

To Dream Europe

Derrida, Europe and Hospitality¹

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Abstract

At his last conference in France, on 8 June 2004, in Strasbourg, under the title “Le souverain bien – ou l’Europe en mal de souveraineté”, Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), always very concerned about Europe and the future of Europe, dared to admit that he dreamed of “a Europe whose universal hospitality and new laws of hospitality or the right of asylum would make it the Noah’s Ark of the 21st century”. Through the question of *unconditional hospitality* – which, as I try to point out, emphasizes the singularity of Deconstruction as a *philosophical idiom* and through which Derrida re-thinks, with a very different amplitude and justice, the “universal hospitality” of Kantian inspiration – it is the silhouette of hope and of responsibility of Europe, shaped by this dream of Derrida, that I try to sketch here.

Keywords

Deconstruction, Derrida, Europe, Hospitality, Hope, Other, Stranger

1. The Derridian dream of a Europe as a *Noah’s Ark* of the “future”

*“Jamais n’aura été plus urgent
une autre pensée de l’Europe.”*

J. Derrida, *Fichus*, p. 51.

At the time of his last conference in France, on June 8, 2004, in Strasbourg, under the title of “Le souverain bien – ou l’Europe en mal de souveraineté”, Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), always very concerned with Europe and with the “future” [*avenir*] of Europe³, dared to admit

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³ Cf. Derrida, J., “Une Europe de l’espoir” in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Nov 2004, p. 3.

that, though without the slightest Eurocentrism or identitarianism,⁴ he dreamed “of a Europe, whose universal hospitality and new laws of hospitality, or of the right of asylum, would make it the *Noah’s Ark* of the 21st century”⁵ – *Noah’s Ark* [*Tevat Noah*] symbolizing, from the Bible (*Gen.* 6-9), as it is well known, the *covenant*, that is, the *alliance* between Elohim, Noah and “*every living being in all flesh*” (*Gen.* 9, 15–16)⁶. I italicize the *alliance* with “*every living being in all flesh*” in order to emphasize at this point the very uniqueness of Derrida’s Deconstruction, as a *philosophical idiom*; in its deconstruction, that is, in its hyper-critical re-thinking of the *carno-phallo-logo-centrism*⁷ of Western civilization and, therefore, in his appeal for an *unconditional* respect for life – in his appeal for an *unconditionally* respectful and compassionate responsibility towards the life of “*every living being*”.

In fact, this *alliance* – let us already underline it too – should be *unconditionally* responsible and compassionate towards the life of “*all living beings*” – and not only towards the life of the living human as, in general, the (diverse) humanisms ask for – as, pleading the urgency of undertaking a *war for mercy*⁸ – which happens to be also a war for human *dignitas!* – Derrida claims and proclaims almost everywhere in his work.

As a *philosophical idiom*, Derridian Deconstruction is, let us notice and emphasize it already, a *thought* bearing the *promise of new Lights*⁹ for the “future”, coming not only of *another* Europe, of *another* figure of Europe, but also, and more liminally, of *another civilization* – yes, nothing more, nothing less, for the *coming of another civilization* because, as Jean-Luc Nancy also dared to proclaim,

We need a revolution, not politics, but of the politics, or in relation to it.
*We simply need (!) another ‘civilization’*¹⁰ [My italics].

In this sense, how do we understand this Derridian *dream of Europe as Noah’s Ark*? What would its silhouette be? In what sense does the Derridian dream of a certain Europe imply the dream of an absolutely other thought and, *ipso facto*, of an absolutely

⁴ In Derrida, all identity is thought of in terms of *differance* to oneself – that is to say as *an infinite experience of non-identity to oneself*; Derridian Deconstruction is a deconstruction of the *one*, of the *proper* or of the sovereign identity – of the *uni-identi-ty* or of the *uni-totali-ty*.

⁵ Derrida, J., “Le souverain bien – ou l’Europe en mal de souveraineté” in *Derrida Politique in Cités*, 30 (2007), p. 113.

⁶ *The Bible* in the Chouraqui translation (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1989).

⁷ Cf. Derrida, J., “‘Il faut bien manger’ ou le calcul du sujet” in *Points de Suspension* (Paris: Galilée, 1992) 294 ss.

⁸ “This is a war about pity” [“C’est une guerre au sujet de la pitié.”], Derrida, J., *The animal that therefore I am*, ed. M.-L. Mallet (Paris: Galilée, 2006), 50.

⁹ Cf. Derrida, J., *Voyous* (Paris: Galilée, 2003) 197; *Papier Machine* (Paris: Galilée, 2001) 330; *Le droit à la philosophie du point de vue cosmopolitique* (Paris: Unesco/ Verdier) 1997.

¹⁰ Nancy, Jean-Luc, *Politique et au-delà* (Paris: Galilée, 2011) 36.

other civilization? A civilization at every moment attentive to its insurmountable eve and dictated and magnetized by the *unconditionality* of hospitality and of responsibility towards the precious *dignitas* of life? And what would be the role, the responsibility of intellectuals, mainly philosophers, jurists, and economists, in the drawing of this silhouette? In their contribution to the implementation of such a dream?

And what would the role of *hospitality* be in the implementation of the design of such a silhouette? What would be the role of hospitality, in its unconditional and hyperbolic register, in preserving and performing a certain ideal of humanization and civilization? As well as to reveal the importance and the political relevance of the singularity of the European ideal of civilization? In short, how can such a *hospitality* be made capable of responding to the unprecedented situations, tragedies, and injunctions¹¹ that plague Europe today and endanger its old civilizational ideal?

And moreover: what does this Derridian dream tell us about Deconstruction itself? What does it say about the very *singularity* of Deconstruction as a *philosophical thought idiom* in the context not only of contemporary philosophy but also of the history of philosophy itself? And not only in the context of the history of philosophy, but also in the context of the history and memory of Europe, of which Emmanuel Levinas said that it was Athens and Jerusalem, that is to say Greece and the Bible.¹²

In the memory of Derrida's speech, according to which, above the earth, everything is nothing but a *translation of a translation of the untranslatable*, is already implying not only that Europe and the memory of Europe are, in themselves, merely "*plus d'une*"¹³, that is to say that diversity, plurality and, above all, heterogeneity are indeed its configuration, but, in addition to that, it is also implying that *plus d'une* [more than one] is also its provenance – mono-genealogy being always a mystification¹⁴. A terrible mystification. Mono-genealogy which is always at the origin of any supposed *single* or pure or *proper identity (unidentity)* and therefore at the very origin of the phantasms of (cratic) sovereignty (that is, one and indivisible).

Let us then now pay attention to this nourishing eve of Europe, in the eyes of Jacques Derrida, susceptible to making it an exemplary focus for the irradiation of a very new thought (a thought of *meta-onto-logical* and *meta-anthro-ptheo-logical*

¹¹ Cf. Derrida, J., *Cosmopolites de tous les pays, encore un effort!* (Paris: Galilée, 1997) 15.

¹² Levinas, E., "La Bible et les Grecs" in *À l'heure des Nations* (Paris: Minuit, 1988) 155.

