

Hospitality in Shakespeare:
The Case of *The Merchant of Venice*, *Troilus and Cressida*
and *Timon of Athens*

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A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

School of English, Communication and Philosophy

Cardiff University

2017

Summary

This thesis analyses hospitality in three of Shakespeare's plays: *The Merchant of Venice* (c. 1596-7), *Troilus and Cressida* (c. 1601-2) and *Timon of Athens* (c. 1606-7). It draws on ideas from Derrida and other recent theorists to argue that Shakespeare treats hospitality as the site of urgent ethical inquiry. Far more than a mechanical part of the stage business that brings characters on and off the performance space and into contact with one another, hospitality is allied to the darker visions of these troubling plays. Hospitality is a means by which Shakespeare confronts ideas about death and mourning, betrayal, and the problem of time and transience, encouraging us to reconsider what it means to be truly welcoming. That the three plays studied are not traditionally linked is important. The intention is not to shape the plays into a new group, but rather to demonstrate that Shakespeare's staging of hospitality is far-reaching in its openness. Again, while the thesis is informed by Derrida's writings, its approach is through close readings of the texts. Throughout, the thesis is careful not to prioritise big moments of spectacle over more subtle explorations of the subject. Thus, the chapter on *The Merchant of Venice* explores the sounds that fill the play and its concern with our senses. Other chapters similarly approach the plays not as exemplars of hospitality but as illuminating problems posed by the complex nature of what it means to be welcoming. The second chapter on *Troilus and Cressida* explores the vulnerability of guests and hosts to one another on and off the battlefield, while the last chapter on *Timon of Athens* argues that the emphasis Shakespeare places on death and mourning problematises the play's gift economy and its representation of hospitality. Finally, the conclusion glances briefly ahead to *The Winter's Tale* (c. 1610-11) and the relationship between hospitality and forgiveness. But there are no easy answers to the problem of hospitality in the late plays either, since they, too, remain caught in the dilemma of what it means to be welcoming.

Acknowledgements

My first and greatest thanks must go to my supervisor, Professor Martin Coyle, who is one of the many wonderful teachers at Cardiff University who first sparked my interest in Renaissance literature many years ago. Over the last few years, Martin has been unfailingly supportive and encouraging of this project, a genuine pleasure to work with and an inspirational friend and mentor.

I am fortunate to have been part of a network of excellent medieval and early modern scholars within the English department. In particular, I am grateful to Professor Ceri Sullivan who read and gave feedback on early drafts of this thesis, and to Dr Megan Leitch who has let me be part of some interesting discussions with her MA students over the last few years and has also given much valuable advice on academia in general. Dr Irene Morra, Dr Liz Ford, Dr Rob Gossedge, Professor Carl Phelpstead and Professor Helen Phillips have all offered their support and encouragement throughout the project and have made me feel welcome inside this research community. I am grateful to Dr Johann Gregory who encouraged me to begin my PhD in the first place and who has been a trusted friend for over a decade. I would also like to express my warmest thanks to Dr Mark Truesdale and Dr Sheri Smith, both of whom have been tremendously generous with their time and advice, particularly in the final stages.

Other friends and colleagues within the wider English department have helped a great deal. I especially wish to thank Professor Neil Badmington who gave helpful feedback on large sections of the thesis and offered encouragement during the annual review process. Dr Chris Müller made numerous suggestions on the contemporary reading and I am appreciative of his support. Thanks are also due to Dr Emma West, Dr Catherine Han and Dr Tom

Harman, who all offered advice on the practicalities of finishing a thesis. I would like to thank Rhian Rattray who has given me so much practical support over the last few years and has been so positive about this project. I also wish to thank Julie Alford, Dean Burnett, Nathan Heslop and the staff from the Arts and Social Studies Library. I am grateful to the School of English, Communication and Philosophy for awarding me funding to present my research at conferences both in the UK and further afield.

I would like to thank my father John Battell for his unwavering support and interest in my research. It is no exaggeration to say that this thesis would have been impossible without his help. Dr Chloe Preedy and Dr Varsha Panjwani have not only offered their advice on all things early modern, but are dear friends. They have supported me and this project in many ways over the last few years and I owe them my thanks. I am so grateful to my partner, Aidan, who has listened to everything, read everything and improved everything. Finally, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my beloved grandmother, Margaret, who sadly passed away before I completed my PhD, but who has informed and inspired all of it.

Lastly, and on a more personal note, I would like to say once again how grateful I am both to Martin and to the English department in general. To say that this PhD got off to a difficult start is perhaps an understatement. After a very happy few years of undergraduate study in English Literature at Cardiff University, I began a PhD at a different institute supported by funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Having produced eighty thousand words of writing, at an annual review meeting at the end of the two-year period I was informed that the project was not coming together as hoped and that I should withdraw from the programme with immediate effect. It took several years to collect my thoughts and to want to research again, and when I began my PhD at Cardiff in 2012 I was not sure that I had another eighty thousand words in me. The fact that I did is testament to Martin's formidable support as a mentor and to my friends and colleagues at Cardiff and my family who believed in me and the project long before I did so myself. The last five years have been extraordinarily rewarding and I have found again a love of research which I believed had been lost forever. Thank you to those who helped.

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Introduction

Hospitality in Theory and Performance

This thesis developed from an initial interest in how stage directions functioned across early modern drama and, specifically, how they were used to create a sense of domestic environment. In Act III of Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, for example, the stage direction reads: '*Enter three of four servingmen [including Spiggot the Butler and Nicholas], one with a voider and a wooden knife, to take away all, another the salt and bread, another the tablecloth and napkins, another the carpet; Jenkin with two lights after them*'.¹ I began by thinking about how commonplace domestic objects such as knives, napkins, and trenchers acquired new meaning when they were brought into the theatrical space, and how entrances and exits supplemented the ordinary with moments of heightened emotional tension. Yet as my research advanced, I became convinced that something of more philosophical importance was happening on stage during moments of encounter. It seemed to me that the dramatic practicalities of getting characters on and off the stage and into confrontation with one another was, in Shakespeare's plays, a means to investigate problems of an ethical nature. Intriguing questions began to arise not only of how hospitality was

¹ Thomas Heywood, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, in *Three Elizabethan Domestic Tragedies*, ed. by Keith Sturgess (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985), III.ii.0.SD.

performed in Shakespeare's theatre, but also about what was at stake during moments of encounter with outsider figures. With this as my starting point, I offer here a sustained analysis of how hospitality is performed in three of Shakespeare's more troubling plays: *The Merchant of Venice*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Timon of Athens*. The thesis seeks to demonstrate how Shakespeare's presentation of hospitality goes far beyond simply introducing characters to one another or to the audience, becoming instead a site of rich theatrical inquiry about what it truly means to give hospitality to another person.

In order to appreciate the complexity of how hospitality functions in Shakespeare's plays it is helpful to begin by coming to some working definition of the term. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the practice of being 'hospitable' as 'Offering or affording welcome and entertainment to strangers; extending a generous hospitality to guests and visitors', but it can also refer to a person who is 'Disposed to receive or welcome kindly; open and generous in mind or disposition'.² Hospitality, then, is a broad term, potentially expansive in scope, and capable of meaning different things in different situations. It comprises both the physical reception of strangers and their feasting or entertainment inside the private household, but, returning again to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, it also takes us into the more intangible world of the emotions since it is related to 'things, feelings, qualities, etc.'³ In seeking to explore what hospitality looks like on the Shakespeare stage we therefore encounter an immediate challenge, since it might include banquets or the disposition of individual characters to be welcoming, alongside plenty in between. It is not the intention of this thesis, however, to delimit the definition of how hospitality appears

² 'Hospitable, adj.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 22 August 2017. In Shakespeare's texts, the term 'hospitality' appears only in *As You Like It* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, while 'hospitable' appears in *Coriolanus*, *King John*, and *King Lear*. The word 'welcome', however, occurs nearly four hundred times across the texts. But, despite the relatively light usage of terms relating specifically to 'hospitality', I am arguing that hospitality is everywhere in these plays.

³ 'Hospitable, adj.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017. Web. 22 August 2017.

in Shakespeare, any more than I intend to provide a comprehensive overview of how it is performed across the canon. Rather, I approach *The Merchant of Venice*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Timon of Athens* not as exemplars of hospitality but as illuminating problems posed by the complex nature of what it means to be welcoming. Given the potential breadth of the subject matter, however, it would perhaps be useful to begin by outlining my methodology and the rationale for choosing to concentrate on three plays which, when looked at together, make an unlikely group.

By considering Shakespeare's depiction of hospitality in these three unrelated plays, this thesis seeks to right something of an imbalance within existing scholarship. In the past, critical discussion of hospitality in the canon has tended to focus quite narrowly on the stage representation of food and banquet scenes, leaving Shakespeare's portrayal seemingly one dimensional. While this view has begun to be remedied in recent years by the work of Julia Lupton, David Goldstein, Kevin Curran and others, this thesis attempts to go further in addressing the gap. This is not to imply that the thesis neglects Shakespeare's festive performances of masques, feasts, and household entertainments, but rather that it is committed to expanding the meaning of hospitality in relation to the plays. I am especially fascinated by the work of Jacques Derrida, whose ideas about hospitality receive detailed consideration throughout all the main thesis chapters. The publication of his *Of Hospitality* seminars in 1997 profoundly altered how we think about this supposedly mundane relationship and encouraged a new comprehension of some of the difficulties that are inherent in acts of welcoming.⁴ In the twenty years since *Of Hospitality* first appeared in print, Derrida's thinking has lost none of its urgency, nor its importance in influencing how we talk

⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, trans. by Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000).

about hospitality. No other contemporary thinker has done more to articulate both the difficulties and the radical optimism of the hospitality relationship, and this dual insistence is why I regularly return to Derrida's writings to help put into words some of what is happening on the Shakespeare stage. In addition to a wide range of Derrida's texts, I draw on a number of related writings by Emmanuel Levinas, Michel Serres, René Girard and others who similarly have helped to shed light on various aspects of my discussion of risk and sacrifice in relation to hospitality. A crucial aim of the thesis is to gain fresh insight into how Shakespeare's plays fluctuate quite drastically in their handling of hospitality. In view of this, the thesis introduces a range of themes, from the senses and the emotions to the economics of gift exchange, issues of violence and sacrifice, plus eating and commensality. I hope that this more inclusive approach enables the thesis to reach a deeper understanding of how hospitality is performed in the plays, and performed not only in terms of the staging but also in every particle of the encounters they enact.

The thesis, then, is about extending the meaning of hospitality in three particularly unsettling plays. Early on in the project I decided not to focus on the tragedies, even though it is easy to be drawn to their big moments of spectacle. The butcheries of *Titus Andronicus*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* are undoubtedly what springs to mind when we think of hospitality falling apart in Shakespeare.⁵ The plays I have chosen to examine in this thesis are preoccupied with the breakdown of hospitable behaviour, and yet they are far more ambiguous in their approach and, therefore, to my mind, more fascinating, and more problematic, than the tragedies. I argue that in *The Merchant of Venice*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Timon of Athens* hospitality is anything but straightforward. Hospitality does

⁵ Of course, the violent abuse of hospitality is a great classical theme, as James Heffernan has demonstrated in *Hospitality and Treachery in Western Literature* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014). Or, to borrow a phrase from Ben Jonson, hospitality going wrong is perhaps the mouldiest tale of them all. Leah Scragg notes Ben Jonson's notorious criticism of *Pericles* in *Shakespeare's Mouldy Tales: Recurrent Plot Motifs in Shakespearean Drama* (London and New York: Longman, 1992), p. 189.

collapse, but at the same time there is a radical hopefulness and a striving on the part of the characters to be hospitable in spite of the consequences. That the plays are not traditionally linked to one another is important. The objective here is not to connect them in new ways, but rather to demonstrate how the idea of hospitality is far-reaching in its openness.

Nevertheless, it is the case that the plays do speak to one another. *The Merchant of Venice*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Timon of Athens* are all uncomfortable plays, which has led them occasionally to be classified under the generic label of ‘problem play’.⁶ They are particularly intense examples of how things can go violently wrong between guest and host, since they all

⁶ It is not the purpose of this thesis to fit the plays into a new grouping nor to expand on the ‘problem play’ debate. It is enough to say here that it is widely acknowledged that there is something unsettling about the plays. For a good brief overview of the arguments surrounding genre see Simon Barker’s excellent introduction to *Shakespeare’s Problem Plays: New Casebooks*, ed. by Simon Barker (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 1-20. Barker’s collection of essays focuses specifically on *All’s Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida*, but he gives a useful overview of how the term has been applied to various Shakespeare plays at pp. 3-8. On the history of the term, Barker notes, ‘It is generally accepted that the critic Edward Dowden originated the “problem” label for the plays’ as far back as 1877 (p. 19). Other influential figures in the early years of the debate include F. S. Boas, *Shakespeare and his Predecessors* (London: Murray, 1896) and W. W. Lawrence, *Shakespeare’s Problem Comedies* (New York: Macmillan, 1931). In 1961, E. M. W. Tillyard published an influential study of *Shakespeare’s Problem Plays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961), which grouped together *Hamlet*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *All’s Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*. Tillyard uses the intriguing metaphor of ‘problem children’ to distinguish *All’s Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* from *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida*, arguing that, with the first pair of plays, ‘there is something radically schizophrenic about them’, whereas the second are ‘full of interest and complexity but divided within themselves only in the eyes of those who have misjudged them’ (p. 2). One of the major problems with the ‘problem play’ designation, of course, is that nobody can agree precisely on what the list should include. Following on from Tillyard’s contribution to the debate, Barker points out that ‘To a large extent the pattern that emerged in criticism of the problem plays over the course of the 1960s and 1970s was of refusal and displacement. Each new critic would refute an earlier rationale for the problem plays as a distinct group (even if the membership of the group was now fairly established) and replace it with a new set of criteria’ (p. 5). For further reading on this long and convoluted evolution of the ‘problem play’ genre as it applies to Shakespeare studies, see, for instance, Ernest Schanzer, *The Problem Plays of Shakespeare: A Study of Julius Caesar, Measure for Measure, Antony and Cleopatra* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), Peter Ure, *Shakespeare: The Problem Plays: Troilus and Cressida, All’s Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure, Timon of Athens* (London: Longman, 1961), A. P. Rossiter, *Angel with Horns: Fifteen Lectures on Shakespeare* (London: Longman, 1989), Richard Wheeler, *Shakespeare’s Development and the Problem Comedies* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), *Aspects of Shakespeare’s ‘Problem Plays’: All’s Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure, Troilus and Cressida*, ed. by Kenneth Muir and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), Vivian Thomas, *The Moral Universe of Shakespeare’s Problem Plays* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), Richard Hillman, *William Shakespeare: The Problem Plays* (New York: Maxwell Macmillan, 1993) and Lawrence Danson, *Shakespeare’s Dramatic Genres* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Danson inserts a helpful reflection back on some of the key points surrounding the ‘problem play’ debate at pp. 13-14. While he concludes that the label is no longer a useful one, he does concede that ‘there is value to the category. It lets us see that some plays are troublesome precisely because they aim to cause trouble; that not fitting easily into a tight generic mould can be a virtue rather than a defect’ (p. 14).

drive the hospitality relationship towards crisis point whether amongst friends, neighbours, or strangers.⁷ I begin with *The Merchant of Venice* because it has long been considered the quintessential stranger play in Shakespeare and it raises disquieting issues which are then addressed in the remainder of the thesis. *Troilus and Cressida* is a play haunted by the fall of Troy, which signifies the ultimate abuse of welcome, for the stranger who is welcomed like a guest ends up destroying its host from the inside. My final chapter on *Timon of Athens* examines the banquet and gift culture, which opens new lines of inquiry that take us into darker areas of the text concerned with death and mourning.

