeed, there is something in the redacted moments of intimacy within the film that cannot help but be brought back, despite the narrative attempts to quell it. What can be made, then of the aspects of intimacy that confronts us outside of the dominant narrative of the film? What if we were to approach the film, in a sense, *inhospitably* or, rather, to refuse the invitation it extends to us and, instead, be confronted by a different kind of intimacy, one that asks us to consider the ways in which violence may not always be or do what it seems? *Zero Dark Thirty* offers the viewer a sense of intimacy, but it is always within the regime of the film’s established narrative and to speak of the intimate encounters enabled by the film is perhaps misleading, as it invites us to know and understand the other as the film does – that is, within a particular framework of knowledge

and desire. Yet this is an intimacy that might we refuse as well, choosing to read these moments of intimacy not as subsuming the other to our understanding but, rather, exposing the infinity and irreducibility of that other instead. In other words, the film does not reveal what can be known about the other; it reveals that the other can *never* be known. These are the unintentional moments of intimacy – the ones that are not created by the film’s narrative but confront the viewer despite the operations of redirection and redaction the film attempts to use to guide our understanding.

Redaction, of course, can never fully extinguish whatever it attempts to hide; like blacks sites, as much as it aims to hide away and conceal, it also reveals and exposes. It is a void similar in presence to the memorial pools in New York and one that is all the more transparent for its lack. Further, just as the memorial pools “reflect” on their own absence, so too do the redacted moments of the film and its prescribed intimacies recognize their own limits and constantly alert us to what is missing. In anticipation of these voids, *Zero Dark Thirty* only presents select moments of intimacy that are in keeping with dominant ideas about the War on Terror and is careful about depicting the more critical acknowledgement of prisoner torture through a romanticized lens of the “nowhere” site and explicit framing of violence as a practice confined to the past. Yet, borrowing from David Simpson’s reading of the role of footnotes, we must consider these redacted moments of the film as absences that remain present in the margins – if not on the page or in the screenplay, then between the lines of dialogue, scene directions and protracted visual rhetoric. These uninvited textual strangers haunt the narrative and intrude on dominant readings of the film. As absences, they are “there to remind us of how much we don’t know” (Simpson, *Romanticism* 110) and demonstrate the unwilling arrival of particular guests into our understanding of the practices of clandestine torture and “covert” operations. Intimacy then,

while supportive of the racialized, gendered and sexualized torture of prisoners as moments of failed hospitality, also operates outside of the film's prescribed rituals of welcome; in *Zero Dark Thirty*, in other words, there is an intimacy that exceeds the frame.

3.7 Conclusion: Surprised by Hospitality

Midway through the film, Maya, her colleague Jessica and the Islamabad station chief, David, discuss how to convince a possible Jordanian asset to “turn” on Al Qaeda and offer them information. Both suggested methods revolve around a gift. The first of these is a dialysis machine, offered as a gesture of good faith but immediately weaponized by David who suggests it be filled with poison. The second gift, revealed later when Jessica goes to meet the asset in Afghanistan, is a birthday cake. While Maya cautions “Muslim’s don’t celebrate with cake,” Jessica proceeds with her strategy, claiming “everyone likes cake,” “it will be fun,” and “we’ve got lots of wine” (Bigelow). While their discussion centers on how they might best “host” the potential asset and assure him of their “protection,” the conversation quickly turns to how they might respond if their investment in hospitality is unsuccessful. In raising this possibility, David, Jessica, and Maya reveal their particular practice of hospitality to be but a simulacrum. If the asset cannot prove his loyalty and produce the information the CIA needs, he will be killed. The visual elements of this scene also call to mind more familiar images of hospitality: colleagues toast each other across a table, operatives wait in a line to receive their “guest,” and the asset arrives through a series of gates and barricades which are criticized by Jessica as potentially “spooking” him off as she orders the security guards to “stand down” (Bigelow). The guest, however, arrives with a gift of his own – a vest laden with explosives that detonates once his car is in the compound, in Boal’s words “massacring them all” (45).

The scene is both explicit and figurative in its deployment of hospitality. It contains elements we might naturally associate with a hospitable moment – toasting, baking a cake, offering wine and gifts – and it also speaks to some of hospitality’s more tense figures: gates, the notion of protection, and the thin line between welcome and risk. Structurally, the scene is framed by violence, from the sarcastic suggestion of poison to the detonation of a bomb. It offers then withdraws, extends then withholds, promises and then fails. Yet the scene also reminds us of the ways hospitality subsumes the other into its rituals of welcome and exchange. As Maya reminds Jessica, Muslims do not celebrate with cake, yet Jessica is resolute in her need to practice a clear (albeit conventional) extension of hospitality. The shot of her icing the cake in an industrial kitchen, cradling the phone between her chin and neck while she talks to Maya is reminiscent of a different kind of life – one away from conflict and politics – that must be read as gendered and suggestive of the promises of a more suburban hospitality. Yet Jessica’s hospitality is far more complicated as it comes with several significant conditions attached. It would be tempting to read the explosion that kills her as hospitality *par excellence* – the result of opening herself, her (temporary) home, and makeshift “family” to risk. Her refusal to search the asset at the gate and allow him unobstructed passage surely results in her death, but it is not a failure of hospitality *per se*. The scene also calls to mind the ways in which intimacy and desire – particularly as intimacy is exercised and manipulated in a desire to *know* the other – can work as operations of both hostility and hospitality. Finally, the scene is punctuated by figures of redaction, most significantly, in the ways in which both guest and host are keeping crucial information from each other. As host, Jessica offers a cake to disguise the threat that lies beneath; namely, that the guest will be killed if he does not fulfill his duty as reliable asset. However, the guest also disguises the violence he will bring to the encounter – a detail the

screenwriters hide from the viewer as well, so we too are shocked when the bomb detonates.

More than conjure some of the more conventional expressions of hosting the stranger, this scene asks us to notice the complex moves of hospitality that lie beneath: the reductive attempts at intimacy exercised through baking a cake, the ways in which the guest turns swiftly to mere asset and then assassin, and the withholding of information on both sides of the guest/host relation. Not only does the scene remind us, as viewers, that violence might not be opposed to hospitality in the ways that we might expect; it also exposes the ways in which some framing context is made readily available while other knowledge is crucially withheld. The scene also returns us, full circle, to Meisel's image, as a representation of gendered and sexualized violence as well as a figure of redaction. We are only made to see certain elements of the image – an image that purports to be critical of so-called interrogation methods but, at the same time, situates both the viewer and model within the frameworks that deny a hospitable reception to difference. *Zero Dark Thirty* similarly claims to illuminate a moment of the War on Terror by inviting the viewer into an intimate moment of encounter, albeit it one operating within a particular regime of representation. In so doing, the film exposes itself as irrevocably concerned with the range of intimate moments that define hospitable relations. Ultimately, then, torture is not entirely the abdication of hospitality but, rather, reveals the ways in which violence, desire and hospitality all coalesce around a notion of intimacy. Hospitality relies on, but is also destabilized by this intimacy, as it is the violent conventions of recognition and identification that lie at the crux of a complex welcome of strangers. It is intimacy that also makes possible a way of apprehending hospitality in a non-moral sense. In other words, what intimate violence uncovers are the ways in which hospitality does not abandon but,

rather, is irreducible to universal understandings of moral good. *Zero Dark Thirty*, thus, has everything to do with hospitality, not simply in its violent treatment of would-be guests, but, rather in what this violence reveals about the ways in which hospitality arrives when we least expect it, in moments that are too quickly passed over for their apparent lack of ethics, and in encounters that reflect intimacy rather than invitation.

What my analysis of *Zero Dark Thirty* insists upon, furthermore, is the presence of hospitality even within regimes of intimacy that seem to operate only within a framework of violence. Indeed, it suggests that intimacy, even when violent, is at the core of hospitality. This is something we see at work across the spectrum of peaceful to violent expressions of living with others, including the ways in which the 9/11 museum, for example, simultaneously avows and forecloses the significance of living with others in moments and, indeed, places of terror, not to mention the variety of ways in which public space is encountered and re-imagined through the work of street art – a context to which I will turn next. Intimacy is, of course, not always violent, even if it is traumatic. What these different texts and differing levels of engagement and spectatorship reveal is the breadth of hospitality's complexity, a persistent appearance that does not always manifest as an ethical practice. In other words, what appears promising in one context – the ways in which strangers' lives are made more intimate and open in street-level memorials after 9/11, for instance – is decidedly defeating in another, as is the case with prisoner lives and bodies striped bare through intimate violence. Ultimately, what *Zero Dark Thirty* highlights, again, is a social and cultural preoccupation not only with the ways in which bodies occupy space (invited or not), but how such moments of occupation are always and inevitably in relation to – and intimacy with – other bodies.

Chapter 4 Taking Hospitality to the Street: Mobile Ethics and the Event of Urban Art

[Public space] would be open, above all, to encounters between people of different classes, races, ages, religions, ideologies, cultures, and stances towards life. It would be planned to attract all these different populations, to enable them to look each other in the face, to listen, maybe to talk...Open public space is a place where people can actively engage the suffering of this world together, and, as they do it, transform themselves into a public"

(Marshall Berman, qtd. in Keith 142).

"Society has been completely urbanized...The street is a place to play and learn. The street is disorder...This disorder is alive. It informs. It surprises...The urban space of the street is a place for talk, given over as much to the exchange of words and signs as it is to the exchange of things. A place where speech becomes writing. A place where speech can become 'savage' and, by escaping rules and institutions, inscribe itself on walls"

(Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution* 19).

Walking through London's East End, visitors and residents will often stumble upon curious stick figures, drawn crudely in black and white and positioned at strange angles, but that stand out against brightly coloured backgrounds and refuse to fade into the otherwise bleary industrial and commercial façades on which they are painted. Comprised of a simple circle with two eyes, a rectangular body, and four black lines for limbs, these figures convey a surprising amount of emotion as they bend and beckon passersby in their simplicity. Their creator, an anonymous artist known only as "Stik", carefully considers each location and paints figures emblematic of his own struggles with homelessness,

poverty and marginalization. His characters are both whimsical and sophisticated, trapped in windows and doorframes, yet flexible as they reach out to one another in positions of embrace and, at times, even flight. As Stik describes “[m]y pieces are about moving through the cityscape and feeling insecure” (“Stik”). Stik does not simply use the walls and doors of the city as blank and ready canvases; he actively engages them as part of his art. In his words, street art is “an environmental medium... You are using the city as your medium. The street art scene is dialogue” (“Stik”). Stik’s figures are simple, almost child-like, but they are evocative in their ability to display a range of human emotion and engage those who stop to look in the recognition of human community and vulnerability. They do not explicitly participate in the anti-capitalist or anti-government critiques that many street artists take up in their work, yet the mouth-less figures make implicit claims about the voicelessness of the disposed, the alternative communities of the street, and the necessity of re-thinking human (in)security within the UK. These anxieties, while undoubtedly historical and owing to Britain’s vast history of transcultural migration and colonialism, are certainly exaggerated by particular social relations brought to the fore after 9/11. Yet because of its figurative responsiveness to hospitality, street art comes to mediate broader anxieties about the terror of strangers and the ways in which the figure of the stranger has intensified after 9/11, producing fascinating effects in terms of how hospitality is both lived and disavowed.

Stik’s work, in particular, reflects not only how street art speaks to a politics of resistance in Britain and the role of art in critiquing social injustice; it also conjures a number of figures of hospitality. The anonymity of the artist, the displacement of the home as a locus of art collection and of the street as something to be owned, and the careful arrangement of stick figures in doorways and on walls all speak loudly to the complexities

of hospitality that this chapter is deeply invested in – complexities that seem to intensify when examined through the prism of urban space. I turn to these figures, and others that crop up in various artworks and movements, in order to investigate if and how alternative modes of hospitality are enabled by the fluid and dynamic space of the street. Moreover, the street raises some important conflicts within a philosophy of hospitality – namely the tension between fixity and mobility – that are not always apparent given hospitality’s preoccupation with the space of the home as a metaphor for welcome and invitation. As the spectrality of the September 11 Museum and representations of torture reveal, hospitality is most certainly about disorder and surprise. For many, however, hospitality is premised on an idea of the home, often narrowly conceived, even when employed as a metaphor of larger social and even international relations. What of the city then, and of public space that falls under the brush or spray-can of artists such as Stik whose pieces insist that homelessness might be central to thinking about hospitality? What does urban space tell us about the work of hospitality, its complex relations, strange proximities and even stranger canvases for expression? What happens, for example, when hospitality is moved out of the metaphor of the home and into the street? What resources does street art provide to nurture a project of hospitality and is such an ethics undermined or encouraged by the often illegal appropriations of and inscriptions upon spaces carved out and surveilled by the state? Taking up these questions and more along the way, this chapter investigates how street art and graffiti⁴⁰ re-order, de-territorialize and remake public space and how such works might offer an alternative framework for conceptualizing hospitable relations.

⁴⁰ In this argument I will refer to graffiti, street art, and urban art interchangeably. This is not to suggest that these are the same or share the same root, nor is to elide to controversy surrounding attempts to distinguish between the two. While some experts are committed to highlighting the difference between these art forms

4.1 Street Art and the Politics of Resistance

Street art has long had a role in critiquing and destabilizing dominant relations of power and inequality.⁴¹ Emerging from a variety of graffiti movements in the 1970s and 1980s, street art gained considerable momentum in the 1990s while depicting various social critiques and political messages through both their content and the highly controversial and criminalized act of graffiti writing itself (see Irvine; Reed; Macdonald; McAuliffe). Contemporary street art has often offered a form of anti-capitalist critique by engaging in projects of culture jamming as a response to corporatism and by borrowing from other “high” art movements to stage what Martin Irvine refers to as a *détournement*, or “a hijacking, rerouting, displacement and misappropriation of received culture for other ends” (240). Often called “brandalism,” this form of street art uses familiar logos and marketing messages in its anti-consumerism re-appropriations. Culture jamming, to be sure, has political implications beyond the critique of corporatism. The very medium of street art and graffiti writing significantly politicizes the so-called “jam.” Bart Cammaerts, for example, highlights “the use of cultural jamming techniques by political actors, as well as by citizens, in their political communication within fragmented counter-public spheres, as well

and, in some cases, even refer to the competition between styles as a war (see Schacter; Lewisohn), the focus of this chapter is not on content and style but, rather, on the event of creating art in city space – what Martin Irvine refers to as the “material moment” of art (241). In using these terms interchangeably, I mean to deconstruct the often employed, hierarchical binary between graffiti and street art, and suggest that while their styles and perhaps intentions are different, they both speak equally to the issues of hospitality that are the focus of this chapter.

⁴¹ While graffiti is often characterized as a “bottom-up development” that expresses the concerns of the dispossessed and finds its roots in the late 1960s (Lewisohn 31), contemporary street writing often reflects and even references a much older history. Much like the common act of “tagging” one’s work, people in ancient Pompeii, too, would etch their names into walls (Baird and Taylor 2). Indeed, the English word “graffiti” comes from the Italian verb “to scratch” (Baird and Taylor 3). More significantly, in the context of this chapter, there is a long tradition of these wall markings revealing the complex relationship between individuals, communities, and space, and the choices made by artists to make these markings in places where they conventionally do not belong (Baird and Taylor 3-4).

as in the mainstream public sphere” (72). For Cammaerts, culture jams employ a particular transgressive form of expression beyond their content. According to him, “jamming the political should also be seen as a way of dealing with the messiness of reality, as subverting meanings, and thereby using humour, mocking, satire and parody” (Cammaerts 72). The well-known street artist Banksy (a pseudonym) employs a culture jamming approach in his work. One example is his provocative piece featuring Nick Ut’s iconic image of a young girl fleeing her village burnt by napalm during the Vietnam War. Seemingly equating the “evils” of consumer capitalism with napalm attack, Banksy re-appropriates Ut’s photograph by stenciling it on a wall and adding Mickey Mouse and Ronald MacDonald on either side of the girl, holding her hands.

As such controversial examples show, Banksy’s work also transcends the corporatist critique and engages in the overtly politicized debates over war, government surveillance and immigration. His UK pieces – “One Nation Under CCTC”, “If at first you don’t succeed – call an airstrike” – and a San Francisco piece depicting an indigenous man sitting under a “No Trespassing” sign make a compelling case against the police state, drone warfare, and colonialism, respectively, yet it is street art’s response to anti-immigration rhetoric in the UK that I want to draw particular attention to, as it provides a sustained critique of the failure of political hospitality in British international relations. As John Sweeney explains, even when the message of street art is not intentionally political (we might place Stik’s work in this context), artists still “call into question the common sensory experience of the politics underlying the formation of (nationalist) space” (256). Intentionally political or not, street art forces us to recognize the ways British hospitality towards others is problematically enacted and thus inserts itself into a larger political debate on immigration and the human rights allocated to refugees and asylum seekers.

The debates and anxieties over British immigration resonate especially in London's East End⁴², where much of the city's street art is based. In her auto-ethnography, *On Brick Lane*, Rachel Lichtenstein recounts a number of ways in which the neighborhood has borne the brunt, often violent, of tensions over British immigration. She points, in particular to the current presence of a mosque on Brick Lane that has historically been used as a Huguenot chapel and Jewish synagogue as well. While the diverse uses of the building reflect a noteworthy way of living with others, the Latin inscription above its doors, *ubra sumus*, translated as "we are shadows" (Lichtenstein 3), speaks more strikingly to the uncertainty and dislocation – even disappearance – that all three groups have been made to feel in a territory they are constantly reminded is not their home. The East End has also been the site of a number of acts of both organized and random acts of terror. In 1999, neo-Nazi David Copeland began a 13-day bombing campaign that targeted the largely African-Caribbean diaspora in Brixton, queer residents of Soho, and Bangladeshi immigrants of Brick Lane in the East End (Hopkins). Six years later, the bombings of July 7, 2005, which have a veiled presence in *Zero Dark Thirty*, killed 52 civilians on a number of bus and tube routes across London⁴³ and, while not entirely proven, are thought to be the work of Al Qaeda ("In Depth"). More recently, on May 22, 2013, British Army soldier Lee Rigby was stabbed to death by two men who claimed to act in retaliation for the Iraq War (Dodd). While the attack on Rigby occurred in Woolwich and not specifically in Brick Lane, all these examples of violence involve elements of race and terrorism and all occur in public

⁴² For a more comprehensive account of contemporary and racially motivated violence and terrorism in London's East End see Benjamin Bowling's *Violent Racism: Victimisation, Policing and Social Context* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), whose book contains a detailed description and analysis of violence from the 1980's onward.

⁴³ While the attacks took place across London, there was one attack that took place in the East End. Seven people were killed on Circle Line train 204, shortly after it left Liverpool Station on its way to Aldgate Station, both points of dis- and embarkation for sites such as Brick Lane and Spitalfields Market ("In Depth").

places⁴⁴. Further, such incidences of violence call up a long history of violence against “othered” groups and individuals that suggests that, while 9/11 has certainly intensified tensions, London, and the East End in particular, has long been defined by anxieties over otherness – anxieties that manifest in gendered and racialized violence but also in the more innocuous forms of anti-immigration policy. My focus in this chapter, then, attends to a history of hospitality and inhospitality that extends beyond the defining date of 9/11. It is an enduring narrative, in other words, but one that raises questions about guests and hostiles, strangers and familiars, that have intensified sharply in the wake of the War on Terror, in large part due to the ways in which this war has opened all public life to increased scrutiny and, in that process, rendered multiple forms of difference hostile. While Britain prides itself on a rhetoric of multiculturalism and political hospitality, it is a welcome that only admits certain strangers and with certain conditions attached. It constructs public space as free and democratic, yet, as these examples show, the street only exacerbates the already insecure and precarious status of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Political hospitality suggests that Britain is a welcoming nation and the statistics indicate that immigration is increasing,⁴⁵ yet the form of hospitality espoused by the British state is unable to grapple with the effects it produces. Thus, this history of violence reveals

⁴⁴ Also occurring in public places, although not entirely racially motivated, is a history of gendered violence in the East End, the most notable example of which are the Jack the Ripper murders. According to L. Perry Curtis, the news reportage of these crimes brought many issues to the front that are still relevant today, among them: “poverty and prostitution, the threat of collective violence in the East End, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, the limits of journalistic decency, and, of course, the ability of Scotland Yard to police the metropolis effectively” (Curtis 253). These acts of violence, committed against women already victimized by prostitution and poverty, continue to haunt the East End in the form of Jack the Ripper tours, which begin with a description of women’s mutilated bodies and end with lunch at one of Brick Lane’s curry houses, a curious way of bridging past and present, but one that effaces the precarity of race and gender in a neighborhood where many feel unwelcome in their own homes.

⁴⁵ According to Migration Watch UK, 583,000 individuals migrated to Great Britain in 2013, while 323, 000 residents migrated out of the country (“Migration 1”).

the street to be a contested space of tenuous exchange, threat and violence to which larger structures of political hospitality are blind and ultimately proven unsustainable.

With this history in mind, what is particularly interesting about the state of hospitality in Britain are the ways in which it is leveraged as a part of British identity despite significant evidence to the contrary, revealing deep anxieties about British immigration and multiculturalism. Sarah Gibson is explicit in her critique of British hospitality, calling it a “founding myth” of national identity. As she explains, it is common for government representatives to adopt a rhetoric of self-sacrifice, claiming that Britain has experienced and must protect itself from an abuse of hospitality (Gibson 164-165). Indeed, according to some, including Conservative leader Michael Howard, “the British people are tolerant and always ready to help those in genuine need...[but] many people now feel that their tolerance, their sense of fair play and their desire to help others is being abused” (Jones). The solution to this, for many legislators, is a tighter border and increased surveillance to help distinguish the welcomed and grateful guest from the abusive other. According to Gibson, “such legislation thus negotiates the tension between Britain’s narcissistic self-image as welcoming and hospitable, and the anxieties that accompany such openness to the other” (165). It is the critique of these anxieties, as unfounded and anti-hospitable, that forms the basis of street art’s political response to the dominant discourses of otherness that propagate anti-immigration sentiment in Britain. Thus, many works of street art in London, and particularly in the East End, regularly depict struggles of marginalization and the myth of a hospitable British identity by highlighting issues of governmentality, human (in)security, (lack of) community, and the struggle for visibility in the dominant regimes of British life.

4.1.1 Urban Art and the Failure of British Hospitality



Illustration 4.1. Banksy. *Dustbin Surveillance*. Brick Lane, London. Photo Credit: Gareth. Flickr Creative Commons. “Banksy-bin.” 28 October 2005. Web.

Banksy’s art responds, in a variety of ways including paste-ups, installations, live performances and even documentary, to state-sponsored violence and governmentality. The area surrounding Brick Lane, in London’s East End, plays host to a number of Banksy’s pieces, including one, now removed, that speaks to Britain’s rituals of surveillance carried out via closed-circuit television. Stenciled in black and white, a figure stands against the wall, partly disguised by a trash bin. Two legs stick out of the bottom and a periscope-style camera peeks out of the top from behind a partially closed lid. While the image can be read as playful, meant to engage those passing by in a game of hide and seek, it speaks more

loudly to Britain's practices of keeping careful watch over certain populations and of the suspicion often circulating around the perceived otherness of London's diasporic community. Moreover, it reflects the tenuous relationship between the treatment of cultural "others" and Britain's self-affirming claims of hospitality that celebrate multiculturalism whilst subjecting "othered" populations to routinized scrutiny. As Heidrun Friese notes "the alien is officially considered a 'guest' to be 'received', 'accommodated' and taken care of and yet as a potential enemy, has to be kept under surveillance" (333). It is not surprising then, in consideration of Britain's anti-immigration rhetoric, that Banksy has chosen to place his work in the Brick Lane neighborhood, which is densely populated by low-income artists and immigrant groups, rather than in one of the city's more affluent (and white) districts. Yet Banksy's piece also speaks to another complex relationship revealed through the work of street art: that between immigration and terrorism. His commentary on surveillance tactics can be seen as a critique, not only of the criminalization of street art but also of the routine scrutiny of London's racialized populations, singled out as more prone to violence. Patricia Noxolo argues "asylum and immigration now form part of a constellation of problematic issues (including crime and terrorism) that are seen as inherently interlinked and which are commonly viewed through the prism of security" (132). Banksy's surveillance art addresses this discourse of security and raises serious concerns about the viability of political hospitality in the UK, particularly when a rhetoric of hospitable refuge is espoused alongside the prevalence of CCTV cameras and police presence in the areas inhabited by immigrant and refugee populations.



Illustration 4.2. David Shillinglaw. *Untitled*. Bacon Street, off Brick Lane, London. Photo Credit: Somethingstarted-crazy. Flickr Creative Commons. “David Shillinglaw in East #london” 17 July 2012. Web.

In addition to highlighting the contradictory relationship between multiculturalism and surveillance, street art also speaks to dominant rhetoric positing the need for identification and tighter borders and argues for a new conceptualization of protection that advocates human security over national security. One work of art, in particular, offers a compelling case for re-thinking Britain’s anti-immigration rhetoric. Just off Brick Lane, on Bacon Street, David Shillinglaw’s large mural depicts a number of figures in various positions of embrace. Significantly, these figures are without conventional human characteristics – they have humanoid features, but they are presented in abstract proportions. Faces appear split in some cases, some figures have three eyes, and multiple heads seem to share one body. Painted in different shades of blue, the figures are all joined in some fashion, often by reaching out their arms toward one another. Some, in fact, have

multiple sets of arms, enabling them to touch almost all of the other figures simultaneously.⁴⁶ Unlike Banksy's image depicting the struggles of certain populations singled out for scrutiny, Shillinglaw's work highlights a promising potential for human interaction and engagement. It exposes a powerful sense of belonging and, in so doing, registers a crucial critique of human (in)security in London's East End. Human security and National security are, of course, very different things and, while a rhetoric of hospitality is often curiously invoked as a way of justifying increased security measures, the conditions placed upon those seeking British hospitality often render them more rather than less vulnerable. Security, as Gideon Baker explains, is a way of giving hospitality over to the so-called practical realities of keeping the nation safe: "That security is an antonym of hospitality can be seen from the link made by political elites across the western world between 'stronger', 'tighter', 'more secure' border controls and a desired drop in asylum applications" (116). Shillinglaw's piece challenges this discourse of security by painting abstract – human yet not quite – figures engaged in embrace rather than conflict. The image suggests that what Britain needs are more affective relationships rather than tighter borders, while, at the same time, it deconstructs the notion of cultural predispositions to violence that link immigration with terrorism. Shillinglaw's mural confronts its viewer with the recognition that closing Britain to foreigners, whether immigrants or refugees, does not encourage security, nor does it engender hospitality; in fact, it forecloses any potential for meaningful human interaction among others. The depiction of abstract creatures in embrace

⁴⁶ It is certainly worth mention here, the resemblance Shillinglaw's piece has to Picasso's "Embrace" (1971) in both content and aesthetic. Shillinglaw's work does seem to reflect some features of cubist art – most notably, an emphasis on multiple perspectives and geometric shapes. Unique to Shillinglaw's art, however, is its painting on a brick wall rather than canvas; thus, much of the geometric texture comes from the surface of the wall itself, rather than the brush strokes.

also challenges the necessity of identification in immigration and asylum policy. Both public discourse and official immigration rhetoric posit the unknown other as someone to be feared and thus continually tracked. Besides stricter border controls, immigration policy in the UK advocates the detention of refugees “who [can]not prove their identities...[and] proper record keeping about who comes and goes” (Noxolo 141). In response, Shillinglaw’s figures defy attempts to identify them. They are not conventionally recognizable and do not possess characteristics likening them to any particular population. Instead, he develops them as multi-perspectival and fragmented creatures, telling of a fractured British national imaginary, yet simultaneously gesturing to the infinite possibilities for community and living among different and even unrecognizable others.