¹³ Cf. Derrida, J., "Lettre à l'Europe" was first published, under the title of "Double Memoire", in the review *Les Inrockuptibles / Festival d'Avignon*, having been subsequently edited by Nicolas Truong in the book entitled *Le Théâtre des Idées* (Paris: Flammarion, 2008) 15–17. Annotated and translated into Portuguese by Fernanda Bernardo under the title of *Carta à Europa*. "Dupla memória", this Letter is also published in the *Revista Filosófica de Coimbra*, nº 46 (2014), 471-480.

¹⁴ Cf. Derrida, J., *L'autre cap*, *op. cit.*, p. 17; *Le droit à la philosophie du point de vue cosmopolitique*, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

register) able to carry out the lights for the political-democratic¹⁵ regime of our time and of the “future” of our world and our civilization. This singular attention would have dictated *Derrida’s dream* – without teleology, the lucid dream of a *Europe of hope*: “a Europe that sets an example of what a political, a thought and an ethics can be, heirs of the past Lights and bearers of the Lights to come.”¹⁶

2. Europe under the reign of the “*general equivalence*” (J.-L. Nancy)

“[...] *une vieille Europe en guerre, avec l’autre et avec elle-même.*”

J. Derrida, *Spectres de Marx*, p. 37.

Although confessed at the threshold of the 2000s by a Derrida at that time already insufficiently confident in Europe as it then was, or seemed to be becoming, we foresee today, without too much difficulty, that this dream is still very far from having been achieved, nor does it seem about to be achieved, while concerns about Europe and its “future” [*avenir*] are today still very far from having been appeased – quite the contrary: in addition to the cruel scourge of war, which strikes today this invaluable *project of peace* which was at the origin of the dream of a European Union, with regard to the hospitality [hospitality being the issue around which we are turning here, in this colloquium, and the issue that, although very succinctly, I am going to approach here in order to draw the silhouette of the Derridian dream of Europe since, in the very saying of *Papier Machine* (2001), hospitality “concentrates today in itself the most concrete and the most suitable to link ethics to politics”¹⁷: hospitality will then make possible to insinuate the singularity not only of Deconstruction as a *philosophical idiom* (an idea that I care about! And that I want to underline and elucidate) but also that of the Derridian dream of another figure of the Europe *to come* [*à venir*], in what concerns hospitality, as I was saying, and such as the media reported it on July 15 (2022) [the birthday of Jacques Derrida, let us remember it], Europe has abandoned around 27,464¹⁸ *asylum seekers* in the Aegean Sea: the number is brutal... but were it only one, and it would already be too many...

¹⁵ Cf. Derrida, J., *Si je peux faire plus qu’une phrase...*, *op. cit.*, 25.

¹⁶ Derrida, J., “Une Europe de l’espoir” in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Nov. 2004, p. 3.

¹⁷ Derrida, J., “Non pas l’utopie, l’impossible” in *Papier Machine*, *op. cit.*, 363.

¹⁸ According to the number disclosed by DIEM (*Democracy in Europe Movement 2025*) quoting the British university agency FORENSIS.

In Europe, the drama of migrants and refugees is omnipresent everywhere and still resounds in the names of horrible memory of *campes* – such as the Camp de Calais or Grande-Synthe – or, at best and at another level – that of the example of a culture of hospitality – in the name of cities of refuge¹⁹ or rebel cities such as Lampedusa, Calais, Lesbos, Paris, Valencia, or Barcelona: cities whose name we insist on saluting and on evoking here and which, in the very venerable biblical tradition of the “refugee cities” (*Gen.* 35: 9–15), as well as in that of a certain spirit of “civil disobedience” (H. David Thoreau), advocate the institution of neo-municipalism, boldly calling on us to “transform and re-found the modalities of belonging of the city to the State”²⁰, while dreaming²¹, as Derrida remarks it in *Cosmopolites de tous les pays, encore un effort!* (1997), of “an original statute for the City”²² (and therefore for citizenship) through a *re-nouveau* of international law likely to allow a true and audacious innovation in the history of the *right to asylum* and/or the *duty to hospitality*²³. To work for such an innovation is our responsibility and our task – the task which Derrida’s Deconstruction calls for and for which it has given us the theoretical instruments.

Everywhere, however, is very dark, and today the horizon of our hospitality seems to have shrunk: indeed, every day countless migrants, countless asylum seekers continue to knock on Europe’s locked doors (especially in the south), with heavy political and social consequences for democracy and for Europe – we need only think of the recent *Frontex* scandal (*European Border Coast Guard*) or the *Aquarius* humanitarian ship episode or, still more recently, that of the *Ocean-Viking* (between France and Italy) – or, because of climate catastrophes, because of wars and social and political failures in their own countries – failures that deprive them not only of the chance of a *dignified life*, but also of the guarantee of the security of life itself – either because of the growing food shortage in North Africa and in the Middle East caused, nowadays, by climatic catastrophes, by the ongoing war in Ukraine or by the inequalities of so-called *mondialisation* in the face of what Jean-Luc Nancy calls the accumulation

¹⁹ Created in November 1993 following the attack on the Algerian writer Tahar Djaout. The *Parlement International des Écrivains*, based in Strasbourg, took on the task of defending freedom of creation – its executive office included Adonis, Breyten Breytenbach, Jacques Derrida, Édouard Glissant, Salmon Rushdie, Christian Salmon and Pierre Bourdieu, and one of the most important of its creations was the *Réseau International des Villes Refuges*, which Coimbra joined in 2003 under the sponsorship of J. Derrida, who signed the adhesion protocol of the municipality of Coimbra with the *Parlement International des Écrivains*.

See also Christian Salmon *Devenir Minoritaire. Pour une nouvelle politique de la littérature* (Paris: Denoël, 2003).

²⁰ Derrida, J., *Cosmopolites de tous les pays, encore un effort!*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

²¹ Derrida, J., “Débat: une hospitalité sans condition” in collectif, *Manifeste pour l’hospitalité*, s/d M. Seffahi (Paris: ed. Paroles d’Aube, 1999) 136–137.

²² Derrida, J., *Cosmopolites de tous les pays, encore un effort!*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

²³ *Cf. ibid.*, p. 12–13.

and the growth of “*general equivalence*”²⁴, that is to say of capital, of the “*capitalocene*”²⁵ (cf. A. Malm and B. Lemoine), which, with the help of a neoliberal narrative, everywhere hegemonic and alienating, places the financial markets²⁶ at the center of everything, especially the financing of public deficits, so that, under the slogan of “good accounts” [“*contas certas*”], democracy is kept under the iron discipline of debt with unpredictable consequences for democratic institutions and democracy itself.