In terms of its methodological approach, however, the thesis is careful not to prioritise big moments of spectacle over more minor instances of hospitality. Looking closely at Shakespeare's performance of hospitality invites us into bits of the plays that we might not expect. In my discussions I concentrate on detailed close readings, influenced partly by the excellent work that has been done previously by Patricia Parker and Molly Mahood in bringing marginal moments to light.⁸ Thus, the chapter on *The Merchant of Venice* argues that listening is a hitherto neglected site of welcoming in that play, while the chapter on *Timon of Athens*, once more informed by ideas from Derrida, interprets the protagonist's strange death and burial as an unforeseen parting gesture of hospitality in the midst of mourning rites. Derrida encourages us to expand our understanding of how Shakespeare

⁷ It is the intention of this thesis to move away from archetypal notions of the stranger in Shakespeare, broadening our sense of how hospitality functions in the plays. In light of that aim, I have chosen not to adhere too precisely to the early modern terminology regarding outsiders. For more on the early modern terminology, though, see James Shapiro's seminal monograph on *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), especially the subsection entitled 'Alien', pp. 180-9. Discussing immigrants from abroad who were residents of early modern London, Shapiro notes that 'They were officially referred to as "aliens" or more typically as "strangers". "Foreigners", odd as it may sound to us, was the term Londoners usually reserved for the men and women (including Shakespeare himself) who had abandoned the English countryside and who swelled the size and strained the resources of the metropolis in the late sixteenth century' (p. 181).

⁸ Patricia Parker, *Shakespeare from the Margins: Language, Culture, Context* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), Molly Mahood, *Bit Parts in Shakespeare's Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

stages displays of welcome, as well as helping us to reconsider how scholars have previously regarded hospitality in Shakespeare's plays.

Staging Domesticity in Early Modern Plays

An examination of the criticism of hospitality in Shakespeare's plays must begin with Leslie Fiedler's *The Stranger in Shakespeare*, first published in 1972. The organising principle behind the monograph is to classify some of the major categories of Shakespearean outsider. Fiedler thus separates his discussion into chapters devoted to women characters, Jewish characters, Moors and what he calls 'New World savages'. Fiedler proposes a psychoanalytic and mythical reading of 'Shakespeare's private mythology' which seeks to outline the playwright's own response to outsiders.⁹ In many respects the study is deeply problematic, not least because Fiedler devotes a lot of narrative attention to what he sees as Shakespeare's 'problem with women'.¹⁰ In the introduction Fiedler argues that 'Shakespeare

⁹ Leslie Fiedler, *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (New York: Stein and Day, 1973), p. 33. On the many forms of outsider in early modern drama, some of the most influential works on the topic include: Lloyd Edward Kermode, *Aliens and Englishness in Elizabethan Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), John Michael Archer, *Citizen Shakespeare: Freeman and Aliens in the Language of the Plays* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2005), A. J. Hoenselaars, *Images of Englishmen and Foreigners in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries: A Study of Stage Characters and National Identity in English Renaissance Drama, 1558-1642* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992), Mary Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, Jack D'Amico, *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama* (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1991), Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theatre and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), Arthur L. Little, *Shakespeare Jungle Fever: National-Imperial Re-Visions of Race, Rape, and Sacrifice* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), Ania Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama* (New York: St. Martin's, 1989). For a historical overview of what life was like for strangers in early modern London, see, for example, Ian Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), Laura Hunt Yungblut, *Strangers Settled Here Amongst Us: Policies, Perceptions and the Presence of Aliens in Elizabethan England* (London: Routledge, 1996), *Immigrants in Tudor and Early Stuart England*, ed. by Nigel Goose and Lien Luu (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), Jonathan Gil Harris, *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic: Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Stephen Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990). Neither of these lists is remotely exhaustive and, in the interests of space, I have listed several of the most important monographs only.

¹⁰ Fiedler, *The Stranger in Shakespeare*, p. 43.

[. . .] began with an antifeminist bias; and it is the private mythology bred by that bias which most directly influences his view of the stranger'.¹¹ From this controversial opening, *The Stranger in Shakespeare* then pursues Shakespeare's dislike of women across a range of texts, including the Sonnets and the History Plays. In his review of the book, Mark Eccles concludes that 'Fiedler writes with remarkable assurance about Shakespeare's fantasies, but this book tells more about his own'.¹² Nonetheless, and in spite of some of the criticism which its approach garnered, Fiedler's project was influential and helped to refocus scholarly attention on stranger relations.

Slightly over forty years later, *The Stranger in Shakespeare* received a long-overdue critical reappraisal with the publication of Marianne Novy's *Shakespeare and Outsiders* (2013). The volume is an intentional expansion and correction of Fiedler's earlier study. Novy makes several significant interventions in the debate, perhaps the most important of which is to emphasise the fluidity of the outsider position:

Critics often refer to a range of Shakespearean characters as outsiders, but that condition is something more fluid and ambiguous than most previous critics have noticed, because it is a position that can be moved into and out of, toward which other characters (and the audience) can have many different attitudes.¹³

Novy offers nuanced readings of the shifting dynamics of outsider relations in Shakespeare's plays, including *Twelfth Night*, *Othello* and *King Lear*. She also updates Fiedler's analysis by dedicating a discrete chapter to women characters as both outsiders and insiders. In addition, Novy significantly expands on Fiedler's range of outsider classifications, arguing that 'The categories I will study are not just racial, religious and ethnic, but also social, psychological (which could include being sad from unrequited love, or more general melancholy), physical,

¹¹ Fiedler, *The Stranger in Shakespeare*, p. 18.

¹² Mark Eccles, review of *The Stranger in Shakespeare*, in 'Recent Studies in Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 13: 2, Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama (1973), 374-406 (p. 387).

¹³ Marianne Novy, *Shakespeare and Outsiders* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 1.

moral, gendered, and (ambiguously, as I will discuss in a moment) sexual'.¹⁴ The problem with this sweeping methodology, however, as Novy herself notes early on in the book, is that the category of outsider threatens to become all-encompassing.

There is plenty to be admired in *Shakespeare and Outsiders*, and Novy is a sensitive reader of the plays, but I think her reservations about the usefulness of the outsider grouping could be taken further: in this thesis I argue for a reading of hospitality in Shakespeare's plays that moves away from archetypes altogether. It will become clearer later on, when I engage with some of Derrida's main ideas, that the rigid binaries of guest and host tend to collapse into one another during the moment of encounter. This is why, even though the names mentioned in this thesis include such conspicuous outsiders as Shylock, Cressida, Helen, Thersites, Timon, Apemantus, and the prostitutes, the intention is not to label them, since each person discussed in this thesis is, at one time or another, a guest or a host, a friend, neighbour or enemy. By moving away from archetypes of the stranger in Shakespeare, I also hope to elucidate another neglected aspect of outsider relations. Frequently in these plays, hospitality has a profound influence on all involved. If we focus exclusively on outsiders, then, we can overlook the way that the individual in a hospitality relationship can end up becoming a stranger to himself.

Complementing my argument against the pigeonholing of outsiders, I try in the thesis not to privilege domestic space to the detriment of other sites of hospitality on the Shakespeare stage. The next chapter on *The Merchant of Venice*, for instance, demonstrates how hospitality is staged both in the public streets of Venice and in the courtroom, while later chapters on *Troilus and Cressida* and *Timon of Athens* consider hospitality on the battlefield, inside the makeshift military encampment, and in the isolated woods. Having said that, the

¹⁴ Novy, *Shakespeare and Outsiders*, p. 3.

thesis naturally keeps returning to the private household as a principal location for performances of hospitality. Domestic spaces discussed over the course of this thesis include both Shylock's house in Venice and the greener world of Belmont, the indoor scenes between the lovers at Pandarus's place, and, of course, Timon's lavish hospitality towards his banquet guests at his city residence in Athens. In this latter respect, I am building on previous scholarship dedicated to early modern drama's representation of domestic life.

The seminal work in this field is Wendy Wall's *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (2002). Wall introduces her reader to a wide variety of sources, from early modern cookbooks to lesser-known plays such as *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, to provide novel insights into how domestic labour intersected with emergent conceptions of gender, sexuality and national identity. She notes that her book 'attempts to credit these dramatic scenes as registering something critical about the process of early modern subjecthood, namely the paradoxical ways domesticity signified in the cultural imagination and how it helped to structure social, sexual, gendered, and national identities'.¹⁵ Accompanying Wall's volume are the essays gathered together in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, edited by Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda, which explore how the domestic environment was brought to life on the early modern stage. Lena Orlin's essay, 'Things with little social life (Henslowe's theatrical properties and Elizabethan household fittings)',¹⁶ considers Henslowe's inventory lists and what this tells us about domestic staging requirements. Orlin makes an intriguing case for the overlooked household fittings and other moveable objects not normally listed in the inventories. In the same volume, essays by Catherine Richardson on 'Properties of domestic life: the table in

¹⁵ Wendy Wall, *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 6.

¹⁶ Lena Orlin, 'Things with little social life (Henslowe's theatrical properties and Elizabethan household fittings)', in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. by Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 99-128.

Heywood's *A Woman Killed With Kindness*' and Sasha Roberts on "Let me the curtains draw": the dramatic and symbolic properties of the bed in Shakespearean tragedy', explore two of the most iconic stage commodities.¹⁷ Richardson's article offers a sympathetic reconstruction of the differing meanings and cultural assumptions that audience members might have projected onto tables. Concentrating on *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*, meanwhile, Roberts persuasively establishes how the 'symbolic power of the bed on the early modern stage' was grounded in contemporary bedchamber habits.¹⁸ Together, these scholars have greatly enhanced our awareness of how the staging of domestic life is at once commonplace, yet rich in imaginative potential.

That potential also informs criticism addressed to questions of tragedy's relationship with domesticity that began to inform scholarship from at least the 1990s. The most influential monographs on this topic are Heather Dubrow's *Shakespeare and Domestic Loss: Forms of Deprivation, Mourning, and Recuperation* (1999), Catherine Richardson's *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy in Early Modern England: The Material Life of the Household* (2006), and Geraldo de Sousa's *At Home in Shakespeare's Tragedies* (2010).¹⁹

¹⁷ Catherine Richardson, 'Properties of domestic life: the table in Heywood's *A Woman Killed With Kindness*' and Sasha Roberts, "Let me the curtains draw": the dramatic and symbolic properties of the bed in Shakespearean tragedy', both in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. by Harris and Korda, pp. 129-52 and pp. 153-76.

¹⁸ Roberts, 'Let me the curtains draw', p. 154.

¹⁹ Heather Dubrow, *Shakespeare and Domestic Loss: Forms of Deprivation, Mourning, and Recuperation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Catherine Richardson, *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy in Early Modern England: The Material Life of the Household* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), Geraldo de Sousa, *At Home in Shakespeare's Tragedies* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010). For further discussion of domesticity in early modern drama, see the following works: Viviana Comensoli, *Household Business: Domestic Plays of Early Modern England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), Natasha Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), Sandra Logan, 'Domestic Disturbance and the Disordered State in Shakespeare's *Othello*', *Textual Practice*, 18: 3 (2004), 351-75, Ann Christensen, 'The Return of the Domestic in *Coriolanus*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 37: 2 (1997) 295-316, Phillip Collington, "I would thy husband were dead": *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as Mock Domestic Tragedy', *English Literary Renaissance*, 30: 2 (2000), 184-212, Michael Modarelli, "Untune that string, and hark what discord follows": The Tragedy of *Troilus and Cressida*'s Fractured Oikos', *Cahiers Élisabéthains*, 74: 1 (2008), 1-10, Emma Whipday, 'Shakespeare's Domestic Tragedies: Disrupted Homes on the Early Modern Page, Stage and Street', unpublished PhD thesis (UCL: 2014), Emma Whipday, "Marrow Prying Neighbours": Staging Domestic Space and Neighbourhood Surveillance in *Arden of Faversham*', *Cahiers Élisabéthains*, 88: 1 (2015), 95-110. For the historical contexts to the early modern household, see, for instance, Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in*

Not confined to drama (she also touches on *The Rape of Lucrece* and the Sonnets), Dubrow's *Shakespeare and Domestic Loss* offers new insights into how the intense trauma of 'domestic upheaval' appears across Shakespeare's works, concentrating specifically on burglary, the loss of dwelling places, and the death of parents whilst young.²⁰ In addition to raising questions of gender and sexuality, Dubrow places emphasis on the instability of the household. In *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy*, Richardson looks at how the early modern house was depicted on stage in English domestic plays, including *Arden of Feversham*, *Two Lamentable Tragedies*, *A Woman Killed With Kindness*, and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*. Drawing on a range of historical sources such as household manuals, court depositions and wills, Richardson attempts to recover contemporary attitudes towards the home. She suggests that 'the point of reconstructing contemporary perceptions of the household here is to begin a dialogue about how they might affect the way in which the domestic tragedies of the 1590s and 1600s were watched'.²¹ De Sousa takes a slightly different approach in *At Home in Shakespeare's Tragedies*, exploring 'the tragic functions of home and domestic space' in *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.²² Demonstrating the tragedies' intimate engagement with the early modern view that the private household was a microcosm of the nation state, de Sousa argues that 'Houses become part of the tragic journey

Early Modern London (Oxford: Clarendon University Press, 1996), Lena Orlin, *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), *Material London, ca. 1600*, ed. by Lena Orlin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), Frances Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England 1550-1700* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), Linda Woodbridge, *Vagrancy, Homelessness, and English Renaissance Literature* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), Kari Body McBride, *Domestic Arrangements in Early Modern England* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2002), Lu Emily Pearson, *Elizabethans at Home* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993), Jennifer Melville, 'The Use and Organisation of Domestic Space in Late Seventeenth-Century London', unpublished PhD thesis (Cambridge University: 1999).