Illustration 4.3. Stik. *Untitled*. Brick Lane, London. Image credit: Socarra. “Stik.” *Flickr Creative Commons*. 17 October 2014. Web.

While some works of street art make particular critiques of British immigration policy and challenge the rhetoric of political hospitality put forth by the state, other pieces simply demand to be recognized at all and call out against attempts to render them and the subjects they depict invisible. Stik's work is a provocative example of the ways in which figures of diversity refuse to blend in to dominant structures of belonging in the UK. One image in particular offers crucial insight into regimes of visibility and acceptance in London's East End. Two figures, both drawn in the familiar Stik style, stand hand in hand in a doorway. While the door is framed in white, the figures stand out in stark contrast to the red background of the door itself. The bold colours highlight not only the black, full-length niqab worn by the figure on the left but also the contrasting whiteness of the (presumably) male figure on the right. The image speaks to the potential of human relationships, and even interracial relationships, despite a climate of distrust toward immigrant populations, yet its placement in a doorway suggests such relationships must still remain half-hidden on a threshold that is neither overtly welcoming nor sealed shut. When considering the discourse of purification that dominates both anti-immigration rhetoric and campaigns against graffiti and street art, it is hard not to see both as a literal and figurative "whitewashing" of otherness. Stik's piece contests both governmental and discursive frameworks of visibility, frameworks that Irvine likens to "regimes". He suggests, "in each regime, there are rules and codes for what can be made visible or perceptible, who has the legitimacy to be seen and heard where, and who can be rendered invisible as merely the background noise of urban life" (Irvine 250). For Irvine, street art has a crucial role in destabilizing the codes that determine what will and will not be seen in the dominant public sphere. Stik's work provides a compelling critique of the failure of political hospitality, to be sure, but also does much more in its resistance to dominant

regimes of visibility. It involves the viewer in a reciprocal exchange of creation and interpretation, offering up significant blank space to highlight, in typical Stik fashion, that aesthetic simplicity does not entail a lack of ideological and/or political complexity. The figures are remarkably human, easily recognizable but not so entirely distinguishable from one another that we could not identify with both in some way. The piece reflects difference, to be sure, but not in such a way that difference becomes the defining feature of the work. Instead, neither figure is normalized nor made unusual and, in their boldness, they defy regimes of visibility by refusing to subscribe to dominant categories of self and otherness. These categories are, of course, so indicative of the exposure of difference that is leveraged to affirm the political hospitality of the British state. Stik's piece, then, has significant implications, given its location in Brick Lane and, in the British context in general, particularly as it references relations with others and ultimately presents hospitality not as the solution but, rather, as a crucial problem for British national identity.

But what do we do with this problem? Is there a case to be made for the necessity of political hospitality in the British context? Does street art make this case and, if successful, is political hospitality enough? To be sure, street art provides a compelling test ground for discourses of hospitality, and the relationship between graffiti and concerns over immigration is complex but well-founded. Yet it is not always the case that street art argues for a more ethical treatment of others or outsiders. While street art may “challeng[e] the very status of language, dialogue and discourse within the public sphere” (Keith 136), this can also manifest in the way of performative hate crime and anti-immigration expression maliciously and somewhat less-artfully sprayed or posted in urban space. The organization Islamophobia Watch keeps a careful record of such incidences around the globe, noting, in particular, the prevalence of racist graffiti on mosques in the UK. Examples include slogans

such as “NO MORE MOSQUE [sic] sprayed on a brick wall in Leicester (Pitt), and a series of messages written on the sidewalk of a London primary school. These messages include “ENFIELD COUNCIL LOVES AN IMIGRANT [sic]” and “FUCK IMMIGRANTS GO HOME [sic]” (Blocker). Such remarks often incorporate well-known symbols, such as those of the English Defense League⁴⁷, who have a history of anti-immigration protest and violence. As Keith cautions, urban art “has been understood variously as a form of popular protest and a people’s art, and it has also been implicated in brutal forms of symbolic violence, genocide and racism” (136). Does this suggest then, that graffiti or street art is merely a tool and that it is the content of the message that must be read more closely – content that, when engaged in potentially harmful discourse, might render the tool itself irredeemable? Thinking through the examples above, what can be made of the moments that suggest transgression can inspire hate and violence as much as it can engender a sense of agency and belonging? Might there still be something in the act of expression – something that perhaps works against the content that allows it to be seen – that may still offer a way into thinking about ethical relations with others?

⁴⁷ While the British state enacts a problematic and self-affirming ritual of hospitality, the English Defense League (EDL) is certainly more extreme and confrontational in their approach to UK immigration. A right-wing street protest movement concerned with limiting influence of Islam and spread of terrorism, the EDL claims to demonstrate peacefully but this is not always the case, particularly when they clash with anti-fascist protesters (see Allen). While the EDL is not a part of the British National Party, their causes, if not their actions, are remarkably similar. The right-wing policies of the BNP provide shocking evidence of the racist discourses surrounding immigration and inhospitality in the UK. The BNP website lists several strategies to limit immigration, among them: “Offer generous grants to those of foreign descent resident here who wish to leave permanently, [s]top all new immigration except for exceptional cases, [and] [r]eject all asylum seekers who passed safe countries on their way to Britain” (“Immigration”) In regards to specifically South Asian immigrants, the BNP offers this rationale: “India would not tolerate millions of non-Indians taking over that society” (“Immigration”). Not only does this statement single out a specifically racialized community (indeed, the countries which appear to be of the most concern for the BNP are India, China, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia); it also elides the legacy of violent British colonialism in India itself. While the views of the BNP are perhaps not representative of mainstream Britain, one does not need to look all the way to the far-right to discover less overt but equally problematic representations of South Asian and Middle Eastern others in British media, politics and social discourse.

While street art and graffiti can be intended to meet unethical and inhospitable aims and, to that end, remind us that such works are never entirely innocent or uncomplicatedly transgressive, the act of engaging in a form of street protest opens up the possibility that street art is a viable outlet for political expression. As the works by Banksy, Shillinglaw and Stik illustrate, street art provides an enduring sense of critique in the UK, whether reflecting the need for closer relations with strangers or depicting a more general urban discontent. It grapples with some of the crucial political problems of the 21st Century: poverty, race, surveillance and identity, and argues (in these cases and many others) that the UK has failed to extend a measure of hospitality towards its cultural, racial and economic “outsiders”. What becomes apparent, however, in reading the works of these urban artists, is that the nature of hospitality they find lacking is predominantly political rather than ethical. It is a hospitality one could liken to that espoused by Kant in his third article of *Perpetual Peace* and one that serves as the basis for theories of hospitality since the Enlightenment. To refresh, according to Kant, hospitality is “the right of an alien not to be treated as an enemy upon his arrival in another’s country” (15). However, Kant’s concern is with a guest’s right to *visitation*, rather than residence, a crucial distinction to make in the context of contemporary immigration concerns and Kant’s own claim that those seeking residence can only “request the *right* to be a *permanent visitor*” (15). This right is not a given and, for Kant, the extension of hospitality in this sense is not unconditional. Even the universal right to visit, it would seem, is conditioned on the “peaceable” behavior of the guest (15). Is Kant’s hospitality flawed then? Or is it simply more (or, perhaps, less) adaptable to the realities (and anxieties) of our time? According to Garrett Brown, Kant’s political hospitality is an important model for international relations because it protects both guest and host. It is conditional, to be sure, but also mutual and perhaps just as necessary

now as it was at the time of Kant's writing. Brown argues:

[I]t is reasonable to argue that in an increasingly globalized world, where powerful corporations and states maintain inhospitable relationships on the behalf of visiting powers, a more robust and mutually consistent commitment to the laws of hospitality is needed. In other words, as in the time of Kant, the globalized world is still dominated by Western powers, both militarily and economically, and these powers continue to act inhospitably beyond their borders. (324)

These powers also act inhospitably *within* their borders, revealing the need to distinguish between a political hospitality that opens a border then turns away from that newly welcomed guest and an ethical hospitality that continues to care for that guest, whatever the cost. According to Kant and Brown, the laws of hospitality must be mutually consistent – a caveat that is reflected in the ways in which political hospitality has been inscribed in legal frameworks. Friese, too, notes how the modern nation state has seen “ethical obligations enshrined into law and into the procedures of public political deliberation, legal procedures and administered law that determine rights and duties and thus, the social spaces of aliens, residents and citizens” (324).⁴⁸ But what is lost in the incorporation of hospitality into law? Is mutual consistency ever possible and, if it were, would there be a need for hospitality at

⁴⁸ Developing a legal framework for an ethical imperative is a complicated, if not impossible, task. Indeed, as Mireille Rosello explains, pure hospitality can actually be *illegal*, thus the need to distinguish between *pure* hospitality and legalized forms of *political* hospitality that cannot help but be subsumed by and filtered through the mechanism of state power. Regarding those who may want to offer “personal” asylum in the form of a invitation to guests deemed “illegal” by the state, Rosello notes: “the implied consequence of the state's right to interfere in the definition of the authorized guest is that the host's house is a subset of the national territory and that the private gesture of hospitality is always a subcategory of national hospitality” (“Interpreting” 212). Not only does Rosello's point here trouble the ethics of a political hospitality; it also troubles the home as a locus of hospitable relations. Forcing the private citizen to make the distinction between the illegal “alien” or innocent guest suggests that “hospitality is here inextricably linked to each individual's ability to interpret, to decode the other's body” (Rosello, “Interpreting” 212), an ability that, when exercised, renders pure hospitality defunct. Ultimately, Rosello's argument raises the important possibility that guilt under the law and pure hospitality can actually function simultaneously. Hospitality, in other words, even in its most ethical sense, can be illegal.

all? Adopting a legal framework for hospitable relations – a framework designed to protect both guest and host – risks sliding into what Emmanuel Levinas refers to as the “tyranny of the state” (*Totality* 176). By institutionalizing a complex set of ethics and, in many cases, appropriating ethics to meet state ends, legal and political hospitality does not provide unconditional welcome and protection but, rather, “awakens the person to a freedom it immediately violates” (Levinas, *Totality* 176).

In thinking about the role of street art in critiquing the contradictions of political hospitality then, we must also question the assumption that political hospitality is, indeed, truly desirable. In other words, while street art certainly reflects concerns over the failure of the British state to provide hospitality to its guests, these works do not so simply suggest that the solutions lie in a more open immigration policy or the granting of every application for asylum. Indeed, legislating a more inclusive immigration policy may invite more guests into the country, but does nothing to assuage the complexities of ostracization, surveillance and even violence that operate *inside* of Britain. If these struggles are, indeed, common to the immigrant experience, then it may well be that political hospitality, as it stands, is their *cause* rather than their solution and, as Gilbert Leung and Matthew Stone question, “why should we pursue hospitality on a political level when it would be far less violent not to offer hospitality in the first place?” (194). Perhaps what street art more specifically critiques is not so much the lack of hospitality but, rather, the ways in which hospitality is enacted and extended in problematic ways that officially welcomes guests but then leaves them without protection, comfort and belonging as they are constantly made to prove their loyalty, gratitude and assimilation while, at the same time, their difference is continually highlighted and reinforced. Political hospitality, in other words, is not about the guest at all but about the host and the need to perpetuate the myth of British multiculturalism – a

crucial platform in any political campaign. Seyla Benhabib suggests “the right to universal hospitality is sacrificed on the altar of state interest” (177), a simple yet scathing repudiation of the case for legal-political hospitality yet also, perhaps, an acknowledgement that the “right” of “universal hospitality” is only ever conditionally extended. Moreover, a welcome based on the condition of peaceable behavior (which can imply anything from non-criminal compliance to the adoption of local customs and rituals) is a political rather than ethical strategy and relies on the assumption that the guest desires *political* community and, even, desires to be British. Thus, “the other is either given hospitality that it does not desire, and is therefore assimilated into a fraternity to which it does not belong, or it is left out, which presumably undermines hospitality as a locus for politics” (Leung and Stone 200). It would seem, then, that political hospitality, while part of a liberalized discourse of multiculturalism and asylum, is more about incorporating rather than preserving otherness, raising important questions about the alterity of an other who “wants to resist political inclusion” (Leung and Stone 199) and also presents hospitality as an ethic deconstructed by its own practice.

Certainly street art provides an important critique of the limits of political hospitality and implicitly raises concerns over the legal frameworks established in the name of hospitality. But it is not enough to suggest that street art exposes the ways in which a political hospitality has failed. Surely these expressions of hospitality have not been successful, and artists issue notable and important critiques of this failure, but what street art and graffiti most importantly do is alert us to the recognition that political hospitality is not enough. This is not necessarily a new line of thinking around the complexities of hospitality. According to Brown, a legal hospitality does not guarantee universal cosmopolitan justice; rather it is a “first step”: “the laws of hospitality [as distinct from the

Law of hospitality espoused by Derrida] could be seen as being specifically designed to act as a *minimal* foundation from which future discussions about cosmopolitan justice might take place between a plurality of world voices in an increasingly globalized world” (Brown 310, my emphasis). Brown highlights the repeated use of the word “possible” throughout Kant’s *Perpetual Peace* to support this notion of a non-guarantee. What street art offers is a persistent engagement with hospitality that transcends the viability of the political and speaks, rather, to the necessity of the ethical. In other words, street art operates outside the state paradigm and offers something that, while often contained by political and legal frameworks, also exceeds those frames. While the political critique is often explicit in its material message, this art speaks to us in powerful ways that moves beyond the content of its expression. It does so by insisting upon the centrality of sociality and being with others to the question of what it would mean to live hospitality. It demands, not a welcome, per se, but that the rituals and conventions of the welcome itself are interrogated to the extent that the stranger is not given conditions but, in fact, becomes *the* condition of hospitality. There is no welcome without strangeness, in other words, and nowhere is that better played out than in the public spaces appropriated by street art. Street art refuses to know who or what is to come or, how one ought to extend hospitality to another while, at the same time, embraces its own lack of “homeliness” or durability. It does this on a number of levels that will be explored in what follows and there are several ways in which street art conjures a deeper understanding of hospitality. Ultimately, by writing and re-writing in moments of unstable collaboration, preserving the anonymity of the artist, and reclaiming and deterritorializing space, street art destabilizes the binary thinking that occludes the possibilities of ethics and exceeds the framework of the home as metaphor and locus of hospitable relations. Before returning to London, however, I want to work through another

moment in street art that engages both the political and the ethical and, in doing so, offers a theorization of the stranger that is always, in some way, tethered to a sense of place.

4.2 Taking Hospitality to the Streets

Inserted into the very fabric of occupation and displacement, the work of street artists JR and Marco has much to say about hospitality's complex relationship with discourses of home and belonging. In their collaborative work, entitled *Face to Face*, JR and Marco have left enormous paste-ups on the Separation Wall dividing Israel from Palestine. Using a 28 millimeter camera, a device that requires the photographer to stand mere inches from his subject, JR and Marco captured images of people from both sides of the conflict in expressions of disbelief and amusement. Granting their subjects full knowledge of the intended project, the artists enlarged the photos and pasted them side by side or, in JR's words, "face to face" on the Separation Wall (*Face to Face*). Each group of images showcases Israelis and Palestinians employed in similar occupations. In "Holy Tryptich,"⁴⁹ a Muslim Imam, Christian Priest, and Jewish Rabbi meet for the first time on the wall that divides them. The project, while technically illegal, is not designed to gloss over difference but rather to invoke a measure of amusement in a territory saturated with despair and to recognize that both Israelis and Palestinians suffer mutually in the conflict (*Face to Face*). While "Holy Tryptich" – and, certainly, the entire *Face to Face* project that hosts this individual work – certainly speaks to the failure of political and religious hospitality, it also offers something even more compelling than a plea for peace. Indeed, in

⁴⁹ As of submission, permission is still pending on the embedded use of JR and Marco's "Holy Tryptich" image. Several versions of the work can be accessed here: <http://www.jr-art.net/projects/face-2-face>

a territory reeling from divisive conflict, JR and Marco's pieces reveal hospitality's potential to transcend a strictly political cosmopolitanism. "Holy Tryptich" reveals the intimate portraits of ordinary citizens struggling to live together but also speaks to the crucial concerns of ethical hospitality – to borders forged and breached, the contested spaces of home and homeland and to the implications of claiming territory as one's own. In a place so fraught with confrontation already, the images confront each other again, but in new ways. Still, it is not so much the content of JR and Marco's work that I wish to highlight here but, rather, the event of its creation. "Holy Tryptich" engages with hospitality through its provocative placement and highlighted use of the wall itself. Street art has long been analyzed in terms of its political messages and its function as a communicator of urban dissent. It has also been discussed in relation to its illegality, and the debate over whether graffiti constitutes art or vandalism. As JR and Marco's example evokes, and moving beyond these more conventional themes, I want to suggest that street art is far more than its message, and it is not in spite of but precisely *because* of its unwanted and unwelcomed nature that graffiti exposes hospitality. As Keith notes, "[g]raffiti is always an intrusion and in this sense it is premeditatedly – but purposefully – *out of place*" (137). Thus, it is through this "out of place-ness" – this uninvited intrusion – that street art resists the binaries of public and private, and destabilizes hospitality's central metaphor of the home and the paradox of the door that has unified even the more contradictory theories of hospitality to date. Sometimes, however, the intrusion *is* invited, the possibilities of which can be seen in the continual creation and re-creation of artistic work in shared spaces.

4.2.1 Writing and re-writing



Illustration 4.4. Ben Slow. *Untitled*. April 2012. Hanbury Street, London. Photo credit: MsSaraKelly. "Hatred by Ben Slow." *Flickr Creative Commons*. 2 August 2012. Web.



Illustration 4.5. Mear One. *The New World Order is the Enemy of Humanity*. September 2012. Hanbury Street, London. Photo credit: Duncan C. "The New World Order is the Enemy of Humanity." *Flickr Creative Commons*. 15 September 2012. Web.



Illustration 4.6. Alex Diaz. *Untitled*. July 2013. Hanbury Street, London. Photo credit: Boring Lovechild. “Hanbury Street Art.” *Flickr Creative Commons*. 15 August 2013. Web.



Illustration 4.7. Bom K and Liliwen. *Untitled*. November 2012. Hanbury Street, London. Photo credit: Boring Lovechild. “Hanbury Street Art.” *Flickr Creative Commons*. 26 January 2013. Web.

One of the ways in which the home is destabilized as a framing metaphor for hospitality is through street art's work in transcending claims to space and, within that, individual claims to art itself. The act of writing and re-writing over space is significant when thinking about the role of street art in engaging hospitality's deeper complexities. One example of this complexity is an ever-evolving wall of art on Hanbury Street in London's East End.⁵⁰ The same wall has played host to a number of artists including (shown clockwise in the images above), Ben Slow (April 2012), Mear One (September 2012), Bom K and Liliwen (November 2012) and Alex Diaz (July 2013). The images are stunning in both their intricacy and their diversity, but, again, it is not their content that I wish to draw attention to but, rather, the fact that in a little over a year, four artists made use of the same walled space in order to share their art. To be sure, there is controversy over some of the images and what they depict, and these debates have much to do with concerns over immigration and anti-immigration policy in the UK; however, a reading of their content risks limiting an analysis of these works in terms of their engagement with matters of hospitality. These works (or, more specifically, this wall) offer some political critique but, more importantly, engage with some of the central concerns of an ethical hospitality; namely, a discourse of invitation that we can read in the ways in which each subsequent art work engages with the one previous and then provides a dialogic backdrop for the one to follow. The wall, then, operates as a kind of palimpsestic canvas, and the layers of art become, in a sense, an argument for how we might view the ways in which we live together

⁵⁰ From photos alone, it is difficult to tell whether these images are discouraged, permitted or perhaps even commissioned. They certainly reflect a wide range of political and cultural orientations, some heralded for their intricacy and beauty – Diaz, for example – and others encouraged, and also lauded, for their controversial critique as in the case of Mear One. Moreover, in one image, a door stands open and reveals a “Shisha bar” on the other side of the wall; when visiting in person, however, in June 2014, it seems the door leads nowhere, to an empty lot and worn residential façade rather than the lively scene of invitation and community suggested in the photo above.

with others: one never more reliable, secure, permanent or fully arrived than another.

The Hanbury Street wall, unlike the closed and cornered spaces of a gallery, illustrates simultaneously the rhetoric of invitation that is painted into each piece, as well as the uninvited nature of art in that space. Through the art that covers it, the wall opens the space of the street and invites free and unrestricted access to passersby as well as other artists. Each piece welcomes both response and re-vision. According to Lewisohn, while traditional graffiti often uses styles and lettering only accessible to “those in the know,” street art “seeks to engage a wider public audience” (qtd. in McAuliffe and Iveson 134). Yet while the pieces such as those found on Hanbury Street welcome public interaction and even artistic revision, it is the work itself that can often be considered the uninvited guest in the urban landscape. As Victoria Carrington notes, this practice “of placing uninvited text in the public view...reflects a clear contestation over control of space and the prioritization given to various narratives of identity and place” (418-419). If the nature of street art is to be “uninvited,” it is curious, to say the least, that the artists themselves readily accept that their own work will be subject to erasure; by writing and re-writing over existing texts, street artists challenge the prioritization of space, even when revisions runs counter to the ethics and politics of the preceding artist. Indeed, the Hanbury wall participates in a curious homage to unconditional hospitality when conflicting viewpoints are confronted in the same space. Mear One for example (see image 4.6), while critical of the so-called “New World Order” and class disparities, utilizes caricatured Jewish bankers in his art, who appear to make their money on the backs of the poor. Accused of anti-Semitism and racial

insensitivity⁵¹, the mural raises important questions about the artistic use of public space – particularly in terms of whether opposing groups can engage in projects in shared space – and about learning to live with others. Despite the controversial nature of Mear One’s work, his art is not entirely erased from view in the process of the revision. While the main wall is almost entirely painted over and re-imagined as an “octophant,” (image 4.8), its artist, Alex Diaz, has elected to turn the door in the wall around, painting over its street-side surface, but leaving Mear One’s image intact on the side now facing in. According to Keith, not only can artists share such spaces; they actively rely on one another to keep the space (un)occupied via a relationship that is “dependent and reciprocal” (150). Instead of eliminating any trace of Mear One’s work, Diaz preserves an aspect of his message in a move that embraces ephemerality and, at the same time, highlights rather than hides the presence of the work that previously occupied the wall. Such a move reminds those who view the image that layers upon layers of art potentially lie beneath the surface of the one work we see most clearly and, as a result, the Hanbury wall insists on a life lived alongside another, not in competition and perhaps not visibly at each moment, but always with some trace of who or what arrived before.

More than simply illustrate an ethical hospitality, the creation and re-creation, or writing and re-writing, of street art is reflective of an entirely new framework for thinking

⁵¹ Mear One’s work on Hanbury Street has inspired much debate. Not one to shy away from the political nature of street art, he uses his craft to “confront” reality “head on” (*MearOne*). According to Mear One, “The New World Order is the Enemy of Humanity” is about “class and privilege” and is not intended to be anti-Semitic (“London Council”). The mural, however, was painted in the area of Brick Lane which, while now home to the UK’s largest Bangladeshi diaspora, was once a flourishing Jewish community. It was also painted over Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur (Croucher). Moreover, while it depicts a general scene of white bankers – what Mear One calls the “banking cartel” – the artist himself labels the group as representative of specific dynasties such as the Rockefellers, but some of whom are well-known Jewish families, including the powerful Rothschilds (Mear One). Mear One’s mural was up for a little over a month before plans took shape to have it removed (“London Council”).

hospitality. The writing and rewriting of street art suggest that works of urban creativity have a particularly compelling relationship with time, a relationship that has important implications for thinking about the work of hospitality as well. Street artists create with full knowledge that their work will be replaced by someone else's and, as Rafael Schacter notes, "destruction [is] not in fact seen as a negative act, rather, ephemerality [is] seen to be part of the very process of street-art" (46). Unlike conventional and more sanctioned creative works, street art expects to be revised, removed or defaced. Its impermanence is what makes it meaningful in the context of hospitality; not only can no artist or work of art ever claim permanent ownership of a space, but hospitality itself is never permanent or guaranteed. The rotation of Hanbury Street murals operates within what Schacter refers to as the "cycle of temporality" (48) and is more often reflective of collaboration than competition. According to Schacter, "the walls can be perceived as a form of ongoing dialogue, a continual artistic discussion and public forum" (48). In addition to its ephemerality, the writing and rewriting of street art is also suggestive of hospitality's inherent instability. Schacter suggests "graffiti's ephemerality and form, its transient, shifting nature, can be seen to exemplify the flux and instability of the modern city (46). Street art operates much like the modern city, then, and like the guest/host relation in hospitality; it is always changing and often unstable. Indeed, like hospitality, street art is always emerging, never complete, and always appears with the tension and trace of something else showing through. For Keith, street art "marks an emergent and phantasmal territory" (143), not dissimilar from Derrida's concept of *differánce* in which meaning is always in process and endlessly deferred. Beyond its content and the collaboration between artist that re-writing on walls allows, street art reveals hospitality through its ephemerality. In other words, it is the constant coming and going, creating and concealing, and claiming

and relinquishing of space that renders street art such a compelling text for re-thinking the work of hospitality.