“We seem to want to maintain an economy of financial rent at all costs”, wrote, as early as 2016, Dominique de Villepin in *Mémoires de Paix. Pour temps de guerre*. And he added: “To the detriment of growth, innovation and change, we are collectively engaging in a conservative policy whose priority is to prevent the erosion of our capital. The German saver is the figurehead of a continent-wide movement. *This madness [...] threatens to rob us of our hopes.*”²⁷ [My italics]

This is a madness which, in De Villepin’s words, “*threatens to rob us of our hopes*” about democracy as well as about a European Union worthy of the name and of its most luminous memory.²⁸ No one here doubts that this is fertile ground for the worst forms of violence – violence which today includes environmental crimes, xenophobia, racism, sexism, anti-Semitism²⁹, religious, ethnocentric, and nationalist fanaticism, hunger, slavery... the violence of what Derrida calls the *carnophallogocentrism*³⁰ of philosophical-cultural and of doxic Westernness – that is, *the sacrificial cruelty* of the reign of a *cratic* sovereignty (subjective, parental, citizen or State) of ontological or even onto-theological appearance. A sovereignty which, it should be noted, is the aura of identity, of *uni-identity* and of totalitarian phantoms of all kinds... Derrida will remember and underline that in the European Union and all over the world the international juridical structures are still dominated by the inviolable rule of sovereignty – namely by the rule of State sovereignty. In this sense, it is not surprising that Derridean Deconstruction is, as an *idiom of philosophical thought*, a deconstruction of sovereignty of all kinds – a deconstruction of the said *metaphysics of subjectivity* and/or *of the presence* (cf. Heidegger).

²⁴ Cf. Nancy, J.-L., *Politique et au-delà*, op. cit., 20.

²⁵ Lemoine, Benjamin, *La Démocratie disciplinée par la dette* (Paris: La Découverte, 2022) 153.

²⁶ Lucbert, Sandra, *Le Ministère des Contes Publics* (Paris: Verdier, 2021) 23.

²⁷ De Villepin, Dominique, *Mémoires de paix. Pour temps de Guerre*, op. cit., p. 566.

²⁸ Cf. Derrida, J., “*Lettre à l’Europe*” in op. cit., 15–28.

²⁹ See Jean-François Lyotard, “Europe, les Juifs et le livre in page” “Rebonds”, Libération on May 15, 1990.

³⁰ Derrida, J., “‘Il faut bien manger’ ou le calcul du sujet” in *Points de Suspension*, op. cit., p. 294 ; *L’animal que donc je suis*, op. cit., p. 144.

3. A future [à-venir] resource in the memory of the “old-new Europe”

“Dans l’histoire et la mémoire de l’Europe
[...] il y a une ressource [...] d’avenir”
J. Derrida, *Si je peux faire...*, p. 30.

Violence that “we recognize too well without having thought them yet”³¹, as Derrida already diagnosed and denounced in 1990, in *The Other Cape* – the title of a book that, on the eve of the very institution of the European Union (on 1 November 1993 in Maastricht), was already looking for *another cape* or, more precisely, for *the other of the cape* (i.e. of the point, the advance, the *phallus*, the head, the captain, the capital, the capital [city]) for a future Europe³² that would come to “sow the seed of a new alter-worldisation [altermondialisation] politics”³³: an *altermondialiste politics* worthy of the name that Jacques Derrida at that time already held as the only possible way out. By the only way out of the neo-liberal or ultra-liberal reign of financialized capitalism that orders Europe as much as the said mondialisation [“mondialisation is Europeanisation”³⁴] and which, nowadays, by the disciplinary tool of the public debt to be reimbursed, carries out a successful domination and demolition of the social order: as, bravely Sandra Lucbert denounces it in *Le Ministère des Contes Publiques*³⁵ (2021), denouncing the reign of the *homo financierus* under which, endlessly repeated, the rhetoric of “La Dette Publique C’est Mal” has become unquestionable. Hence the need to pay attention to the presuppositions of this reign, which threaten to destroy the ideal of a certain European spirit by making Europe a purely geographical, monetary and economic entity. Hence the urgent need to re-think again and “*tout autrement*” the presuppositions of this reign, which is at the origin of these forms of violence and feeds them.

³¹ Derrida, J., *L’autre cap*, *op. cit.*, 13.

³² Before its publication in an abbreviated form in *Liber, L’autre Cap* was the text of a lecture delivered in Turin, on May 20, 1990, during a symposium on “European cultural identity”, under the presidency of G. Vattimo. In *Les Éditions de Minuit*, *L’autre Cap* also incorporates “The deferred democracy” (p. 103–124), an interview by Derrida with Olivier Salvatori and Nicolas Weill, published in an abbreviated form in *Le Monde de la Révolution Française*, n° 1 (monthly, January 1989).

³³ Cf. Derrida, J., “Lettre à l’Europe” in *op. cit.*, 15–28; *Si je peux faire plus qu’une phrase...*, *op. cit.*, p. 24–26; “Une Europe de l’espoir” in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Novembre 2004, p. 3 : Discours prononcé le 8 mai 2004 à l’occasion du 50ème anniversaire du *Le Monde Diplomatique*: <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2004/11/DERRIDA/11677>.

³⁴ “Hence the paradox: mondialisation is Europeanisation”, Derrida, J., in J. Derrida, Roudinesco, E., *De quoi demain...* (Paris : Fayard / Galilée, 2001) 288.

For the issue of “mondialisation” in terms of “alter-mondialisation”, as well as for the distinction between “globalisation” and “mondialisation” in Derrida’s thought, see, namely: Derrida, J., “Auto-immunités, suicides réels et symboliques” in Derrida, J. Habermas, J. *Le “concept” du 11Septembre* (Paris: Galilée, 2003); Derrida, J., “La mondialisation, la paix et la cosmopolitique” in collectif, *Où vont les valeurs?* Jérôme Bindé dir. (Paris: Albin Michel/ Ed. Unesco, 2004); Bernardo, Fernanda, *Derrida – em nome da justiça. Do cosmopolitismo à alter-mundialização por vir* (Coimbra : Palimage, 2021).

³⁵ Lucbert, Sandra, *Le Ministère des Contes Publiques*, *op. cit.*

To envision them, to think the presuppositions of this violence in order to find a totally other cape for Europe and for *mondialisation* – since, let us remember and note, in Derrida’s own words, “we recognize them too much”; this violence that weighs on Europe and on the world, “*without having thought about them yet*” – this is therefore the urgency and the duty of intellectuals, jurists, economists and, and especially, philosophers – a philosophical–theoretical gesture that in itself is already political, hyper-political, as any political act worthy of the name should be today: the urgency, the courage, the lucidity and the responsibility is today not only to denounce but, at the same time, to think *the source* of this violence in order to approach and to grasp, in the history and in the memory of Europe, *a resource* that could make it the *Noah’s Ark* of the “future” [*avenir*]. *A resource* in the history and memory of the “old-new Europe”³⁶ that is an unfinished *resource* of “future”³⁷ – a kind of sleepless vigil that never ceases to watch over the “future” of Europe and of the world, just as, according to Derrida, a certain “madness” should keep watch over thought, as reason does.³⁸