²⁰ Dubrow, *Shakespeare and Domestic Loss*, p. 2.

²¹ Richardson, *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy*, p. 4.

²² De Sousa, *At Home in Shakespeare's Tragedies*, p. 10.

and reflect the effects of tragic experience as a dislocation of habits of mind, disruption of households, and destruction of home'.²³

Scholars working on the representation of domestic life on the early modern stage, then, often identify something disturbing about the dramatic representation of the household, linking it to overarching tragic themes in the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Building on this body of criticism, I argue that in *The Merchant of Venice*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Timon of Athens* there is, too, something unsettling about the rendering of the domestic environment. Part of the original contribution of this thesis, however, is its attempt to move away from fixed places and identities (the house, the outsider), arguing for a more mobile conceptualisation of hospitality.

Food for Thought

Critical interest in how early modern drama staged domesticity has burgeoned into an associated area of scholarship which examines representations of food and eating within the drama of the time. The seminal monographs in this area are all as intriguingly different from one another as they are alike: Chris Meads, *Banquets Set Forth: Banqueting in English Renaissance Drama* (2001), Joan Fitzpatrick, *Food in Shakespeare: Early Modern Dietaries and the Plays* (2007), and David Goldstein's recent book on *Eating and Ethics in Shakespeare's England* (2013).²⁴ In *Banquets Set Forth*, Meads argues that 'The audience

²³ De Sousa, *At Home in Shakespeare's Tragedies*, p. 172.

²⁴ Chris Meads, *Banquets Set Forth: Banqueting in English Renaissance Drama* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), Joan Fitzpatrick, *Food in Shakespeare: Early Modern Dietaries and the Plays* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), David Goldstein, *Eating and Ethics in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). For further reading on food and eating within Shakespeare's plays, see, for instance, Michael D. Bristol, "'Funeral Bak'd Meats': Carnival and the Carnavalesque in *Hamlet*" in *Hamlet: Complete Authoritative Text with Biographical and Historical Context, Critical History, and Essays from Five Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, ed. by Susan Wofford (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), Joseph Candido, 'Dining out in Ephesus: Food in *The Comedy of Errors*', in *The Comedy of Errors: Critical Essays*, ed. by Robert S. Miola (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 199-226, Kim F. Hall, 'Guess Who's Coming to

was persistently confronted with banquet scenes wherein the food was to be understood as text in itself; its richness, its extravagance suggesting figurative possibilities, even emblematic or symbolic ones'.²⁵ Meads provides an exhaustive look at how banquets were used in plays from Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* to Shirley's *The Court Secret*, as well as giving a useful overview of Tudor and Stuart banqueting practices. In particular, Meads raises some interesting points about how foods acquire new meanings in different generic contexts. The strong association between the banquet and revenge tragedy is noted, for instance, and Meads contrasts this with the more erotic and sensual uses of food in the comedies. Whereas Meads focuses on the stage presentation of banquet scenes, Fitzpatrick takes a different approach in *Food in Shakespeare*, claiming that her objective is 'to provide modern readers and audiences of Shakespeare with an historically accurate account of the range of, and conflicts between, contemporary views that informed the representations of food and feeding in the plays, in particular views about diet'.²⁶ Looking at a number of dietary themes, including overindulgence, medicine and the humours, vegetarian diets, and

Dinner? Colonisation and Miscegenation in *The Merchant of Venice*' in *New Casebooks: The Merchant of Venice* ed. by Martin Coyle (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), Kaul Mythili, 'References to Food and Feeding in *Pericles*', *Notes and Queries*, 29: 2 (1982), 124-6, James Jackson, 'Shakespeare's Dog-and-Sugar Imagery and the Friendship Tradition', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 1: 4 (1950), 260-3, Andrew Moran, 'Synaesthesia and Eating in *The Winter's Tale*' in *Religion and the Arts*, 9: 1 (2005), 38-61, Stanley Cavell, "'Who Does the Wolf Love?': *Coriolanus* and the Interpretations of Politics', in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. by Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (New York: Methuen, 1985), pp. 245-72, Michael Dobson, "'His Banquet is Prepared": Onstage Food and the Permeability of Time in Shakespearean Performance', in *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 145 (2009), 62-73, Joshua Fisher, 'Digesting Falstaff: Food and Nation in Shakespeare's *Henry IV Plays*', *Early English Studies*, 2 (2009), 1-23, Peter Holland, 'Feasting and Starving: Staging Food in Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 145 (2009), 11-28, Katherine Knowles, 'Appetite and Ambition: The Influence of Hunger in *Macbeth*', *Early English Studies*, 2 (2009), 1-20, J. Dover Wilson, 'A Note on *Richard III*: The Bishop of Ely's Strawberries', *Modern Language Review*, 52: 4 (1957), 563-4. For a historicist approach to food in early modern culture, see, for instance, Joan Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England: Phases, Fads, Fashions 1500-1760* (London: Continuum, 2007), Ken Albala, *The Banquet: Dining in the Great Courts of Late Renaissance Europe* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), Piero Camporesi, *Bread of Dreams: Food and Fantasy in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), Robert Appelbaum, *Aguecheek's Beef, Belch's Hiccup, and Other Gastronomic Interjections: Literature, Culture, and Food Among the Early Moderns* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), Nancy A. Gutierrez, *'Shall She Famish Then?': Female Food Refusal in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), Michel Jeanneret, *A Feast of Words: Banquets and Table Talk in the Renaissance*, trans. by Jeremy Whiteley and Emma Hughes (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

²⁵ Meads, *Banquets Set Forth*, p. 2.

²⁶ Fitzpatrick, *Food in Shakespeare*, p. 1.

foreign tastes, Fitzpatrick establishes how ‘early modern dietaries make clear the view that food and drink are not mere necessities but also indices of one’s position in relation to complex ideas about rank, nationality, and spiritual well-being’.²⁷ The recent appearance of *Eating and Ethics in Shakespeare’s England* signals another change of culinary direction, as Goldstein shifts the critical emphasis away from food and dietary concerns, to explore the ethics of communal eating. In the introduction he outlines how ‘This study instead considers eating from the point of view of community. It examines the ways in which the act of sharing food helps build, demarcate, and destroy relationships – between eater and eaten, between self and other, and among different groups’.²⁸ The book is a rich and thoroughly engrossing read, as Goldstein carefully traces notions of early modern commensality across a wide range of texts, from *Titus Andronicus* and Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, to seventeenth-century cookery manuscripts and Eucharist debates in early modern England. One of the most effective aspects of Goldstein’s work is that he combines a historicist approach that takes in sociable eating in the English Renaissance with writings by philosophers such as Emmanuel Levinas who have talked about the relationship between communal eating and ethics.

Over the course of this thesis I consider food and banqueting scenes in the greatest detail in the final chapter on *Timon of Athens*, where a good deal of the discussion of hospitality centres both on Timon’s lavish opening feast and the second or mock banquet when he hurls water and stones at his rapidly departing guests. In addition to the existing body of scholarship on food in Shakespeare studies, including the excellent critics mentioned above, I also draw on the philosophy of Derrida and Michel Serres, alongside anthropological studies by Claude Lévi-Strauss and others. Like Goldstein, I am persuaded that our

²⁷ Fitzpatrick, *Food in Shakespeare*, p. 3.

²⁸ Goldstein, *Eating and Ethics in Shakespeare’s England*, p. 3.

understanding of these plays' complexities can be deepened by drawing on contemporary thinkers. This is not to apply current criticism onto early modern plays in such a way as to flatten them or leave them seemingly one dimensional, but rather to take the conversation in new directions. By developing my analysis of banqueting in *Timon of Athens* into other areas of the text preoccupied with mourning and burial rites, for instance, I am committed to my overall intention of thinking more imaginatively about how Shakespeare's plays perform hospitality.

As a result of its near ubiquity in early modern drama, there is also perhaps something to be said for the banquet scene threatening to become a stale theatrical device. In the period between 1585 and 1642, Meads estimates that banquets occur in ninety-nine of the extant plays, providing 'a substantial body of dramatic text within which playwrights demonstrated both their inventiveness and their indebtedness to each other'.²⁹ In spite of being frequently innovative (who can forget *Titus Andronicus*'s cannibalistic revenge feast?), the banquet scene is far from being the complete picture of how Shakespeare stages hospitality in his plays. It is here that Derrida's thinking on the subject becomes helpful by expanding the discussion in a number of radical ways. In the next section I briefly outline some of what was important about the publication of *Of Hospitality*. For the reason that Derrida's ideas receive detailed consideration throughout all of the main chapters, however, I do not propose an exhaustive summary now. Rather, I wish briefly to show how Derrida's philosophy of hospitality has occasioned some new directions in recent criticism of early modern plays.

²⁹ Meads, *Banquets Set Forth*, p. 1. Meads argues that that the staging of banqueting scenes remained interesting right up until the closing of the theatres, in spite of their predictability: 'So many aspects of drama in the final phase up to 1642 show a decline in quality and invention, but the banquet scenes in these remaining plays, although predictable in outline, are far from hackneyed stereotypes' (p. 6).

The Ethics of Hospitality

When *Of Hospitality* was published in French in 1997 it brought together two of Derrida's lectures which he had delivered in Paris as part of a seminar series the year before. It is worth noting straightaway that, while a vital summation of Derrida's teachings, *Of Hospitality* is only a single event within a far more extensive collection of writings on the same subject.³⁰ In the *Of Hospitality* seminars, Derrida performs detailed readings of literary texts, including *Antigone* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, but always with a view to the contemporary situation. One of Derrida's most important ideas is the distinction he makes between pure or unconditional hospitality and conditional hospitality. He interrogates at length what keeps holding hospitality back from being unconditional, wondering why and

³⁰ Hospitality is a theme that Derrida consistently returns to throughout his work. In addition to *Of Hospitality* see, for instance, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, trans. by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999), 'The Principle of Hospitality' in *Paper Machine*, trans. by Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 66-69, 'Hostipitality' in *Acts of Religion*, ed. by Gil Anidjar (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 356-420, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. by Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (London: Routledge, 2001), 'Hostipitality' in *Angelaki*, 5: 3 (2000), 3-18, 'Hospitality, Perfectibility, Responsibility', in *Deconstruction Engaged: The Sydney Seminars*, ed. by Paul Patton and Terry Smith (Sydney: Power Publications, 2001), pp. 93-104, 'Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida', in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, ed. by Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 65-83, 'Derelictions of the Right to Justice', in *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews, 1971-2001*, ed. by Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. 133-46, *Aporias*, trans. by Thomas Dutoit (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993). There are two excellent recent monographs which engage closely with Derrida's writings on hospitality but from a feminist perspective: Judith Still, *Derrida and Hospitality: Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), and Tracy McNulty, *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity, and the Expropriation of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007). Other contemporary discussions of hospitality and related topics discussed throughout this thesis include, for example, Immanuel Kant, 'Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch', in *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, ed. by Pauline Kleingeld, trans. by David L. Colclasure (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 67-109, Emile Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society*, trans. by Elizabeth Palmer (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1973), Ben Jelloun, *French Hospitality: Racism and North African Immigrants*, trans. by Barbara Bray (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), Michel Serres, *The Parasite*, trans. by Lawrence R. Schehr (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), J. Hillis Miller, 'The Critic as Host' in *The J. Hillis Miller Reader*, ed. by Julian Wolfreys (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp. 17-38, Marcel Mauss, 'Gift, Gift', in *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, ed. by Alan D. Schrift (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 28-32.

how hospitality ends up becoming so provisional and qualified. In the course of that discussion, Derrida promotes a more critical awareness about the demands that hosts place upon their guests, and vice versa, and how this creates an economy of debt and obligation. Hospitality tends to imply some form of reciprocity, and yet Derrida convincingly argues how ‘this hospitality of paying up is no longer an absolute hospitality, it is no longer graciously offered beyond debt and economy’.³¹ Place is of interest throughout *Of Hospitality*, and not simply because of its association with dwelling and burial, but because it also raises more disquieting questions about who is in charge. As Derrida notes elsewhere, ‘To dare to say welcome is perhaps to insinuate that one is at home here, that one knows what it means to be at home’.³² This statement in turn invites continued discussion of the relationship between hospitality and structures of authority, with Derrida explaining that ‘one can become virtually xenophobic in order to protect or claim to protect one’s own hospitality, the own home that makes possible one’s own hospitality’.³³

Another key strand of Derrida’s argument in *Of Hospitality* concerns what he sees as the violence underpinning the hospitality relationship, and how this relates to issues of trust and sacrifice. The presence of hostility in hospitality goes back to the etymology of the term. Citing from the German, Derrida notes that ‘the word for “hospitality” is a Latin word (*Hospitalität*, a word of Latin origin, of 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 ...)’.³⁴ In his discussion of the etymology, Derrida engages with the work of Emile Benveniste who, in *Indo-European Language and Society*, traces the

³¹ Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 83.

³² Derrida, *Adieu*, p. 15.

³³ Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 53.

³⁴ Derrida, ‘Hostipitality’, *Angelaki*, p. 3.

complex evolution of the terms for stranger, guest, and enemy.³⁵ Hospitality is sometimes an unforeseen encounter which brings with it the threat of terrible violence. At the same time, however, hospitality remains as necessary as it is problematic. Discussing the extent to which hospitality is ingrained in our culture, Derrida says that ‘*ethics is hospitality*; ethics is so thoroughly coextensive with the experience of hospitality’.³⁶ It is this emphasis on the ethical dimension of hospitality that recurs across Derrida’s writings with particular resonance and which has prompted some of the new directions in the scholarship on hospitality.