4.2.2 The Anonymity of the Artist

In addition to the writing and re-writing of street art in urban spaces, another encounter with hospitality occurs through the figure of anonymity. On a surface level, artists seem to conceal their true identities as a way of eluding the surveillance and punitive tactics of the authorities who categorize graffiti and street art as vandalism. But there is far more at stake in the discourse of anonymity than the criminalization of urban art, and it has much to do with the more complex operations of hospitality. To what extent then, is the preservation of anonymity indicative of an ethical hospitality? Do attempts to render artists close and familiar subsume them into more comfortable categories of belonging and, thus, impose conditions on them and their work as guests in the urban landscape? Banksy, of course, is the most well-known and infamous street artist working under an anonymous pseudonym today. While some claim to know his true identity, he goes to great lengths to avoid being “discovered,” despite his notoriety and commercial success. Stik is another example who, while not as prolific and wealthy as Banksy, still operates under a veil of secrecy. Yet while Banksy and Stik both speak to the preservation of anonymity within the street art community, there is one more artist who seems to be even more purposeful in his persona. “Invader,” as he is known in many of the countries where his art is found, is a French born artist who fashions the iconic 1980’s Space Invader video game characters out of colorful tile and installs his pieces in highly visible as well as hidden and innocuous places. Yet Invader’s persona operates on a level distinct from other anonymous artists in the way that he has chosen a pseudonym that, even if unintentional, offers a provocative

critique of the failure or lack of hospitality in the cities that feature his work. To be an Invader, as his name suggests, is to move about cities without being welcomed. It is to be invisible and apprehended as a perpetual outsider, one who (certainly in the case of the video game) is often met with violence. In this sense, Invader's pseudonym can be thought of as an example of prosopopeia⁵² in that, while his true identity is hidden, the persona operating on the surface adds another level of rhetorical critique. Moreover, to be an invader is to go unnoticed, but *necessarily so*, to take rather than ask for entry, and to assert an agency of mobility usually unafforded to the unwelcomed arrivant.

Anonymity is crucial to the work of hospitality for a number of reasons. As Derrida and others point out, any requirement of a name or identification is antithetical to pure or unconditional hospitality. The extent to which the host is willing to extend a welcome to whoever or whatever arrives, before any indication of who or what that might be, is one of hospitality's most complex and enduring questions. Derrida addresses this problem with questions of his own: "Does hospitality consist in interrogating the new arrival? Does it begin with the question addressed to the newcomer... what is your name?" (*Of Hospitality* 27). As Derrida insinuates, the request for a name is perhaps more an interrogation of hospitality rather than a limit. Surely such interrogations can operate on the plane of genuine concern for the guest as well and a desire to know who is entering, not as a condition but as a show of sincerity. As Michael Naas argues, the question "who are you?" can be an invitation as much as a demand (20). Derrida, too, acknowledges that such questions can be asked in either an interrogative or a loving spirit (*Of Hospitality* 27-28).

⁵² Prosopopeia is a rhetorical device "whereby an imaginary or absent figure is represented as acting or speaking" (Macey 314). Invader uses prosopopeia, not in its conventional sense, to give an inanimate object a more human identity (though it could be argued that his space figures do this as well), but, rather, as a tool to disguise his true identity while making a rhetorical statement with his pseudonym.

The difference, it seems, is perhaps one more recognizable in French – a question of *comment t'appelles-tu?* or *qui êtes-vous?* When investigated in the context of street art and its anonymous creators, we see a fine distinction between conditional acceptance and sincere interest. We may not know the name of these artists, but the Law of hospitality does not require such, and in the absence of a name, even in the absence of a body, we are apprehended by art, and it is the art itself that demands hospitality before we know which name, real or pseudonym, it falls under. Likewise, Derrida suggests that hospitality is “*rendered...given to the other before they are identified*” (*Of Hospitality* 29). Rather than incorporate the artist/other into a sense of self, home and safety, hospitality resists assimilating alterity and opens itself, not in spite of, but *because* of that otherness, even because of the threat that may be. Baker echoes this ethic in a more political context, and suggests “[p]roviding entry only to known individuals defined in advance as not posing a security risk might be many things, but it is not hospitality” (117). Thus street art becomes a unique and compelling test ground upon which to interrogate both political and ethical philosophies of hospitality. Surely, there is always the risk that the other as art, or as guest, might be subsumed into the host’s rituals of understanding and even identity. Indeed, there is always the danger of the other’s art becoming art-for-me. Still, there are a range of ways in which street art resists this incorporation; not only do these artists challenge the anti-immigration rhetoric of the spaces they work in but perform their critiques anonymously and, in so doing, call for a hospitality in which the other is not subsumed by the host self but welcomed in irreducible, unknowable and unidentified alterity.

4.3 Canvases of Hospitality and the Gallery in Urban Space

In 2003, street artists Mysterious Al and D*Face established a temporary gallery in London's East End as a way to move art out of the confines of the traditional gallery and engage both artists and public in a frenetic exchange of creative work. Artists were encouraged to meet together and seek out their materials from within the urban landscape and, armed with the mantra "all you need is a wall" (Dickens 12), they searched the streets for garbage, wood, metal and other forms of urban and industrial detritus on which to create their work. Several days later, the artists reconvened in an abandoned lot and posted their work against the industrial backdrop, setting up the site as a "temporarily occupied space" (Dickens 1), and transforming the landscape into a "pop-up" gallery chosen precisely for its illegality. The artists who took part in the project faced very little in the way of conditions, with the exception of their commitment to producing unsanctioned works of art. Finder's Keepers offers a challenge not only to conventional thinking about what constitutes "art" or gallery space but also to dominant conceptions of hospitality that are premised on a "guest" arriving at a place where the "host" is decidedly at "home." In the pop-up gallery, no one is at home. We are used to experiencing public space as dislocated from authentic encounters and instead regulated by the neoliberal orders of surveillance, capitalism and Darwinian social relations. Yet Finder's Keepers reveals the ways in which public art resists being subsumed by, or incorporated into, these regimes of place and, in a sense, reclaims a sense of home that is absent from the self-affirming claims of political hospitality in Britain. It is a home, however, untethered from any one place – it is neither the domestic nor the national. The gallery as envisioned by Finder's Keepers, can be, in fact, everywhere, with

no single root from which it springs.⁵³ According to Irvine, street art is “fundamentally nomadic” (242), a compelling turn of phrase when considered in the context of hospitality. In other words, how does our thinking of hospitality change when viewed through the lens of a practice that is, essentially, home-less? As a homeless *event*, street art puts forth a significant challenge to theories of hospitality that are dominated by the metaphor of the home. But can hospitality operate when there is no place from which to extend a welcome or invitation and no door to open to the other? FINDER’s Keepers offers a hospitality without a physical home. It reflects the homelessness of street art, forsaking permanence and security for territories of transcendence or, in Hakim Bey’s titular words, “temporary autonomous zones” (97),⁵⁴ but in doing so, asks us to think about the home in entirely new ways and suggests that, while the idea of “home” is problematic in hospitality, perhaps it is a problem that need not be resolved.

There are obvious parallels between the FINDER’s Keepers movement and the work of hospitality. FINDER’s Keepers is a collaborative space, art-inclusive, and non-hierarchical – although, to be sure, the movement was initiated by established artists, but in such a way that directly contested the aesthetic arbitrations of traditional and even more transgressive gallery spaces (Dickens 11). Further, it is the inspiration of not one, but four artists working

⁵³ The FINDER’s Keepers Gallery also calls to mind Homi K. Bhabha’s conception of “third space,” originally configured as a postcolonial space in which cultures meet, colonial rule is contested and hybridity abounds. In Bhabha’s words, “it is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity” (55), and that “is closed to the paranoid position of power” (143).

⁵⁴ See Bey, 2003. The Temporary Autonomous Zone, or T.A.Z., functions to challenge and destabilize existing (dominant) social relations by establishing new territories of transcendent or alternative thinking and action. Crucially, the T.A.Z. is not merely a theoretical concept – an imagining of some ideal space to come – but, rather, a recognition of “free enclaves” within society that currently exist (Bey 97-99). As Bey describes, the T.A.Z. must exist not in utopian visions of the future, but in “geographical odorous tactile tasty physical space (ranging in size from, say, a double bed to a large city)” (x). Importantly, then for the work of FINDER’s Keepers and, by extension, theories of hospitality, the T.A.Z. creates its own “outside” (xii) through acts of “poetic terrorism” (such as graffiti) that have “no tickets and no walls” (Bey 5).

for the “love” of art rather than money, and who are extraordinarily supportive of other emerging artists (Marshall and Whitehouse). At the end of the evening, all of the art is given away for free in a demonstration of the reciprocal and generous exchange of public patronage and artistic product. On the surface, Finder’s Keepers seems keenly invested in an ethic of hospitality and supportive of encounters with strangers. There is, indeed, an open invitation to whatever and whoever arrives. Yet there is something deeper at work as well – a sustained and engaged relationship with hospitality’s more complex relations that is reflected in the relationship between the artist, the street, and the work itself. Finder’s Keepers reflects a provocative intimacy with the urban landscape – one that deepens the further one ventures away from the safety and security of London’s more affluent neighborhoods – and displaces the home as a primary site of close relations. According to Luke Dickens, the Finder’s Keepers project “momentarily, and consciously, produces a space “in between” the street and gallery – a differential space through which the city is rendered a site of play and pleasure, surprise and critical possibility” (2-3). If we think of the sanctioned gallery – with its doors, defined and allocated wall space, conditions of acceptance, and creative limitations – as a “home” space from which invitations are extended, then the transient and mobile gallery of the street suggests that hospitality can be worked out over multiple terrains simultaneously and is not tethered to one side of a door, gate or threshold. As Finder’s Keepers participants venture out in pursuit of their materials, the street not only plays host to this search but is incorporated into the work of art itself. The street becomes host to the artist, and then is hosted by the work, as hospitality emerges not as a direct extension of welcome from host to guest but a far more complex and circular exchange of hospitalities across a variety of landscapes, bodies and objects. The street and its materiality, then, becomes a space “to explore, wander through and to encounter in

surprising and intimate ways” (Dickens 14). Ultimately, while the street level gallery is a public space, it is always *out of place*, or displaced, and there is an ethical and hospitable valence to the ways in which the street opens itself to invasion for art’s sake.

4.3.1 Hospitable Figures of the Street

While street art certainly destabilizes the home as a site of power, it is also deeply concerned with other central figures in hospitality and uses these figures as a primary canvas. The very installation of street art in city spaces, and the ways such art engages with space, are elements of a practice imbued with the language of hospitality. As Valeria Appel notes, “graffiti allows an experience with ‘the stranger’ since its medium contests the fact that the actual privatisation of the space has diminished interaction with others” (2). Street art opens the urban landscape to such encounters and transforms public space through a rhetoric of continual invitation. Yet there is more to street art’s engagement with hospitality than the street itself; there are spaces within the street and surrounding it – spaces that are found in the context of the street but serve a specific purpose beyond it – that have much to do with hospitality. Indeed, the selection of sites, technically “on” the street, upon which to create art is not random but, rather, such spaces are selected purposefully in order to make the location itself a part of the communicative work of the art on every level. Irvine explains: “Street art is a direct engagement with a city’s messaging system, a direct hit on the unconscious, accepted, seemingly natural spaces in which visual messages can appear” (251). As Irvine implies, no piece of art and, importantly, no *site* of art, is ever innocent. Moreover, while not in the specific context of art, Ash Amin also recognizes the political nature of particular spaces within the city. He suggests there are spaces that “not only shape opinion, but are a sphere of intimacy in their own right in which feelings towards the nation

and its outside, the self and the other, are made and unmade” (Amin 12). As Amin insinuates, the street is a place of possibility but not one entirely devoid of power. Outside of the home, the street functions neither as a national space, nor as an uncontested or entirely unclaimed space. There are, of course, claims of many kinds, and the East End is no exception. It is entirely possible that the streets are incredibly foreign to some yet more homely than “home,” in the conventional sense, for others. The street, it would seem, is a site made, unmade, and re-made continually in the image of hospitality and offers a complex bricolage – much like the art that adorns it – of relations between strangers who share the space but with difference degrees of intensity and homeliness. There are complex relations, to be sure, and there are figures that are contained within – but always exceeding – the street-scape that are useful in working through some of the more intricate moments of hospitality in urban space. The scale of these spaces reaches from the city at large, and the street art meccas of particular neighborhoods, to an individual door, window frame, stop sign or train car.

The most obvious and well-utilized space appropriated by street art is the wall, a seemingly innocuous and perhaps obvious site of artistic production, but one that, upon closer reading, speaks loudly as a figure of ethics and hospitality’s contradictory or even impossible nature. While walls might seem like a natural choice of urban artists for reasons as simple as sheer volume and accessibility, a wall means so much more in the context of hospitality. Walls have existed for thousands of years for the purpose of keeping something out, protecting something within, or preventing one from leaving. More recent examples such as the Berlin Wall or Separation Wall suggest that the figure of the wall has much to do with questions of hospitality and the fears of the other that continue to dominant social and political life. A wall is never a blank canvas. It carries within and upon it prefigured

markings and imperfections, as well as previous works of art and renovation, and exists always in the context of what surrounds it and what it might be framing or excluding. A wall can be unregulated and accessible but can also exist as the private wall in the interior space of one's home or sanctioned (and often whitewashed) wall of a gallery space. Street artists, therefore, use both content and location in their work and seek not to hide or disguise their canvas but, rather, to highlight it. The use of walls shares this significance of location with the works of graffiti art that find themselves on trains and subway cars. Just as walls suggest a hemming in or barrier indicative of processes of exclusion, so too do trains invoke a rhetoric of industry and hegemony – it is, after all, difficult to get off a moving train. Artists write on and near trains to appropriate the symbols of both forward progress and privileged momentum denied to them through dominant social structures. Over the course of graffiti's evolution in the 1970's and 1980's, "tagging" or painting trains was bound up in processes of competition, risk, and the thrill of the challenge (Lewisohn 30-35) – and, if artists were able to complete their work undeterred, the movement of the trains would extend the life of the art, if only temporarily. Artists then described their work as "running" (Cooper, qtd. in Lewisohn 37),⁵⁵ a compelling turn of phrase when thinking about the ways in which art is often seen as immobile and, especially if housed in a gallery, static. Hospitality, too, is concerned with the play between impetus and inertia and, as Bell notes, "the relationship between host and guest that defines hospitality is marked by an asymmetry of mobility" (29). Writing or creating on trains, thus, becomes a way of appropriating familiar structures to subvert or challenge the ease of movement that is not

⁵⁵ While graffiti on trains is not the immediate focus of this chapter, Martha Cooper and Henry Chalfant's *Subway Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984. Print.) is a fascinating look at the writing and "running" of train art. See also Tracy Fitzpatrick's study on subway tunnel and train art in New York (*Art and the Subway: New York Underground*. New Brunswick, Rutgers, 2009. Print.).

available to all.

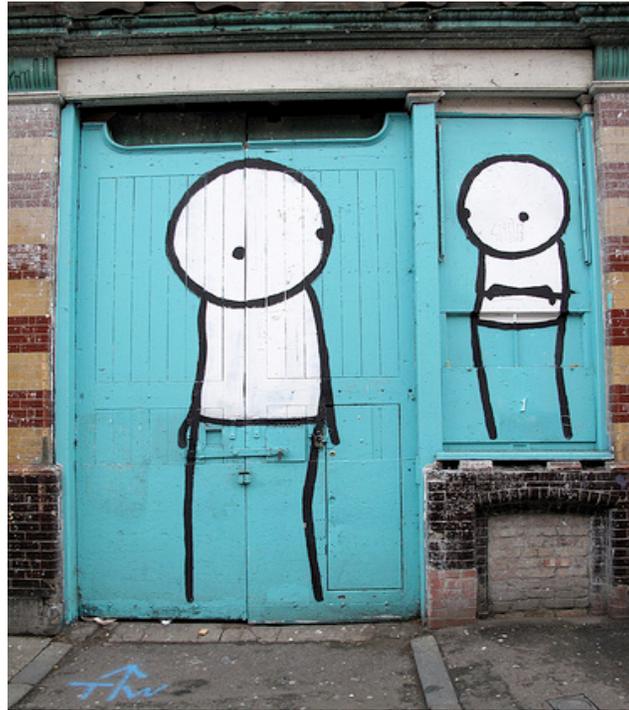


Illustration 4.8. Stik. “Art Thief.” Pitfield Street, London. Photo Credit: Duncan C. “Stik Street Art. *Flickr Creative Commons*. 18 November 2010. Web.



Illustration 4.9. Stik. “Art Thief.” Pitfield Street, London. Photo credit: Martin Deutsch. “Stik.” *Flickr Creative Commons*. 19 March 2012. Web.



Illustration 4.10. Stik. “Untitled”. Scriven Street, London. Photo credit: Socarra. “Stik Hoist.” *Flickr Creative Commons*. 28 June 2014. Web.

Perhaps the most significant urban canvas for the work of hospitality is the figure of the door – including domestic entrances, bi-fold telephone booths, paneled garage doors, overhead sliding doors – upon which street art finds an ideal backdrop. Rather than paint around these “breaks” in a building’s walled façade, street artists incorporate doors of every kind into their work. This may result in highlighting the presence of the door or, in the process of painting, may disguise it almost entirely. Stik’s work is a uniquely powerful interrogation of how doors are used to draw attention to their potential to enclose, separate, and limit but also their ability to swing open on a variety of hinges. In addition to his black,

white and red image discussed earlier, Stik paints a number of figures that are framed in or around doorways and windows. “Art Thief” (image 4.9) is a piece that uses the door to give an otherwise ordinary stick figure a sense of movement. Revised by the artist himself (the original depicts two figures side by side in doorways), the smaller stick figure appears to be painted on a door, but the door itself has been moved. Stik’s work here is not for mass consumption but, rather, for locals who observe and understand the entire narrative as it unfolds in successive edits. It has been taken from its original location, released from its “frame,” so-to-speak, and is shown being carried away by another stick figure – the “thief” in this case. The entire scenario suggests that even when confined by a door, there is always the potential for resistance to both social and artistic enclosure. Yet while “Art Thief” uses a door as an apt canvas, it is so much more than the door as well; it situates street art as an artifact to be desired and likens attempts to remove, regulate or cover it to a form of theft in its own right. Moreover, while it does not carry an explicit message regarding tensions over immigration it speaks convincingly to other forms of removal, trafficking, and forced migration that must be understood in the context of the broader paradigm of political (in)hospitality in the UK. Another work by Stik, his largest piece in London, depicts a towering black and white figure painted on a brick wall and alongside a number of windows, fences and scaffolding (image 4.10). It is a figure that, in its stark colouring and sheer size, refuses to be hidden. Moreover, it is a figure that will not fit within the confines of a conventional doorway. This figure, in fact, entirely displaces the door. Not only does it tower over the threshold where guests would ordinarily enter, it has no need for doors at all, as the figure uses a pulley system (an example of the artist’s melding of art and objects in the environment) to hoist up items that may be too large or heavy to fit through a doorway. In this way, the figure exceeds the frame of any door that might attempt to hem it in and

seems to circumvent the laws of hospitality that insist guests must enter through a door at all.

While Stik does not make overt mention of his art in the context of ethics and hospitality, his pieces can be read as examples of the ways in which the figures as well as the broader concerns of hospitality are reflected in street art. Doors are, of course, crucial to the philosophy of hospitality in the sense that hospitality both requires – and is limited by – some sense of a door. Indeed, as Karima Laachir clarifies, hospitality is “marked by a double bind...[and] lives on the paradox of presupposing a nation, a home, a door for it to happen but once one establishes a threshold, a door or a nation, hospitality ceases to happen and becomes hostility” (182). Yet while the door seems to suggest the failure or, at very least, the impossibility of hospitality, it is the work of art on doors, in particular, that offers an alternative way of thinking about hospitality’s complex set of conditions and *unconditions*. In the theory of hospitality, the door originally presents itself as a problem – it is the problem of hospitality *par excellence*, for as Derrida reminds us on multiple occasions, if there is a door there is no hospitality. The installation of art on doors is a performance that exposes this double bind – the highlighting of doors reveals rather than conceals this paradox. Stik’s work reveals the importance of the door for thinking about the arrivals of strangers and aliens as well as the ways the ways in which doors are an opening interrogation rather than the definitive or *de facto* site of hospitality. In other words, his art reminds us that hospitality is so much more than a door. The problem of the door, when interrogated through the lens of street art (a practice imbued with its own complexity and contradictions), need not be glossed over but instead should be made explicit. The door reminds us of what is ultimately at stake and street art, at the very least, presents us with an alternative mode of understanding both the function and permeability of doors. When doors

are evaluated under the microscope of hospitality, they are seen as limit pieces meant to close, enclose or keep out as they mark out the (unstable) boundary between public and private life. When considered within the practices of street art, however, they are re-appropriated as spaces of engagement and cease to become “doors” in the conventional sense of the word. In the case of making art noticeable, the door must remain closed for the art to be seen. An open door, while ajar for hospitality’s sake, conceals the work of art. To whom or what, then, must hospitality be extended: the work of art that covers the door or the guest who stands waiting beyond it? We must think of doors then, even when closed, as continuing to offer up possibilities for dialogue and exchange rather than an immediate foreclosure of ethical relations with others. Further, while doors can certainly stand open or closed, they can also be removed entirely, as is the case in “Art Thief” or, quite possibly stolen. A door speaks convincingly to the complexity and inherent contradiction of hospitality, but it is not necessary an impasse. Rather, the door insists upon the recognition that doors reflect not the impossibility of hospitality but, rather, its precarity. In Laachir’s words, “[t]his *aporia* [of the door] does not mean paralysis, but in fact, it means the primacy of the ethics of hospitality over politics, and thus, keeping alive the danger of hostility in the making of the politics of hospitality by ‘political intervention’ that respects the uniqueness of the other every time a decision is taken” (188). As transgressive canvases, doors remind us that hospitality is always fragile and must never be taken for granted or assumed, as it risks being, within its political and legal frameworks.

4.3.2 Implications of Street-side Hospitality

The placement of art in the street, the momentum of creating art live in front of an audience, and the engagements with multiple surfaces and urban canvases collectively

reveal the ways in which the street and the city operate as a training ground for multiple and non-linear expressions of hospitality. The street has long been a locus of urban protest and the construction of alternative meaning. Street art has a crucial role to play in these politics and political activism often involves a purposeful – if complex – reclamation of public space. As Cammaerts notes, “the street is increasingly becoming a space for political alternative discourses to be ‘advertised’. In many countries radical activists frequently use stickers, for example, to voice dissent. These types of engaged street art seek to subvert and at the same time reclaim public spaces with counter-messages” (78). While the legal and moral authorities may attempt to foreclose on such forms of protest, the street itself opens to it and makes available its walls, doorways and windows for alternative messages to be broadcast. Urban forms of art, therefore, become the messaging system of the disenfranchised who are not welcomed into dominant structures and spaces of community encounter. McAuliffe and Iveson claim street art is a “transgressive performance in space. [It] tells us much of the ways space is configured, constructed and reproduced in the city...[and] draws attention to the complex processes at work in the social, cultural and political construction of urban space” (129). Indeed, according to Keith, what is ultimately at stake in what he calls an “urban graphology” is “an emergent struggle over inclusion, citizenship, entitlement and belonging” (137). While both these arguments recognize the ways in which the failure of political hospitality is expressed through social and cultural products, they both render space inactive in social relations, suggesting that space is acted upon, or constructed by street art but discounting the ways in which space carries its own agency into the encounter. The “stakes,” in other words, are much higher. Street art insists on being recognized in ways that transcend the aesthetic and the political, and turns the monolithic “urban” into a multi-purpose, unexpected and dynamic site of encounter – an

active figure of hospitable relations rather than a passive canvas or container for living among others. Street art does much more, then, than simply use or appropriate spaces that are convenient; it highlights particular spaces – as is the case with walls, doors and trains – as part of the message and engages with those spaces in such a way that the art-making becomes as much an event as a product. This is not to discount the work of the political of course, and, as the particular examples in the beginning of this chapter illustrate, street art makes its critique through both its content and its medium and thus transforms the seemingly innocuous material landscape into a politicized site of encounter. McAuliffe and Iveson note that such art is a method of “unsettling settled visions of the city [and] providing space for those whose presence is not strongly represented in visions of order” (133). It is a commentary on those who, like the walls and doors that are often rendered merely backdrops to urban life, refuse to remain hidden. The critique street art offers, in this sense, is clearly in response to the alienation and, in some cases, expulsion of certain bodies from public life, yet it is more than that as well, transcending the political in order to recognize the ways in which hospitality moves against and outside expectation.

The street becomes, then, a necessary site of public engagement, a forum and canvas for critique, and an alternative sphere of belonging⁵⁶ – all of which respond directly to a lack or failure of political hospitality, particularly because public space has become a

⁵⁶ It would be remiss not to recognize the seminal work of Jürgen Habermas in conceptualizing the public sphere as a site of exchange and engagement and, in turn, his critique of its decay due to advancements in mass media. However, the kind of alternative sphere produced through the work of street art, however, is much different than that discussed by Habermas, who suggests the coffeehouses of the 18th century were “seedbeds of political unrest” (59) whilst recognizing that the notion of a public sphere, is limited by its “social preconditions” (88). While street art enables a particular kind of community organizing premised on shared experiences of disenfranchisement, ostracization and is characterized by an overall shift *away* from dominant structures of belonging, the kind of public sphere imagined by Habermas remains overwhelmingly tethered to more dominant and hegemonic structures imbricated in discourses of gender, class and cultural capital.

site where feelings of exclusion and dispossession are repeatedly confirmed. Yet again, much like street art itself, the urban space of the street does more than make injustice visible; it also offers a deeper reading of hospitality that transcends its function as a locus of political critique. Like hospitality, for example, the street is intimately concerned with discourses of invasion. While some art (and artists) speak to this more overtly, as is the case with Invader and his very deliberate pseudonym, urban art in general engages with ideas of invasion simply by making its tangible presence known against the backdrop of daily life. Irvine notes that “street art *inserts itself* in the material city as an argument about visibility, the social and political structure of being visible” (237, emphasis added). Street art, at its core, whether art or crime, welcome or unwelcome, is always a form of invasion but also, importantly, has its own agency beyond that of the artist. Indeed, in the case of Invader’s work, the tiled figures take on a persona of their own; it is not Invader himself but his mosaics that pop up in cities around the globe. His website keeps a careful tally of “successful invasions” and rather than claiming this as the work of the artist. In what is perhaps an ironic appropriation of colonial mentality, the website attributes a “point” to each individual space invader that appears in a particular city. London, for example, has relinquished (at last count) 101 points to space invaders (*Space Invader*). What a discourse of invasion suggests is that the street continually engages with hospitality in the way that it is open to (and often fraught with) encounters. Amin describes the street as a series of engagements with others that are anything but simple: “Modern urban living is about people placed far apart from each other, rushing past each other, carrying multiple cares with them, inhabiting familiar and known spaces, displaying varied affects – positive and negative – towards others, bringing a host of pre-formed orientations into the encounter” (Amin 2). As Amin infers, the encounters of urban living often look very similar to

invasions – perhaps ethical, but often unwilling. Yet hospitality, in its pure or ethical sense, requires that we do not get to choose which “other” we are confronted with in the street. Some of these encounters are entered into freely while others bear closer resemblance to a more hostages moment. What *is* guaranteed and made possible by the fluid and dynamic space of the street is the encounter itself.