Only the attention to this *resource* – a paradoxical *resource*, in fact, Jacques Derrida warns – will raise and take into account not only the *double genealogy* of Europe’s provenance (The Bible and Greece), but also its *double memory*, thus creating the conditions for making Europe the promise of a place of *refoundation* and of *critical invention* with regard to thought, the human, ethics, the social, culture, the university, politics, law, the economy, the media, tele-technology, democracy, etc., while at the same time causing us to think about the “ethnicity of ethics”³⁹ and justice, both of which dictate, stamp, and magnetize thought and, at the same time, lead us to re-think and, hopefully, to live *tout autrement* the gaps *between* ethics (in the sense of meta- or hyper-ethics as an *absolute relationship to the absolutely other*), politics, social, economic and law, the registers that especially interest us here. These deviations – living traces of every conjunctural response to the injunction of this *resource* from which, at every moment, the other of all capes springs – instigating an invaluable sign of vigilant attention, of concern and of remorse due to the current state of affairs, as much as a desire for increasing perfectibility and justice. Let us note this at once before we go on to try to explain it:

1.) Following Kant and Heidegger, but in a totally different way, counter-signing them, distinguishing thought from philosophy (associated with *logocentric*

³⁶ Cf. Derrida, J., *Lettre à l’Europe*, *op. cit.*, 17.

³⁷ Cf. Derrida, J., “La mondialisation, la paix et la cosmopolitique” in collectif, *Où vont les valeurs ?* J. Bindé dir. (Paris : Albin Michel/ Ed. Unesco, 2004) 173–174.

³⁸ Cf. Derrida, J., *Points de Suspension*, *op. cit.*, 374.

³⁹ Cf. Derrida, J., “Débats” in *Altérités*, *op. cit.*, 70–73.

metaphysics, of the presence or of the anthropocentric subjectivity), there is in Jacques Derrida's thought and work an equation of thought or, more precisely, of the scope of the *unconditionality* of thought to ethics in the sense of the "*ethicity of ethics*"⁴⁰ – understood in terms of *meta-*, *hyper-* or "hyperbolic ethics"⁴¹ – in relation to justice⁴² and to hospitality: *the thought of the différance or of the absolute or secret otherness is a thought of hospitality, a thought as hospitality* and, in its *unconditionality* or in its *hyperbolicity*, according to Derrida,⁴³ is ethics itself. A passage from *Cosmopolites de tous les pays, encore un effort!* (1997), which is perhaps worth recalling here, notes this (*hyper*) ethical scope of the *unconditionality of thought* and of *hospitality*:

[...] to cultivate an *ethics of hospitality*. Isn't *cultivating the ethics of hospitality*, moreover, tautological language? Despite all the perversions that threaten it, we do not even have to cultivate an ethics of hospitality. Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic among others. Insofar as it has to do with *ethos*, that is, the residence, one's home, the familiar place of dwelling, as much as the way of being there, the way in which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as to one's own or as foreigners, *ethics is hospitality*, ethics is in every way co-extensive with the experience of hospitality, in whatever way it is opened up or limited.⁴⁴

Since it is always operating⁴⁵, attentive to the injunction of this ageless *resource* and therefore deconstructing principiality, originarity, arch-causality, substantiality and theoreticism in general, Derridian Deconstruction not only plays an *act of resistance* and *of reinvention*, but also an *act of faith* and *of hope*⁴⁶ (without teleology). There is no doubt that, listening to the piercing scream of Europe and, more broadly, of the world, Derrida's dream *of Europe* and *for Europe to come* gets confused with a kind of *credo* – with an *act of faith* without dogma. A *messianic act of faith* in a thought of the event *to come*, of the democracy *to come* [*à venir*], of the justice *to come*, of the reason *to*

⁴⁰ Cf. Derrida, J., "Débats" in Derrida, J., Labarrière, P.-J., *Altérités* (Paris: Osiris, 1986) 70; J., *De la Grammatologie* (Paris: Minuit, 1967) 202.

⁴¹ "This 'exceedance' is what I call 'hyperbolic ethic', an ethics above ethics." ["Cette 'excédance', c'est ce que j'appelle l'éthique hyperbolique", une éthique au-dessus de l'éthique.], J. Derrida, J., "La Mélancolie d' Abraham" in *Les Temps Modernes*, 67 année, Juillet/Octobre 2012, nos. 669/670, 35

⁴² Cf. Derrida, J., "Le lieu dit: Strasbourg" in collectif, *Penser à Strasbourg* (Paris: Galilée/ Ville de Strasbourg, 2004)m 48.

⁴³ "[...] pure ethics begins beyond right, duty and debt." ["[...] l'éthique pure commence au-delà du droit, du devoir et de la dette."], J. Derrida, "Auto-immunités, suicides réels et symboliques" in Derrida, J., Habermas, J., *Le "concept" du 11 septembre* (Paris : Galilée, 2003) 193.

⁴⁴ Derrida, J., *Cosmopolites de tous les pays, encore un effort!*, *op. cit.*, 41-42.

⁴⁵ "[...] deconstruction is always already at work." ["[...] la déconstruction est toujours déjà à l'oeuvre"], Derrida, J. in Weber, Elisabeth, *Questions au Judaïsme* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1996) 91.

⁴⁶ Cf. Derrida, J., *Papier Machine*, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

come: a thought that carries and makes the promise of a Europe and of a world that is increasingly more hospitable and righteous...

2.) Without in any way elaborating and providing a political *philosophy*⁴⁷, there is nevertheless in the work of Jacques Derrida a *thought* of politics and of democracy⁴⁸: a *thought of unconditional hospitality* and of *justice* which, merging with the *meta-onto-phenomena-logical* allure of Deconstruction as *an idiom of philosophical thought*, happens to be the light to think, and to prompt us to think the promise of a *democracy to come* (which also happens to be *democracy as a promise* and therefore always (still) *to come* [«à venir»] as the *impossible* itself) – a *democracy* which, disconnected from the traditional values of nationality, citizenship, rootedness, and fraternity, would be “like the *khôra* of politics”⁴⁹ and therefore like the *khôra*⁵⁰ of a totally other *Europe*⁵¹, of an *alter-mondialist* Europe that would become the laboratory and the motor of “*alter-mondialisation*”, of a totally other “*alter-mondialisation*” *to come* [à venir].

“I believe very much in *alter-mondialisation*”, Derrida confessed in March 2004 in an interview entitled *If I can do more than one sentence...* which has just been published in book form. And he added in clarification: “Not in the forms it currently takes, which are often confused and heterogeneous. But in the future, I believe, decisions will be taken from there, and the hegemonic nation-states and the organizations dependent on them (notably the economic and monetary “summits”) will have to take account of this power.”⁵²

There is, therefore, no theoretical model of politics in Deconstruction – there is, rather, a (political) *thought* of the political that appeals to the effort to keep open the event of alterity that makes politics possible and inevitable. The old inherited words of politics and of democracy are maintained – but, paleonymically rethought from the perspective of “à venir” [“to come”], they hold new “fundamentals” [fundamentals without foundation, be precise], new configurations and new senses.

⁴⁷ Cf. Derrida, J., *Voyous*, *op. cit.*, 14–15.