During the 1990s early modern scholars started to treat hospitality seriously as a topic in its own right. Felicity Heal’s seminal investigation into *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (1990) was quickly followed by Daryl Palmer’s *Hospitable Performances: Dramatic Genre and Cultural Practices in Early Modern England* (1992).³⁷ In her historicist account, Heal provides a meticulous social history of precisely what place hospitality occupied in early modern culture, looking approximately at the period from 1400-1700. The discussion centres on issues related to class and social rank, contrasting, for example, the elite hospitality of country households to that of urban residents and the clergy.³⁸ Heal is also

³⁵ Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society*, pp. 71-83. Derrida comments on Benveniste’s work on etymology in his essay ‘Hostipitality’, *Angelaki* at pp. 13-14. All throughout his writings on hospitality Derrida plays with the semantic ambivalence of the French word *hôte*, which can be translated into English as either guest or host. Derrida also coins the portmanteau term ‘hostipitality’ to describe what he sees at the hybrid mixture of hostility with hospitality. For more on this, see his essay of the same name in *Acts of Religion*.

³⁶ Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, pp.16-17.

³⁷ Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), Daryl Palmer, *Hospitable Performances: Dramatic Genre and Cultural Practices in Early Modern England* (West Lafayette, IN.: Purdue University Press, 1992). Dating from this same period of criticism is an interesting early essay by Paul Kottman, ‘Hospitality in the Interval: *Macbeth*’s Door’, *Oxford Literary Review*, 18: 1 (1996), 87-115.

³⁸ Heal describes the architectural layout of the great house and its relation to hospitality in detail in chapter two ‘Hospitality in the Great Household’, in *Hospitality in Early Modern England*, pp. 23-90. For further reading on architectural space in the early modern household and, specifically, the life of the country estate, see, for example, Lena Orlin, *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), Lena Orlin, *Material London, Ca. 1600* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), Malcolm Kelsall, *The Great Good Place: The Country House and English Literature* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), Linda Levy Peck, *Consuming Splendour: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), J. T. Cliffe, *The World of the Country House in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), James Sutton, *Materialising Space at an Early Modern Prodigy House:*

particularly interested in the changing nature of hospitality across the period, from its origins in medieval society and the Christian doctrine of charity and the necessity of helping the poor and destitute, to court culture and the inevitable myths of nostalgia and decline towards the end of the period. In *Hospitable Performances*, Palmer develops Heal's work, yet his major innovation in the debate is to supplement a cultural historicist reading of hospitality by linking it to literary genre. In particular, he seeks to answer the question of how hospitality affects the genre of literary texts and he thus separates his argument into chapters based on genre classifications. Hence there is a chapter on Shakespeare's comedies, another on the tragedies, and one chapter on pageantry that touches on *Kemp's Nine Days Wonder* and Thomas Nashe's *Summer's Last Will and Testament*. Part of the strength of Palmer's readings comes from this interdisciplinary approach. In his chapter on Shakespeare's comedies, for instance, he persuasively demonstrates how 'marriage in Shakespeare's romantic comedies always hinges on successful hospitality'.³⁹ Palmer uses this point to suggest fresh insights into plays, including *The Taming of the Shrew* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but he simultaneously extends Heal's inquiry into unhappy households and how the early moderns regarded domestic abuse as a crime of hospitality, since the wife had left the family home to enter her husband's house.⁴⁰

The Cecils at Theobalds, 1564-1607 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), Kari Boyd McBride, *Country House Discourse in Early Modern England: A Cultural Study of Landscape and Legitimacy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), Stephen Greenblatt, *Representing the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), Patricia Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics: Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday*, ed. by Patricia Fumerton and Simon Hunt (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), Lisa Celovsky, 'Ben Jonson and Sidneian Legacies of Hospitality', *Studies in Philology*, 106: 2 (2009), 178-206, Heather Dubrow, 'Guess who's coming to dinner?: Reinterpreting Formalism and the Country House Poem', in *Modern Language Quarterly*, 61: 1, (2000), 59-77, Christopher Wortham, "'A happy rural seat" Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the English Country House Poem', *Parergon*, 9: 1, (1991), 137-50, G. R. Hibbard, 'The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century', *Journal of Warburg and Courthauld Institutes*, 19 (1956), 159-74, William McClung, *The Country House in English Renaissance Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), Don E. Wayne, *To Penshurst: The Semiotic of Place and the Poetics of History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), Peter Remien, 'Home to the slaughter": Noah's Ark and the Seventeenth-Century Country House Poem', *Modern Philology*, 113: 4 (2016), 507-529.

³⁹ Palmer, *Hospitable Performances*, p. 62.

⁴⁰ Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England*, p. 5.

While in many respects Palmer's study is an excellent contribution to the discussion, there are two problems with his methodology. The first of these is that the precedence given to genre in the book leads to literary texts that do not fit easily under the headings of comedy, tragedy or pageant being excluded from the discussion. The second, and, arguably greater, problem is that Palmer foregrounds hospitality in a way that sometimes distorts the spirit of the original text.⁴¹ This is especially plain in the chapter on Shakespeare's tragedies, where *King Lear* becomes a play as much about 'a crusty old householder' as it is about a monarch, which many would find unfaithful to the emphasis of the original play.⁴² In the same way, in *Macbeth*, the disturbing account given by one of the witches of demanding some chestnuts from the sailor's wife near the opening of the play becomes less about magic than it is about 'bad hospitality'.⁴³ Hospitality begins to resemble a totalising narrative that is mapped onto these plays in a way that restricts their own textual waywardness. Near the beginning of the book, Palmer notes that the study of 'representations of hospitable practices in dramatic texts and the plethora of strategic and tactical manoeuvres on the fringe of the work's main action may prove overwhelming'.⁴⁴ As a result, although with a few exceptions, he restricts his investigation of hospitality to the heart of the main action: the banqueting scenes, festive occasions, and household entertainments. In the chapters that follow, I try to adopt a different approach, by seeking to consider performances of hospitality from both the margins of the texts as well as the centre.

⁴¹ I am not alone in making this criticism of the text. See the reviews of *Hospitable Performances* by Joost Daalder, *The Review of English Studies*, 46: 181 (1995), 75-76, and Cecile Williamson Cary, *Comparative Drama*, 26: 3 (1992), 287-289.

⁴² Palmer, *Hospitable Performances*, p. 164.

⁴³ Palmer, *Hospitable Performances*, p. 180.

⁴⁴ Palmer, *Hospitable Performances*, p. 39.

Recent Scholarship on Hospitality

More recent essays on hospitality have largely sought to move away from Heal and Palmers' historicist agenda of recovering early modern cultural practices of hospitality and instead have begun to pursue the directions put forward by Derrida and other critical theorists. A 2005 essay by Richard Wilson, entitled 'Making Men of Monsters: Shakespeare in the Company of Strangers', uses Derrida's ideas on hospitality to shed new light on mumming rituals. By comparing mumming with other early modern carnival customs, Wilson demonstrates that, 'While Carnival is a ritual of exclusion, mumming is a game of *identification* with the alien'.⁴⁵ Like Derrida, Wilson emphasises the presence of risk within mumming rites, outlining 'the climax of the visit, which is always some game of chance played between visitors and hosts such as dice or cards. "Mumchance" is the old word for both dice and dumb-show and what it denotes is the hazard of exchange'.⁴⁶ Not long afterwards an essay by David Ruitter appeared on 'Shakespeare and Hospitality: Opening *The Winter's Tale*' (2007), which also uses Derrida's thinking extensively in order to propose a new reading of the early scenes of Shakespeare's late play. Ruitter engages closely with several of Derrida's key arguments on the complexity of hospitality, particularly in relation to notions of gift exchange and whether the host remains fully in control of the hosting situation. While Ruitter is largely concerned with the opening of *The Winter's Tale*, he does look ahead to the play's ending and the statue sequence, interpreting Paulina as the 'new host'⁴⁷ of the

⁴⁵ Richard Wilson, 'Making Men of Monsters: Shakespeare in the Company of Strangers', in *Shakespeare*, 1, Nos. 1-2 (2005), 8-28 (p. 14). In *Hospitality and Treachery in Western Literature*, James Heffernan dedicates a chapter to Shakespeare's plays at pp. 117-48. Unsurprisingly, given the focus of his monograph, Heffernan concentrates on the tragedies, discussing the portrayal of hospitality in plays including *King Lear* and *Macbeth*. Heffernan's approach is very much to look at the big moments of theatre, particularly those involving food, drink or household entertainments. Apart from an oddly sympathetic reading of Goneril and Regan's inhospitable treatment of Lear (whom he notes reminds him of his grandmother), this is a lucid introduction of the staging of hospitality gone wrong in Shakespeare's tragedies.

⁴⁶ Wilson, 'Making Men of Monsters', p. 14.

⁴⁷ David Ruitter, 'Shakespeare and Hospitality: Opening *The Winter's Tale*', *Mediterranean Studies*, 16 (2007), 157-77 (p. 175). Derrida's ideas on hospitality have been effectively applied to other early modern plays.

play. Kevin Curran's 2011 article on 'Hospitable Justice: Law and Selfhood in Shakespeare's Sonnets'⁴⁸ brings another perspective, this time foregrounding the legal contexts of Sonnets 35, 49, and 88 and then reading these texts in relation to modern philosophical discussions of hospitality by Derrida, Levinas and others.

A further direction in the recent scholarship on hospitality in early modern studies is the research which Julia Lupton does to blend questions of selfhood with modern design discourse. In a 2013 essay entitled 'Making Room, Affording Hospitality: Environments of Entertainment in *Romeo and Juliet*', the Capulets' party becomes, for Lupton, a way of articulating how hospitality always 'involves *making room for guests*'.⁴⁹ What is compelling about Lupton's scholarship is the way that she combines an awareness of the practicalities of stage business and material culture with phenomenological lines of inquiry. She argues, for example, that 'The simplest acts of setting the table or strewing rushes on the floor mentally as well as physically prepare the hosting household for the adventure to come by rededicating the space of the *oikos* to the dangers and delights of visitation'.⁵⁰ We find this, Lupton proposes, in *Romeo and Juliet*, when the Capulet servants' clearing away of commonplace

Courtney Lehmann's 2011 article titled "'Taking back the night": Hospitality in *The Changeling* on Film' in *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 29: 4 (2011), 591-604, invites Thomas Middleton to the party. In the essay, Lehmann focusses on contemporary film adaptations of *The Changeling* in order to argue that Derrida can help to elucidate how the cinematic representations of Beatrice-Joanna negotiate 'the borderland between rape and consent', as well as the gulf between pure and conditional hospitality (p. 593). She also touches on themes of day and night in *The Changeling*, linking this both to contemporary campaigns to support victims of sexual assault alongside Derrida's discussions of daytime spying. In *Eating and Ethics in Shakespeare's England*, Goldstein devotes a chapter to 'Eaters of Eden: Milton and the Invention of Hospitality', interpreting *Paradise Lost* as 'an elegy for lost community' (p. 175).

⁴⁸ Kevin Curran, 'Hospitable Justice: Law and Selfhood in Shakespeare's Sonnets', *Law, Culture and the Humanities*, 9: 2 (2013), 295-310.

⁴⁹ Julia Reinhard Lupton, 'Making Room, Affording Hospitality: Environments of Entertainment in *Romeo and Juliet*', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 43: 1 (2013), 145-72 (p. 146). See also Reinhard Lupton's other work on this topic: 'Macbeth's Martlets: Shakespearean Phenomenologies of Hospitality', *Criticism*, 54: 3 (2012), 365-76, 'Hospitality' in *Early Modern Theatricality*, ed. by Henry S. Turner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 423-41, 'Shakespearean Softscapes: Hospitality, Phenomenology, Design', in *The Return of Theory in Early Modern English Studies, Volume II*, ed. by Paul Cefalu, Gary Kuchar and Bryan Reynolds (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 143-64, and her chapter on 'Hospitality and Risk in *The Winter's Tale*', in *Thinking with Shakespeare: Essays on Politics and Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 161-86.

⁵⁰ Lupton, 'Making Room, Affording Hospitality', p. 146.

objects in anticipation of the party prompts the other preparations required in order to create space mentally and emotionally for the arrival of the visitors. Hospitality here connects the everyday with the subjects' displacement and anxious anticipation.

Lupton's interest in hospitality culminated in late 2016 in a collection of critical essays on *Shakespeare and Hospitality: Ethics, Politics, and Exchange*, co-edited with David Goldstein. In the introduction, Goldstein and Lupton explain that their aim is 'to fashion a welcoming space to consider hospitality as a subject of present importance'.⁵¹ The methodologies employed in the book are varied in scope, and the contributors draw on a wide range of early modern literatures alongside contemporary critical theory, with Derrida and Levinas favoured authors. Hospitality is treated as a theme affecting performance practice, material culture and philosophical inquiries. Andrew Hiscock, for example, reads *Troilus and Cressida* as a play where 'the riven nature of Shakespeare's warring societies is

⁵¹ David B. Goldstein and Julia Reinhard Lupton, 'Introduction' to *Shakespeare and Hospitality: Ethics, Politics, and Exchange*, ed. Goldstein and Lupton (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 1-16 (p. 12). Several individual articles published in 2016 demonstrate the burgeoning interest in hospitality and indicate future directions in the scholarship. In 'Shakespearean Hospitalities in *Sir Thomas More*', in *Cahiers Élisabéthains*, 89: 1 (2016), 9-26, James Purkis uses Derrida's texts to explore 'how competing aspects of early modern hospitable discourse shape the presentation of More himself and the play's exceptional dramatisation of popular revolt' (p. 11). Purkis looks closely at the part of the manuscript written by Hand D (thought to be Shakespeare's hand) which contains More's speech to the Mayday rioters in defence of strangers. But he does not leave the discussion of hospitality there, also noting, for instance, how the threatened rape of Doll 'is immediately presented in terms that might be designed as an affront to the hospitable' (p. 19). For more on the background to the stranger crisis in *Sir Thomas More* see John Jowett's excellent recent introduction to his edition of the play (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), pp. 1-130. In another 2016 essay titled 'In the Mean Season: *Richard II* and the Nostalgic Politics of Hospitality', *Parergon*, 33: 2 (2016), 57-78, Kristine Johanson furthers the critical debate with a reading of Shakespeare's *Richard II* as a play about 'absent hospitality' (p. 59). Johanson draws on Felicity Heal's monograph on cultures of early modern hospitality to argue for a historicist approach. She alludes to the dismal economic situation in England during the 1590s to demonstrate that the play is filled with nostalgia for a lost golden age of hospitality. See also Martin Orkin's recent essay entitled "'Which is the stranger here?": Degrees of Doubt, Hospitality, and Invisibility in *The Merchant of Venice*', *Cahiers Élisabéthains*, 91: 1 (2016), 51-66, and Randi Pahlau, 'Hospitality and the Natural World within an Ecotheological Context in William Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*', unpublished PhD thesis (Kent State University: 2015). There is also Maurizio Calbi's essay "'This Is My Home, Too": Migration, Spectrality and Hospitality in Roberta Torre's *Sud Side Stori*' (2000), *Shakespeare*, 7: 1 (2011), 16-34. David Ruitter and Ruben Espinosa's edited collection of essays on *Shakespeare and Immigration* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014) contains a number of insightful essays that touch on issues closely related to hospitality (see, for instance, the chapters by Eric Griffin, Geraldo de Sousa, Kathryn Vomeros Santos, and Elizabeth Valdez Acosta). See also B. J. Sokol, *Shakespeare and Tolerance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), and Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Citizen-Saints: Shakespeare and Political Theology* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005).