Ultimately, then, the street engages with matters of hospitality not only in the way people respond in these primary and often unsettling confrontations, but also through the ways in which the fabric of the city shifts and is shaped by such encounters.⁵⁷ Amin suggests that there is responsibility owed toward the other in every encounter as well as to the space that enables such meetings to occur. In this sense, Amin argues for both a hospitality *in* the street, and a hospitality *to* the street – one that would preserve the alterity of what is created there. What is necessary in the city is “an ethic of care for the urban commons sustained through the city’s material culture” (Amin 11). While not speaking specifically in the context of street art, Amin implies that the cultural production that occurs in urban space is not only the guest but alternately a host as well, in the ongoing relation between material culture and urban design. This has significant implications for the work of

⁵⁷ This is, to be sure, a fairly romanticized notion of the street as a space of urgency and one that both reflects and carries its own desires. De Certeau noticed this, when he reflected on what it means to walk through urban space. The street, he infers, is a place “down below, below the thresholds at which visibility begins...[there] are walkers...whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban ‘text’ they write without being able to read it...the paths that correspond in this intertwining, unrecognized poems in which each body is an element signed by many others, elude legibility” (de Certeau 168). As de Certeau suggests, the street tells a story, is mysterious, and hard to make out from its own level; it is only from above that the streets and the city make sense, yet this is also where its dimensions and texture disappear. The street functions as a kind of strangeness, observable and somewhat conceivable from a distance but never entirely knowable. Similarly, Henri Lefebvre suggests the street is not only a meeting place but an animated place of “spontaneous theater...I become spectacle and spectator, and sometimes an actor” (18). For Lefebvre, the street is “disorder,” but a romantic disorder. Indeed, the street has long been idealized as the transgressive space of the populous; a space for organizing and for play. Yet while this idealized conception of the street must be acknowledged, it remains a useful figure – between the home and the city, comprised of multiple surfaces, organized and random – for theorizing the ways in which hospitality might be brought out of the home.

hospitality and illustrates how the street enables encounters that are eclipsed by the often-employed metaphor of the home. To be sure, the street is a site one enters *into*, much like the home, and it must be acknowledged that the street is the very literally home to many and often operates as a container in certain ways. But unlike the home, with its easier-to-define borders, doorways, gates and fences, the street is more porous and fluid. It has borders of its own, but they are more readily contested and exposed. Owned by no one but claimed by a great many, the street is an “inside” of entirely different proportions and implications, and it is in this space that street art refuses to be framed but, rather, carries on across buildings, onto the ground, through intersections and over barriers that might otherwise limit its reach. Rather than follow a prescribed route, it moves forward and backward, points out and misdirects, and is far less clear on where one path ends and another begins making it difficult to read or interpret in any one way. Speaking of the transgressive potential of urban cultural movements, Cammaerts points to multiple points of connection and deconstruction, resistance and subversion. He refers to this as the “rhizomatic behaviour of the jam” (Cammaerts 79). Indeed, as street art works to “jam” the political and even the hospitable, urban space becomes the locus through which hospitality is reimagined in the disorder and surprise of street art – not as a linear extension of welcome from host to guest, but as an encounter of multiple directions and asymmetries.

4.4 Conclusion: An Alternative Framework for Mobile Hospitality

This chapter offers a reading that suggests street art subverts dominant structures of belonging but, more significantly, claims that there is something in the work of street art that disrupts conventional, and even the most ethical, notions of hospitality or, at the very least, points us towards the hospitality we have been missing. Hospitality is so often

conceived as an ethic of welcoming the stranger in, but as a figure that can only, by definition, be encountered in the street, urban art is not welcomed in, as guest but, rather, draws the host out or, at the very least, makes walls and doors far more permeable than imagined. It is, in fact, a switch that renders political hospitality inoperable or, at the very least, not hospitality at all. To be sure, this is not to imply that absolute hospitality need be displaced as a primary and foundational framework of political ethics from which a welcome is extended to whoever or whatever might arrive – Derrida, after all, reminds us of the need to keep the Law of hospitality intact to serve as the basis for the only form of (conditional) hospitality we might be able to offer – that hospitality is an “art and a poetics...[but] an entire politics depends on it and an entire ethics is determined by it” (qtd. in Naas 26). What I want to suggest, however, is that what we discover in looking beyond the politicized content of street art and more closely at its medium, the role of the street, and the selections of hospitable figures as canvases, is that hospitality is far more fluid than a strictly political understanding allows. Moreover, it has arrived when we were busy looking elsewhere – at the failure of the political and in legal frameworks of state-sponsored discourses of generous multiculturalism. It arrives, in other words, through street art, which does not so simply critique violence and anti-immigration policy; it is political, but transcends a strictly political understanding and praxis, and, ultimately, insists that learning to live with strangers is at the core of our being in the world.

In his book on urban space, Henri Lefebvre hints at a surprising root of street art when he points to mapping and urban planning as emergent forms of writing in the city (12). This writing was “simultaneously idealist and realist” and signified a “shift of social reality toward the urban [and] (relative) discontinuity” (Lefebvre 12-13). Lefebvre’s description of urban writing as subject to discontinuity can be easily propelled into a more

contemporary moment, raising a crucial question: How might street art, as a new form of urban writing, offer us an alternative plan for the city, perhaps even a map to hospitality?" Lefebvre's blueprint for urban life offers a compelling model for thinking about the work of hospitality. In what he calls the "critical phase" of urban development, "[a]ll the elements of urban life, which are fixed and redundant elsewhere, are free to fill the streets and through the streets flow to the centres, where they meet and interact, torn from their fixed abode" (Lefebvre 18-19). As Lefebvre implies, while the street may be full of (or fraught with) the potential of encounter, other aspects of life (and we must consider the home as one of these) are stagnant sites of urban and, it can be inferred, human possibility. In other words, something happens when one leaves the fixity and certainty of the home or, more compellingly, when one comes to recognize that the home has *never* been a site of certainty. This is not necessarily a new line of thinking. Levinas too, suggests that ethics can only be extended when the primacy of the home is displaced. The Stranger, after all, "disturbs the being at home with oneself" (Levinas, *Totality* 39) and, as Meyda Yegenoglu notes further, "unconditional hospitality or hospitality as ethics implies the interruption of a full possession of a place called home" (64). Through its continual engagement with doors, windows and walls, street art alerts us to the instability of the home as a primary metaphor for ethical hospitality and in so doing destroys the distinction between public and private, local and foreign, inside and outside and, ultimately, guest and host. When confronted in the figures provided by street art, hospitality becomes untethered and uncontained, flowing in and out in ways that conventional conceptions of the home and its threshold delimit. As Keith suggests, there is something both violent and innovative about the ways in which this rootless space of the street offers opportunities for encounter. In his words, "fragmented urban experience which opens itself and collides with differences of both flesh and stone

offers new possibilities for personhood and public life” (Keith 139). For Keith, this fragmentation is one way in which traditional debates over the status of graffiti as art or vandalism are overcome and even made redundant. As he suggests, such either/or positions on street art “underestimate the degree to which the spaces of the public sphere are malleable surfaces rather than passive containers of forms of sociality” (Keith 140). Ultimately, the more fluid and dynamic spaces of public life offer a provocative turn in theorizing hospitality that is not always possible given the status of the home as the central metaphor of ethical encounter. In other words, “the contingent performances and comings-together of hosts and guests in cityspaces unsettle our understandings of hospitality, offering an opportunity to think it differently” (Bell 30). Rather than offering a centralizing metaphor for ethics, the home then, much like the door, becomes not a vessel but a significant *problem* for hospitality, a problem so convincingly exposed in Stik’s work where doors are open, closed and, while they appear hinged, are also, as “Art Thief” reveals, transient. As Yegenoglu notes, “[o]ffered as the law of place, hospitality lays down the limits of a place and retains the authority over that place, thus limiting the gift that is offered, retaining the self as self in one’s own *home as the condition* of hospitality” (56, emphasis added). Again, the street disrupts this condition, deconstructing hospitality itself and, although public life is often highlighted as needing “ethical transformation...in order to render it more conducive to hospitable action” (Gauthier 160), street art offers a glimpse of what the Law of hospitality *might* look like – a glimpse of an impossible future.

An impossible future seems contradictory, but also suggests that street art might propel us closer in both theory and in practice. What is at work in the street, in public life, and in the works of urban art that crop up unexpectedly and temporarily in strange places, then, is a *mobile* hospitality – a hospitality not tethered to a particular place but one that

makes use of space in productive and alternative ways. The figure of the “running” train is once more significant for thinking this tenuous relationship between inertia and mobility. One of the more well-known train artists, “Futura”, pioneered train art and was responsible, in particular for the shift from a lettering to a more abstract aesthetic. According to Lewisohn, in the 1980’s “Futura” was always “pushing boundaries and confounding ideas of what’s possible,” and “he always had his mind on the day after tomorrow” (41). Trains became, then, an appropriate canvas for an artist always with a mind to the future. Photographed by Martha Cooper, “Futura’s” trains became synonymous with the train art movement and Cooper describes waiting for the moment when the train would rush by, in a blur of color:

I would go up to the Bronx at seven in the morning to my predetermined spot, and I would stand there and watch the trains go by, until the one car that might be running among hundreds and hundreds of cars would go by. It might come by immediately, or it could take five hours. The kids also had to tell me “from the morning side or the afternoon side”. We had this language, because I didn’t want to the car to be backlit, I needed the sun to be shining on the car so the colours would look bright...I waited for hours, in these areas of complete devastation in the Bronx. (qtd. in Lewisohn 37)

The sense of waiting and movement that Cooper describes is crucial to re-thinking hospitality in the context of new and pressing concerns surrounding what it means to engage with others in a time of terror and, in particular, in thinking whether or not there may be a future for hospitality, even (or especially) in the face of terror. Indeed, if these trains – covered in art – are, indeed, *running*, then where might they be running to or, possibly, away from? Yet it not so much the direction of the trains that matters as it is their

constant motion. To cover these trains with art, then, is to issue a plea that such art remains mobile – it is art that is always going somewhere, viewed in a countless number of surrounding contexts and, thus, is always changing. To think of hospitality in this sense is to address, in part, the concerns of Derrida and others who call for a new conception of hospitality that does not fall prey to stasis and assimilation. As the running trains disrupt conventional notions of art and spectatorship, they gesture toward other possibilities as well – namely, an understanding and practice of hospitality that does not stagnate or tire, and one that is not dismissed even when it seems unlikely given how we have always conceptualized it and experienced it in action. As Derrida declares, “hospitality must be so inventive, adjusted to the other, and to the welcoming of the other, that each experience of hospitality must invent a new language” (in Brown 316). Could it be that street art provides the inventiveness necessary to reconceptualizing what a hospitable ethics *and* politics might mean in the context of global urbanity? Might it offer a way of thinking about hospitality that is freed from its more dichotomous distinctions of friend/enemy, home/homeless? Bell suggests that “[h]ospitality – as a relationship marked by poles of host-ness and guest-ness, and by the obligations and rewards that this polarity brings – is thus itself destabilized as we enter an increasingly mobile age, a society of mobilities” (29). Here, Bell refers to two ideas that are central to this chapter and this thesis. He advocates not only for a liveliness and animation of thought, to be sure, but also for a spirit of disjuncture and greater flexibility when conceptualizing hospitality – not simply as two “poles” of hospitable and inhospitable but as a spectrum of complexity. Mobility, here, also must be considered as not only a philosophical possibility/opening but as a tangible and physical experience of so many in an era of rapid immigration and forced displacement. Hence, mobility is not an experience that is enjoyed freely and justly in every circumstance. It is, however, a defining

feature of contemporary life and hospitality, as we apprehend it now, must be so flexible as to adjust to this ever-shifting landscape of social and cultural life and non-stop moving of bodies.

Yet when we think of the ways in which street art provides a critique of unequal social relations through both its content and engagement with city spaces, it would seem that this locus of artistic momentum –that does not depend on homes and doors – does not delimit but, rather, offers up greater possibilities for engaging in hospitable acts precisely *because* of the mobile nature of relationality. Street art, thus, alerts us not simply to the failure of political hospitality in contemporary Britain and elsewhere but, rather, to the productive notion of mobile hospitallit(ies) that, while firmly ethical and unconditional, cannot help but have resonance in political life as well. The mobility and ephemerality of street art also raises important questions that lie at the heart of this study including the relationship between spectatorship and confrontation that have significant implications for not only hospitality but for the reading and function of cultural texts as they affect social life. What does it mean to view a work of art, for example, that cannot be circumvented? Public art, unlike the works that hang in galleries and museums and are separated by doors, is in many ways unavoidable. To be confronted by a piece of street art is often to be denied an agency of vision – to be hostaged to the work itself. Yet the art itself is also in a position of vulnerability: to be defaced, removed, and re-painted, surely, but also to be misunderstood. It is a reciprocity of risk that will become even more profound in my next chapter where the viewer, or reader in this case, is confronted not by paint but an intimate invasion of the body.

Still, thinking through a hospitality that is mobile further enriches our understanding of how hospitality persists and is enacted in a variety of ways. The discontinuity of the

street maps productively onto hospitality in the sense that it frees it from a metaphor of home and hearth that, while useful, limits hospitality's reach towards what might otherwise be impossible – a sense of belonging that is, at the same time, homeless. Furthermore, the relationship between street art and hospitality recalls other moments so crucial to the guest-host dynamic that the other chapters of this dissertation explore, for example, the intimate relations forged in spaces of public memory, violence, and artistic creation that are made more vulnerable, risky and complicated when forged in a time of terror. Yet a mobile hospitality also offers an invitation to turn, more generally, to less obvious figures of welcome and belonging, invitation, and invasion that are neither reliant on the home nor the street but reside in the body itself. It is perhaps the most vulnerable and risky site of hospitality – one that builds upon the fluid and dynamic conceptualizations of hospitality made possible by thinking through rituals of public memory, aesthetic consumption, and artistic performance, but one that is ultimately as tragic as it is promising.

Chapter 5 Organic Shrapnel: Hospitality, Incorporation, and Infirmity in Don

DeLillo's *Falling Man*

In the days, weeks, and months that followed the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, first responders, survivors, and residents living nearby the former towers began to report, with increasing frequency, a disturbing set of health problems. A persistent cold that would not go away, the “World Trade Center cough,” as it came to be known, has had a lingering and damaging effect on the health and psyche of the local Manhattan community. Since 2001, more than 18,000 people have experienced illnesses⁵⁸ related to the 9/11 attacks and their aftermath; among them, a host of respiratory problems, “scarred lungs” and even cancer, conditions that have been sparked by “toxins” and “bad air,” and which “appear to be permanent” (Kennedy). The range of illness do not only affect those in the immediate vicinity of the towers; mothers all over Manhattan, who were in their first trimester of pregnancy during the attacks have recently been the focus of a study that suggests exposure to 9/11 dust and toxins carried an increased likelihood of birth complications, and low birth weights, especially among baby boys, and “more than doubled” their chances of premature delivery (Huber). These illnesses are not limited to the short term. Indeed, three firefighters who responded to the crisis that morning in September, have all recently passed away from various cancers attributed to the collapse of

⁵⁸ Those suffering from these 9/11 related ailments have become the subject of various debates over compensation for the enduring victims of the attacks – those not in the towers or planes but nearby, who breathed in particular matter in the days and weeks after. The Zadroga Act (named after James Zadroga, who succumbed in 2006 to lung disease thought to be related to 9/11) was passed in December 2010 and authorized 4.7 billion dollars for “monitoring, treatment and compensation for victims” (Shukman).

the towers (P. Ross). They died on the same day, September 22, 2014, 13 years and 11 days after the attacks.

Health concerns stemming from the 9/11 attacks, however, have never been limited to the purely physical. In narrating her own experiences of the day, trauma scholar Judith Greenberg recalls a conversation with a paramedic who, on five separate occasions, attended to adolescent girls with identical symptoms. After losing a large amount of weight, these girls were brought to the hospital unable to swallow and believing “that some debris or body part from the destruction of the towers had lodged in their throats” (Greenberg 26). Each girl did have a “physical constriction” (Greenberg 26), according to medical personnel, but there was no visible matter to cause it. This range of conditions is representative of the variety of ways in which individuals were compromised by what they absorbed, aspirated and incorporated into their bodies and minds. Whether physical, psychical or something manifesting as both, those in the vicinity of the attacks were overcome by an entirely foreign phenomenon that challenged the very border of their body and being. The acknowledgement that these remains are ambiguous and materially indistinguishable from the steel frame, office furnishings and other matter pulverized in the towers’ fall reflects a similar preoccupation with human remains as that which haunts the memorial museum. Whether “real” and visible or not, the notion of an obstruction in the throat, caused by debris material that may also be biological, raises the disturbing but not impossible scenario of ingesting or incorporating human remains. It is a possibility that, much like a metaphoric lump in the throat, is hard to swallow, nearly unsayable, and reveals the durability and breadth of an epidemiological anxiety that extends beyond witness anecdotes and into the realm of representation – even fiction. In Jonathan Safran Foer’s *Extremely Loud and*

Incredibly Close, for example, 11 year-old narrator, Oskar Schell envisions the literal inhalation of 9/11 victims, his father included:

“Why would I want to spend eternity next to an empty box?” [Oskar asks his mother].

Mom said, “His spirit is there,” and that made me *really* angry.

I told her “Dad didn’t have a spirit! He had cells!”

“His memory is there.”

“His memory is here,” I said, pointing at my head.

“Dad had a spirit,” she said, like she was rewinding a bit in our conversation.

I told her, “He had cells, and now they’re on rooftops, and in the river, and in the lungs of millions of people around New York, who breathe him every time they speak!” (Safran Foer 169)

What the medical reports, Greenberg’s account, and Oskar seem to recall is more than a deep sense of personal and collective trauma, although, to be sure, trauma permeates the archive of 9/11 fiction. Safran Foer’s narrator, however, confirms there is something more at work – a fixation with matters of the body that raises a fascinating, if somewhat ominous, question in the search for missing loved ones and their biological remains: What if the remains of victims, pulverized into ash and dust along with the towers, were actually aspirated into the lungs of those nearby?

More than capture a range of physical ailments or psychological injury, however, these experiences reveal a significant trend in the way the aftermath of 9/11 has been documented – not as a strictly corporeal assault or invasion, but a sustained preoccupation with a self that has been compromised in ways that that are entirely unfamiliar, irreconcilable and, while expressed through the familiar framework of the body, are so

much more than the body. These experiences reveal, in fact, that the body is a lens through which to think the work of mourning but is also a body completely given over to that work in ways that are neither agential nor altogether conscious. To be sure, those reporting such phenomena cannot discern what exactly it is that they have encountered. Is “bad air,” in other words, a way of actually making this incorporation more familiar rather than face the more unfamiliar questions of introjection, mourning and a body that gives relinquishes itself to the stranger – indeed, absorbs it entirely – against the desires of its host?

This dissertation has consistently examined the preoccupation with strangers in the aftermath of 9/11 and the ways that a discourse of hospitality – in which the figures of guest and host define social, aesthetic and cultural relations – is central to the archive of cultural production created in the aftermath of terrorist attack. 9/11 has, in fact, become defined by hospitality and is recurrently articulated via the tension between the corporeal and incorporeal that appears in the figure of ghosts, black sites and redaction, and the physical yet unhomely space of the street. A similar figure emerges here, in the possibility of incorporating ambiguous matter that is raised by another cultural response to 9/11 – the novel. One novel in particular, Don DeLillo’s 2007 *Falling Man*, offers a surprising and sustained engagement with a discourse of incorporation. *Falling Man* imagines and theorizes what would be at stake if hospitality were to become a way of living in the world after 9/11 and it does so by recognizing, first and foremost, that hospitality is not a chosen condition; rather, it arrives unbidden and affects every character differently. As a practice of living together through the powerful and intensely shared experiences of 9/11 and its aftermath, *Falling Man*’s curious but insistent hospitality asks us to reflect on the ethical potential and limits of incorporation even, and especially, when incorporation is unavoidable.

5.1 The 9/11 Novel: Criticism and Contexts

Hospitality is, as I will argue, crucial to 9/11 fiction but rarely acknowledged in the criticism that places an overwhelming emphasis on the experience and representation of trauma. Admittedly, 9/11 seems to have produced a desire to express a range of personal, collective and vicarious traumas, as well as attempts to memorialize, make “sense” of, or critique the social, cultural and political life in the aftermath of the attacks. For many writers, the event of the attacks was not the starting point for new works but, rather, fueled revisions to novels already in process. In the case of Claire Messud, who was writing *The Emperor’s Children* at the time, 9/11 was unavoidable in a novel that deals intricately with the lives of a number of New Yorkers. On writing the event of 9/11 into her fiction, Messud recognizes “its shadow is going to be somewhere in your book, whether it’s over or not” (Brand). Whether incorporated into works already in progress or the starting point for a new novel, the event of 9/11 has been taken up in fiction in staggering numbers and Messud’s novel reveals something deeper than an attempt to make sense of traumatic events. It also positions the event as unavoidable – a shadow that cannot be outrun – and suggests that authors, much like victims and witnesses, were not immune to incorporating the remains of the event. Just as the attacks themselves were unstoppable, so too is the process of breathing in its effects and while Messud’s experience is perhaps not a bodily one she does suggest that there was something “in the air” after 9/11 that writers could not avoid. This preoccupation with incorporating remnants of September 11th into fiction, of breathing in the shadows of that day, however, is not a central avenue of thought when taking up the genre of post-9/11 fiction. Yet even the critical commentary inadvertently employs this discourse of infirmity, as both academic work and literary review attempt to define the boundaries of an archive through a kind of triage – ranking or canonizing certain

texts, perhaps as a way of stemming the rush of novels produced in the years since.⁵⁹ These acts of triage are also, significantly yet unintended, simultaneously engagements with a process of incorporation and rejection that occasionally welcomes but more often rebuffs the novels that arrive at the canon gate. Despite the wide variety of texts produced in response to 9/11, there are a number of common threads found in the novels themselves, as well as the criticism that addresses them.

In general, 9/11 fiction addresses an expected spectrum of trauma, both personal and collective, but also, more reflexively, the challenge of making any sense out of the events and translating them into a representational form. Most criticism on the 9/11 novel takes up two related themes in light of this challenge: the *representation* of trauma (including its unrepresentability in language) rather than its mediation, and the representation of the terrorist other. In the aftermath of terrorist attack, many writers turned to their own strengths to account for what journalism and politics could not – a new way of narrating the events of that day. Yet this poses a challenge as well, with authors struggling to grapple with the enormity of events and the multitude of firsthand accounts in light of which fiction might appear competitive or incapable of doing justice to an event in which so many perspectives are both contained by measures of common understanding and exceed these measures entirely. Before fiction appeared, the event was already recorded in

⁵⁹ The archive is both vast – Alizeh Kohari offers a low 2011 estimate of 164 novels – and also difficult to define, making the designation “post 9/11 literature” a controversial genre to pin down or contain either thematically or temporally. Despite this uneven terrain, within the novels that refer either explicitly or in passing to 9/11 and its aftermath, certain texts have already become “hypercanonical” (Duvall and Marzec 394) either by virtue of copies purchased or garnered critical attention. This raises serious concerns for the genre as a whole, particularly in terms of how to define such a canon. Is every novel written since the attacks now classed as 9/11 fiction? Are there certain elements or themes that each text must include or a percentage of 9/11 related material that a novel should contain? And can one write about New York anymore, or the Middle East, for that matter, without reference to the September 11th attacks? Perhaps entry to this canon is determined by a novel’s perceived fidelity to history, a tricky requirement of authors who routinely and rightfully rely on their own creative embellishments, not to mention the variety of ways in which the event has been taken up by writers of fiction around the globe in more culturally relevant contexts.

so many voices in addition to the larger normalizing narratives of mass media and official mourning, to say nothing of the debates over the appropriateness of writing about recent tragedy. As Michiko Kakutani describes, “perhaps not even enough time has passed for any novelist to grapple convincingly with those actual events, without being eclipsed by the documentary testimony (from newspaper articles, television footage and still photographs) still freshly seared in readers’ minds” (Kakutani). This may explain the tendency of writers after the event to respond in what Mishra calls the “dominant mood of 9/11 commemoration” (Mishra)⁶⁰. What Kakutani signals here, however, is the struggle authors face in adequately representing the events of 9/11 and, even more, to write fiction that provides readers with any understanding of the event and its lingering effects. According to Martin Randall, it is impossible to use or expect fiction to assimilate “the meaning of 9/11” into the “realm of representation” (4). Don DeLillo addresses the considerable challenges faced by writers after 9/11, initially entering the conversation not with a novel, but with an essay, “In the Ruins of the Future,” written ten days after the attacks. In his essay, DeLillo acknowledges the multitude of narratives emerging around 9/11; first-hand survivor stories, live and television witness accounts, makeshift memorials, pilgrimages to Ground Zero and fantasy⁶¹ storylines are just some of the many cultural texts that surround the events of that day. To attempt to narrativize such an event is, for writers such as DeLillo, an order unmet

⁶⁰ Mishra is, of course, not the only one to make this critique. David Simpson argues in his aptly titled book *9/11: The Culture of Commemoration* that, while commemorative culture often manifests in diverse ways, there are “routines” and “rituals” within memorialization that “exist to mediate and accommodate the unbearably dissonant agonies of the survivors into a larger picture that can be metaphysical or national-political and is often both at once” (9/11 2).

⁶¹ There is a vast network of so-called “conspiracy theories” surrounding the events of 9/11, ranging from the suggestion that the American government knew about the planned attacks, to scathing reviews of defense systems and both tactical and communications chains of command, to questions about the “demolition-type” collapse of the towers (“Top 40 Reasons”). Many of these theories converge in the 9/11 Truth Movement but skepticism about the official narrative of 9/11 is found in more popular culture venues as well, of which Michael Moore’s (albeit more moderate) *Fahrenheit 9/11* is a well-known example.

by the conventional tools of the trade, so to speak. “The event itself has no purchase on the mercies of analogy or simile,” DeLillo claims... “we have to take the shock and horror as it is” (“In the Ruins”). DeLillo speaks specifically of writers here but his essay refuses to fully distinguish between “we” who are “rich, privileged and strong,” “we” who have stories of escape and grief, or “we” who begin to try and understand the event through writing (“In the Ruins”). In many ways, the “we” DeLillo refers to is simply anyone who is not “them” – who are “willing to die” and live “a certain kind of apartness” (“In the Ruins”). Marco Abel, however, speaks specifically to the role of the writer after 9/11 and suggests that the trade is under intensified scrutiny. He claims “because of the impossibility of escaping this realm [of representation], it matters all the more how we deploy language, images, and forms of judgment” (Abel 1247). It should come as no surprise, then, that the fiction of 9/11 has garnered intense criticism, but in such a way that is less hospitable than critical attention given to other archives of trauma writing – archives that surely do not provide a quintessential account. The 9/11 archive cannot help but be approached differently, however, for a number of reasons, not the least of which includes the reality that writers are faced with in the task of representing an event that has not only already unfolded in front of readers eyes with spectacular force but is also relatively recent – even living – history. Very few novels, therefore, are seen as providing a sufficient response, perhaps because nobody knows yet, or ever, what that response should be or how any response could ever be enough to compare with, mediate or supplement what has already been seen on such a striking scale.