⁴⁸ As Derrida remarks in *Voyous* (*op. cit.*, 64): “The thought of the political has always been a thought of *différance*, and the thought of *différance* has always been a thought of the political.” [“La pensée du politique a toujours été une pensée de la *différance* et la pensée de la *différance* toujours aussi une pensée du politique”].

⁴⁹ Derrida, J., *Voyous*, *op. cit.*, 120; “Terreur et Religion. Pour une politique à venir” (in *Revue Iter*, p. 13).

⁵⁰ Derrida, J., *Khôra* (Paris: Galilée, 1993).

⁵¹ “A Europe that sets an example of what a politics, a thought and an ethics can be, heirs of the past Enlightenment and bearers of Enlightenment to come, capable of non-binary discernment.”, Derrida, J., “Une Europe de l’espoir” in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Novembre 2004, 3.

⁵² Derrida, J., *Si je peux faire plus qu’une phrase...*, *op. cit.*, 24–25.

4. *Unconditional hospitality* – a name and the hope of Deconstruction

*L' hospitalité,
c'est un nom ou un exemple
de la deconstruction."*

J. Derrida, *Hospitalité*, II, p. 152.

The attention to this *resource*, to the injunction that springs from this *resource* coming from the very eve of European civilization in which is inscribed the possibility of the auto-hetero-deconstruction or of auto-immunity as “survival” [*«survivance»*], as an in-finite «survival» or an infinite affirmation of life happening⁵³, is the mark *par excellence* of Derrida’s Deconstruction as *thought*, indeed as a *philosophical idiom*: as the philosopher confesses it in *Le Monolinguisme de l’autre* (1996), such attention – which (following Malebranche, Benjamin, Celan and Levinas⁵⁴) Derrida calls the “pure prayer of the soul” – unveils and affirms the *hyperbolism*⁵⁵ that, in the trace of *khôra*⁵⁶ (from Plato’s *Timaeus*), of the *Good* beyond being, *reinterpreted or counter-signed* by Derrida, dictates, magnetizes and rhythms the undeconstructibility of the *meta-ontological*, *meta-ontotheological* and *meta-anthro-po-logical* register of the *thought of the différance* or of the *trace*: a *meta-register* that deconstructs the vein of the *possible*, of the *systematic* and of the *oiko-nomic*, and so the vein of *power* and of *power of power* that, hegemonically, dictates, crosses and structures the thought of philosophical-cultural Westernness and lies at the very origin of violence. As Derrida declares in *Marges, de la Philosophie* (1972), *différance* is the tomb of *one’s own* [“*propre*”] and the death of the *dynast*⁵⁷.

A *meta-register* – (of attention to the absolute otherness or to the time of the absolute other to which Derrida calls *messianic*) – that encourages and magnetizes an attitude of hyper-critical vigilance, of irredentist criticism and resistance,⁵⁸ even of dissidence, in the face of the injustice of the established (dis-)order – an order drawn and consolidated from everything that links the instituted, i.e., law, politics

⁵³“There is survival as soon as there is a trace [...] I believe that it is the very form of experience and of inescapable desire.” [“Il y a survie dès qu’il y a trace [...] je crois que c’est la forme même de l’expérience et du désir inéluctable.”], Derrida, J., *Sur Parole* (Paris: Ed. de l’Aube, 1999), 51.

⁵⁴ Levinas, E., *Paul Celan – De l’être à l’autre* (Montpellier : Fata Morgana, 2002) 25–26.

⁵⁵ Derrida, J., *Le Monolinguisme de l’autre* (Paris : Galilée, 1996) 82.

⁵⁶ Derrida, J., “Terreur et Religion. Pour une politique à venir” in revue *Iter*, n° 1 (2018), p. 15–16.

⁵⁷ Derrida, J., *Marges de la Philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972) 22.

⁵⁸“If I had invented my writing, I would have done it like an endless revolution.” [“Si j’avais inventé mon écriture, je l’aurais fait comme une révolution interminable.”], Derrida, J., *Apprendre enfin à vivre* (Paris : Galilée/ Le Monde, 2005), 31. And in *Papier Machine* (*op. cit.*, p. 341), Derrida confesses: “I have always dreamed of resistance.” [“J’ai toujours rêvé de résistance.”]

and citizenship, to the sovereignty of the (metaphysical) subject: a subject defined in terms of (autonomous) consciousness, intentionality, freedom, will, decision-making, power, responsibility, one-identity and self-presence, and which Derrida says to be nothing but a fable!⁵⁹ Indeed, because of his finitude, he does not come to him except through the other, through the primacy of the language of the other, and therefore in the scene of an infinite *auto-hetero-nomic experience* – his appropriation (of himself or of the language of the other) is merely an *ex-appropriation*. That is to say, it is not but an infinite, bereaved *appropriation* – the experience of the *proper* or of identification is inseparable, as an experience, from *expropriation* and therefore from mourning or melancholy as well as a movement of *reappropriation*.

A *meta-register* from whose excess and exceedance [*“le pas au-delà”*] spring all the *impossibles*, all the *unconditionals* of the Derridean Deconstruction in its condition of *impossible though*⁶⁰ or of *impossible experience of the impossible*⁶¹ barely (aporetically) *impossible*: time (diachronic or messianic), justice, forgiveness, witness, response and responsibility, decision, blessing, democracy to-come, event, gift, hospitality... – the *gift of hospitality*, precisely (which is also *hospitality as a gift* and not as a duty or a right – a gift that gives what it does not have at all), thought as attention, welcome and *ex-position* or openness (*heterological* or *heteronomical*) to the other, to the unexpected and surprising coming of the other⁶², *whoever or whatever he/she/it may be*, as, for Derrida, *“absolutely other is absolutely other”* [*“tout autre est tout autre”*]⁶³. Anarchic, unconditional and hyperbolic, hospitality is then the *ex-position* or the opening to the other, to the very other, in its condition of unpredictable *visitor* or *absolute arrival*. Or it is the *ex-position* or the opening *to what happens* or *to who comes*, to the *“arrivance de l’arrivant”*⁶⁴, Deconstruction being also a *thought of as the event* or of the *“having-place”*, of the messianic event and of the *singularity*.

Such hospitality – which Derrida will call pure, absolute, unconditional, just, poetic/po-et(h)ical or, in the trace of Levinas’s lexicon⁶⁵, of *visitation* – such

⁵⁹ “The subject is a fable” [*“Le sujet est une fable”*], Derrida, J., “‘Il faut bien manger’ ou le calcul du sujet” in *Points de Suspension*, *op. cit.*, 279.

⁶⁰ J. Derrida in Derrida, J., Roudinesco, E., *De quoi demain... , op. cit.*, 200.

⁶¹ “The interest of ‘deconstruction’, of its strength and its desire, if it has any, is a certain experience of the impossible: that is to say [...] of the other.” [*“L’intérêt de la déconstruction, de sa force et de son désir si elle en a, c’est une certaine expérience de l’impossible : c’est-à-dire [...] de l’autre”*], Derrida, J., *Psyché. Invention de l’autre* (Paris : Galilée, 1987) 27.