repeatedly expressed in terms of the crises being negotiated within the microcosm of the elite household – *oikos*'.⁵² In the next essay, Jessica Rosenberg discusses the repurposed funeral baked meats in *Hamlet* to note how Hamlet 'charges his mother with both bad hospitality and good housekeeping',⁵³ adding that 'The misogynistic core of Hamlet's accusations lies in its central paradox: at the same that Gertrude (a bad hostess) is not giving away enough, she is giving away far too much'.⁵⁴ Thomas Anderson's essay then looks at the portrayal of friendship and hospitality in *Coriolanus*, noting how the greetings between Coriolanus and Aufidius indicate 'The ambivalence at the core of [. . .] hospitality' and explain the play's 'remarkable interplay of eroticism and violence'.⁵⁵

The following two essays from James Kearney and Sean Lawrence read *The Winter's Tale* and *Anthony and Cleopatra* respectively through the lens of economic exchange, both persuasively showing how the exchange of gifts undermines hospitality. Lawrence encapsulates the problematic dynamic when he says of *Anthony and Cleopatra* that 'not only do the characters of Shakespeare's play in fact fail to create stable relationships through hospitality but also that they must fail. While a relationship can be built on exchange, it can never overcome the suspicion of being merely tactical, self-serving, or temporary'.⁵⁶ The implications of this argument for plays as different from one another as *The Merchant of Venice* and *Timon of Athens* are far-reaching and are explored later in this thesis.

In the next few essays in *Shakespeare and Hospitality*, the authors address issues of dramatic performance. James Kuzner writes about theatre in *As You Like It*, while David

⁵² Andrew Hiscock, "'Will you walk in, my lord?': Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* and the Anxiety of Oikos', in *Shakespeare and Hospitality*, pp.17-38 (p. 22).

⁵³ Jessica Rosenberg, 'A Digression to Hospitality: Thrift and Christmastime in Shakespeare and the Literature of Husbandry', in *Shakespeare and Hospitality*, pp. 39-66 (p. 39).

⁵⁴ Rosenberg, 'Thrift and Christmastime', in *Shakespeare and Hospitality*, p. 41.

⁵⁵ Thomas P. Anderson, "'Here's strange alteration!': Hospitality, Sovereignty, and Political Discord in *Coriolanus*", in *Shakespeare and Hospitality*, pp. 67-88 (p. 77).

⁵⁶ Sean Lawrence, 'Hospitality in *Anthony and Cleopatra*' in *Shakespeare and Hospitality*, pp. 112-32 (pp. 112-3). See also James Kearney, 'Hospitality's Risk, Grace's Bargain: Uncertain Economies in *The Winter's Tale*', in *Shakespeare and Hospitality*, pp. 89-111.

Hillman goes on to discuss the language of salutations in *Othello*, concentrating on Cassio's words of welcome to Desdemona in Cyprus and showing how his greeting invokes the Ave Maria.⁵⁷ In a fascinating essay, Thomas Moretti considers hospitality and temporality in *King Lear*. Once more referring to Derrida's writings, Moretti establishes that, in performance, the awkward internal timings of *King Lear* become inhospitable to the theatre spectators. The playwright's rendering of the untimely rhythms that signal either hastiness or delay 'forces audience members to dwell upon excruciating moments of madness, cruelty, loss, and grief'.⁵⁸ The last few essays then propose more theological readings. Sheiba Kian Kaufman comments on the representation of Persian hospitality in *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*, while Joan Pong Linton provides some biblical contexts to the stranger situation in *Twelfth Night*.⁵⁹ Michael Noschka's final essay on the ethics of stewardship in *Timon of Athens* sheds light on some of the religious parables in that play.⁶⁰ Hospitality is seen not just as theme or idea, but as something integral to the theatrical performance.

The essays in *Shakespeare and Hospitality* signal a timely intervention in the existing scholarship. One of the major strengths of the collection is to map the complexity of the critical terrain and open up the debate by setting new plays such as *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* alongside *The Winter's Tale*, for instance. The breadth and resonance of Derrida's ideas on hospitality inform nearly every piece in the volume, with Derrida often put in rewarding dialogue with thinkers like Levinas or Mauss. The sheer range of topics under discussion confirms that we have come a long way since the narrow classifications of

⁵⁷ David Hillman, 'Ave Desdemona', in *Shakespeare and Hospitality*, pp. 133-56, and James Kuzner, 'As You Like It and the Theatre of Hospitality', in *Shakespeare and Hospitality*, pp. 157-73.

⁵⁸ Thomas J. Moretti, 'Hospitable Times with Shakespeare: A Reading of *King Lear*', in *Shakespeare and Hospitality*, pp. 174-96 (pp. 175-6).

⁵⁹ Sheiba Kian Kaufman, "'Her father loved me, oft invited me": Staging Shakespeare's Hidden Hospitality in *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*', in *Shakespeare and Hospitality*, pp. 197-221, and Joan Pong Linton, 'Hospitality in *Twelfth Night*: Playing at (the Limits of) Home', in *Shakespeare and Hospitality*, pp. 222-41.

⁶⁰ Michael Noschka, 'Thinking Hospitably with *Timon of Athens*: Toward an Ethics of Stewardship', in *Shakespeare and Hospitality*, pp. 242-64.

hospitality in Fiedler's *The Stranger in Shakespeare*. The essay collection also breaks out of Palmer's rigid adherence to genre in *Hospitable Performances*, instead choosing to assemble the essays thematically. Yet although this is a step forward in the criticism, it risks becoming a downside. This is because hospitality resists any neat classification and therefore the discussions tend to seep into one another with no respect for the sub-divisions. Thus, the analysis of greetings in *Coriolanus* seems to belong with the treatment of the same theme in *Othello* later on, while the essay on household thrift in *Hamlet* feels closer in scope either to the essays on economics or, with its talk of the seasonal calendars of feasting and frugality, arguably to the later discussions of temporality in *King Lear*. Nonetheless, *Shakespeare and Hospitality* remains a rich volume that amalgamates the directions taken by many of the critics I cited earlier on in this literature review. The essays reinforce my own sense that the scholarship on hospitality in early modern drama is determined to take its reader somewhere unexpected.

The Present Thesis

The present thesis concentrates on the different kinds of hospitality informing *The Merchant of Venice*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Timon of Athens*, and offers a reading of these plays that is influenced by Derrida and contemporary thought. While I expand on some of the excellent scholarship mentioned above, I also attempt to break new ground by examining what might be termed marginal hospitalities. Banquets and the generous provision of shelter or accommodation to guests are some of the recognisable signs by which we recognise hospitality is happening on stage, yet they do not limit or define it. Hospitality is just as often found in the brief moments as the large gestures, in small bits of language as well as in the great speeches. It comprises listening, too, every bit as much as speaking. In the opening to

Shakespeare from the Margins: Language, Culture, Context, Patricia Parker notes that her project is ‘about what in Shakespeare has been marginalised or overlooked, and the edification from the margins (to borrow from Hamlet) that can be gained by attending to what might appear the simply inconsequential’.⁶¹ I share in Parker’s conviction that what is taking place on the fringes of the action proper is as important as the big moments of dramatic spectacle. This is not automatically to prioritise the marginal incidents, but, again, to expand the sense of what hospitality is capable of achieving in Shakespeare. While I allude to other Shakespeare plays, including *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Coriolanus* and *The Winter’s Tale*, considering three plays in substantial detail affords me space to explore the quieter areas of the text, the little moments and the minor figures. My desire is to arrive at a more subtle understanding of how hospitality is performed on stage.

Throughout the thesis I draw on Derrida’s writings but I feel I perhaps need to clarify what I see as a fundamental difference in how Shakespeare and Derrida approach the problem of hospitality. As previously mentioned, my aim is not to suggest a Derridean reading of Shakespeare’s plays. I rather see Derrida as a helpful guest who has broadened the critical vocabulary of hospitality in a number of significant ways. Speaking about hospitality in Sydney in August of 1999, Derrida said:

We are not dreamers, from that point of view, we know that today no government, no nation state, will simply open its borders, and in good faith we know that we don’t do that ourselves. We would not simply leave the house with no doors, no keys and so on and so forth. We protect ourselves, OK? Who could deny this in good faith? But we have the desire for this perfectibility, and this desire is regulated by the infinite pole of pure hospitality. If we have a concept of conditional hospitality, it’s because we also have the idea of a pure hospitality, of unconditional hospitality.⁶²

These lines are important because they show that Derrida is not asking us to take dangerous risks with our own hospitality: to leave our home unlocked, or to let ourselves be surprised or

⁶¹ Parker, *Shakespeare from the Margins*, p. 1. Mahood’s fascinating research on marginal roles in Shakespeare’s plays is also relevant to my interests here; see, for instance, her monograph on *Bit Parts*.

⁶² Derrida, *Deconstruction Engaged*, p. 101.

ambushed by strangers. He is arguing simply that pure hospitality exists at one end of a spectrum and so it becomes a way of thinking through the dilemma and understanding where good intentions sometimes fall apart. A great deal of the urgency of Derrida's writings on hospitality, however, also comes from his application to contemporary society. As he says elsewhere, 'It is not for speculative or ethical reasons that I am interested in unconditional hospitality, but in order to understand and to transform what is going on today in our world'.⁶³ Where Derrida is overt about his intentions, Shakespeare seems more interested in the speculative potential of hospitality and with an imaginative engagement with the topic. Of course, this is not to say that Shakespeare was oblivious to the stranger crisis in seventeenth-century London, but only that the theatre is a unique space to test the limits of possibility.⁶⁴ In *The Merchant of Venice*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Timon of Athens* and beyond into the late plays, Shakespeare is performing hospitality and, at the same time, exploring both its wonder and its violence, its everyday noises and meetings, and its moments of heightened tension. In the end, Shakespeare is perhaps asking the same questions that trouble Derrida: Is another world visible from here? Is hospitality possible? The plays examined in this thesis, I suggest, if they do not provide any neat answers to these questions, do at least allow us to see and hear them.

⁶³ Derrida, 'Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility', in *Questioning Ethics*, p. 70.

⁶⁴ For a concise introduction, see Eric Griffin's essay on 'Shakespeare, Marlowe, and the Stranger Crisis of the Early 1590s', in *Shakespeare and Immigration*, pp. 13-36.

Chapter One

Listening for Welcome in *The Merchant of Venice*

Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?

Shylock, *The Merchant of Venice*¹

Somehow the senses have got detached from the stranger question in general critical readings of *The Merchant of Venice*, and yet Shylock's urgent appeal to the universality of the human senses is at the heart of this play. Hospitality is a way of encountering the world around us, one that is mediated primarily through our senses and emotions. In the introduction I outlined the centrality of banquets and eating to the recent scholarship on hospitality in Shakespeare's

¹ William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. by Molly Mahood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), III.i.46-52. All further references to the play are to this edition unless otherwise stated and are given parenthetically in the text.

plays, which would seem naturally to lead on to the sense of smell and especially taste.² Mikhail Bakhtin writes that ‘The encounter of man with the world, which takes place inside the open, biting, rending, chewing mouth, is one of the most ancient, and most important objects of human thought and imagery’.³ While Bakhtin is surely correct, taste is not the only sensory faculty that is stimulated through encounters with the outside world. Hospitality entails the free movement of bodies coming into contact both with one another and with their environment. It is a moment rich in sensory and emotional possibilities. But even though *The Merchant of Venice* is one of Shakespeare’s most iconic stranger plays, the existing scholarship is more likely to emphasise its representation of the legal system than to explore its portrayal of the senses. It is as if we have fallen for the play’s own internal myth-making of Venice as a tolerant society in which foreigners are dealt with in a measured manner through the formalities of state bureaucracy, red tape, paperwork, and solicitors’ bonds. I will suggest, however, that the play’s performances of hospitality involve much more than this description allows for. It is the intention of this chapter to establish that Shakespeare depicts hospitality in *The Merchant of Venice* not simply as a matter for the law courts, but as an intensely visceral and emotional experience. In particular, there is an underlying violence to stranger relations in this play that often becomes overt. The violence of the hospitality relationship is a recurring

² Recent readings of hospitality in *The Merchant of Venice* have also tended to concentrate on eating and the stage presentation of foodstuffs. For more on eating in the play, see David Goldstein, *Eating and Ethics in Shakespeare’s England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). Goldstein suggests that the play is strangely empty of onstage meals, and he finds something disquieting about its portrayal of table fellowship. Julia Lupton builds on this point by discussing failures of commensality in *Citizen-Saints: Shakespeare and Political Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), relating this to the play’s broader citizenship crisis. In her essay ‘Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner? Colonisation and Miscegenation in *The Merchant of Venice*’ in *New Casebooks: The Merchant of Venice* ed. by Martin Coyle (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), Kim F. Hall provides a historicist account of the play’s recurrent images of hunger, arguing that Shylock becomes linked to the colonialist figure of the cannibal, pp. 92-117. Taken together, these critics all agree that there is something deeply disturbing about the portrayal of communal eating in *The Merchant of Venice*. They all discuss the play’s representation of food as either a problem or a disappointing failure within the stage play world. I pick up the discussion of taste in relation to hospitality in a later chapter on *Timon of Athens*, but for now my argument focusses on the sense of listening.

³ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. by Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 281.

theme throughout this thesis, and, here in *The Merchant of Venice*, we witness the guest preparing to cut the heart out of a citizen of his host country. It is one of the play's great dramatic moments where hospitality is not merely strained but stretched to breaking point. I noted previously, however, that alongside such big moments of spectacle I also wish to pursue the more marginal aspects of hospitality, and so I consider in this chapter how the sense of hearing influences performances of welcome in *The Merchant of Venice*.