5.2 DeLillo, *Falling Man* and the Critique of Representation

While there is no shortage of commentary on the 9/11 novel, ranging from assessments of writing style and structure to historical accuracy and ideological bias, much of the extant criticism centers on the notion of representation, both of trauma and of the terrorist other, a terrain onto which *Falling Man* ventures unapologetically. Trauma, otherness, violence seem to intersect in DeLillo's novel and, as Aaron Derosa notes, "*Falling Man* shows that ethical approaches to 9/11 are often at a juncture of representing alterity and representing trauma" (Derosa 170). For most critics, however, the novels of 9/11 do not address these issues in a satisfactory way. Perhaps this is to be expected, with writers taking on such a moment in history and one that reflects such a deep sense of loss. Pointing to both academic commentary and literary and cultural reviews, Duvall and Marzec confirm, "the last ten years have not been kind to artists' attempts to represent 9/11. Everyone seems to find something wrong with 9/11 art—both the visual and the literary" (382). Yet while most of the literary commentary – published both in journals such as *Modern Fiction Studies* and *American Literary History* and in reviews found in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The New York Review of Books* – seems to acknowledge the almost impossibility of capturing the sheer volume of loss and spectacle, this is precisely what garners the most criticism. For many, the inadequacy of 9/11 fiction is characterized by a tendency to focus on the private lives of citizens in the aftermath of attack and on the frequency with which coming to terms with the trauma of 9/11 and its aftermath is played out within homes, families and marriages. Michael Rothberg offers a critique of this nature and suggests that while an American perspective is still crucial, "what we need from 9/11 novels are cognitive maps that imagine how US citizenship looks and feels beyond the boundaries of the nation-state" (158). Richard Gray, in his study *After*

the Fall, goes further in his assessment of how the traumatic events of 9/11 are handled in fiction. For him, “the act of recuperation, as it happens, is also one of domestication” (51). To be sure, Gray is critiquing the notion that there is ever a stable state, identity, or wholeness that could ever, in fact, be recuperated – or reconstituted from a fragmented state – yet does he pre-emptively assume that the domestic is a move *away* from fragmentation, as if the home provides the stasis and familiarity necessary for recovery? Surely, domestication cannot be tamed to a scene of safety, consolation and comfort. Yet, while Gray alludes to the challenges writers face in capturing a sense of trauma, he ultimately suggests that the crisis is domesticated in such a way that authors never move beyond the unsayable or the “preliminary stages of trauma” (“Open” 130), as if domestication is always an act of retreat rather than a site of intensified questioning, traumatic incorporation, and disintegrating rather than mended narratives. Pankaj Mishra, in his survey of 9/11 fiction for the *Guardian*, is even more explicit in his critique, claiming that American writing in particular has “retreated” towards the subjective, domestic and local (Mishra). Mishra’s choice of words, with their military connotations, is a particularly revealing and suggests that fiction after 9/11 has a public responsibility to mediate global and domestic politics. Not only are these words a veiled reference to the inability of American forces to ensure stability in the Middle East in a timely manner; at the same time they inadvertently exposes the failure of the home to act as a figure of security. Mishra’s perspective is supported by other critics who claim the archive is predominantly comprised of texts that privilege a local, New York viewpoint. According to Gray, many of these works make “desperate retreat[s] into the old sureties [and] the seductive myth of American exceptionalism” (*After* 16-17). Again, the emphasis on retreat is so compelling, given that we are dealing with an archive based predominately on an act of terrorism. Such language

not only assumes American domesticity has ever been a place of “surety”; it also echoes dominant political rhetoric which suggests the only way to combat terrorism is to run out and meet it head on – a perspective that overshadows the possibilities of contemplating unexamined and surprising moments of incorporating otherness within the very domestic that is so lamented. In *9/11 and the Literature of Terror*, however, Martin Randall questions Mishra’s concerns that such issues are indicative of American prose writing: For him, Mishra’s claim that “the failure of the majority of American 9/11 fiction fully to grasp the attacks’ significance mirrors a historical failure of American writers generally to write outside of merely local concerns” is a “too convenient critique of modern and contemporary US writing” (Randall 135). Whether the literature produced in response to 9/11 succeeds or fails according to the criteria set out for it by the gatekeepers of the canon, it would seem that many desire a fiction that reaches further and tackles some of the more geopolitically pressing realities of our time – one that confronts the loss head-on but then moves beyond it, regardless of the injunctions posed by this fiction to linger a bit longer in the incorporation of traumatic remains (and returns).

Indeed, while the perceived turn inward and toward the domestic is critiqued by Gray, Mishra, and Rothberg, others find poignancy in this inner life of the 9/11 aftermath. For Kristiaan Versluys, author of *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel*, the emphasis on private lives and the struggle to make personal meaning out of trauma is a *strength* of 9/11 fiction. According to him, many novels dealing with 9/11 “affirm the humanity of the befuddled individual groping for an explanation, express the bewilderment of the citizen as opposed to the cocksureness of the killers, [and] give voice to the stuttering and stammering as a precarious act of defiance” (Versluys 13). While Versluys sets up a perhaps too-distinct binary between the victims and perpetrators of 9/11, he does raise a

point about the agency of fragmented narratives that is crucial to unpacking the significance of 9/11 fiction to how we learn to live with others. This turn opens up another important point of critique, other than the domestication of trauma, that concerns the ways in which many 9/11 novels attempt to offer a moral message or lesson of some kind as the event is turned into an occasion for clichéd reconciliation or self-discovery. For Gray, novels such as *The Emperor's Children* (Messud, 2007), *The Good Life* (McInerney, 2006), *A Disorder Peculiar to this Country* (Kalfus, 2006) and *Falling Man* (DeLillo, 2007) “simply assimilate the unfamiliar into familiar structures...reducing a turning point in national and international history to little more than a stage in a sentimental education” (Gray, *After 30*). According to Mishra, even these attempts are unfulfilled and he warns that “those readers seeking a capacious moral vision in contemporary American literature may have to move out of the narrow category of ‘9/11 fiction’” (Mishra). In general, however, these critiques challenge the tendency of much of the archive to turn toward too-easy solutions and familiar patterns as a way of mediating trauma. One of these familiar patterns is raised in Versluys criticism; as he points out, “many of the novels deal with the events of September 11 only tangentially: as tragic moments that punctuate other, more mainstream (mostly love) interests” (13). This claim is not without merit and, indeed, the novels written after 9/11 are saturated with marital dissolution, tentative romance, and even what *Salon* writer Cole Kazdin has coined “terror sex.” These themes, often realized through adulterous relationships and casual encounters, are found in many of the more well-known and best-selling works, including: *Netherland* by Joseph O’Neil, *Falling Man* by Don DeLillo, *A Disorder Peculiar to This Country* by Ken Kalfus, *The Emperor's Children* by Claire Messud, *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali, *The Good Life* by Jay McInerney, and *Incendiary* by Chris Cleave. There are some exceptions of course. Novels recounting a more historical

perspective and works written for, or narrated by, children do not focus on romantic relationships as a central feature. Yet in novels that tend specifically to the aftermath of the attacks – to piecing lives back together and learning to live with loss – martial strife, sex, and adultery are common threads. Rather than fall back on familiar or, in Verslyus' words, “mainstream” themes, however, might these novels suggest that in the aftermath of terrorist attack, what people long for most is simply connection with someone else?

Duvall and Marzen pick up on this possibility in their assessment of McInerney *The Good Life*, although they critique the ways in which 9/11, in the end, “merely functions as an event that urges us to try to be a bit better in our interpersonal relations” (384). For Duvall and Marzen, this is not enough, but is it not a large part of what writing *should* do? Benjamin Bird certainly believes so. For him, novels that feature the importance of relationships and our responsibilities towards others provide a necessary antidote to more reactionary political responses. According to Bird, 9/11 fiction provides a counter to militaristic responses by insisting “on the necessity for a process of mourning” (561). More specifically, Bird suggests that 9/11 novels have the potential to return us to a deeper reflection on the body – its vulnerability as a container for human history and a site of trauma (561). Part of this potential, as Bird sees it, is also returning us to place of need for others. This is a less-than urgent prospect, however, according to Rothberg who notes, “while a renewed commitment to hospitality toward the other ought certainly to remain on the domestic agenda (now, as ever), an even more challenging agenda awaits those who want to grapple seriously with the contemporary context of war and terror” (157). While this may appear to suggest the privileging of politics over ethics, thinking about the other and understanding the global scale of the crisis are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Indeed, Duvall and Marzen recognize that “imagining the Other is crucial to a number of

critics thinking about 9/11” (393), yet much of this criticism comes by way of a need to understand the motivations and thought-process of the terrorists responsible for the attacks. To this end, writers such as McInerney, Safran Foer, Updike, and DeLillo have, according to Mishra, either “ignored or failed to understand the terrorist ‘character’” (qtd. in Randall 136). These critiques are certainly well-founded, and thoughtful, yet perhaps a new strategy is needed in dissecting the growing body of fiction written in response to 9/11 – one that does not leave aside the notion of otherness altogether but, rather, approaches it differently. Verslyus offers an assessment of what a 9/11 novel should offer that hints at what it might mean to live with others, even terrorist others. According to him, “[w]riters are supposed to practice imaginative identification, that is, the ability to *get into someone else’s skin*” (150, emphasis added). But what is it about this particular archive that impulsively raises so many questions about the body – its limits and its fragility – and its relationship to violence? Getting into another’s skin, in other words, is not just a metaphor for imagination; it carries deeply physical connotations and, even as a tool for writers, suggests a method only achieved by penetrative force.

Within this terrain of assessment, *Falling Man* is routinely critiqued for *not* engaging with the idea of the other or coming to any conclusions about the terrorist character, yet such analyses are offered within a limited view of what otherness might mean in the text. These assessments are fair to an extent, but only in their treatment of obvious or visible markers of difference; *Falling Man*’s terrorist character Hammad, for example, is written as a man with no firm convictions, easily persuaded, and he exists only in small chapters kept separate from the larger narratives involving Keith, Lianne, and others. He appears not to be written in any depth. Yet the claims that the novel, as a result, “[is] small...unsatisfying and inadequate” (Kakutani), “lacks a tragic hero’s catharsis” (Conte

576) and “adds next to nothing to our understanding of the trauma at the heart of the action” (Gray, qtd. in Duvall and Marzec 383), misread DeLillo’s engagement with a discourse of alterity that is anything but brief. *Falling Man*, in fact, engages with the other in some surprising ways that are not necessarily reflected in plot and structure. Moreover, *Falling Man*’s preoccupation with otherness is not limited to the character of Hammad alone nor is it restricted by characters who do not appear as fully developed. As Laura Miller elaborates, “if DeLillo can never quite make these figures register as actual human beings, they are nevertheless the vehicles for some intriguing ideas” (Miller). *Falling Man* actively responds, then, to the central claims about what a post-9/11 novel should do precisely by refusing to offer either a singular *raison d’être* for September 11 fiction or a quintessential terrorist portrait. Moreover, *Falling Man*, rather than sidestep the question of otherness, opens up the notion of alterity to a far more complex set of meanings and experiences. What if, for example, the “failure” in 9/11 fiction is not the failure of the writer to imagine the external other but, rather, the failure of all – writers, critics, and readers alike – to imagine the other as anything except the *cultural* or *religious* outsider? What strangers do we miss in this limited view of alterity? Indeed, while the criticism of *Falling Man* seems to converge on its representation of otherness (or lack thereof), each critique overwhelmingly figures alterity as a *cultural* otherness rather than other figures of difference, strangers buried deep within selves, and invasions of the mind and body – willed, unwilled, and even unacknowledged incorporations – that appear over and over again in the text. These are the moments that alert us to the possibility of hospitable incorporation and a hospitality to mourning, but that also recognize the limits of an incorporation in which the other ceases to be and exists only *in us*. In other words, is a hospitality to otherness that absorbs the other as a figure of sameness hospitality at all? This

is a question raised by Derrida in his own reflection on mourning, *Memoires: for Paul de Man*. In it he asks, “is the most distressing, or even the most deadly infidelity that of a *possible mourning* which would interiorize within us the image, idol, or ideal of the other who is dead and lives only in us? Or is it that of the impossible mourning, which, leaving the other his alterity, respecting his infinite remove, either refuses to take or is incapable of taking the other within?” (*Memoires* 6). While framed in the context of mourning, these questions are crucial to exploring the ways in which hospitality paradoxically succeeds and fails on a model of incorporation. It suggests an unconditional welcome of strangers but also an incorporation that levels the other to a figure of familiarity, and a figure whose alterity is potentially negated when incorporated by the host. *Falling Man* offers a sustained engagement with questions of this kind, and considers – in a variety of scenarios – what it might mean to offer hospitality in a way that incorporates but does not negate the singularity of the other.

5.3 *Falling Man* and Organic Shrapnel

DeLillo’s 2007 novel begins in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, as Keith Neudecker makes his way through the ash to the home of his estranged wife, Lianne, and their son, Justin, seemingly without reason. The three resume domestic life and Keith and Lianne even share their former marital bed, yet they move in circles around each other as they each attempt to come to terms with what has happened. Instead of grieving together, Keith and his wife seek outside distractions, he in an eventually consummated affair and card games, and Lianne through her group sessions with Alzheimer’s patients. Their son, Justin, avoids almost all communication, speaking in monosyllables and scanning the sky for “Bill Lawton”, his own Anglicized interpretation of Osama Bin Laden. At first glance,

Falling Man deals with quintessential post-9/11 themes such as love and loss, personal and collective trauma and, to be sure, the forging and breaking of bonds – some casual and some sacred – as well as a number of motifs recognizable in DeLillo’s fiction generally; the splintering and re-building of family life; intellectualism bordering on satire; consumption and waste; violence; and, increasingly in his works, the place of both domestic and global terrorism. In *Falling Man*, DeLillo plays on the reader’s knowledge of world events with a titular reference to perhaps the most provocative image to come from September 11, 2001. Yet while the title conjures a recollection of Richard Drew’s infamous photo for the Associated Press⁶², DeLillo’s *Falling Man* is a *performance* artist, intent on recreating that tragic free fall in various places around Manhattan. We might think of this *Falling Man*, meant to draw us back to the “real” event, and away from it at the same time, as a kind of disguise; to be sure, he is everywhere in the novel, from the title page to Lianne’s discovery of his true identity near the conclusion, yet it is not the image of the *Falling Man* that we are drawn to over and over again. Instead, we are confronted by a far more startling image, buried in a doctor’s narrative of events, mentioned only twice and forgotten swiftly both times. By its nature, however, the image persists, pierces the surface of things, bubbling up over and over again and into virtually every other interaction in the novel, changing each life irrevocably in the process.

In the hospital, bits of glass are extracted from Keith’s skin and he is given an education in the deeper fragments that are often never retrieved from bombing victims:

⁶² The *Falling Man* image is one of nine frames Drew shot the morning of September 11, 2001. In an interview with CCN anchor Paula Zahn, Drew describes his rationale for continuing to take photographs as people were jumping from the towers. “You have to tell the story,” he reasons. “You can’t just turn your head and stop. I don’t think I captured this man’s death; I think I captured part of his life” (qtd. In Zahn). The title of Drew’s image was first coined in an essay written by Tom Junod and published in *Esquire* in 2003.

“Where there are suicide bombings [the doctor tells him]. Maybe you don’t want to hear this”.

“I don’t know”.

“In those places where it happens, the survivors, the people nearby who are injured, sometimes, months later, they develop bumps, for lack of a better term, and it turns out this is caused by small fragments, tiny fragments or the suicide bomber’s body. The bomber is blown to bits, literally bits and pieces. And fragments of flesh and bone come flying outward with such force and velocity that they get wedged, they get trapped in the body of anyone who’s in striking range. Do you believe it? A student is sitting in a café. She survives the attack. Then, months later, they find these little, like, pellets of flesh, human flesh that got driven into the skin. They call this organic shrapnel.”

He tweezered another splinter of glass out of Keith’s face. “This is something I don’t think you have,” he said. (*Falling* 16)

This scene, occurring within the opening pages of the novel confronts the worst fears of a victim of terrorist attack. Not only does Keith feel the effects of emotional trauma firsthand as he witnesses the planes collide with the towers; he also must face the combined physical and psychological shock of an unwilling incorporation as the scale of trauma is reduced from the grand spectacle of the towers to the intimate invasion of one’s own body. This scene leaves aside the inorganic violence of the planes and weaponizes a vulnerable body in such a way that it can simultaneously inflict and suffer harm. The bomber (or, in this case, the hijacker) does not, of course, survive his act of violence. Indeed, one cannot be certain if any bits of flesh do in fact belong to a terrorist or not. DeLillo certainly hints at this possibility, however, as Lianne describes her initial encounter with Keith as he stumbles

home from Ground Zero: “There was more blood than she’d realized at first...It was not his blood. Most of it came from somebody else” (*Falling* 88). Surely, this could be the blood of Keith’s friend and co-worker, Rumsey, whom Keith attempts to save before Rumsey dies in his arms. Yet the source of the blood that covers Keith is never confirmed, leaving its origin ambiguous and calling to mind all of the other possible ways in which Keith may be exposed to some visceral and abject contact, perhaps including the weaponized bodies of the hijackers and their most immediate victims

The emphasis on organic shrapnel, to be sure, has been highlighted in a few thoughtful responses to the novel. In her own study on affect and aesthetics in literature written about 9/11, Rachel Greenwald-Smith takes up the image in DeLillo’s text as a metaphor for the lasting impact trauma has on a survivor’s body. She writes: “The exposure to such horrifying events appears to involve an eerie permeability where the force of the experience radically alters the world, and with it the corporeal existence of its victims” (153). Using Greenwald-Smith’s recognition of the trauma of this occurrence as a starting point, my chapter considers how ideas of incorporation echo across and beneath the novel as part of an ongoing theorization of relationality in the wake of 9/11, that includes the ways in which we live together and with ourselves in the endless aftermath of an event so often premised as unprecedented and utterly foreign. To consider, as the novel does, the ways in which we are all, in some way, a part of one another in welcome and unwelcome ways, is to embark on a trajectory of thought that raises significant questions for hospitality. What happens, for example, when relationality is predicated on the assimilation of difference rather than its preservation? This may resemble a kind of conditional welcome of strangers, but it is not an ethical hospitality. How then, might we think through the image of organic shrapnel in *Falling Man* in such a way that opens, rather than forecloses, the

pivotal politics of difference that need not be reconciled but are, in fact, necessary to a hospitable welcome? What organic shrapnel suggests is not only that the body is simultaneously permeable and weaponized; the image also constructs trauma as a social and thereby possibly *ethical* experience and asks whether or not an ethics of hospitality can take the singularity of the body for granted. The profound and unavoidable sociality of our existence, in this case, compels us to ask questions that are inherently ethical regarding the shared precarity of bodies, and what the voice of that vulnerable body might ask of those who seek to do it harm. Organic shrapnel, therefore, offers a compelling image for considering the breaching of personal borders, the velocity of interpersonal relations and, most significantly, how we engage or disengage with the lives of others.

Falling Man, however, appears to gloss over these deep and disturbing implications. The ease and swiftness with which the doctor dispatches his assurance to Keith – “this is something I don’t think you have” (16) – and Keith’s apparent acceptance of the matter-of-fact but not entirely certain diagnosis, suggest that organic shrapnel is not crucial to the text and certainly not as vital as the figure of the Falling Man himself and the significance he carries. The notion of these bits of flesh are raised only once more, and cast aside equally as quickly: “[Keith] thought of something out of nowhere, a phrase, *organic shrapnel*. Felt familiar but meant nothing to him. Then he saw a car double-parked across the street and thought of something else and then something else again” (*Falling* 66). These moments are raised in the text only to be disavowed, perhaps to signal Keith’s inability to make or preserve any meaningful connections in the aftermath of the attacks. It is more a testament to his emotional distance than the vulnerability of his body. We might critique DeLillo for rushing past this and not slowing down to consider fully its implications, particularly in how it positions the ethical encounter within a politics of difference. It is a curious tactic, to

raise the potential of incorporating difference, only to disavow it moments later, as if the prospect itself, more than the literal bits of flesh, is what cannot be lived with. Yet its very mention makes it forever a part of the narrative in involuntary and unavoidable ways, and, much like the medical narratives that reinforce a rhetoric of infirmity, the prospect of organic shrapnel is readily thrust aside. Or so it seems. We move on to read about Keith's infidelity, Lianne's complicated relationship with her parents (including with her mother's lover, Martin Ridnour), and Hammad's slow transformation into a devout jihadist. But reading closely, we discover that organic shrapnel is *everywhere* in the novel; in Martin's false identity; the fragmented ideological struggle within Hammad; the torn assurances of white, American masculinity; the shattered memories of Lianne's Alzheimer's patients; the shards of an unraveling marriage that nevertheless makes Lianne feel "dangerously alive" (*Falling* 11); and the implosion of private life into public. It will take time and care to examine how each of these moments return to the ideas of incorporation and hospitality figuratively raised by organic shrapnel yet, different as they are, these moments signal different orders of shrapneling that occur in the text and the necessity of looking at each as emblematic of the ways in which incorporation raises a fraught set of ethical concerns. Some of these wounds, like the physical bits of glass in Keith's skin, can be traced more directly to the attacks themselves, yet the process of incorporation is not always literal. Some strangers are, indeed, remnants of destructive organic material that is lodged in the survivor's body upon impact. Some are strangers from the past that collide violently with the present. Others, still, alert us to a confrontation with an other that is not external at all, but already incorporated yet buried behind layers of mourning, repression and disavowal. These moments signal an occasion to begin thinking about not only the ways in which other

lives might intertwine with our own but also the extent to which every life is also invaded by the stranger already within.

5.4 Strangers Within: *Falling Man*'s Trail of Splintered Selves

5.4.1 "Maybe he was a terrorist but he was one of ours": Martin/Ernst

DeLillo's text is divided into three sections, each of which is titled by a reference to three figures that appear to be somewhat arbitrarily chosen. Bill Lawton, Ernst Hechinger, and David Janiak seem like curious choices to anchor entire sections of *Falling Man*, particularly since most of the narrative centers around Keith, Lianne and, to an extent, Hammad. Yet when we come to read these names as aliases, they take on far more significance, particularly in a narrative that is intimately concerned with the notion of the other within. As aliases – for Bin Laden, Martin Ridnour, and the Falling Man, respectively – these names suggest that even small details and minor characters are crucial to the dynamic sense of invasion and embeddedness in the text. Martin is certainly one of these. While not a crucial character in the central narrative of *Falling Man*, Martin Ridnour is significant for thinking about the other within, particularly as he has what is perhaps the most developed "second self" in the text. Martin is introduced as the long-time lover of Lianne's ailing mother, Nina, and is financially successful (although Lianne expresses curiosity as to how this is attained) but transient, drifting in and out of the narrative, and Nina's life. He describes himself as "shapeless" (*Falling* 42) and in his own apartment keeps "bare walls" (*Falling* 112, 145, 147) as if he is ready to leave at any moment. Lianne is fond of Martin but questions his history and the subtle hints he inadvertently – or perhaps intentionally – leaves. Martin "may or may not" have a wife in Paris (*Falling* 45) yet in the mirror he speaks to his beard in German not French (*Falling* 115) and Lianne inevitably

questions his true identity after realizing her mother offers very little about Martin's past, despite being his lover for two decades. "Is that his real name?" Lianne asks, yet Nina responds cagily, "[w]hy do I have to know his name? He's Martin. What will I know about him if I know his name that I don't know now?" (*Falling* 145). What Nina does recall, however, is her lover delivering a strong Marxist critique of a painting twenty years prior – although his art appraisals are mostly "aesthetic" now (*Falling* 145). Pressed by Lianne for more, Nina eventually relents, giving her daughter information as to Martin's true identity.

Vague at first – "he was involved in the times. All that turmoil. He was active" (*Falling* 144) – Nina eventually acknowledges that Martin's history may have been a violent one. She recalls a conversation years ago where Martin admits "I've done some things" but claims there is "not much vivid color or wild excitement" in them (*Falling* 146). Even in the hands of the woman he has known for twenty years, Martin's story swirls in ambiguity and inference. As Linda Kauffman notes, "nearly everything about him is surrounded by speculation and surmise...except his beliefs" (362), beliefs that become more clear and significant after the 9/11 attacks. His real identity, however, remains concealed until Lianne is finally given some concrete historical context for Martin's "activities". Martin's real name, Nina reveals, is Ernst Hechinger, and he belonged to a collective in the 1960's – a group referred to as Kommune One⁶³ who protested German

⁶³ Kommune One's origins can be traced to the killing of university student, Benno Ohnesorg, during a demonstration in Berlin against a visit by the Shah of Iran. Inspired by the possibility of a Marxist Revolution in Germany, Kommune One responded to German fascism with the proposed firebombing of department stores, for which they were arrested for incitement to commit arson (Claridge 96). The second incarnation of the left-wing movement in Germany became known as Baader-Meinhof, after its leader – Andreas Baader – and radical journalist Ulrike Meinhof. Using mostly pipe and fire-bombs, Baader-Meinhof targeted capitalist institutions with the hope of overthrowing the German state (Claridge 96). After Baader-Meinhof reorganized as the (more violent) Red Army Faction, most of the key leaders, including both Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof were imprisoned where they committed suicide shortly before trial (Claridge 100).

fascism. “First they threw eggs,” Nina tells Lianne, “then they set off bombs” (*Falling* 146). Ernst/Martin’s function in the narrative, as a figure with two literal selves, becomes an important example of the ways in which *Falling Man* explores the notion of an other within. As a second identity (or perhaps his first), Ernst Hechinger operates as a buried self that resurfaces after 9/11. Not only does he highlight the internal struggles of so many of DeLillo’s characters; he also provides the perspective of the “terrorist” that critics of such fiction are adamant is missing. Ernst, however, is clearly not the terrorist critics have imagined and unsettles dominant assumptions about what a terrorist “should be.” Derosa even suggests “DeLillo offers a *champion* of the terrorist impulse in the voice of Ernst Hechinger” rather than Hammad (167, my emphasis). Yet Martin’s narrative is also significant for the ways in which it introduces the prospect of an other living within and an other who, crucially, may be a violent one. In this case, the violence of Martin/Ernst refers to one who is capable of violence in certain situations but it gestures towards the possibility of a violent ontology as well, and an other that is, at core, a violent being. While Martin’s violence is, presumably, in the past, his double identity raises questions about the function of difference and identity in the context of DeLillo’s larger narrative, and reflects the ways in which questions of alterity rise to the surface after the terrorist attacks.