⁶² Cf. Derrida, J., *Psyché*, *op. cit.*, 53.

⁶³ Cf. J. Derrida, in Derrida, J., Malabou, C., *La Contre-Allée* (Paris : La Quinzaine Littéraire/L. Vuitton, 1999) 263.

⁶⁴ Derrida, J., “Fidélité à plus d’un” in *Cahiers Intersignes*, numéro 13 automne 1998, *Idiomes, Nationalités, Déconstructions* (Paris / Casablanca : éd. Toubkal/ éd. de l’Aube, 1998) 261.

⁶⁵ “the epiphany of the face is *visitation*.” [*“l’épiphanie du visage est *visitation*.”*], Levinas, E., “La trace de l’autre” in *En Découvrant l’existence avec Husserl et Heidegger* (Paris : Vrin, 1988) 194.

hospitality, as I was saying, configures, as a gesture or as an attitude, as a *Stimmung*, an *experience* or an *uncondition*, Deconstruction itself in its condition of *thought of the différance*, of the *trace* or of the *absolute otherness*, while drawing, at the same time, both the hyper-ethical⁶⁶ and the hyper-just register⁶⁷ of this *thought*, as well as the (already) hyper-political (register): a *trace* of the excess and of the “*excédance*” of the *impossible* or of the other *as other* as the very condition of the possible; this register is, in a saying of Derrida’s *Papier Machine* (2001), “the very drive or the very pulse”⁶⁸ of Deconstruction. The life of its «*survivance*» [“survival”] in its combination of the movement – arising from the nourishing indestructibility of the excess of its *meta-ontological* register that *loco-moves* it: an excess configured by the timelessness and by the impassibility of an absolute abyss or an eve without tomorrow designated by the historical quasi-names of *messianic* and *kbôra*⁶⁹ – and of the *hiatus*, the interruption, the break or the deviation (*trace/écart* – “*trace*” as the anagram of “*écart*” as well as of “*carte*”⁷⁰). In “*Circonfession*” (1991), Derrida confesses that his “only desire remains to give the interruption to be read”⁷¹.

Indeed, let us note: it is not only in relation to justice⁷², *to the unconditionality* and *to the messianicity of justice*⁷³ (in its difference from the law (legal system) and thought, in a certain trace of Levinas, in terms of an absolute relation to the absolutely other or as “a relationship to the unconditional”⁷⁴), that Jacques Derrida has understood [“*comme que*”] “how to” define Deconstruction – “*Deconstruction is justice*”⁷⁵, he says in *Force de loi* (1994), while, in *La Contre-Allée* (1997), by accentuating the idea of movement and displacement, in short, the idea of *loco-commotion*, he adds: “deconstruction [...] would be a certain experience of the travel, [...] of the letters and of the language in travelling”⁷⁶. He does exactly the same with the motif of *hospitality* – *hospitality* that he holds to be inseparable from a *thought of justice* and that he thinks originally as a *gift* (and not, it should be noted once again, as a duty or as a right): at the January 8, 1997 session of his seminar on *Questions of Responsibility* entitled *Hostipitality*,

⁶⁶ Derrida, J., *Voyous*, *op. cit.*, 210.

⁶⁷ Derrida, J., *Voyous*, *op. cit.*, 64.

⁶⁸ Cf. Derrida, J., “Comme si c’était possible, ‘within such limits’...” in *Papier Machine*, *op. cit.*, 308.

⁶⁹ Cf. Derrida, J., *Sauf le nom*, *op. cit.*, 95-97.

⁷⁰ Cf. Derrida, J., “Envois” in *La Carte Postale de Platon à Freud et au-delà*, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁷¹ Derrida, J., “*Circonfession*” in Derrida, J., Bennington, G., *Jacques Derrida* (Paris: Seuil, 1991), 53.

⁷² Cf. Bernardo, F., *Derrida – em nome da justiça* (Coimbra: Palimage, 2021).

⁷³ Cf. J. Derrida in Derrida, J., Ferraris, M., *Le goût du secret* (Paris: Hermann, 2018) 26.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 23, 26.

⁷⁵ Derrida, J., *Force de loi* (Paris: Galilée, 1994) 35.

⁷⁶ Derrida, J., Malabou, C., *La Contre-Allée*, *op. cit.*, 40.

Derrida announces that *hospitality*, as a questioning of the *proper*, of the *same*, of the at home/“*chez soi*”, of the *oikos*, the being *with oneself*, the abode/“*demeure*”, *property*, *appropriation*, “*presence to oneself*”, in short a questioning of *oikonomy* and of *ipséité* or of *cratic* (from *kratia* / *kratos*) sovereignty (i.e. one and indivisible), so central in *logocentric metaphysics*, as a name and/or as an example of Deconstruction. Let us listen to his words, in what is still the only English version (on this date: October 2022) of this seminar,⁷⁷ edited and translated by Gil Anidjar (in *Acts of Religion* (2002):

[...] hospitality, the experience, the apprehension, the exercise of impossible hospitality, of hospitality as the possibility of impossibility [...] – this is the exemplar experience of deconstruction itself [...], the experience of the impossible. *Hospitality – this is a name or an example of deconstruction.* [...] Hospitality is the deconstruction of the at-home; deconstruction is hospitality to the other, to the other than oneself, the other than “its other”, to another who is beyond any “its other”.⁷⁸

I emphasize: “*Hospitality – this is a name or an example of deconstruction.*” I emphasize this in order to note that while being one of the impossibles or one of the unconditionals of the meta-ontological register of Derridean Deconstruction, the “beautiful rainbow of hospitality”, as Edmond Jabès calls it; this major sign of humanity, culture and civilization⁷⁹, as much as of risk, danger and promise of re-invention and of “future” not only draws the silhouette of the singularity of Deconstruction as a *thought of the différance* or of the *absolute otherness*, but also draws the (messianic or hetero-auto-nomic) openness to the other and/or to the “future” [“*avenir*”], thus outlining the very *uncondition* of the *subjectivity of the subject*, or, more precisely, of the *a-subjective or différent singularity*⁸⁰: *already always* under the call of the absolute other, the “first come” [“*premier venu*”], the said subject, always late, always late arrived, is for Derrida, following Levinas⁸¹, *arch-originally and unconditionally a guest*. *A guest* and not a *proper* or a *master*! It is as guest, already always *chez soi chez l'autre*, and not as master of the self and of the house, that the said subject welcomes the other in his condition of unexpected visiting *guest* or of absolute arrival.

⁷⁷ This seminar has since been published in French by Pascale-Anne Brault and Peggy Kamuf: *Hospitalité II Séminaire* (1996–1997) (Paris: ed. du Seuil, novembre 2022). This quote is now found on p. 152.

⁷⁸ Derrida, J., “Hostipitality. Session of January 8, 1997” in *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar (NY/London: Routledge, 2002) 364.

⁷⁹ “Civilization was born with hospitality”, De Villepin, D., *Mémoire de paix*, *op. cit.*, 564. See also René Schérer in “Zeus hospitalier. Éloge de l’hospitalité” in collectif, *Le livre de l’hospitalité*, s/d Alain Montandon (Paris : Bayard, 2004).