Of all of the senses, listening might not perhaps be the most immediately obvious one when we are thinking about hospitality, yet it is of vital importance. Hospitality often generates a good deal of noise and this is especially the case in the theatre where, aside from the stage properties of napkins, cutlery and trenchers, the uproar of loud salutations and the raucous entertainment of guests are some of the foremost ways that an audience can recognise that hospitality is taking place. Derrida notes the noisy hubbub of welcoming in *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, when he says that 'We are welcomed at the very outset under the sign of a sign of hospitality, at the sign of hospitality, by the witty remark of a hosteller, the questionable words of a host or the bad humour of an innkeeper'.⁴ Hal and Falstaff's wild antics at the Boar's Head Inn in the *Henry IV* plays, for instance, is one memorable instance of noisy hospitality. As with so many of his writings on hospitality, however, Derrida soon brings ethics into the discussion, and it is his understanding of the ethical importance of listening to the language and practice of hospitality that informs the thematic direction for this opening chapter. In *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, Derrida outlines 'a series of metonymies that bespeak hospitality, the face, welcome: tending toward the other, attentive intention, intentional attention, yes to the other'.⁵ For Derrida, paying careful attention to the other person, and listening attentively, offers another perspective on how we theorise the hospitality relationship. In the *Of Hospitality*

⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, trans. by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 100.

⁵ Derrida, *Adieu*, p. 22.

seminars, as we will see later on, he comments at length on some of the problems caused by differences in speech and unfamiliarity with the native language. In this chapter I am similarly interested in the ethical dimensions of listening and the risks of being heard by neighbours or strangers. It has long been noted both that *The Merchant of Venice* is a play about outsiders and also that it is unusually musical, and yet these ideas have not been linked. In attempting to redress this gap, and draw new connections across the text, I argue that sound is a hitherto neglected site of welcoming in *The Merchant of Venice*.

In the introduction I suggested that the thesis seeks to distance itself from discussions of archetypal outsiders. Consequently, although they are key topics in *The Merchant of Venice*, I do not offer a reading of Jewish or female alterity in the play. Rather, I seek to put forward a fresh interpretation of the stranger problem, exploring the theme of music and the senses and I link this to one of the essential aspects of Derrida's theory of hospitality, which is the unjustifiability of why we choose to take in some people and turn away others. Concentrating on the play's soundscape can allow us to rethink how ethical dilemmas relate to hospitality, taking up Derrida's observation that the threshold is the originating point of hospitality.⁶ As is frequently the case in Shakespeare's plays, in *The Merchant of Venice* thresholds are dangerous places: they are liminal sites of violent expulsion as well as of welcoming scenes. When it comes to listening, the ears themselves are bony little thresholds. Like our homes, they, too, have become adept at filtering our unwanted intrusions.

As well as introducing ideas about the threshold, another main purpose of the chapter is to begin articulating the violence of the hospitality relationship which, as previously noted, is a central preoccupation of this thesis. It is no more than an etymological coincidence that hospitality contains within it the word 'spit', but this is a play in which a native citizen of

⁶ Jacques Derrida discusses the idea of the threshold in a number of texts but at some length in *Aporias*, trans. by Thomas Dutoit (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993).

Venice violently spits on a guest resident. It will become clearer in the second chapter on *Troilus and Cressida* that Derrida was also exceedingly troubled by the violence which he found to be innate to hospitality. In *Of Hospitality*, he presents numerous everyday situations in which both guests and hosts exert a forceful hold over one another as they meet. In the present chapter I also wish to introduce the theme of movement in relation to hospitality. Not only must the guest pass across the entrance threshold, but acts of welcoming tend to move the individual on an emotional level as well. Hospitable encounters with other people have a tendency to stir us and get under our skin, moving us in some incomprehensible way. This internal motion replicates the literal transgressions of the threshold, linking outside and interior in a way not dissimilar from early modern medical thinking about the ears.

Thresholds of Hearing in Early Modern Culture

Early modern anatomists looking to depict the curiously hidden recesses of the human ear frequently draw on a household topography of winding passages, doors and stairways. One of the most important achievements in Renaissance otology was made by the Italian physician Bartolomeo Eustachio, who does just this. He discovered what would later become known as the Eustachian tube, which is a narrow pipe connecting the ear and throat. Labelling the find in his 1564 study, Eustachio predicted that “knowledge of this passage [. . .] will be very useful to physicians” because “now they will know that even thick materials” can be “purged from the ears” by this “very ample pathway” or, conversely, absorbed inwards through the same gateway’.⁷ This sense of physical space became characteristic of

⁷ Bartolomeo Eustachio, quoted by Jennifer Rae McDermott in “‘The Melodie of Heaven’: Sermonizing the Open Ear in Early Modern England”, in *Religion and the Senses in Early Modern Europe* ed. by Wietse de Boer and Christine Göttler (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp.177-97 (p. 182). For more on the medical history of the ear, see Jorge E. Hachmeister, ‘An Abbreviated History of the Ear from Renaissance to Present’, *Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine*, 76 (2003), 81-86.

early modern otological models in general, and by the time Helkiah Crooke's *Microcosmographia* was printed in England in 1615, it had become the norm. Thus, whilst explaining how the sense of hearing works, Crooke writes that:

The Ayre endowed with the quality of a sound is through the auditory passage, which outwardly is alwayes open, first stricken against the most drie and sounding membrane, which is therefore called Tympanum, or the Drumme. The membrane being stricken doth moou the three littel bones, and in a moment maketh impression of the character of the sound. This sound is presently receiued of the inbred Ayre, which it carryeth through the windowes of the stony bone before described, into the winding burroughs, and so into the Labyrinth, after into the Snail-shell, and lastly into the Auditory Nerue which conueyeth it thence vnto the common Sense as vnto his Censor and Iudge.⁸

In his description, Crooke maps the curious bone structure of the ear onto more recognisable topographical terrain, which has the effect of domesticating somewhat its anatomical peculiarity. Alongside the homely examples borrowed from the natural environment (the pond, burrows and, of course, the snail shell), Crooke also makes extensive use of the illustrative potential of domestic architecture. He likens the passageways and stony windows belonging to the inner ear to the interior space of the early modern household. English medical treatises thus build on Eustachio's work by ingraining anatomical models of the ear within a domestic setting.

Strengthening the association between the ears and a vocabulary of domestic interiors is the intensely material quality of sound in the early modern period. In her discussion of voice, Gina Bloom asks:

What does it mean to say that the voice is material? [. . .] The medical and scientific writers I discuss [. . .] describe voice as crafted air that gains momentum for movement from the speaker's lungs. Shaped into pronunciations by the tongue, teeth, and palate, shifted in tones by the gullet, windpipe, and vocal chords, vocal sound travels through the air to enter the air-filled chambers of the listener's ears.⁹

⁸ Helkiah Crooke, quoted by Wes Folkerth in *The Sound of Shakespeare* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 64-5.

⁹ Gina Bloom, *Voice in Motion: Staging Gender, Shaping Sound in Early Modern England* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 2.

Owing to the visibly changing shape of the mouth and throat during word pronunciation, voice is a particularly clear example of how the early moderns conceptualised sound as a special type of physical matter, one whose life was centred on motion. As Bruce Smith puts it in *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor*, ‘Above all, the power of sound resides in the fact that it is a matter of motion, of waves of air physically striking the members of hearing. Sound is communicated through motion, actively impressing itself on the senses of the listener, whereas sight seems to be incorporeal, to lack motion’.¹⁰ Smith goes on to add that ‘To understand voicing and listening in early modern culture we have to keep our sight much more focussed than we are accustomed to on the material realities of metal, wood, air, and the members of the human body.’¹¹ This extremely material way in which the early moderns understood sound – together with the household vocabulary already being used in the anatomy books – led to the growth in hospitality imagery being applied to narrative descriptions of listening. In the same way that sounds from the outside world drift inside the listener’s ears, hospitality involves what Derrida terms ‘the stranger’s entering movement’.¹² For those writing about the sense of hearing, the noises flooding the inner spaces of the ears could quite easily be compared to guests being ushered inside the private household.

Early modern narratives of listening, then, went far beyond static references to household architecture. Building on the idea of movement, increasingly dynamic allusions to the welcoming of guests became a way of articulating contemporary unease about the ear as a vulnerable entryway to the body. We can see this plainly in changing accounts of the Eustachian tube. In Eustachio’s original description, the auditory canal ‘winds ever deeper

¹⁰ Bruce Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 105.

¹¹ Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, p. 106.

¹² Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, trans. by Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press 2000), p. 123.

into the throat as narrow cartilage until “at the end of the same passage, there seems to be a kind of doorway”.¹³ Helkiah Crooke later takes this analogy one step further as ‘the “strong gristle” at the end of the Eustachian tube becomes a personified “Porter” to monitor and “keep” the “outlet” of the passage’.¹⁴ Personifying the gristly inner ear cartilage as a doorkeeper, Crooke transforms this bit of the body into a powerful host whose role is to actively defend the body from harm. Most of all, these hospitable ear metaphors flourished in the new religious instruction manuals which started to appear in print from the 1590s. Intended to combat inattentiveness in church, popular sermons stressed the spiritual importance of listening well.¹⁵ In seeking to communicate the necessity of listening carefully to congregations of sometimes bored listeners, the Christian preachers turned to the same language of hospitality found in the anatomy books. Of most use to these Protestant ministers was the type of vigilant hospitality which Crooke writes about. William Harrison’s sermon on *The Difference of Hearers*, for instance, included the advice: ‘True, the door of the ear must be open enough to admit God, but it should also be guarded carefully so that the “Diuell” cannot steal in “to take the worde out of your hearts”’.¹⁶ In another sermon entitled *A Jewel for the Ear*, Robert Wilkinson argues that one’s ears should welcome ‘not every gieste, but the king of glorie [who] shall come in’.¹⁷ In both of these instructional examples, the ideal parishioner’s ears behave like discriminating hosts, barring unsuitable guests and upholding an attitude of spiritual vigilance. Protestant writings on hearing during the early modern period accordingly acknowledged a contradiction: for while the ears were praised for

¹³ Eustachio quoted by McDermott in ‘Melodie’, p.186.

¹⁴ Crooke cited by McDermott in ‘Melodie’, p.187. According to the *OED*, Crooke is also the first to use the architectural term ‘windows’ to explain the two openings connecting the middle and inner ear (and which would later become known as the oval window and the round window): ‘Window, n.’ *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2016. [Accessed 13th January 2017].

¹⁵ The authoritative work for further reading on this topic is Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). See also Ceri Sullivan’s essay on ‘The Art of Listening in the Seventeenth Century’, *Modern Philology*, 104: 1 (2006), 34-71.

¹⁶ McDermott, ‘Melodie’, p. 187.

¹⁷ Wilkinson quoted in McDermott, ‘Melodie’, pp. 186-7.

enabling religious instruction to pierce into the heart of the devout listener, they were also thresholds for latent transgression.

The anxiety of the threshold occurs again and again in writings about listening as well as about hospitality. In terms of the body, the ear's inability to shut defensively like the eyelid when confronted with danger made it a source of tangible worry for the early moderns. While the house can close its doors and windows, recoiling deeper in on itself like a snail contracting inside its shell, our ears are permanently open to the world around us. This perpetual openness makes them uniquely hospitable body parts. For Derrida, openness is similarly fundamental to hospitality, yet also dangerous:

If, however, there is pure hospitality, or a pure gift, it should consist in this opening without horizon, without horizon of expectation, an opening to the newcomer whoever that may be. It may be terrible because the newcomer may be a good person, or may be the devil; but if you exclude the possibility that the newcomer is coming to destroy your house – if you want to control this and exclude in advance this possibility – there is no hospitality.¹⁸

In these lines, Derrida is making a strikingly similar argument to the early modern ministers with their pious vocabulary of good or bad angels. But his is a description of pure hospitality, and so Derrida is not imposing any limitations on welcoming. Pure hospitality should rather accept whoever comes to the door, functioning on a basic principle of openness to the new arrival. Even so, Derrida does admit that the violence that might result from such a radical state of passivity can be terrible for us to grasp.

On the early modern stage the risk of making one's body or home completely open to outsiders is occasion for rich dramatic suspense. Shakespeare seems to have been

¹⁸ Jacques Derrida, 'Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida' in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, ed. by Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 65-84 (p. 70). Compare in *Of Hospitality* where Derrida writes, 'Let us say yes to *who or what turns up*, before any determination, before any anticipation, before any *identification ...*' (p. 77).

particularly fascinated by the motif of vulnerable ears, as several critics have noticed.¹⁹

Discussing this point in *The Sound of Shakespeare*, Wes Folkerth argues that ‘Among the associations ears have in the early modern period is that they are pregnable, and therefore potential targets of violent attack. This is especially apparent in Shakespeare’s work. The ears are specified as sites of extreme vulnerability in almost every one of the major tragedies’.²⁰ Famously in *Hamlet*, the ghost tells of how his treacherous brother Claudius stole into the orchard while he was sleeping one afternoon:

And in the porches²¹ of my ears did pour
The leperous distilment whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body.²²

Drawing on the conventional association between body and city, the ghost uses architectural imagery in order to describe how the poison rapidly permeates his sleeping body through his open ears. In the ghost’s narrative, his ears are vulnerable ‘porches’ that willingly welcome their harmful guests.

Despite their passivity to the outside world, the ears are not, however, universally receptive organs. Bruce Smith makes an interesting distinction:

¹⁹ Plenty has been written about the vulnerability of the ears across Shakespeare’s plays. See for instance Tanya Pollard’s chapter on ‘Vulnerable Ears: *Hamlet* and Poisonous Theatre’ in her monograph on *Drugs and Theatre in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 123-44, Patricia Parker, ‘Shakespeare’s Sound Government: Sound Defects, Polyglot Sounds, and Sounding Out’, *Oral Tradition*, 24: 2 (2009), 359-72 and Bruce Smith, ‘Within, Without, Withinwards: The Circulation of Sound in Shakespeare’s Theatre’, in *Shakespeare’s Theatres and the Effects of Performance*, ed. by Farah Karim-Cooper and Tiffany Stern (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 171-95. Relevant as well are Mark Robson’s essay on ‘Looking with Ears, Hearing with Eyes: Shakespeare and the Ear of the Early Modern’ in *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 7: 1 (2001), 1-23 and Joel Fineman’s essay on ‘Shakespeare’s Ear’ in *Representations, Special Issue: Essays in Memory of Joel Fineman*, 28 (1989), 6-13.

²⁰ Folkerth, *Sound*, p. 73.