It is no accident that DeLillo inserts a former member of Kommune One into the debates about contemporary terrorism that dominate the conversations of Lianne, Nina, and Martin. In so doing, DeLillo provides a unique perspective on contemporary terrorism and speaks to issues of prisoners in custody and the possibilities of biological weapons and, as a result, places the 9/11 attacks in a much wider historical and global context. Martin’s participation in the leftist German protests of the 1960s is no coincidence and this history is no stranger to DeLillo. Kommune One, of course, was the precursor to the even more active

(and infamous) “Baader-Meinhof” gang and its central figures provide a backdrop to another post-9/11 text by DeLillo, a short story, simply entitled, “Baader.”⁶⁴ While the history of Baader-Meinhof is not explored in the text, its inclusion is significant, particularly as Martin comes to be the character most sympathetic to the terrorist cause, likely because he is, in fact, a former terrorist himself or, at very least, is named one in the narrative. In other words, Martin is profoundly but differently impacted by the event of 9/11 and does not struggle like Nina and Lianne to understand the terrorist motivation – he is already embedded, in a sense, within a terrorist mindset and 9/11 is not so much jarring as it is uncannily familiar – a return of a self long-repressed yet somehow at home and, perhaps, even more at home now than ever before. Yet the figure of Martin also suggests that there is no singular “mindset” to which all terrorists might subscribe and while the contemporary milieu certainly evokes Martin’s anti-American sympathies, the experiences of him and Hammad are differentially contingent on the context in which each is operating and, thus, profoundly distinct. Looking more deeply at the history of Baader-Meinhof, it becomes clear that the associations with contemporary terrorism are not so simple as Martin’s placement in the narrative as a (former) terrorist himself, and his history calls up other figures that resonate with some of the more complex aspects of DeLillo’s novel.

In addition to raising parallels between European and Middle Eastern terrorism, Martin’s history calls to mind the fear over biological warfare in the wake of the 9/11

⁶⁴ DeLillo’s short story, “Baader,” was published in *The New Yorker* on April 1, 2002, not long after the attacks on the World Trade Center. While the story on its own appears to be an unrelated to the 9/11 attacks, his two characters visit the Museum of Modern Art where they view photographs that, although they are not named, are likely the works of Gerald Richter who depicted the Baader-Meinhof gang as a series in 1988 (Gerald Richter). For more on the significance of “Baader” and MoMa to DeLillo’s *Falling Man*, see Linda S. Kauffman’s “The Wake of Terror: Don DeLillo’s ‘In the Ruins of the Future,’ ‘Baader-Meinhof,’ and *Falling Man*. *Modern Fiction Studies* 54.2 (Summer 2008): 353-377.

attacks and the very real threat of anthrax that swept America weeks after the towers collapsed. While most of Baader-Meinhof's efforts were concentrated on non-human targets and corporate symbols, David Claridge notes that, at times, the Baader-Meinhof gang was associated with the theft and development of biological weapons. After canisters of mustard gas disappeared from a storage facility in West Germany, reports began to circulate that Baader-Meinhof were behind the disappearance (Claridge 95). While this was ultimately proven speculative, the gang used it to their advantage. As Claridge notes, once the gas was reported as missing, the group claimed responsibility to invoke fear in their targets and "the whimsical nature [of Baader-Meinhof] would probably have led them to consider the idea of making *threats* about the use of chemical weapons" (Claridge 105). This was not an isolated case of the group being associated with chemical weapons, however. As the group shifted into its second – third including its roots in Kommune One – incarnation, the Red Army Faction in the early 1980s, they were accused of being behind a small apartment laboratory, discovered in Paris and intended for the development of clostridium botulinum, an extremely volatile neurotoxin (Claridge 110; McAdams). While it seems to be a distant relation to the events that shape the central narrative of *Falling Man*, Martin's associating with Baader-Meinhof, and even the possibility that the group may have acquired biological weapons seems to be the impetus behind much of the debate that occurs between Lianne, Martin, and Nina who cannot help but assimilate their current response to Al Qaeda terrorism within their historical understanding of terrorism that is interpellated by a Euro-American imaginary. Moreover, the emphasis DeLillo places on biological metaphors in their dialogue is telling. Martin, for example, points out that the perpetrators of 9/11 "think the world is a disease. This world, this society, ours. A disease that's spreading" (*Falling* 46), leaving it unclear the degree to which Martin himself agrees

with this diagnosis. Nina offers her own biological metaphor later when suggesting that the causes of terror are in Islam and not in the social and political conditions, past and present, of the Middle East. “It’s a viral infection,” she argues. “A virus reproduces itself outside history” (*Falling* 113). There is nothing more suggestive of the unwanted and abject incorporation of alterity than the allusion to a virus that is not only unnatural but flies in the face of an idea that we are, in act, dependent upon biological others (even within our bodies) to fully be ourselves. Indeed, let us not forget that the very act of immunizing against a foreign virus is to inject a small measure of that virus into the body – we are protected not from that incorporation but *by* it, and only able to avoid the destruction by that foreign agent because a trace of it remains inside of us. This emphasis on the viral nature of terrorism, then, is important to thinking about the ways in which a virus reproduces itself *within* the body – and a point that I will return to at length – and is able to disguise itself or “blend in” not only to avoid destruction but to continually deliver *protection* to the host.

Likewise, Martin blends in and discovering the full significance of his second self requires some work on the part of the reader to decipher the fragments Nina offers to Lianne. As the other within him, Ernst Hechinger is only able to disguise himself for so long, and it seems that he is more susceptible to the events of 9/11 than he admits. It is these moments that provide the impetus for this hidden identity to bubble to the surface in the context of contemporary terrorism. In that process, however, the figure of Martin/Ernst offers some compelling moments for thinking about the stranger within, and reveals this minor character to be more important than first thought. Indeed, unless one reads Martin’s presence in this light, his entire role in the narrative remains profoundly tangential. Unlike the otherness that invades the body anew in the case of organic shrapnel, Martin’s other is

from the *past* – not only spatially but temporally positioned. It is an other, however, that will not stay in the past, and when the pressing issues of terrorism come to the fore, Martin is confronted by this history that he alternately attempts to both welcome and suppress. On the one hand, for example, Martin willingly identifies with aspects of the terrorist cause, claiming that the attacks have logic behind them above and beyond mere religion – “Don’t think people will die only for God” (*Falling* 116) – and, importantly, he refuses to see 9/11 as an isolated event. In fact, he is adamant that contemporary terrorism is not that different than the mid-century terrorism of which he was a part. As he argues, “they’re all part of the same classical pattern” (*Falling* 147). Yet Martin also makes a number of moves to not only conceal the identity of Ernst but to make it clear what “style” of terrorism he subscribes to. As Nina points out, Martin’s attempts to conceal his appearance are futile and cannot erase the identity underneath. “Who is that man?” Nina asks. “You think you see yourself in the mirror. But that’s not you. That’s not what you look like. That’s not the literal face, if there is such a thing, ever. That’s the composite face. That’s the face in transition... What you see is not what we see. What you see is distracted by memory, by being who you are, all this time, for all these years” (*Falling* 114-115). Nina’s perspective suggests that Martin will always, in a sense, be two-faced and his true identity – whether Martin or Ernst – will never be fully realized. Martin, for his part cannot acknowledge that the other he has left behind is resurfacing, responding, “I don’t want to hear this” (*Falling* 115). Moreover, he further seeks to disavow the surfacing of his terrorist other by using an old wanted poster as “proof” of his more moderate political behaviors. Wanted posters – seeking both terror suspects and 9/11 terror victims – were of course prevalent in the aftermath of the attacks. As always paradoxically doubly purposed then, the figure of the wanted poster locates Martin within both histories of terrorism but simultaneously

distinguishes him from the worst perpetrators, past and present. According to Nina, Martin keeps a poster of nineteen Baader-Meinhof members wanted for crimes against the state in his Berlin apartment. As she relays this information to Lianne, however, Nina is quick to point out, “[h]e’s not one of the faces” (*Falling* 147). Lianne, however, only hears the number, nineteen, and repeats it back to Nina three times over the course of their conversation, as if checking her mother’s memory. The actual wanted poster, preserved by the German Historical Institute, includes the faces of nineteen alleged “gang” members and, indeed, the name Ernst Hechinger is not included (“Wanted Poster”), but they are not the nineteen to which Lianne’s thoughts are drawn. There are, of course, also nineteen 9/11 hijackers, whose faces are immortally preserved in similar fashion on, now iconic, FBI posters, a resemblance that fiction borrows from historical record. Martin seems to reveal the poster in his apartment as a way of assuring Nina he is, in fact, not a terrorist, at least not a murderous one, although his precise association with Kommune One and Baader-Meinhof is never clarified. After 9/11 then, Nina also struggles to bury Martin’s past in her mediation of events. She looks at the FBI’s wanted poster and, in the images of the hijackers, only sees “his nineteen” (*Falling* 149). Lianne, however, while she argues with Martin over the roots of terrorism, is a willing participant in the suppression of his true identity, in large part because she too believes that he can be distinguished from the terrorism that was carried out on 9/11. She “respect[s] his secret, yield[s] to his mystery...Maybe he was a terrorist but he was one of ours” (*Falling* 195).

Martin’s concealed identity and the other living within him raises some significant questions for thinking though the extended metaphor of organic shrapnel in the text, for his other is not one that arrives on impact; rather, it resurfaces from already within. What does it mean then, when thinking about the ways in which we are embedded within different

lives, to come to a recognition of the other inside? Does *Falling Man* provide a crucial turning point in conceptualizing a kind of otherness that reveals, in Kauffman's words, the possibility that "terrorism is inside us all?" (360). If the figure of Martin necessitates thinking through the implications of this, *Falling Man* also cautions against homogenizing a discourse of terrorism that might result in a rhetoric that recognizes "we are all terrorists." What the figure of Martin reveals in the novel is that there is no such single thing as "the terrorist." DeLillo seems to taunt us with these similarities of the past and the present, the European and the Islamic terrorist, precisely in order to work through the risk of making too-easy and too-pure distinctions between forms of terrorism – a purity that would actually cast aside crucial singularities in order to maintain a strict opposition (Clark 48-49) – at the same time as he maintains a measure of similarity in order to test the very philosophical possibilities of equivalency. It is a caution against homogeneity through both similitude *and* difference. These questions, then, are made even more complex through the DeLillo's inclusion of a figure who *is* one of the faces on the poster – the terrorist identified to the reader only as "Hammad." The extent to which Martin, then, disavows yet simultaneously yields to the terrorist other within him is a compelling counterpart to the figure of Hammad. Like Martin, Hammad carries an other within him, but one that is even more othered to himself – an other that contradicts not only his name and safety but his entire system of belief – and highlights not the reappearance of a long-buried other but the incessant splintering of an identity previously thought to be whole.

5.4.2 "Today, again, the world narrative belongs to terrorists": Hammad

In his essay, "In the Ruins of the Future," written ten days after the attacks, DeLillo considers the physical and metaphoric implications of 9/11, suggesting "our world, parts of

our world, have crumbled into theirs, which means we are living in a place of danger and rage” (“In the Ruins”). DeLillo’s statement not only alludes to the phenomenon of organic shrapnel – one life crumbling into another – it also anticipates the fragmented structure of the novel he will write years later. Nowhere in *Falling Man* is the meaning of this structure more apparent than in the passages focusing on Hammad. A hijacker-in-training, Hammad’s perspective is told in three segments, each piece disrupting the narrative of the three main sections of the novel. As Hammad’s life “crumbles” into that of Lianne, Keith, and their family, his story mirrors the metaphor of incorporation that permeates the rest of the text and, again, suggests that the notion of embeddedness is far more prevalent in the novel than first imagined. Indeed, his passages insinuate that organic shrapnel is not only a surprising *result* of terrorist attack but, rather, an *expected outcome* that is as much a part of military strategy as it is a radical belief. Hammad’s narrative opens with this premise, as he speaks to a former soldier in “Saddam’s army” who describes watching young men “sent out to explode landmines” in a “glory of self-sacrifice” (*Falling* 78). This emphasis on corporeal fragmentation – the literal obliteration of bodies – is repeated shortly after, as Hammad listens to his fellow trainees talk about the determination of the Western world “to shiver Islam down to bread crumbs for birds” (*Falling* 79). The invocation of bread crumbs here is particularly telling, as it suggests that Islam has been splintered or peeled back as a result of Western influence. That DeLillo chooses a food metaphor highlights the ease with which these pieces are broken down and absorbed by a literal or figurative body, but also reminds us of what shrapnel is *before*; bread crumbs, in other words, are made only through the breaking down of something previously whole. Already in these moments that initiate Hammad into the text, where he only listens and does not speak, a framework is laid for the

intimate preoccupation with the idea of shrapnel, of being embedded in other lives, and of losing one's own life or being splintered down to nothing.

It would be tempting to read Hammad's narrative as evidence of the role of the other, as a kind of foil to the central characters irrevocably changed by Hammad's actions. Yet despite their brevity, Hammad's three narrative segments not only intersect with those of the other characters in structurally meaningful ways, they also offer a number of compelling insights about the nature of organic shrapnel itself, and of its implications, long before the plane carrying Hammad hits the tower. In short, Hammad is both agent and victim of various forms of shrapnel. He is, as suggested by Keith's doctor, the other, *par excellence*, and a possible source of the bits of flesh that may or may not be embedded in Keith's body. At the same time, he is also other to himself, splintered from within by unfamiliar desires and self-doubt. As DeLillo's 2001 essay struggles to account for the motivations behind terrorism, Abel offers one possible reasoning, suggesting that the other "does not even acknowledge – is not capable of acknowledging – our self. The other bypasses us. The terrorist's self is already other to our concept of the self; the terrorist's self is non-self-identical: the I of the self is always already an-other" (1242). Hammad's narrative challenges Abel's somewhat contradictory logic of an essentialized terrorist subject by demonstrating the strangeness Hammad observes in *himself*, independent of the ideological otherness he is taught to observe in the Western World. It is not simply that he cannot see "our self"; he cannot see himself either. One of the ways the novel establishes this crucial distinction is by highlighting Hammad's inability to abide by a single self. He cannot see himself because he is divided by desires that are and are not his own. In some ways, he is defined by his mission and, importantly, his brotherhood; he decrees "[t]he time is coming, our truth, our shame, and each man becomes the other, and the other still

another, and then there is no separation” (*Falling* 80). In their ultimate goal they incorporate each other, becoming each other’s flesh, oddly referencing the genesis account of creation⁶⁵, with his longing to “become the other’s running blood” (*Falling* 83). At the same time, however, DeLillo highlights Hammad’s solitude and, in so doing, emphasizes a rhetoric of mourning that is exacerbated by Hammad’s inability to reconcile his conflicting desires. Hammad’s mission-determined identity is not the only self he faces, and this reflects the ways in which he is permeated and torn apart by the other within. It is clear, early on in Hammad’s passages, that he is drawn to a more Western and, at times even secular, lifestyle, despite continuing with his training. He moves steadily toward his mission but still has “to step over the prone form of a brother in prayer as he [makes] his way to the toilet to jerk off” (*Falling* 80). Later, he describes his relationship with a girl named Leyla and desires, at one point and in spite of himself, “to marry her and have babies” (*Falling* 82). Hammad lacks focus and discipline but is, at the same time, easily led. His concerns about the mission and its intended victims are easily assuaged, as his leader, Amir – here a proxy for Mohammed Atta – rationalizes their aims in a speech that Hammad accepts not because he understands but because he is impressed by what sounds “like philosophy” (*Falling* 176). While Hammad may not fully grasp the necessity of killing innocent people – DeLillo humanizes Hammad in order to offer an explanation of how “ordinary” Muslims are led into fundamentalism – he understands that “death is stronger than life” and is “ready to close the distance to God” (*Falling* 172). Even then, he sees a car full of young people and asks himself: “how easy would it be for him to walk out of his car and into theirs?” (*Falling* 172). Despite everything he is taught and all he feels

⁶⁵ See Genesis 2:23: “This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh!” (New Living Translation).

he is meant to accomplish, Hammad struggles between two selves: the jihadist in training, devout and committed to his brotherhood, and the other within, who pulls him away from his need to fulfill a grand destiny. Indeed, as he and his “brothers” move forward with their plans, Hammad continues to fight “against the need to be normal” (*Falling* 83).

More than anything, Hammad’s struggle to live with difference and inability to resolve his conflicting desires is evident in his constant self-doubt. While his leader, Amir, proceeds in firm confidence and is – at least in the eyes of Hammad – apparently unrelenting and disciplined, Hammad is plagued by a strangeness that has no place in fundamentalist Islam. Kauffman suggests that *Falling Man* is “obsessed with disintegration” and Hammad is certainly no exception. While he is presented in Keith’s narrative as a destructive and very material force – not as an abstraction but as literal pieces of flesh and bone – in his own narrative Hammad is decidedly less materialized. Instead, he slowly withdraws from both desires – his attraction to secularism and a fervent fundamentalism. As the day of the attacks looms closer, Hammad drifts further away from both. He describes going out in public while training in flight school and reflects: “he was invisible to these people and they were becoming invisible to him” (*Falling* 171). This is, however, a necessity; to become “nobody from nowhere...the idea is to go unseen” (*Falling* 172). Hammad’s fade into nothingness is specter-like and reflects neither the surface self nor the other within vying for control. On the contrary, it is a failure to recognize himself in either scenario – the jihadist brotherhood or the Westernized world of children and supermarkets. He is losing the solidity of both, slowly de-materializing, and Hammad looks in the mirror at the barber shop and realizes “he was not here, it was not him” (*Falling* 175). But which *him* is he looking for? Indeed, although he moves closer to carrying out his instructed mission, it is not a result of his increased devotion to Islam or

disavowal of Westernized ways of being in the world, a complex struggle for identity that could be misread as a caricature – the terrorist who has no history, no desire and only myopic vision. In his review of *Falling Man*, Sandy English notes that Hammad “has no family and no past...Everything remains on the surface” (English). Hammad is, however, far less parochial, as is his characterization in the text. At the end of the narrative, Hammad appears to have no conviction other than blind duty and is represented as the bumbling terrorist caught up in a process of which he has little understanding and for which he has no agency. Far from caricature, however, what DeLillo’s portrayal of Hammad does recall is the utter singularity of his soon to be extinguished existence. His jihad is, in some ways, against himself and even as he carries out the mission assigned to him, he is not fully present in the narrative given unto him. To recognize this is to acknowledge that there is no such thing as the quintessential terrorist and Hammad, rather than having any agency over his own story, can only act within the confines of the stereotypical terrorist narrative assigned to him. Even on the plane, seconds away from the tower, his devotion is limited by a precise awareness of his own person, cut and bleeding, on its way to eternity but still very much embodied. By the time the plane hits the tower, Hammad is almost gone, “carrying his soul in his hands” (*Falling* 238), disintegrated not upon impact but by the alterity that undoes him from within.

Hammad’s fade into difference, a chasm beyond invisibility and anonymity, reflects deeply the power of the stranger within him and speaks loudly to the notion of organic shrapnel, but in a far less linear way. Hammad’s narrative reveals that the trajectory of a penetration of the self by others extends in multiple directions in the text and not always in a singular moment of extreme force. Indeed, what is perhaps most important to notice here is that Hammad is lacerated by difference well before impact. Initially conceived as a

moment of precise incorporation of an other by Keith, Hammad's struggle with conflicting desires and selves suggests a different kind of shrapnel that makes itself known from the inside – not embedded on impact but a defining antagonism that structures his conflicted experience of himself and that is ultimately left unresolved. To this end, the struggles of Hammad and Keith are not so distinct. Randall suggests that both characters suffer from a parallel crisis of masculinity and, in his words, the text attempts to make meaning of the events by “seeing a kind of pathology in the masculine mind that leads to Keith's sense of confusion and trauma and Hammad's desire to cause massive death and catastrophe” (Randall 123). It is not just the failure of their masculinity, however, that binds Keith and Hammad, and it is not so simple to say that organic shrapnel is suggestive of the ways in which Keith incorporates the other in his trauma. It is fitting then, that the conclusion of Hammad's narrative returns us to the moment of impact. Indeed, *Falling Man* moves backwards and forwards through time, and Hammad's last moments intersect almost simultaneously with Keith both in the towers, and three years later, while he sits alone in a casino playing poker. Moving between narratives suggests not simply a theoretical and possible corporeal link between Keith and Hammad; it also draws our attention to the ways in which the event is experienced differentially, even if simultaneously. Keith lingers casually at the table, wanting to “make [his opponents] bleed. Make them spill their precious losers' blood” (*Falling* 230) – a comment that finds eerie, and no doubt intentional, resonance with Hammad's earlier desires to “make blood flow” (*Falling* 173). Here DeLillo plays with both time and space, as the narrative oscillates rapidly between Keith and Hammad. The novel jumps forward three years to find Keith in his hotel room engaging in his ritual of his physiotherapy exercises even though his wrist has healed (*Falling* 235). The narrative then shifts back to Hammad, three years earlier, nursing his

own arm injury on a plane somewhere in the Hudson corridor (*Falling* 237-238). One in a plane, in 2001, approaching the towers and one in a Vegas hotel room in 2004, we are meant to read these two together, their narratives swiftly closing in on each other. Yet they are also remarkably different, in time and space, and positioning them in such proximity only reveals the precise singularity of each experience, both traumatic, both violent, and both indicative of a conflicted sense of self, yet irrevocably distinct. Keith, for one, is focused on ritual while Hammad is taken out of his, distracted by a bottle that has fallen on the floor:

[Hammad] watched it roll this way and that, a water bottle, empty, making an arc one way and rolling back the other, and he watched it spin more quickly and then skitter across the floor an instant before the aircraft struck the tower, heat, then fuel, then fire, and a blast wave passed through the structure that sent Keith Neudecker out of his chair and into a wall. He found himself walking into a wall. He didn't drop the telephone until he hit the wall. The floor began to slide beneath him and he lost his balance and eased along the wall to the floor. (*Falling* 239)

The shift in perspective, from Hammad to Keith, within the space of a single sentence is significant for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the way it recalls – in fact, anticipates, the initial moments of incorporation in the novel now backed by the force of a sentence in which two characters literally collide. This connection may be forced by the hands of DeLillo, who writes these two characters under the shared pronoun “He” in such a way that they are denied their own space as the autonomous subject of the sentence. Yet at the same time as it calls Keith and Hammad in to a shared space of violence and even identity, it is a space that neither can fully occupy. Nor does it provide the kind of narrative completion and sense of the event itself that one might be looking for in the first pages of

the novel. It provides this history at the same time as it ruptures it by positioning it as a history of difference than can never be rendered into a narrative of equivalence. Indeed, while (chronologically) Keith's narrative begins at this point, his own conflicting desires begin to make themselves known, perhaps sparked by the moment of impact but distinct in their own capacity to unsettle and surprise as already incorporated fragmentations of identity within him.

5.4.3 "Only half there": Keith

After the plane hits, and after Rumsey dies in his arms, Keith makes his way down the crowded staircase and out into the street where he enters into a world in which he no longer recognizes himself. He describes the scene as if he is watching a stranger make his way through an entirely foreign landscape: "It was not a street anymore... He wore a suit and carried a briefcase... There was something critically missing from the things around him" (*Falling* 3-5). Keith surveys the scene as if he is describing another person, as if encountering a new or, as I will argue, repressed version of himself for the first time. Before the possibility of organic shrapnel is raised, Keith is confronted by a stranger who is not so much new as uncanny. Immediately, we are faced with a figure of hospitality that explores what it means to be living with others in ways that always compromise the borders of the self – an experience that is not limited to shrapnel, then, though organic shrapnel certainly gives us precedent to recognize various others when they appear and a language to describe it. Bits of flesh may break the surface of Keith's body, yet the novel is interested in a range of strangers within that body that are all the more compelling for the surprising ways in which they make themselves known yet are not entirely given over to knowledge themselves. When taken in this context of organic shrapnel and hospitality, then, DeLillo's

title, becomes far more significant. Keith is introduced as the novel's first, but not final, falling man, descending from the tower and out into a world full of strangers and strangeness. For Kristeva, "[s]trange indeed is the encounter with the other – whom we perceive by means of sight, hearing, smell, but do not 'frame' within our consciousness" ("Strangers" 286). Exiting the towers into a world "of falling ash and near night" (*Falling* 3), Keith struggles to place himself, this figure in a suit, among so many other figures in suits rushing past. He is familiar to himself, but no longer recognizable, and not only for the pulverized matter, blood and sweat that cover him. This is indeed a strange encounter for Keith and signals the beginning of a series of encounters with the other within who, in particular, challenges the stability and durability of the white, affluent, male privilege he has enjoyed to this point. Again, as a sub-theme of post 9/11 novels, this reflection on identity is not entirely unprecedented and so many works of fiction center on the "male mid-life crisis" or the "trial of masculinity" (Anker 464; 469). Yet Keith's trial is unlike most others as it situates the crisis as one that has been buried within him all along. As Mary Parish points out, Keith's actions "derive from a place of insecurity rather than strength" (188), which suggests that there was never a secure masculine identity to begin with. This is, of course, the central way in which Keith comes to figuratively reflect the novel's title, as both the rise and decline of masculinity often take on a falling metaphor. Michael S. Kimmel, for example, goes so far as to suggest "American manhood is always more about the fear of falling than the excitement of rising, always more about the agony of defeat than the thrill of victory" (qtd. in Parish 189). With this in mind then, we must read Keith's encounter with his other within – a very unrealized hegemonic-masculine subject – as occasioned but not created by the event of 9/11.

To be sure, prior to the terrorist attacks, Keith confidently embodies a comfortable

hegemonic masculinity, albeit an arrogant and perhaps always threatened one. He is handsome and fit, and thrives in physical situations, seeing them as occasions from which he cannot retreat “once the thing [gets] started” (*Falling* 227), even if the “thing” turns violent. He enjoys his work as a real estate lawyer and the consumer pleasures it brings. He is sexually dominant, and occasionally mocking of female intelligence, referring to his mother-in-law as “the So-and-So Professor of Such-and-Such” (*Falling* 9). Keith, it seems, instigates conflict in order to prove his masculine dominance, always ready “to break up a table and burn it so he could take out his dick and piss on the flames” (*Falling* 103). This need to assert his gender role in a twisted and phallic rescue scenario is not entirely dissimilar from many of the masculine savior fantasies operating around 9/11 first responders. As Parish elaborates, “the intense glorification and glamorization of male firemen, rescue workers, and soldiers throughout American popular culture in the months and years after 9/11 suggest a deep-seated cultural need for the psychic comforts inherent in the illusion of safety promised by the mythic cowboy persona” (186-187). Indeed, the discourse of masculine salvation is not unlike the scene of “men rolling their shoulders, hoisting their balls, ready to sit and play, game-faced” that characterizes the pre-poker ritual of Keith and his friends (*Falling* 96). Yet when faced with his near demise, witnessing that of his friends and co-workers, and forced to confront his own helplessness, Keith loses hold of this masculine surety. To this end, Kristeva’s query about the conditions that prompt the return of the other is significant. She asks, “[a]re death, the feminine, and drives always a pretext for the uncanny strangeness?” she asks (“Strangers” 285). It certainly seems that, when faced with death and stripped of masculine power, Keith encounters a deeply buried other within in, reminding the readers of the ways in which conventional masculinity offers a fragile fantasy of protection from, and a disavowal of, a

world of others. Keith's survey of his unrecognizable self suggests a powerful working through of the other within – one who resists total reconciliation and, with it, annihilation – to raise crucial questions about how we encounter lives vastly different than our own, perhaps more fascinatingly, even *within* our own and what it means to live with such difference. For Kristeva, “[b]eing alienated from myself, as painful as that may be, provides me with that exquisite distance within which perverse pleasure begins as well as the possibility of my imagining and thinking the impetus of my culture” (“Strangers” 274) – a culture that is often the basis of the annihilation of difference and singularity through even the most transgressive organizations of group identity and affiliation, common language, shared history and, even, shared oppression. The distance of this alienation is one that, in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, seems to initially lead Keith to a deeper acceptance of his other within, yet the ethical resonance of that separation is ultimately difficult for him to sustain.