⁸⁰ Derrida, J., “‘Il faut bien manger’ ou le calcul du sujet” in *Points de Suspension*, *op. cit.*, 277.

⁸¹ “The subject is a guest.” [“Le sujet est un hôte.”], Levinas, E., *Totalité et Infini* (1998) 334, “The subject is hostage.” [“Le sujet est otage.”], Levinas, E., *Autrement qu’être ou au-delà de l’essence* (Dordrecht : Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988) 142.

It should be noted that in French the word “*hôte*” [from the Latin “*hostis*”/”*hospes*”: *host/enemy*] can mean both the *hôte/guest*, i.e. the one who asks for hospitality, and the *hôte/host*, the one who gives hospitality – a significant undecidability which J. Derrida plays with to suddenly remind us that there is no host who does not begin by being a guest of the very place where he or she gives hospitality: the language, the house, the family, the heart, the city, the nation, the country...

It is the deconstruction of the autonomous, egological and ontological, if not ontotheological, register of sovereignty (of the giver of hospitality) that is at stake and that is put into question: there is no “at home” [“*chez soi*”] that is not already always “at home at the other one’s home”: the guest becomes the host of the host, as Derrida says.⁸² Implicitly, this is also a critique of Kant’s *universal hospitality*, in which the host welcomes as master and lord of the place where he “gives” place, that is, conditionally.

“The arrival”, says Derrida in “Fidélité à plus d’un” (1996), “must be so surprising to me that I cannot even determine him as a human. [...] *hospitality open to the arriving person unconditionally should open me to the arriving whatever he or she may be, but also to what is so easily called an animal or a god. Good or evil, life or death.*”⁸³

I italicize the central passage in order to stress the *meta*-onto-anthropo-logical register of the *unconditionality* of hospitality according to Derrida – hospitality is the welcome of the other, of a wholly other who happens to be *anyone* as, for Derrida, “*tout autre est tout autre*”. It is the anthropocentrism of the traditional humanisms, including the meta-ethical humanism of Emmanuel Levinas (*a humanism of the other man*), which is questioned – an anthropocentrism that is the scene of the man’s sovereignty or of the man’s mastery over women, nature, and animals. And thus, the scene of *carno-phallogocentrism* and of its ruthless *sacrificial spirit*⁸⁴.

Drawing the hyper-political and hyper-ethical scope proper to the *meta*-onto-phenomena-logical and *meta*-onto-anthropo-logical register of *deconstructive thinking*, *unconditional hospitality* thus commands to welcome *the other* (whoever he may be) without conditions and without questions – beyond, therefore, the hospitality conditioned by the right to immigration and by the right to asylum, beyond even the right⁸⁵ to universal hospitality (*allgemeinen Hospitalität/ Wirtbarkeit*) of which Kant⁸⁶

⁸² Cf. Derrida, J., in J. Derrida, Dufourmantelle, A., *De l’hospitalité*, *op. cit.*, 111.

⁸³ Derrida, J., “Fidélité à plus d’un” in *op. cit.*, 247.

⁸⁴ Derrida, J., “‘Il faut bien manger’ ou le calcul du sujet” in *Points de Suspension*, *op. cit.*, 292–293.

⁸⁵ Cf. Kant, *Projet de paix perpétuelle*, éd. Bilingue, tr. fr. J. Gibelin (Paris : Vrin, 2002) 55.

⁸⁶ Kant, *Projet de paix perpétuelle*, *op. cit.*, 54–55.

speaks in the *Third Final Article for Perpetual Peace: unconditional hospitality* demands without command to unconditionally welcome *the other, the absolutely other, the absolute arriving*, and not (yet) *the foreigner*: Jacques Derrida⁸⁷ distinguishing the “other” from the “foreigner” in order to re-think this from the primacy of the “other”. Synonymous with “citizen”, the “foreigner” is always a philosophical and juridical-political concept – it designates the subject of a certain territorialized nation-state – whereas, *a-conceptualizable*, the “other” is synonymous of *otherness* or of *absolute (a-solus) singularity (a-subjective* and, in a certain way, *a-political)*. Not one, the “other” is not “one”/”unit”, but unique and secret: “the other is secret because he is other”⁸⁸, as Derrida reminds us in his interview with Antoine Spire (2000) – “I am *in the secret* as another. A singularity is by essence in the secret.”⁸⁹

Such a difference between the “*other*” and the “*foreigner*” has its origin in the singular Derridean distinction between *unconditionality without indivisible sovereignty* and *conditionality*⁹⁰, between power and unpower, which singularizes the *meta-ontological* deconstructive idiom and which presupposes the singular distinction, as well as the implication and the aporetic reinvention, between meta-ontology and ontology, thus also suggesting how this *unconditional hospitality* is regulated (and regulates!) in a political or legal practice – and thus the singular distinction, as well as the implication, between *The Law of Hospitality* (anomic, absolute, unconditional, just, pure, poetic or visiting) and the *laws of hospitality* (conditional and conditioning, i.e. national and international, ethical, political and legal laws): a distinction that is nonetheless singular, it should be noted, because, by drawing at the same time a relationship of heterogeneity and of indissociability⁹¹, it will also configure the *aporia* or the *antinomy* of hospitality, that is, the “*pas d’hospitalité*”⁹²: an *antinomy* which, in the more than living idiom of Derrida’s language, the philosopher spells *hosti(pita)lity* to designate, no longer the (juridical-political) *laws of hospitality*, the laws of immigration and of the right of asylum, but the *laws of hospitality* haunted by the *Law of hospitality*; i.e. to designate the always possible anxiety and pervertibility of the *Law of Hospitality* inscribed/*ex-cribed* in the *laws of hospitality*, as these are affected, hetero-affected, inspired, perverted and guided, even haunted by the incalculable *unconditionality* of the *Law of Hospitality*. The political difficulty of immigration lies

⁸⁷ Cf. Derrida, J., Dufourmantelle, A., *De l’hospitalité* (Paris : Calmann-Lévy, 1997) 11 ss.