²¹ Closely associated with the word ‘porch’, it is perhaps interesting to note that the word ‘tympanum’ was used from at least the early seventeenth century onwards to mean both the ear drum and the vertical face of a door panel: ‘tympanum, n.’ *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, [accessed 15th January 2017].

²² William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. by Ann Thomson and Neil Taylor (London: Thomson Learning, 2006), I.v.63-7.

About hearing you have no choice: you can shut off vision by closing your eyes, but from birth to death, in waking and in sleep, the coils of flesh, the tiny bones, the hair cells, the nerve fibres are always at the ready [. . .] To listen, however, is a choice. What's more, you can choose *how* to listen.²³

This ethical capacity for choice is an important point in relation to *The Merchant of Venice*. I noted earlier that, for Derrida, giving someone your undivided attention and so being attentive to what they are saying can be understood as a gesture of hospitality, once again extending our definition of how hospitality works in practice. We will see that there are some noteworthy incidents in *The Merchant of Venice* where the figures on stage are resolutely refusing to listen to one another and that this displays an acute breakdown in the hospitality relationship. Discussing the uses of the telephone in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Derrida gives an example of how listening can be a demonstration of ethical receptivity. Of course, the telephone is shaped like an enormous prosthetic ear or conch shell, and so it amplifies the idea of response. In his analysis of *Ulysses*, Derrida says that:

There are several modalities or tonalities of the telephonic *yes*, but one of them, without saying anything else, amounts to marking, simply, that one is *there*, present, listening, on the other end of the line, ready to respond but not for the moment responding anything other than the preparation to respond (hello, yes: I'm listening, I can hear that you are there, ready to speak just when I am ready to speak to you).²⁴

The silent, disembodied speaker whose presence is merely felt down the end of a telephone line is comforting, because it signals a future commitment to respond. Silence can be intensely welcoming, and offers another performance of hospitality that we might not anticipate but which Derrida helps to explain.

In the discussion so far I hope to have suggested how hospitality relates to matters of hearing, since early modern texts on listening tend to emphasise both the materiality of sound and the motion of the air in a manner that lends itself to discourses of hospitality and other

²³ Smith, *Acoustic World*, p.6. In this chapter, I use the terms 'hearing' and 'listening' interchangeably, but I think Smith's point about choice is an important one.

²⁴ Jacques Derrida, 'Ulysses Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce' in *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. by Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 569-601 (p. 572).

kinds of guest behaviour. The ears are vulnerable entry thresholds to the body, and this makes them sites of possible transgression, but also of more ethical choices. Miniature gristly houses, our ears have become adept at filtering out unwanted sounds, just as the domestic space can expertly shield us from unwanted visitors. In spite of the fact that we spend our whole lives engulfed by noise and surrounded by other people, we are not always receptive to their voices. In this chapter I argue that in *The Merchant of Venice* neither listening nor being welcoming are ever entirely neutral activities, and that for every guest that is welcomed, many others are left out. In the next section of this chapter, I turn my attention more specifically to how this filtering method is performed onstage in *The Merchant of Venice*.

The Lottery of Hospitality

One of Shakespeare's principal sources for *The Merchant of Venice* was a collection of Italian short stories dating from the fourteenth century called *Il Pecorone*. In one of the stories, a lady from Belmont challenges her wooers to a sly bed test, which ends with her drugging them with wine and winning their money.²⁵ The casket test in *The Merchant of Venice* might initially appear simply an antiquated trope from Italian romance, but in what follows, I argue that Shakespeare is actually saying something very relevant to today about the discriminatory nature of hospitality. Hospitality is reliant on a basic principle of exclusion, as Derrida explains in *Of Hospitality*:

No hospitality, in the classic sense, without sovereignty of oneself over one's home, but since there is also no hospitality without finitude, sovereignty can only be exercised by filtering, choosing, and thus by excluding and doing violence. Injustice,

²⁵ For a concise overview of Shakespeare's sources for the play, see Mahood's 'Introduction' to *The Merchant of Venice*, pp. 1-65 (pp. 1-8).

a certain injustice, and even a certain perjury, begins right away, from the very threshold of the right to hospitality.²⁶

When choosing visitors, even the most generous of hosts is simultaneously making decisions about who is not invited. In this section, I suggest that we witness this ruthless logic in action through Shakespeare's dramatisation of the Belmont lottery. In general, *The Merchant of Venice* is a play profoundly interested in what happens during moments of choice and how we go about deciding on who is most deserving of our hospitality. As the action of the play unfolds, I believe that Shakespeare encourages us to reconsider whether the seemingly bizarre selection method of the three caskets is really any different from the other unfathomable ways that we normally go about deciding who is welcome inside our homes.

Before I begin exploring the casket test, however, I first wish to take a brief look at the play's opening scene, which is significant for the way that it introduces the theme of the emotions. At the start of *The Merchant of Venice*, the Italian merchant Antonio remarks to his friends that he does not understand why he has been feeling so sad recently. His emotions have made him a stranger to himself:

In sooth I know not why I am so sad.
It wearies me, you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn.
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,
That I have much ado to know myself.

(I.i.1-7)²⁷

²⁶ Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 55.

²⁷ For further discussion of Antonio's strange melancholy at the beginning of the play, see Cynthia Lewis's essay on 'Antonio and Alienation in *The Merchant of Venice*', *South Atlantic Review*, 48: 4, (1983), 19-31. Erin Sullivan briefly comments on Antonio's opening speech in the introduction to her recent monograph, *Beyond Melancholy: Sadness and Selfhood in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Solanio and Salarino (often referred to as the Sallies) are quick to offer their reassurances that Antonio is most likely either worrying about the fate of his rich merchandise out at sea or else he must be in love. Once Antonio dismisses both of these suggestions, however, Solanio then says it might be in his nature:

Now by two-headed Janus,
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes,
And laugh like parrots at a bagpiper;
And others of such vinegar aspect,
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

(I.i.50-56)

The reference to the bagpipes introduces early on the dominant motif of music, also relating it to the peculiarities of individual taste. It is not easy to say why music affects people so differently, and this issue was equally intriguing to the early moderns. In *The Passions of the Mind*, Thomas Wright said that it was:

a question to be answered, as difficult as any whatsoever in all naturall or morall Phylosophy, viz. How musicke stirreth up these passions, and moveth so mightily these affections? What hath the shaking or artificiall crispling [*sic*] of the ayre (which is in effect the substance of musicke) to doe with rousing up choller, afflicting with melancholy, jubiliating the heart with pleasure, elevating the soul with devotion, alluring to lust ...?²⁸

In this passage Wright stresses the sense of motion as he wonders how the movement of sound waves can tickle the heart and arouse the feelings. (The link between motion and emotional receptivity is something I return to later in the chapter.) In *Shakespeare and Music*, meanwhile, David Lindley compares the feeling of being moved by music to the

²⁸ Thomas Wright quoted by David Lindley in *Shakespeare and Music* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2006), p. 28. For further reading on Thomas Wright, see Erin Sullivan, 'The Passions of Thomas Wright: Renaissance Emotion across Body and Soul', in *The Renaissance of Emotion: Understanding Affect in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, ed. by Richard Meek and Erin Sullivan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), pp. 25-45.

sensation of falling in love, for both of these experiences ‘work upon the passions by mysterious means, and both of which stimulate the spirits and therefore are capable of raising the mind to divine ecstasy or abasing it to bestial disorder’.²⁹ It is surely no easier to put into words how music influences us any more than it is to explain why we should fall in love or respond hospitably to some people but not others. The discussion about Antonio’s melancholy at the beginning of *The Merchant of Venice* introduces these concerns: in particular, it foregrounds the unknowability of the emotions.

In Belmont in the second scene of *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia is feeling similarly depressed, although arguably with more understandable reasons. The scene establishes the play’s association of hospitality with powerful emotions, as the audience learns that she is an unwilling hostess. The lottery designed by her father whereby potential wooers must choose between the riddles on the gold, silver, or lead casket, obliges Portia to play the courteous hostess before a long line of house guests. Geraldo de Sousa points out that ‘The will of Portia’s father creates a paradox: he wants his daughter to find a loving Venetian husband and have a secure home; yet the lottery of the caskets turns her house into a lodging house for adventurers and passersby’.³⁰ Complaining to her companion, Nerissa, about the unfairness of this strange living arrangement, Portia says:

O me, the word ‘choose’! I may neither choose who I would, nor refuse who I dislike, so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none?

(I.ii.19-22)

Portia goes on to add that, if she could decide on her own husband, she would be recklessly led by passion: ‘The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o’er a cold

²⁹ Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music*, p. 32.

³⁰ Geraldo De Sousa, “‘My hopes abroad’: The Global/ Local Nexus in *The Merchant of Venice*”, in *Shakespeare and Immigration*, ed. by Ruben Espinosa and David Ruiter (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 37-59 (p. 46).

decree – such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o’er the meshes of good counsel the cripple’ (I.ii.15-8). The lottery is presumably in place to prevent this exact scenario from happening because it eradicates personal desire from the process of deciding on Belmont’s one permanent resident.³¹ And yet, Shakespeare’s play does not leave things there, but continues to contrast Portia’s own impassioned feelings towards her visitors with the bureaucratic machinery of the lottery.

Part of what makes *The Merchant of Venice* so intriguing from an external perspective is that Shakespeare shows us what goes on behind the glittering outer façade of hospitality. Once we have heard Portia complaining about how the artificial mechanism of the lottery will decide on her future husband, the play nonetheless takes the time to provide us with an insight into how Portia really feels towards her guests. Nerissa names the wooers who have already come to Belmont and Portia gives a brief account of them. It rapidly becomes apparent that all of the foreign suitors have aroused in Portia a passionate – albeit unanimously negative – response. She ridicules the Neapolitan prince, for instance, for talking excessively about his horse, while the German is mocked for being a drunkard. Of the English suitor, Falconbridge, Portia says:

You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian, and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor penny-worth in the English. He is a proper man’s picture, but alas who can converse with a dumbshow? How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere.

(I.ii.56-62)

³¹ Recent critics of *The Merchant of Venice* have done much to debunk the supposed impartiality of the casket test. For more on this, see Geraldo de Sousa’s chapter on ‘Textual Encodings in *The Merchant of Venice*’, in *Shakespeare’s Cross-Cultural Encounters* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 68-96. De Sousa argues that the lottery fundamentally disadvantages Morocco and the other foreign suitors because they are less well acquainted with deciphering European cultural artefacts and especially written texts. In a very topical essay entitled ‘Open Doors, Secure Borders: The Paradoxical Immigration Policy of Belmont in *The Merchant of Venice*’, in *Shakespeare and Immigration*, Elizabeth Acosta compares the Belmontian system to the contemporary U.S. green card immigration lottery, pp. 177-99.

The humour in this passage relies on stock ideas about Englishmen being bad at foreign languages and dressing in eccentric continental fashions. B. J. Sokol describes Portia's comments as 'a string of comically weak but possibly ethically acceptable "nationality" jokes'.³² Cruel laughter can certainly be heard throughout the play to the extent that Edward Berry has called *The Merchant of Venice* an especially plain example of 'the exclusionary impulse behind Hobbesian laughter'.³³ For modern audiences, the racial intolerance implicit in Portia's observations certainly makes for uncomfortable listening. Everything offensive that Portia says about her foreign guests would be left unheard under normal circumstances. By allowing us to eavesdrop on her nasty vetting of her prospective husbands, however, Shakespeare presents the brutality underpinning hospitality's selection methods. In *The Merchant of Venice*, the audience is provided with an unusual backstage peep behind the polite ceremony of hospitality. Here, as elsewhere in the play, beneath the opulent performance things can get quite ugly.

In his writings on hospitality, Derrida highlights some features of this relationship that make for uncomfortable listening. He also repeatedly draws our attention to the subtexts that we might fail to listen out for either when welcoming or being welcomed. Hospitality comes with its own unspoken rules and tacit acknowledgements that bind host and guest together in ways that we do not always appreciate. On reading between the lines of a typical invitation, for instance, Derrida shows how the guest is being told: "Please, come in, you're invited" – but of course as invited guest you won't disturb too seriously the order of the house, you're going to speak our language, eat the way we eat ... et cetera et cetera'.³⁴ If hospitality is only

³² B. J. Sokol, *Shakespeare and Tolerance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 16. Leslie Fielder discusses Portia's prejudiced responses to her foreign suitors at some length in *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), especially at pp. 99-106.

³³ Edward Berry, 'Laughing at "Others"', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Comedy*, ed. by Alexander Leggatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 123-38 (p. 125).

³⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Deconstruction Engaged: The Sydney Seminars*, ed. by Paul Patton and Terry Smith (Sydney: Power, 2001) p. 98.

conditional, then the guest's invitation always comes with a number of stipulations attached. It remains, above all, contingent on the ongoing compliant behaviour of the visitor, and I return to this idea later in the chapter in my discussion of Shylock's treatment by the Venetian residents. Another of the more problematic aspects of the hospitality relationship, but one that we can easily overlook, is the way that we go about choosing beneficiaries deserving of our generosity. In *The Gift of Death*, Derrida argues that we can never justify this process:

I am responsible to any one (that is to say to any other) only by failing in my responsibilities to all the others, to the ethical or political generality. And I can never justify this sacrifice, I must always hold my peace about it [. . .] What binds me to singularities, to this one or that one, male or female, rather than that one or this one, remains finally unjustifiable.³⁵

By letting the audience eavesdrop on what goes on behind the scenes in Belmont, Shakespeare discloses the arbitrary and therefore wholly unjustifiable nature of hospitality's selection methods. Portia's reliance on crude national stereotypes while disparaging her overseas guests demonstrates the injustice of clutching at straws in order to defend unfathomable motives for excluding some outsiders.

In the opening scenes of *The Merchant of Venice* Belmont gives the impression of being welcoming to strangers in the way the text lingers over the flow of travellers to the island. Describing Portia to Antonio in Act I, for instance, Bassanio says:

Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth;
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece,
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,
And many Jasons come in quest of her.

³⁵ Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. by David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 70-1.

(I.i.166-71)

The classical allusions to the myth of Jason and the Golden Fleece romanticise the lottery, making it sound like an island adventure. Later on in Act II, one of Portia's suitors, Morocco, likewise relates how:

The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits, but they come
As o'er a brook to see fair Portia.