Following the towers' collapse, the other within stakes a greater claim over Keith's actions and relationships. As Keith's firm is “just about decimated” (*Falling* 53), so too is the stable and masculine self he had constructed. The same is true of his social life as a divorced father, as he finds himself living, once again, with his family – though only “half there” as Lianne describes (*Falling* 213). On all fronts, the event of 9/11 serves to initiate a new way of being in the world for Keith as Lianne leads him “like walking a child” (*Falling* 9) to the hospital and they resume family life, at least to a fair extent; still, the various selves within him are held tenuously together. Keith's confrontation with the other within him is not only about his failure of masculinity; it is about a failure to recognize himself anymore – in his marriage and family, in his poker games, and in his overall sense of being and autonomy. Where poker was once the perhaps defining feature of his sociality,

Keith now plays alone, silent, and he avoids contact with both strangers and former friends alike. He cares only about the cards and never the players; he is not even interested in their “tells” (*Falling* 197). His tells, however, are laid bare. He carries a deep nostalgia and desire to recreate some aspects of his old life, retain some shards of his former self, even if it never occurs to him “to light a cigar, as in the old days, at the old game” (*Falling* 197). Still drawn, in some way to the spoils of corporate life, yet resigned to experience them alone, Keith “reconstruct[s] his work life within the world of the casino, an environment in which the future becomes irrelevant and where he is safely shielded from the press and expectations of time, events, and relationships” (Parish 185). More significantly, given the other lives that threaten to expose his profound yet suppressed sociality, Keith is driven – in ways he himself cannot fully articulate – to live as anonymously as possible. At the casino, for example, he wins “only quiet amounts of money” (*Falling* 197) so as not to draw attention and avoids “winning too much...that he’d slip into someone else’s skin” (*Falling* 227). To win, in other words, is unfamiliar, and it is in the acceptance of loss, perhaps even the desire for loss, that Keith becomes recognizable to himself even if Keith has, in a sense, *always* been in someone else’s skin. While not acknowledged as such, Keith’s narrative cycles back once more to the notion of organic shrapnel, to the bits and pieces of other lives that continually try to embed themselves in his own, and to which he remains consistently hostile. Yet what he fears in this instance, is not incorporating the other but, rather, being incorporated himself, of further losing himself in the one remaining thing that he feels still defines him. Far from the sturdy and cocky male subject, Keith becomes “a hovering presence...not quite returned to his body yet” (*Falling* 59) and, in an almost direct echo of psychoanalysis, feels “strange to himself” (*Falling* 65). Later, at the casino poker table, he notices “he was becoming the air he breathed” (*Falling* 230), much like the feeling

captured in Hammad's last days and moments.

Keith may not be able to sustain the initial relations that his loss of masculine power enables, but his detachment again from social and family life is most certainly not a return to his secure, masculine sense of self. Indeed, at the end of the narrative, Keith is more splintered and, if the above passages are any indication, more ethereal than ever. Unlike his father, who Keith remembers as "unconfused, alive in his true skin" (*Falling* 128), Keith's skin is crawling with lives of all sorts. Late in the novel, three years after the attacks, Keith is still paralyzed by dreams in which he is not the actor of his own script: "These were the days after and not the years, a thousand having dreams, the trapped man, the fixed limbs, the dream of paralysis, the gasping man, the dream of asphyxiation, the dream of helplessness" (*Falling* 230). These are the various "others" in Keith, far from the confident masculine swagger he (still) attempts to conjure: they are the impotent and weak selves, formerly buried and unrecognizable but now rising to the surface and all too familiar. They recall, perhaps, what it must feel like to fall from a great height. Unable to reconcile these others, let alone welcome them in, Keith struggles to identify them as anything other than rage and they remain foreign for precisely that reason. It is fitting, then, that both Lianne's explanation – "You want to kill someone...it's a thing you carry with you" (*Falling* 214) – and Kristeva's definition for the foreigner – "a choked up rage deep down in my throat" ("Strangers" 264) – inadvertently, yet overtly, capture the essence of organic shrapnel as something burrowed within the body.

These "shrapnel" selves are, importantly, not new. As Kristeva describes, "the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder" ("Strangers" 264). Thus, the event of 9/11 and its aftermath, as experienced by Keith, bring these selves to the surface

and serve not as the birth of the other but, rather, its uncanny return. This raises significant questions for the notion of hosting the stranger, for what if, instead of being lodged in the self with velocity and violence, these others were there all along? What if, as Freud notes, “the uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression” (qtd. in Kristeva, “Strangers” 284). Indeed, Keith’s near death in the towers reveals not a newly embedded other but a bump, many bumps, under his skin that were always there but perhaps growing rapidly now. These are occasionally acknowledged by Keith as fleeting recognitions of something resurfacing. He finds an odd and familiar pleasure, for example, in his short return to family life: “There was a contained elation in these times, a feeling that was nearly hidden, something he knew but only barely, a whisper of self-disclosure” (*Falling* 66). The moment, however, like most of Keith’s brief epiphanies, is short-lived as he retreats swiftly. In short, he exemplifies Kristeva’s description of encountering one’s other, *par excellence*. She writes: “Confronting the foreigner whom I reject and with whom at the same time I identify, I lose my boundaries, I no longer have a container...I lose my composure...I feel ‘lost’, ‘indistinct’, ‘hazy’” (Kristeva, “Strangers” 286). Keith’s elation, as he himself notes, is indeed “contained” – a deeply connotative word in the context of hospitality, indeed, in the context of the 9/11 literary archive – and he tries to prevent this strangeness of his own “self-disclosure,” even if it feel like elation, from spilling over. Is it any coincidence then, when the figure of organic shrapnel reappears again on this very page? After cautiously documenting the pleasures of family life, Keith “thought of something out of nowhere, a phrase, organic shrapnel” (*Falling* 66). In Keith’s case, however, the shrapnel is not, as he assumes, coming out of nowhere – it is coming from within; this disclosure of self, loss of hegemonic

masculinity and dissolution of his former identity is bubbling up from *inside*. The implications of Keith's ongoing, though no less traumatic, incorporation by the other (within) has significant implications, then, for the ways in which we are embedded by different lives. Freud's recognition of the uncanny strangeness within us, "brings us the courage to call ourselves disintegrated in order not to integrate foreigners and even less so to hunt them down, but rather to welcome them to that uncanny strangeness which is as much theirs as it is ours" (Kristeva, "Strangers" 290). Moreover, this shared sense of strangeness is, for Kristeva, the "ultimate" condition of being *with* others" ("Strangers" 290). Kristeva's figure of strangeness is, to be sure, a figure of possibility that is, for Keith, far more unsettling than promising. It is a strangeness not unlike the figures of viral infection that pose more of a challenge for those confronted with the potential of a toxic other multiplying within. Keith, then, is representative of the challenges of living in this promise and offers a figure for thinking through hospitality's alternative in *Falling Man* – a model of unethical relations occasioned at first by the disavowal of organic shrapnel but confirmed by Keith's defiance in the face of any possible breach of his borders of self, as well as his desire to live in masculine self-sufficiency rather than in any state of dependence on, or responsibility to, others. Yet while Keith's disavowal allows us to think through the alternative to a hospitable incorporation of difference, it is a disavowal always in tension. Not quite the exact foil to an ethics of welcome, Keith signals, conversely, the absolute necessity of learning to live with others and oneself, not to mention the consequences of its failure. Keith, ultimately, is resolutely inhospitable to a strangeness that nonetheless remains his own and, rather than shared, it is buried again under the cloud of casino smoke and occasional bouts of fitful sleep in an isolated hotel room.

5.4.4 “Diminishing Remains”: Lianne

While Keith escapes to Las Vegas, Lianne and Justin remain at home in Manhattan, join the protests against the war in Iraq and offer a counterpoint to Keith’s unresolved battle with the strangeness within him. If Keith and Hammad are the most significant (and most significantly studied) figures in DeLillo’s novel, it seems fitting that Lianne is initially positioned only to bring clarity to the central storylines – that of Keith’s mediation of trauma and Hammad’s reluctant fundamentalism. Yet Lianne’s narrative is all the more provocative for her own quiet struggle with the stranger within, not to mention the various figures of shrapnel that appear in the passages dedicated to her perspective. Indeed, Lianne has her own preoccupation with ideas of incorporation that exist independently from Keith’s own embedded bits of flesh and bone. Unlike Keith, who aims to disavow the significance of carrying the other within, Lianne actively embraces it. She wants “to absorb everything, childlike, the dust of stray sensation, whatever she could breathe in from other people’s pores” (*Falling* 105). Importantly, this absorption includes religion as Lianne abandons her previous position on spiritual matters and turns to God in the aftermath of the attacks. While, her allegiance is still, to be sure, shaky and even hesitant, she finds herself in an empty church “two or three times a week” (*Falling* 233) and observes rituals of Catholic communion that have poignant resonance with matters of hospitable incorporation. While she is cannot fully embrace the doctrine, “she believe[s] something” in the process of transubstantiation, “half fearing it would take her over” (*Falling* 233). This reference to the belief that, in communion, the bread and wine that symbolize the body of Christ become literal flesh and blood when consumed is significant for a number of reasons. It reinforces the recurring image of blood in the novel, but also suggests that Lianne has perhaps the most complex narrative in the context of hospitality and being

embedded by another. Not only is communion a far more willing incorporation, but it is the acceptance of the incorporation of the Christ, the absolute and irreducible Other for philosophers such as Levinas. Once again, while the initial figure of organic shrapnel in the text is cast aside fairly quickly by Keith and is never explicitly raised in Lianne's narrative, Lianne nonetheless engages in an ongoing confrontation with strangeness throughout the novel – one that culminates in images of breathing in stray matter and ingesting flesh. Like the discourses of incorporation found in Keith and Hammad's narrative, Lianne's emphasis on both a figurative and sensory embeddedness confirms that it is the possibility of the encounter and incorporation of otherness, rather than the event of 9/11, that is central to the novel. The significance of Lianne's narrative to hospitality does not end with her desire to "breathe in" those around her or partake in communion; more precisely, it does not *begin* there for, much like Keith and Hammad, Lianne is also confronted by an other that is perhaps not as strange as it first appears. This sense of strangeness does not so much confront as it is *recalled* through her encounters with a performance artist, appropriately given the name "Falling Man." Lianne's encounter, in other words, is with an other she *knows* – albeit a distant one accessed via her professional life and family history – whose function is perhaps most persuasive in the context of an embeddedness that is transgenerational and autoimmunitary and arrives in the form of Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

While organic shrapnel certainly provides a startling image, the figure of the Falling Man is a disrupting and jolting reminder of its real life referent. It calls up not only the moment preserved in time by photographer Richard Drew, but also the scores of other victims who jumped or fell from the towers to their deaths and of whom no remains could be collected. According to Conte, such images have always existed on the threshold of

acceptance, making the Falling Man's repeated performances all the more shocking: "there are ancient proscriptions against the shattering of a corpse...a defilement of the body that permits no chance for proper burial... The performance of Falling Man reminds his audience that such a death violates a primal code of religion and ritual" (Conte 578). Yet the Falling Man cannot help but draw eyes upon himself, much like those falling from the real towers, and the performance artist seems to understand that he holds "the gaze of the world" (*Falling* 33). Passersby are, in a sense, hostages to his act, an important distinction when considering the variety of ways in which the novel itself is consumed by figures emblematic of the host/stranger relation so crucial to hospitality.

While his performance has a perverse precedent, the Falling Man, arrives repeatedly but unexpectedly, with no prior indication as to the timing or location of his stunts. For many viewers, his performance exists not as an act but as an apparent suicide as not all are privy to the appearance of a safety harness as he drops out of sight. As Andrew O'Hagan describes in his review for the *New York Review of Books* "dying in full public view has been a theme of Don DeLillo's since the time when September 11 was still a nothing day in the average American calendar" (O'Hagan).⁶⁶ After 9/11 however, this particular kind of dying in public takes on new resonance when passersby are confronted repeatedly and memories that have begun to heal are made raw again. Lianne describes it thus: "He'd appeared several times in the last week, unannounced...always upside down... He brought it back, of course, those stark moments in the burning towers when people fell or were forced to jump... There was the awful openness of it, something we'd not seen, the single

⁶⁶ Lianne's turn to religion near the novel's conclusion is significant also in relation to the Falling Man, as Lianne begins to believe in, and cling to, perhaps the most well known "dying in public" of all time – that is, the death of Christ.

falling figure that reveals a collective dread, body come down among us all” (*Falling* 33). Whether by coincidence or divine ordination, Lianne witnesses a number of the Falling Man’s stunts, forced to confront his free fall over and over again. In this sense, he is not the intruder who arrives and returns the next time as a known guest or familiar presence. His presence, his position and posture, are always unnerving and unfamiliar; he is always abject, “body come down among us,” life-in-death. Yet like the abject, he cannot be ignored or completely pushed aside. For Lianne, his presence is “too near and deep, too personal...[but] she did not think of walking away. He was right above her but she wasn’t watching and wasn’t walking away” (*Falling* 163). This is a dying in public from which she cannot turn away yet while these performances certainly call up the fresh memories of real deaths in the towers, they also reveal Lianne’s obsession with remembering, as the quasi-suicide of the Falling Man calls up the death of her own father, who by his own hand, took his own life rather than be overcome by the ravages of dementia. Indeed, while O’Hagan suggests DeLillo’s falling man metaphor “fails” to accurately capture the sense of events, it actually captures far more than initially realized via its capacity to awaken Lianne’s recollections of her father.

The Falling Man, through his symbolic suicide, intrudes on Lianne’s mediation of 9/11, but when she links it to her family history, a far more unnerving intruder within is revealed. While most Manhattanites are jarred out of their healing and attempts to forget by the Falling Man’s performance, Lianne seems to welcome it as a sign that she still remembers, at least for the time being. He “brings it back,” as she describes, but it is precisely what she needs. The Falling Man, in other words, provides a disturbing reassurance that Lianne is not becoming victim to the dementia that she fears she has inherited from her father. At the same time, however, the performance disrupts her memory

of everyday particulars and suggests a more menacing strangeness within that is increasing in strength. Unlike Keith and Hammad, whose internal strangers are largely a product of their own struggles with identity and self-awareness, Lianne's other within is transgenerational and her "memory lapses [are] steeped in family history" (*Falling* 187). Lianne's obsession with her father's disease has an overwhelming presence within her narrative of events. In particular, Lianne struggles to remember easy details from her everyday life. She has trouble recalling the names of her son Justin's friends, referring to them instead as "the Siblings" (*Falling* 16), and later asks Keith about the friends he lost, including "the one who was badly burned, whose name she'd forgotten" (*Falling* 104). Most significantly, after Justin and the Siblings come up with an Anglicized version of Osama Bin Laden – "Bill Lawton" – presumably to remember it more easily, Lianne cannot recall it on a number of occasions: "She tried to remember the name but could not do it... It was an easy name, this much she knew, but the easy names were the ones that killed her" (*Falling* 153). There is a doubled sense of "killing" in Lianne's phrasing, then, that refers both to Bin Laden as the architect of 9/11 destruction – Bill Lawton did, in fact, kill – and to the slow death caused by dementia that also connects to an easy name, her father "Jack", and a name that she may also one day fail to recall. Dementia, of course, and much like the Falling Man artist, is another kind of dying in public and, as witness to so much of this public dying, Lianne cannot help but fear meeting the same end – not only death, but a death occurring in full view.

Lianne's fear of repeating family history is not unfounded as she becomes increasingly anxious about forgetting those around her and becoming, quite literally, a stranger to herself. As she forgets simple details, she develops an almost ritualistic method of combatting the intrusion of an other who may or may not be lurking under the surface. In

her head, she recited pieces of poetry she cannot entirely remember (*Falling* 32) and counts down backwards “from one hundred by seven...[but] there were mishaps now and then” (*Falling* 187). Dementia is an other that Lianne has (or just as likely, has not) inherited; regardless, she is confronted by the reality that it is not her father’s disease anymore. Lianne has come to recognize the signs of impending Alzheimer’s and as this other invades, she fears not so much the forgetting of details but her loss of self and identity. It is not so much the moment of dying, then, that Lianne fears, but the loosening strands of her mind, of not being able to hold herself together and then relying too intimately on those around her to draw together those unraveling threads. As she describes, “[s]ometimes it scared her, the first signs of halting response, the losses and failings, the grim prefigurings that issued now and then from a mind beginning to slide away from the adhesive friction that makes an individual possible” (*Falling* 30). Indeed, while Alzheimer’s often manifests as an assault on physical and critical capabilities, most research on dementia suggests “that a loss of cognitive and linguistic abilities will result in a loss of *selfhood* and *identity*” (Hyden, Lindemann, and Brockmeier 3, my emphasis). Lianne’s terror then, is not so much in response to a biological threat levied against her mind or body; rather, it is a fear that her self and identity will be consumed from within and turn against themselves in a highly visible way. Even more, however, Lianne’s fears suggest that to live with others is also, terrifyingly, to die with them. It is a kind of death-in-community that is much different than the heroic and poignant narratives that circulated after 9/11, about co-workers dying together and strangers holding hands as they tumbled from the towers. Instead, dementia presents a dying in public that is entirely foreseen – a death she, and everyone around her, can see coming long before it strikes.

Yet Lianne’s attempts to counter these effects are perhaps premature and likely

owing to the Alzheimer's patients with which she surrounds herself. As a volunteer, Lianne hosts an Alzheimer's writing group where participants in varying stages of the disease come and share their lives, memories and challenges, through discussion and journaling sessions. While these meetings are held "strictly for morale" (*Falling* 29), Lianne holds them more for her own morale than those of her patients. What she fears most in herself, she observes in her group members who come each week with what their doctor describes as "diminishing returns" (*Falling* 60), a phrase that, yet again, conjures the destructive effects of organic shrapnel. "Diminished returns" also names, perhaps paradoxically, the risk of living with others – and the ever diminishing possibility of doing so ethically – and *Falling Man* raises questions about the ultimate viability of hospitality for, in its most ethical incarnation, hospitality opens itself not only to better relations between the living but quite possibly to death.

Reading "diminished returns" as the living impossibility of hospitality accounts, then, for the (often unnamed) frequency with which this figure permeates the text. Indeed, the "diminished returns" are not limited to the Alzheimer's patients, and the experiences of Lianne's group members seem to mimic those of other characters in the novel. This is particularly so in the case of Keith, whose slow disintegration and meager poker earnings parallel the mental degradation of the dementia group. Lianne's writing sessions reiterate and reinforce the different ways in which Martin, Keith, Hammad, and Lianne are each unrecognizable others to themselves. One of Lianne's patients, for example, struggles to put on his pants in the morning, not recognizing them as his own. Lianne comes to recognize "he was in a mind and body that were not his" (*Falling* 94). Such a statement calls up the out-of-body experiences of Keith following the attacks, not to mention the ways in which Hammad feels he is occupying a body that is not his own as he tries to

measure his convictions against his desires. Because of her family history, Lianne cannot help but see herself in these patients and “bearing her father’s mark, the potential toll of plaque and twisted filaments, [she] see[s] the crime of it, the loss of memory, personality and identity, the lapse into eventual protein stupor” (*Falling* 125). To be sure, her fear of the other within has historical precedent, but it is largely unsupported by Lianne’s *actual* memory loss. The dementia group remains significant, however, if only in the ways that it refers back to the other characters in the novel who seem to be experiencing the same thing as they all play host to an unwilled or uninvited condition, whether medically diagnosed or not.

The Alzheimer’s doctor’s gentle caution to Lianne, then, is both pertinent and telling. “Its theirs” he tells her, “don’t make it yours” (*Falling* 60), as Lianne comes to realize how much she needs the patients herself, “the living breath of the thing that killed her father” (*Falling* 61-62). Yet while the doctor’s comments are directed towards Lianne’s relationship with the Alzheimer’s patients, his warning “don’t make it yours” also refers to her father’s disease and Lianne’s anxious expectation about her own possible transgenerational dementia. Thus, as Lianne works to counter the effects of what she feels is the impending undoing of her self and identity, she is told she is “unremarkable” by her doctor, and “she love[s] the word” (*Falling* 206). Lianne’s approach to the possible other within is much different than her father’s, who “did not want to submit to the long course of senile dementia” (*Falling* 40). His response to the invader within was to kill himself using the gun he taught Lianne to hunt with as a teenager. The fear of the other proved too powerful for Jack and confronted with the possibility of forgetting too quickly, Lianne recalls, “my father shot himself so I would never have to face the day when he failed to know who I was” (*Falling* 130).

Jack's suicide is far from only background material and context for Lianne's own fears. While Jack "died by his own hand" (*Falling* 218), his suicide can also be read as a preventative measure, meant to immunize Jack against the impending ravages of Alzheimer's. To consider Jack's suicide as a metaphor for some of the larger operations of hospitality and the figure of the stranger at work in the novel, is to recognize the ways in which a singular and whole self is the antithesis of hospitality. To think the question of hospitality through a stranger that arrives violently, without warning and demands incorporation, yet does not wait for a response, is perhaps one of the most difficult challenges in ethics. How much more complex, then, is hospitality made when that stranger, still unexpected and still violent, is not entirely strange? Can we read Jack's suicide, as a kind of autoimmunitary process, an attempt to immunize the mind against its own failure? It is a prospect that warrants a deeper look at both autoimmunity and its implications, and can be read initially through the figure of America itself, as a compelling example of being undone by an other that is incorporated long before it identifies itself as other. This is not without support in DeLillo's novel as the implosion of America is hinted at, most clearly, through Martin: "America is going to become irrelevant," he tells Nina and Lianne. "Soon the day is coming when nobody has to think about America except for the danger it brings. It is losing the center. It becomes the center of its own shit. This is the only center it occupies" (*Falling* 191). Martin's words make a powerful statement about the trajectory of American decline and suggest that America is both victim and perpetrator of an erosion that is so irrevocably damaging precisely because it comes from within. It is a prospect explored in other examples of 9/11 fiction and one that begins with a critique of American exceptionalism, but ultimately signals a far more terrifying condition of living with others.

5.5 American Identity and Autoimmunity

In Moshin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, the narrator, Changez, comes to America from Pakistan to study and is hired by a prestigious firm that assesses the value of companies intended for takeover. Changez meets and falls in love with Erica, a beautiful and wealthy local who is working on a novel. Their relationship, however, is stymied by Erica's unhealthy fixation with her dead lover, Chris. Much like the name of Changez's firm – Underwood Sampson, which offers a not-so-veiled critique of American imperialism with its tell-tale initials – the similar treatment of Erica's name, a marsupial of America, begs unpacking. According to Peter Morey, "Erica is made symbolically to embody the whole fate of her home nation after September 11" (Morey 140). It is significant then, and perhaps not surprising given Changez's narrative tone, that rather than live in the "real world", Erica is admitted to a facility "where people could live in their minds without feeling bad about it" (Hamid 133). Unable to cope in a world that, since the death of Chris, has been irrevocably changed, Erica begins wandering off until one day she does not return. When Changez goes to visit, a nurse tells him "her clothes had been found on a rocky bluff overlooking the Hudson, neatly folded in a pile" (Hamid 163). Reading Erica's suicide as a metaphor for the decline of America itself is perhaps a simple connection but deeper layers unfold when read in the context of *Falling Man* and the possibility of hosting the other within. Erica's other, of course, is incorporated as a figure of melancholia and while she "longs for her adolescence" (Hamid 113) before any real awareness of mortality set in, the suggestion behind Changez's tale is that America has been too buried in its own nostalgia to see a new world emerging. For Elizabeth Anker, "Hamid's metaphor rebukes Erica-America's self-involved desires for a lethal combination of amnesic denial and numbing nostalgia that verges on suicidal" (Anker 469). Her suicide, then, is also America's and

represents a failure to live with the other, whether inside or outside its borders.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist raises a number of questions about the implications of hosting the other within and, by extension, what it might mean to be embedded – *to the point of death* – by an otherness that cannot be attributed to an external or peripheral alterity. Hamid’s novel uses the metaphor of an (Am)Erica in decline to make an extraordinarily provocative suggestion, not simply that America is unable to deal with the transforming realities of the world around it but that it is effectively dying by its own hand. As complement to this figure of suicide, then, *Falling Man* circles around the notion of an other within with even more ferocity and builds a kind of critical momentum. If we read the incidences of suicide in DeLillo’s text the same way they can be read in Hamid’s, a number of important conclusions arise regarding America’s openness to an other amid misallocations of destructive alterity. For Kauffman, moments such as Nina’s debates with Martin “highlight the contradictions between America's self-image and its image in the eyes of the world” (362). Moreover, Kauffman points to the figure of Alzheimer’s in the text as a “metaphor for the post-9/11 condition” (368). To be sure, America is facing a crisis of both identity and amnesia but what is the place of the other in this crisis? While *Falling Man* is very much concerned with the larger issues at stake in the global War on Terror; it demands that these issues are read as the result of implosion – as diminished returns, albeit occasioned by destruction from an outside source, a turn that re-situates the source of terror as originating from within rather than the result of a spectacular suicide. At the same time, suicidal destruction simultaneously exposes the consequences of living with others that are not so easily absorbed into the body of the self that they, too, die with the death of their host. Hence, the figure of organic shrapnel is only the beginning of what hosting the other might mean in the aftermath of trauma and, I suggest, is placed in the text

precisely to be disavowed quickly in order to raise important questions about what it might mean to have an other inside, whether it is a newly embedded one or one already waiting below the surface.