⁸⁸ Derrida, J., *Papier Machine*, *op. cit.*, 397.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Cf. Derrida, J., *Foi et Savoir*, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

⁹¹ Cf. Derrida, J., “Le siècle et le pardon” in *Foi et Savoir*, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

⁹² Derrida, J. in Derrida, J., Dufourmantelle, A., *De l’hospitalité*, *op. cit.*, 71

in the need to negotiate between these two equally imperative laws. Derrida makes this explicit in “Pas d’hospitalité”, the fifth session of 17 January 1996 of his seminar around the *Questions of Responsibility* (1991–2003):

“The antinomy of hospitality”, he says there, “irreconcilably opposes the Law, in its universal singularity, to a plurality that is not only a dispersion (*the laws*) but a structured multiplicity, determined by a process of partition and differentiation: by *laws* [...] *The law*, in the absolute singular, contradicts the laws in the plural, but each time it is the law *in the law*, and each time *outside the law* in the law. That’s the so singular thing that we call *the laws* of hospitality. A strange plural, a plural grammar of *two different plurals at once*. One of these two plurals says the *laws* of hospitality, the conditional laws, etc. The other plural says the antinomic addition, the one that adds to the unique and singular and absolutely only great Law of hospitality, to *the law* of hospitality, to the categorical imperative of hospitality, *the conditional laws*. In this second case, the plural is made of One + a multiplicity, while in the first case, it was only multiplicity, distribution, differentiation. In the one case, we have $Un + n$; in the other $n + n + n$, etc.”⁹³

Indeed, anomic (*nomos a-nomos*), although before, above and outside the *laws*, the *Law of unconditional hospitality*, which commands openness to the coming of the other beyond the law, beyond the hospitality conditioned by the right to asylum, by the right to immigration, by citizenship and even by the right to universal hospitality of which Kant speaks – which is still controlled by a political or cosmopolitical law⁹⁴ – , this *law of unconditional hospitality* must nevertheless be inscribed in *the conditional laws* of the right to hospitality, which it disturbs, transgresses, inspires, and improves, otherwise it “risks remaining a pious, irresponsible desire, without form and without effectiveness”⁹⁵ while, on the other hand, the guests thus welcomed would risk looking like parasites or barbarians: “*sans papiers*”/“undocumented”:⁹⁶ this singular inscription, this *ex-cription*, haunts the *laws of hospitality*, always limited and imperfect, igniting an infinite desire for its increasing perfectibility and justice – in Jacques Derrida’s words, by exceeding and overturning the juridical, political and economic calculation of the laws, *the law of unconditional hospitality*, always inadequate to the laws, dictates an attitude and “gives its meaning and its practical rationality

⁹³ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 73, 75, 77.

⁹⁴ Cf. Derrida, J., *Voyous*, *op. cit.*, 205; *Cosmopolites...*, p. 11 ss.

⁹⁵ Derrida, J., *Cosmopolites...*, 57.

⁹⁶ Cf. Derrida, J., *De l’hospitalité*, *op. cit.*, 57.

to any concept of hospitality.”⁹⁷ *Unconditional hospitality*, then, is like *the meridian* (in Celan’s way⁹⁸) of the *laws of hospitality* – *the meridian* of the laws of immigration and of asylum: “it is an absolute pole”, says Derrida, “outside of which desire, concept and experience, the very thought of hospitality would have no meaning.”⁹⁹

In *De l’hospitalité* (1997), Derrida highlights and makes explicit this difficult – but necessary – distinction and this inadequacy, this insurmountable gap between the *other* and the *foreigner* (*xenos*), as well as between *unconditional* and *conditional hospitality*, while underlining, alongside the primacy and the *irreducible* excess of the former over the latter, their singular *contamination* and *perversion*, and therefore the blade of antinomy which, as far as *the question of hospitality* is concerned – the question which haunts us as well as haunting the horizon of our time! – leads Derrida to speak of *hostipitality* (of *hos-ti/pita-lity*):

[...] the difference, one of the subtle, sometimes elusive differences between the stranger and the absolute other, is that the latter may have no name nor surname; the absolute or unconditional hospitality, which I would like to offer him or her presupposes a break with hospitality in the common sense, with conditional hospitality, with the right or the pact of hospitality. In saying this, once again, we are taking into account an irreducible pervertibility. The law of hospitality [...] appears as a paradoxical, pervertible or perverting law. It seems to dictate that absolute hospitality breaks with the law of hospitality as a right or duty, with the “pact” of hospitality. To put it in other words, absolute hospitality requires that I open my home, my house, and that I give not only to the stranger (with a family name, a social status of a stranger, etc.), but to the absolute other, unknown, anonymous other, and that *I give him a place*, that I let him come, that I let him arrive, and have his place in the place that I offer him, without asking him for reciprocity (entry into a pact), or even his name. The law of absolute hospitality commands to break with the hospitality of right, with the law or the justice as right. Just hospitality breaks with the hospitality of law; not that it condemns it or opposes it, and on the contrary it can put it and hold it in a ceaseless movement of progress; but it is as strangely heterogeneous to it as justice is heterogeneous to the law of which it is nevertheless so close, and in truth indissociable.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Derrida, J., *Voyous*, *op. cit.*, 205.

⁹⁸ Celan, P., *Le Méridien*, tr. André du Bouchet (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1994).

⁹⁹ Derrida, J., “Non pas l’utopie, l’im-possible” in *Papier Machine*, *op. cit.*, 361.

¹⁰⁰ Derrida, J., in Dufourmantelle, A., Derrida, J., *De l’hospitalité*, *op. cit.*, 29.

By enjoining us to listen to the “voice of fine silence”¹⁰¹ which, like an inexhaustible *resource* of “*à-venir*” [future], springs from the distant confines of our civilization’s eve and resounds in the interstices of its texture and its cultural manifestations, this *thought of unconditionality*¹⁰² is the bearer of *the promise of new Lights* for the *à-venir* [future] not only of a totally other Europe and a totally other “mondialisation” and new international law to which it calls but, more broadly, of a totally other civilization. Nothing more and nothing less!

As if the dream were more hopeful and more vigilant than the vigil itself, as Derrida suggests in a dreamy discourse throughout *Fichus*¹⁰³ (2001), then the outline of Jacques Derrida’s dream for Europe – for another [*tout autre*] *thought of Europe* and for *another* [*tout autre*] *Europe*: (for) a *Europe of hope*¹⁰⁴, of a lucid hope and of the responsibility which, heir of the past lights and bearer of new lights for the future, could become the thinking, the acting and the radiating nucleus of the deconstruction of the ontotheological and ontotheological-political phantasms of sovereignty, and therefore of metaphysics of the national state – the fertile ground of the violence proper to the *sacrificial spirit* – thus making a decisive contribution to the future of democracy (nowadays so weakened and so reduced to a vain word) – of law and international law at the service of new international institutions for a “good living together”¹⁰⁵ in the immense ark that is our world, *with all the living beings*. With all the living beings – human or not – in a respectful attention to their “power” of being affected. A Europe of the social justice that, in light of this demanding and compassionate responsibility, proper to the *unconditionality of thought*, would wage a relentless battle *for life, for mercy, for justice and for peace* – a war against the indifference and the impiety of “putting to death”, of “letting die” or of “giving death”, for Jacques Derrida the most eminent sign of sovereignty of an onto-theological and onto-theological-legal-political nature.

¹⁰¹ “A ‘voice of fine silence’, if I hear well, seems to enjoin us [...] to re-start again in a different way.” [“Une ‘voix de fin silence’, si j’entends bien, semble nous enjoindre [...] de re-commencer tout autrement.”], Derrida, J. in Derrida, J., Roudinesco, E., *De quoi demain... op. cit.*, p. 222.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 200.

¹⁰³ Cf. Derrida, J., *Fichus, op. cit.*, 18.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Derrida, J., “Une Europe de l’espoir”, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Derrida, J., “Avouer – l’impossible” in *Le dernier des Juifs, op. cit.*, 13-65.

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