Is it possible, then, that *Falling Man* is not at all about the domestication of trauma and the “retreat inward” but, rather, a complex metaphor for the ways in which the other does not simply *arrive* – though violently and without warning – but, rather, returns in ways that only the aftermath of a traumatic event may make possible and in ways that suggest that questions about living with others – violent, viral, or virtuous – are more important than ever? The image of organic shrapnel, at first read, seems to be disavowed too quickly to provide any meaningful commentary about the ways in which we engage or disengage in the lives of others. Yet the other is everywhere in *Falling Man* – in the bits of flesh extracted from Keith but also in his splintered selves, and in the others within Martin, Hammad, and Lianne that illustrate conflicted identity and the fear of forgetting that signal the loss of self. While the critics are not kind to *Falling Man* – it is “inadequate” (Kakutani), “evades trauma” (Gray, qtd. in Duvall and Marzec 383) and relies on “familiar structures” (Gray, *After* 30) – its engagement with questions of the stranger and learning to live with others shift the conversation away from such evaluative assessments of what a 9/11 novel “should do” and into new terrain that, to be sure, offers commentary on larger War on Terror politics in ways that demand the necessity of thinking the political through a more intimate ethical framework. Conte, at least, hints at this possibility: “Forcibly, physically penetrated by the body of his attacker, Neudecker—and the American psyche of which he is a symbolic case—bears in body and mind the internalized scars of this violation” (567). Conte rightfully reads Keith as a metaphor for the larger operations of identity within America, but the symbol runs deeper in terms of what this violation means

for the work of hospitality and the recognition of an other who scars from within. Gray, similarly, recognizes this struggle within America, though he does not see its resonance within *Falling Man*. He claims America “is a superpower that seems haunted by fear—fear, among other things, of its own possible impotence and potential decline” (Gray, “Open” 129). What Gray describes is precisely what *Falling Man* references in both the parallel decline of Keith’s masculinity and the threat of imploding or disintegrating from the inside-out. Many critics suggest DeLillo is commenting on the erosion of American hegemony due to its own myopia and corporate greed, a common theme in many of DeLillo’s novels. In *Falling Man*, this perspective is represented in Martin who, asks, somewhat rhetorically, “[w]eren’t the towers built as fantasies of wealth and power that would one day become fantasies of destruction? You build a thing like that so you can see it come down” (*Falling* 116). Martin’s statement here, however, is more than just a critique of American exceptionalism and even more than the suggestion that America is to blame for its own loss of power. Martin also frames the destruction of the towers as something America *wanted*, a fascinating proposition considering the ways in which the novel also deals with the figure of suicide.

It is within this ever-evolving context of hosting the other, then, that *Falling Man* does precisely what its critics argue it cannot: it dives inward toward the domestic, to be sure, but further inward still and in such a way that everything on the surface is left exposed. In its revelation of the others within Martin, Keith, Hammad, and Lianne, *Falling Man* draws attention to the greatest fear among those who anticipate another attack; namely, that the other is already within and will attack, not with force as velocity, as organic shrapnel does, but with quiet precision. Organic shrapnel, thus, is not only about literal flesh being embedded and figurative hospitality; it is also an image of parasitic,

“inside-out” destruction – the body potentially turning against itself from within. Organic shrapnel is clearly more than a biological condition, yet as the stranger points us toward a more metaphorical condition of being undone by an other, organic shrapnel refers us usefully back to biology. W.J.T. Mitchell notes the utility of biological metaphors in Derrida’s reflections on autoimmunity, a discussion that focuses “on the totality of the organism, namely, the immune system” (“Picturing” 915). If we think of America as an organism, complete with an immune system, then the threat of the other within comes to have both biological and theoretical implications as it is destroyed from inside by the very thing it deploys agents to attack elsewhere. As Mitchell describes, “[t]he whole theory of the immune system, and the discipline of immunology, is riddled with images drawn from the sociopolitical sphere-of invaders and defenders, hosts and parasites, natives and aliens, and of borders and identities that must be maintained” (“Picturing” 917). What this turn back to biology reveals is that all of the different elements of shrapnel in *Falling Man* – and all of the splintered selves that, to be sure, are often overshadowed by the spectacle of the event – circulate around the notion of being invaded from within. Moreover, the turn to biology calls up a very particular image of immunity – that is, an *autoimmunity*, that acts against instinct and self-protection.

5.6 *Falling Man* and Autoimmunity: Hospitality Gone Viral

An autoimmunitary process, Derrida reminds us, is “that strange behavior where a living being, in quasi-*suicidal* fashion, ‘itself’ works to destroy its own protection, to immunize itself *against* its ‘own’ immunity” (qtd. in Borradori 94). Organic shrapnel can be thought of as a kind of destruction that relies on autoimmunity; the body turns against its self-preserving instincts and welcomes the other, in a reverse and hostile process, but one

that has provocative implications for hospitality both in the way it re-confers material dimensions upon hospitality and in the way it disrupts the expected response to the abject. Indeed, in the context of 9/11, Derrida points to the American-trained pilot/hijackers, American technology, and the planes that took off from American airports as the first moment of autoimmunity – the realization that the threat has come from inside. He explains: “these hijackers incorporate, so to speak, two suicides into one: their own (and we will remain forever defenseless in the face of a suicidal, autoimmunitary aggression) ...but also in the suicide of those who welcomed, armed, and trained them” (qtd. in Borradori 95). Derrida’s point finds much resonance with DeLillo’s essay in which he cites the difference between “us” and “them” in that while “we are rich, privileged and strong...they are willing to die. This is the edge they have” (“In the Ruins”). This is a recognition that finds its way in to DeLillo’s novel as well, although spoken this time from the perspective of the hijackers – “We are willing to die, they are not” (*Falling* 178). Yet the hijackers also have an edge in the sense that they are more than themselves, forever linking their deaths with the deaths of those who armed them. *Falling Man* also engages with aspects of autoimmunity in other ways, including the suicide of Jack – who effectively eliminates the invader inside of him to prevent it from killing him, but in that process destroys his own chances of fighting the disease. Indeed, the novel sustains an ongoing preoccupation with notions of disease in general. Dementia is certainly the most prominent, but many of the characters are ailing in some way; Nina exhibits a slow but willing physical decline and Keith clearly suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Even the *Falling Man* artist succumbs, not to one of his stunts, but to heart disease and is given a lengthy obituary⁶⁷ at

⁶⁷ David Janiak’s obituary is significant in the sense that it offers a fairly comprehensive portrait, in

the end of the novel under his real name, David Janiak. That DeLillo chooses heart disease and not a performance gone awry suggests there is something more to the novel's emphasis on disease and illness. In each of these cases, the otherness of illness seeps in when the body's immunity fails.

Given the novel's insistence on a discourse of infirmity, then, it is no surprise that when there is speculation around the possible motivations for terrorism, it is positioned as a parasitic attack. The debates between Nina, Martin, and Lianne reveal that viral metaphors are freely employed regardless of what position one takes on terrorism; Islamic Fundamentalism and Western excess are both described using words such as "virus" (*Falling* 113) and "disease" (*Falling* 46) and both reference a fear that the condition will spread. Viral metaphors have also been readily applied in popular culture and political commentary. In particular, diseases that multiply within the body and attack the body's internal defense systems, rendering them autoimmune, often become ready-made symbols for terrorist behavior. As Mitchell describes, diseases like cancer have "an interesting relation to autoimmunity, since it is about the body's inability to recognize a destructive cell structure as alien; the cancer cells are the body's own cells-their DNA lineage is indistinguishable from the host body. So the immune system sleeps through the attack by the body's own cells" ("Picturing" 918). This is, of course, precisely the condition of autoimmunity in America – a body that can no longer immunize itself against destruction from within. For Mitchell, "[t]he limits, borders, boundaries of the body (politic), its relations of inside/outside, friend/enemy, native/alien are exactly what is in question in the

comparison to the real "falling man" of 9/11 who remains officially unidentified. It is a curious choice for DeLillo, who does not write any of other 9/11 victim, including Keith's best friend, Rumsey, with as much life and detail. The falling man captured by Richard Drew has no obituary in the conventional sense and DeLillo is perhaps, in a sense, eulogizing both him and David Janiak simultaneously.

metaphor of the immune system” (“Picturing” 916). In the case of terrorism – indeed, operating at the *cellular* level in the form of undetectable “sleeper cells” – the outsiders/aliens/enemies develop their destructive powers while already *inside* the body.

In *Falling Man*, hospitality itself is viral; it multiplies and reproduces, turns people into hosts but also hostages, and all the while beneath the surface, undetected, until perhaps the distraction of the event itself can be put aside momentarily to discover that all of these bits of shrapnel connect in meaningful ways. Taking the physical, psychic, and viral breakdowns of all characters into account, it would seem that the narratives of *Falling Man* do not simply intersect at various plot points; they merge *critically* at the juncture of strangeness, autoimmunity and disease. One of the outcomes of this emphasis on the virus is, to be sure, a sustained and sophisticated extended metaphor for the ways in which America has and is imploding, yet there is far more at stake in considering what it might mean to live with others in ways that are not immune nor indifferent to alterity. *Falling Man* suggests that not only has immunity to the other failed but – and here lies *Falling Man*’s most significant contribution to hospitality – it *must* fail. *Falling Man* may not be an adequate representation of trauma and/or otherness – if such a thing might ever exist; what the novel does propose, however, is an engagement with hospitality through the figure of *the stranger within* that, when read in the context of a violent collision (or a viral attack), has significant implications for how we learn to engage in the lives of others, and with the others in our own. Moreover, the novel exposes these conditions of being with others as *unchosen* – that is, hospitality is *not* an ethics of freedom but, rather, relentlessly pursues the value of a world of being together, even if that pursuit is bleak, terrifying, or brings more harm than good.

The prospect reminds us that hospitality has never been about invitation – seeking out the guests who only come to do good. On the contrary, it is about a hospitality to those or that which may arrive precisely to do us harm or, more chillingly, may come disguised as a welcome guest and wreak destruction once arrived. Furthermore, it is also a hospitality that challenges the temporality of arriving itself, as autoimmunity disturbs the trajectory of a guest appearing to confront a host who is already at home. Instead, much like Keith’s strangeness to himself is confronted but not created on the occasion of 9/11, an autoimmunitary process describes the failure of immunity *before* it is actually threatened. Virology, then – the drive to study, understand, and remedy a virus – provides an apt metaphor for the conditional welcome of strangers by actually immunizing *against* hospitality and reminds us, once more, that hospitality is an ethics of visitation rather than invitation. Derrida reiterates: “The visit might actually be very dangerous, and we must not ignore this fact, but would a hospitality protected by an immune system against the wholly other, be true hospitality? Though it is ultimately true that suspending or suppressing the immunity that protects me from the other might be nothing short of life-threatening” (Derrida, qtd. in Borradori 129). Hospitality, in other words, relies on autoimmunity; it demands, in some cases, that it be exercised in the actual suicide of the host. *Falling Man* raises the prospect of this in its early invocation of organic shrapnel but goes beyond that initial metaphor to signal the possibility of being *already* embedded by a destructive and suicidal other within.

The discourse of infirmity – be it organic shrapnel, dementia, viral attack, or suicide – again proves so instructive as it presents hospitality as a devastating yet ultimately unavoidable condition of social life. Moreover, viral or biological threats also pose significant challenges to the ability of the host body or host nation to protect itself against

an attack that may likely come from within. In this way, the figures of immunity and its lack that *Falling Man* employs are indicative of a wider discourse surrounding not only the attacks themselves but an overwhelming preoccupation with a way of being in the world that is never free of the demands of others, nor free of the pathogens those others (and we ourselves) carry. Faced with and following the very real possibility of incorporating human remains through the dust surrounding Ground Zero, virology became infinitely more important after 9/11 as citizens and governments sought to preserve their own immunity against potential biological threats. Biological warfare is, in many ways, an unimaginable terror – the terror of a terror to come – yet one that is, potentially, already chipping away at whatever immunity remains. Derrida’s statement about this future is compelling: “We are talking about a trauma, and thus an event, whose temporality proceeds neither from the now that is present nor from the present that is past but from an im-presentable to come (*à venir*). A weapon wounds and leaves forever open an unconscious scar; but this weapon is terrifying because it comes from the to-come, from the future, a future so radically to come that it resists even the grammar of the future anterior” (Derrida, qtd. in Borradori 97). Derrida speaks to the future of trauma but in so doing, points towards to the future of hospitality or, more radically, a hospitality *to* the future, even if that future might bring violence. Even if it might bring death.

Chapter 6 Conclusion: Hospitality and *The Gates*

Walking through New York's Central Park in February 2005, visitors entering from all sides were confronted by a vast sea of saffron-colored gates running through the entire rectangular respite that is carved into the center of Manhattan. Wide enough to span the pedestrian pathway and 16 feet tall – to enable passersby to walk underneath – each steel frame held a panel of bright fabric that was light enough to move in the breeze yet firmly affixed to the crossbar above it (“Central Park’s”). The installation opened on February 12, 2005, as mayor Michael Bloomberg “released” the first rolled-up fabric panel from its frame, allowing visitors to wander through the 7,503 gates that were erected at 12-foot intervals and stretched through 37 kilometers of pedestrian pathway (*The Gates*). Created by local artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude known for their large-scale international works, *The Gates* was an installation years in the making. Originally conceived in 1979, the proposal for the installation was developed and rejected a number of times before finally being approved when Bloomberg took office in 2003. According to Bloomberg, *The Gates* would “transform Central Park and challenge viewers to revisit their preconceptions of public art and urban parks” (“Press Kit”). For a little over two weeks, visitors to the park used the pathways as usual, but under a “golden ceiling” (*The Gates*). The installation was a surprise to many residents who had little choice but to walk through the elaborate canopy, yet at the same time as they presented a new way of experiencing the park, they also highlighted the figure of the gate itself, and the particular gates that park users have been walking through for over a hundred years. *The Gates*, of course calls to mind the original gates of Central Park, the nineteen pedestrian entrances, whose names were finally etched into stone in 1999.

Similarly, *The Gates* also draws our attention back hospitality in inevitable ways. Indeed, the words used by Christo and Jeanne-Claude to describe their work position *The Gates* as much more than an aesthetic public art piece or work of environmental activism. The temporary nature of the project, in the artists' words, "endow[s] the works of art with a feeling of urgency to be seen, and the love and tenderness brought by the fact that they will not last" ("Press Kit"). The choice of words – and particularly the emphasis on love – is fascinating, especially in the context of a figure that so often works to close-off or contain. To be sure, the saffron-colored gates *are* imposing. They are unavoidable and, in a sense, force passersby through a very particular frame over and over again. Yet they can be walked around or through in any direction, imbuing more agency into a figure that is often thought of as limiting. The fabric gives them a sense of movement not associated with traditional gates that swing open and shut on a hinge and are always tethered to the wall or fence that holds them in place. As a piece of public art, *The Gates* speaks to a number of complex figures of hospitality that have been raised by this dissertation and by the different texts produced in the aftermath of terrorist attack. The installation was located, to begin, in Central Park, another iconic New York City landmark that, much like the 9/11 museum, reaffirms the centrality of place and place-based identity in thinking the question of hospitality after 9/11. Moreover, it raises important questions about a hospitality that is unwilled and unbidden, recalling the intimate confrontation with otherness that preoccupies *Zero Dark Thirty*. Its parallels to street art are also clear, as *The Gates* propels thinking about hospitality out of the metaphor of the home and into urban space where the environment itself provides a ready, uncontained, and unregulated canvas. Finally, the structure of the gates themselves, as commanding but readily passable – more akin to windows than walls – calls up some of the most provocative realizations in *Falling Man* –

that the body is permeable and that no borders, of self, nation, or physical space, are resolutely impenetrable. Ultimately, then, *The Gates* insists on the promise of art for thinking through some of the most pressing philosophical challenges of our time and echoes some of the most complex operations of a hospitality always arriving, testing its limits, and challenging its own possibility.

Does contemporary art and culture, however, bring us any closer to understanding what hospitality might be? Does it give us an example of a purely hospitable act? We are fairly certain of what hospitality is not, and Immanuel Kant's ideas are worth revisiting here. Kant reminds us that hospitality is a question of right and not of philanthropy, "the right the right of an alien not to be treated as an enemy upon his arrival in another's country...*as long as he behaves peaceably*" (15, emphasis added). Kant elaborates that the right to reside permanently may be *requested* while the right to visit "belongs to all men by virtue of their common ownership of the earth's surface...[they] must, finally, tolerate living in close proximity" (Kant 15-16). Kant's Third Definitive Article is crucial in its framing of peace as the universal obligation of *all* citizens yet, as many since have pointed out, it immediately establishes not one, but *three* conditions for hospitality: the peaceable behavior of the guest, a right only to *request* residence, and the establishment of tolerance as a basis for hospitable relations. Derrida challenges Kant on all three counts. Tolerance, he reminds us, is the very opposite of hospitality, even if it may sometimes be exercised in hospitality's name. On the contrary,

pure and unconditional hospitality does not consist in such an *invitation* ('I invite you, I welcome you into *my home*, on the condition that you adapt to the laws and norms of my territory, according to my language, tradition, memory, and so on').

Pure and unconditional hospitality, hospitality *itself*, opens or is in advance open to

someone who is neither expected nor invited, to whomever arrives as an absolutely *foreign* visitor, as a new *arrival*, non-identifiable and unforeseeable, in short, wholly other. (Derrida, qtd. In Borradori 17)

Taking the complexities raised by Derrida into account – complexities that appear over and over again in the cultural texts produced after 9/11 – what are the possibilities of such an ethics now and moving forward, when many argue that the suspicion against foreign guests and others of all kinds has intensified? Indeed, as David Simpson notes in his study on romanticism and the figure of the stranger, “[e]ven if one accepts the impossibility of an absolute, unconditional hospitality, it seems clear that the pendulum has swung very far in the other direction, with juridical and informal restrictions widely and radically applied in the name of homeland security” (Simpson, *Romanticism* 247). The archive of cultural texts produced in the aftermath of 9/11 surely alerts us to the conditions imposed on would-be guests as, more often than not, this cultural production highlights rather than mediates the increased frequency with which racial profiling, security regimes, and a culture of fear have come to dominate the political and social landscape. Yet at the same time, these texts remind us that the figure of the stranger is infinitely more complex than these dominant discourses of security allow and, at times, more complex than the texts themselves allow. As Simpson points out in the context of romanticism, in its attentions to all kinds of strangers, [romanticism] often shows the limits of hospitality, sometimes in the form of outright violence and rejection, sometimes through selective domestication by way of class or creed” (*Romanticism* 247). Likewise, the museums, films, art, and literature created after 9/11 seem to often reflect the failure of hospitality more than its possibilities. We see this in the museum, for example, which does not fully welcome the work of the specter in its displays, or in the abject failure of ethics that leads to racialized and gendered torture in

Zero Dark Thirty. We see it in the art that covers London's East End, a visual testament to the breakdown of political hospitality and multiculturalism in the UK, and in the immediate disavowal of organic shrapnel in *Falling Man* and, with it, the disavowal of the significance of living with others.

At the same time, however, these texts present us with figures of a less visible but perhaps more promising hospitality in the sense that they are figures uncontained by what we might call a preferred reading of the text. These are figures that, while they call up new ways of thinking hospitality in a time of terror, often operate against the intentions of their creators, against dominant readings, and even against the spaces that play host to their distribution. They are the ghosts that haunt the museum and memorial, the intimate violence and figures of redaction in *Zero Dark Thirty*, the disruption of the home as a primary locus of ethical relations in the works of street artists, and the recognition of an other in *Falling Man* that does not come knocking from outside but, rather, is already at home within us. These texts are vital to what some might call a cosmopolitan pedagogy: "The representation of alternative human lives in fictional form (tragedy, film, the novel) is proposed as the key resource in a revitalized humanities education and able, at least potentially, to keep us from falling into the worst failures of imagination, those suppressing the dignity and vulnerability of others" (9/11 126). Simpson questions this expectation, moreover, asking "[d]oes the experience of literature inevitably or even plausibly lead us to a compassionate response to the suffering of others?" (9/11 126). Indeed, reading about "alternative human lives" can also work *against* compassionate response. It can also be *violent*, leading to a simulation of affect of expressions of caring exhausted by fiction and thus unable to transform the lives of those represented by such socially concerned art – a kind of interpretive fatigue. What does this mean, then, for the text that arrives as other?

Undoubtedly, when we read literature, or experience any cultural form for that matter, we do not know what we will get. While they appear as products of a number of different processes – authorial, cultural, material, and technological – they do not arrive with a warning attached. And, indeed, despite the celebration of Barthes’ “death of the author” thesis in literary scholarship, what we have learned from hospitality is that even ghosts have their demands – demands that are perhaps more alarming because they often go unspoken and unrecognized. The contexts that govern the production, circulation, and reception of texts, in other words, certainly aid in our interpretation but cannot account for all of the strangeness within that defies expectation and the desire for familiarity. Thus the remarkable function of the cultural texts produced after 9/11 is not to provide a blueprint for hospitable relations but, rather, to deliver new ways of approaching this strangeness. They provide an opening, give us a language and a frame of reference in order to apprehend, question and re-think hospitality, but not to solve it.

In this way, these texts reveal themselves to have *everything* to do with hospitality and provide a useful counterpoint to dominant political rhetoric that is also concerned with hospitality but a hospitality that is understood through the prism of security rather than ethics. As Peter Melville suggests, “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” (178, emphasis added). Not only does this explain the general preoccupation with strangers in popular and political culture; it also accounts for the ways in which the question of the stranger has been used, not as an opening to thinking about ethics after trauma, but as justification for the inhospitable practices towards cultural others. Melville elaborates, “9/11 triggered not only an outpouring of compassion and solidarity...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” (178). What Melville suggests is that political life became more concerned than ever with the figure of the stranger after 9/11 but particularly with a figure that is constructed as strange precisely to know it better and contain it within a specific framework of understanding. This process, of course, is not new and is reminiscent of eighteenth-century discourses of Orientalism in which the Western world “articulates the Orient...[an articulation] not of a puppet master but of a genuine creator, whose life-giving power represents, animates, constitutes the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries” (Said 57). Not only does Edward Said’s recognition suggest that the stranger is *made strange* by transforming the unknown guest in to a known foreigner; it also reveals Orientalism itself to be intimately concerned with hospitality. In this way, we must think of hospitality as having both a future *and* a history, in such a way that we begin to recognize that hospitality is not confined to any era, text or branch of philosophy. It is not one aspect of ethics, Derrida reminds us; ethics *is* hospitality (*On Cosmopolitanism* 17). Simpson’s question on the genealogy of death is particularly useful here as well as he thinks beyond the event of 9/11 or, rather, *before* it and asks “has there ever been a time that was not the time of death?” (*9/11* 121). Indeed, has there ever been a time that was not the time of hospitality? If theory, as Simpson suggests, “began life as a foreign body” (*9/11* 123), then hospitality, as an ethics concerned with what is foreign, has surely existed as long as theory has. Indeed, as long as there has been a foreigner there has been some measure of hospitality.

Why now then? If hospitality is no less and no more impossible than it was before 9/11 then what is it about the event and its aftermath that make hospitality worth revisiting? How has it changed? I want to suggest that while the cultural texts explored here do not

offer answers or examples regarding the presence of a pure and unconditional hospitality, they are demonstrative of the momentum of the event of 9/11 that is, at once, political *and* philosophical. The need for hospitality rises with its lack and if there was ever a time to revisit such an ethics in earnest, it is now, in this era of increasing surveillance, suspicion of foreigners, and closed borders in political life. Also timely are the turns in critical theory towards the specter and back to psychoanalysis that reveal a preoccupation with hospitality across social, political, cultural and critical life. Hospitality remains, to be sure, a hospitality to come (*a venir*) but perhaps the most surprising and unexpected figures of strangeness that arrive in the museums, films, art and literature of 9/11 offer up possibilities beyond the impossible and remind us of the necessity of holding this future intact. Redfield reads a similar responsiveness – even idealism – toward the future in Kant’s works, suggesting that, in this case, peace, as an impossible figure, “remains constitutively exposed to a failure it cannot accept” (95). Kant’s work may be limited in its conditional treatment of hospitality, and the hospitality he describes is, to be sure, more political than it is pure, at least insofar as a pure Law of hospitality – as Derrida’s conceptualizes it – is or is not possible. Yet what Kant offers is an *undeterred* mapping of peaceful relations among states, despite the piling evidence to the contrary that characterized the end of his century, and now defines the beginning of ours. Redfield notes, “Kant’s work commits itself to the impossible so as to call on us to take up the pragmatic, everyday work of being cosmopolitan citizens” (95) and, as David L. Clark puts it, Kant proceeds “*as if* peace were possible” (qtd. in Redfield 95). It makes sense, then, that the cultural texts produced in the aftermath of 9/11 might point us toward a hospitality – that has always been coming – with not new but, rather, *re*-newed vigor and momentum.

Upon completion of *The Gates*, Christo and Jeanne-Claude described their work in

Central Park as “a golden river appearing and disappearing through the bare branches of the trees” (*The Gates*). What is this constant appearing and disappearing if not the presence of the stranger? Arriving and departing at leisure, forwards and backwards in time, in and out and through, the stranger arrives through gates that are never closed, a position we can put ourselves in as well. Walking through the brightly coloured gates in Central Park, we are all just passing through, all arriving; every body to cross under those gates is a body that is strange and, in its passage, challenges the possibilities of hospitality over and over again. In this sense, while Stranger’s Gate designates one particular entrance to Central Park, every gate – whether erected in stone or fabric, around the perimeter of the park or stretched throughout – is a gate through which one enters as a stranger. They are all, perhaps, “strangers’ gates.” Describing his own visit to the exhibit, visual theorist W.J.T Mitchell was, at first, “underwhelmed” – as were many – by the installation’s design: “What could [the gates] possibly be saying to us that the park itself had not already said?” (“Christo’s” 592). Indeed, the park already had gates, yet they were gates that – by design and over time – had faded into the landscape of the park. However, not only did *The Gates* draw attention to the installation itself; the project also highlighted all of the gates at the park’s entrances that have gone largely unnoticed on a daily basis. The experience of *The Gates* proved eventually transformative for Mitchell, with his initial observations giving way to the resonance of their “elusiveness and vagueness” (Mitchell, “Christo’s” 593), descriptors that should not be misread as a characterization of invisibility. On the contrary, “vague” and “elusive” seems to suggest that the project took on – or perhaps took over – dimensions beyond its immediate design, incorporating pathways, passersby, and over a hundred years of park history into an installation that gestures exceedingly beyond its own immediate frame. Erika Doss’s reflection – a testament to visual and spatial disorientation – adopts a

similar rhetoric of indefinite space. She recalls: “*The Gates* did not dominate the park but radiated within it; while thousands of fluttering saffron sculptures lined the park’s pathways, there was no particular start or finish to their design, such that visitors meandered around Central Park for hours” (E. Doss 183). We might think of hospitality in this way, never dominant, but radiating from underneath a surface that often disorients, perhaps underwhelms, or maybe even alarms. The culture produced after 9/11 reminds us that hospitality is still to come, but perhaps closer than ever, for while the boundaries may be undefined, the gates are all opened to its arrival. Walking, then, through those bright gates that refuse to blend into the landscape, we press on. We are meant to meander through this maze of being and belonging, this strange terrain which has no pattern. We know not what is around the next corner or through the next gate. Hospitality may be there, a hospitality *a venir* (to come), perhaps even *à venir* – “coming soon” – but surely is it *avenir* – “the future”.

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