(II.vii.44-47)

Morocco explains how the appeal of the lottery with its generous reward has helped to facilitate intercontinental tourism to Belmont. His account of the sea tributaries calmly flowing into Belmont again portrays the lottery in alluring terms as having opened up shipping traffic routes. In an essay on 'Perpetual Peace' Kant commented on the universal necessity of men sharing the finite inhabitable surfaces of the globe and what this meant for hospitality: 'Uninhabitable parts of this surface, the sea and the deserts, separate this community, but in such a way that the *ship* or the *camel* (the ship of the desert) makes it possible to come into contact with one another across these regions that belong to no one'.³⁶ In this ecological vision of hospitality, Kant envisages freedom of movement across the hostile territories of ocean and desert. Morocco puts forward an equally positive reading of the hospitality on offer in *The Merchant of Venice*. Yet the exotic travel narratives are misleading, only sentimentalising what is, in fact, a ruthless procedure of forced deportation from the island.³⁷ Shakespeare, I suggest, is continually challenging our assumptions about hospitality in the play, revealing it sometimes to be no more than a glistening performance.

³⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, ed. by Pauline Kleingeld (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 82.

³⁷ Acosta puts this nicely in her essay on 'Open Doors, Secure Borders' in *Shakespeare and Immigration*, when she says of *The Merchant of Venice*: 'Further highlighting the perversion of hospitality offered by the lottery and its conditions is the fact that only one suitor, the one who chooses the correct casket, will ever be welcome in

Throughout the remainder of this chapter I return to the idea that Derrida can help us to listen out for the things that often go unsaid in moments when extending invitations of hospitality. These gaps and silences crowd the corners of the play text. The next section moves away from Belmont to consider Shakespeare's representation of the urban environment of Venice. Inside the imaginative world of *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock's household is associated with poor hospitality towards its occupants. But, if we keep in mind what we have already uncovered about Belmont, then we need to guard against passively accepting the play's fantasies of Jewish domestic alterity.

Shylock's Sober House

Our relationship with our home is often a highly emotional one. The house is, after all, the site of many of our most private activities; it is where we eat, sleep and daydream. French philosopher Gaston Bachelard famously writes about the intimacy of household architecture in his seminal work on *The Poetics of Space*. From the beginning of the book, Bachelard emphasises how domestic space has great imaginative potential. He says, 'if I were asked to name the chief benefit of the house, I should say: the house shelters daydreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace'.³⁸ The first time we see Shylock inside his home he says that he dreamt of moneybags the previous night, and he is

Belmont. The rest of the suitors all risk a very damaging deportation, possibly all the more so because they are unaware of the conditions associated with the will until they arrive in Belmont' (pp. 190-1). From a critical perspective, Derrida has written at length about the filtering process deemed essential to the hospitality of governments. In *Adieu*, he argues that 'We know this only too well: never will a Nation-State as such, regardless of its form of government, and even if it is democratic, its majority on the right or the left, open itself up to an unconditional hospitality or to a right of asylum without restriction. It would never be "realistic" to expect or demand this of a Nation-State as such. The Nation-State will always want to "control the flow of immigration"' (p. 90). Compare also in *Paper Machine*, trans. by Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005), where Derrida observes 'the "conditions" that transform gift into contract, openness into legal pact; hence rights and duties, frontiers, passports and ports; hence laws about an immigration of which we say that we have to "control the flow"' (p. 66).

³⁸ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 6.

not the only one daydreaming. The Jewish household quickly becomes a focal point on which many different fantasies in *The Merchant of Venice* converge. It is clear that Shylock views his own home as a place of quiet sanctuary.³⁹ Yet in Jessica's imagination, it is a medieval hell mouth complete with its own devilish occupants. Her elopement later on in the play is imagined differently again, this time in terms of a bird flying its nest:

<i>Shylock</i>	You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.
<i>Salarino</i>	That's certain; I for my part knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.
<i>Solanio</i>	And Shylock for his own part knew the bird was fledged, and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam.

(III.i.20-25)

The dialogue here intertwines artificial imagery of tailoring together with the natural environment of a bird's nest. In particular, the nest image denotes an extremely fragile sense of dwelling. In *The Poetics of Space* Bachelard devotes an entire chapter to nests in literature, and another to shells. He argues that 'With nests and, above all, shells, we shall find a whole series of images [. . .] that bring out the primitiveness in us'.⁴⁰ Our delight in such natural objects is aroused by a deeply instinctual desire for refuge. As Bachelard continues, 'A nest – and this we *understand* right away – is a precarious thing, and yet it sets us to *daydreaming of security*'.⁴¹ Despite their delicacy, nests have long been synonymous with cosy hideaways. The representation of Shylock's home in *The Merchant of Venice* is equally contradictory and embodies its owner's own uncertain position as a tolerated Jewish alien living within a predominantly Christian state.

³⁹ For a good account of Shylock's emotional attachment to his home, see Roy Booth, 'Shylock's Sober House', *The Review of English Studies*, 50: 197 (1999), 22-31. In another interesting essay entitled 'Anxious Householders: Theft and Anti-Usury Discourse in Shakespeare's Venetian Plays', *The Seventeenth Century*, 30: 3 (2015), 285-300, Jordi Coral classifies Shylock as one of Shakespeare's more nervous homeowners. Coral argues that 'the Jewish moneylender has been living in a state of uneasiness as regards his property long before he proclaims his proprietorial outrage in the city streets when Jessica elopes with Lorenzo' (p. 289).

⁴⁰ Bachelard, *Poetics of Space*, p. 91.

⁴¹ Bachelard, *Poetics of Space*, p. 102.

The first member of Shylock's household whom we encounter onstage in the play is Lancelot the Clown.⁴² Clearly unhappy in his present domestic position, Lancelot enters near the beginning of Act II, pondering aloud whether or not he should change employers:

Certainly, my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me, saying to me 'Gobbo, Lancelot Gobbo, good Lancelot', or 'Good Gobbo', or 'Good Lancelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away.' My conscience says 'No: take heed, honest Lancelot, take heed, honest Gobbo' – or (as aforesaid) – 'honest Lancelot Gobbo; do not run, scorn running with thy heels.'

(II.ii.1-7)

It becomes clear that Lancelot is amusingly portraying himself as a type of Everyman figure in a medieval morality play. Yet, whereas the morality play protagonist ultimately comes to abandon worldly pleasure and think only about salvation, Lancelot's interests never move beyond the material. To begin with, his language is noticeably bodily. Whilst discussing running away from Shylock's house, he alludes to his elbows, legs and heels. This is followed by some physical comedy with his father who has come looking for him. Lancelot takes advantage of his father's poor eyesight, resulting in slapstick humour. In one comic episode, for example, Lancelot places his father's hands on his own splayed fingers, pretending that they are his bony ribs because he is so underfed in Shylock's house.⁴³ All the way through *The Merchant of Venice*, Lancelot remains wholly preoccupied with the demands of his body. One of the main attractions of leaving to serve Bassanio is the new uniform. He is also commonly found talking about either food or sex,⁴⁴ which again has the effect of identifying him with creaturely appetites. Indeed, Shylock gives the following unflattering description of Lancelot's behaviour at home:

⁴² For more on the portrayal of domestic service throughout early modern drama, see Mark Thornton Burnett, *Masters and Servants in English Renaissance Drama and Culture: Authority and Obedience* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1997).

⁴³ The allegation is doubtful, since there is some evidence to the contrary. Indeed, in her edition of the play, Mahood lists instances which indicate 'the Clown is fat (2.2.56, 87-8; 2.5.3-4; 3.5.17-28)' (II.ii.0*n*).

⁴⁴ In Act III, for example, Lancelot is accused both of getting Jessica into secluded corners as well as making another woman pregnant. Lorenzo says, 'I shall answer that better to the commonwealth than you can the getting up of the Negro's belly: the Moor is with child by you, Lancelot' (III.v.30-2).

The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder,
Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
More than the wildcat. Drones hive not with me,
Therefore I part with him, and part with him
To one that I would have him help to waste
His borrowed purse.

(II.v.44-49)

The repetition of animal metaphors again associates Lancelot with more primal urges such as oversleeping or greediness over food.⁴⁵ He brings a brutish corporeality to Shylock's household which is unpleasant. In his edition of *The Merchant of Venice*, John Drakakis argues that 'In almost every respect the figure of the Jew replicates in a distorted and alienated form the life of Venice, exposing the contradictions that lie beneath the surface of an allegedly multicultural society'.⁴⁶ This is surely the case when it comes to Shylock's living arrangements, which disrupt Renaissance ideals about the orderly family unit as a microcosm of the nation state. In contrast, the lodgers in Shylock's house are openly rebellious: Lancelot is a lazy glutton, and Jessica's elopement with a Christian husband and the theft of her father's gold transforms her into a figure of sexual immorality and criminality. The Jewish household is a distortion of the dutiful model, yet it is the Christian character, Lancelot, who is at least partly to blame.

The image of a fiery hell mouth filled with sinners is one of the most enduring fantasies surrounding Shylock's home. In an essay entitled 'Shylock's Sober House', Roy Booth argues that 'Shylock's house has fleeting associations of being a hell to Belmont's

⁴⁵ For further discussion of animal imagery in the play, see Laurie Shannon, *The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopolitanism in Shakespearean Locales* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013). Shannon discusses *The Merchant of Venice* in relation to the historic animal trials of early modern England at pp. 240-8. Relevant, too, is Bruce Boehrer's essay on 'Shylock and the Rise of the Household Pet: Thinking Social Exclusion in *The Merchant of Venice*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 50: 2 (1999), 152-70.

⁴⁶ John Drakakis, 'Introduction' to William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. by John Drakakis (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), pp. 1-159 (p. 46).

heaven'.⁴⁷ When Jessica learns that Lancelot is planning to leave Shylock in order to serve Bassanio, she says to him:

I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so.
Our house is hell, and thou a merry devil
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.

(II.iii.1-3)

Similarly, while Lancelot himself is still undecided about whether or not he should move to a new place of employment, he reasons that, 'To be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master who – God bless the mark! – is a kind of devil; and to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend who – saving your reverence – is the devil himself'

(II.ii.16-20). Medieval religious drama typically presented the central character being lectured to by good and evil angels who attempt to intervene in his salvation. In a blasphemously comical parody, Lancelot envisages himself here as Everyman, overhearing an argument between the devil and his own good conscience. Discussing how spiritual listening changed over time in *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art and Representation*, Roland Barthes notes that 'What the first Christians listen to are still exterior voices, those of demons or angels; it is only gradually that the object of listening is internalised to the point of becoming pure conscience'.⁴⁸ Lancelot's behaviour early on in the play is characteristic of the earliest Christian listeners. His soliloquy is thick with reported dialogue, emphasising how he is listening to two distinct speakers. By the time Shakespeare was writing *The Merchant of Venice* in the second half of the 1590s, the morality play was, of course, a recognisably old-fashioned mode of English drama.

Nonetheless, the play's indebtedness to the tradition, and most especially to derivative plays such as Marlowe's very popular *Doctor Faustus* and *The Jew of Malta* is apparent, and not

⁴⁷ Booth, 'Sober House', p. 24.

⁴⁸ Roland Barthes, *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art and Representation*, trans. by Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 250-2.

only in the medieval iconography of hell. The morality play's vocal exteriorising of competing mystical voices symbolises a far older style of listening and dwelling with which Shylock's home is becoming increasingly associated.

The claustrophobic atmosphere of Shylock's house again connects it with more outdated modes of dwelling. In *Locating Privacy in Tudor London*, Lena Orlin writes about some of the challenges of private life in the early modern household. New building designs that sprang up during the Tudor period reflected a growing trend for solitude in separate rooms, and yet homes remained subject to intense overcrowding. In addition, neighbourly snooping had long been considered a useful tool for regulating social conduct. For the early moderns, then, the pursuit of privacy at home was difficult. Orlin concludes that 'It can sometimes seem that there was nothing neighbours did not know about each other. Their lives appear porous in part because living conditions were so crowded'.⁴⁹ In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare stages the highly congested nature of city dwelling. Numerous critics of the play have noticed that Shakespeare either disregards or else he was unaware that in 1516 a Jewish ghetto was established in Venice, choosing instead to situate Shylock's household in the middle of the Christian district.⁵⁰ By depriving it of any architectural partition, the Jewish

⁴⁹ Lena Orlin, *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 155. In her essay entitled 'Constructing the Female Self: Architectural Structures in Mary Wroth's *Urania*' in *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday*, ed. by Patricia Fumerton and Simon Hunt (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 139-62, Shannon Miller relates private architectural spaces to developing notions of inwardness, suggesting that 'The construction of a sequence of rooms to which an individual could retire developed hand-in-hand with the creation of smaller private spaces in the Renaissance: closely guarded cabinets, alcoves, and closets [. . .] These rooms, cabinets, and boxes provide a material analogy to the creation of psychological space in the Renaissance' (pp. 144-5). More specifically on the representation of household furnishings on the early modern stage, see, for instance, Catherine Richardson, *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy in Early Modern England: The Material Life of the Household* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), Wendy Wall, *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Lena Orlin, 'Things with little social life (Henslowe's theatrical properties and Elizabethan household fittings)', in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. by Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 99-129, Catherine Richardson, 'Properties of Domestic Life: The Table in Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed With Kindness*', also in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, pp. 129-53, William Kerwin, 'Blood and Home in Early Modern Drama: Domestic Identity on the Renaissance Stage', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 68: 2 (2015), 781-83.

⁵⁰ Discussing the likelihood of whether or not Shakespeare travelled to Italy in her 'Introduction' to *The Merchant of Venice*, Mahood speculates, 'But if he did make the journey [to Venice], it is scarcely conceivable

domestic residence is brought into immediate confrontation with its adjacent Christian neighbours.

Another consequence of sharing space in the early modern period was that there was nearly always a good likelihood of being overheard. Writing about the ‘eavesdropping household’,⁵¹ Orlin comments that ‘Because it was usually assumed that household walls had ears, it was also generally accepted that the domestic interior could not be trusted for what was called “private conference”’.⁵² It is just as hard to hold a personal conversation in Shylock’s home, since eavesdropping appears to be a routine occurrence. Secretly planning her elopement, Jessica warns Lancelot that ‘I would not have my father/ See me in talk with thee’ (II.iii.8-9). Shortly afterwards we find Shylock attempting to eavesdrop on her conversations:

Lancelot [Aside to Jessica] Mistress, look out at window for all this:
 There will come a Christian by
 Will be worth a Jewè's eye

Shylock What says that fool of Hagar’s offspring, ha?

Jessica His words were ‘Farewell, mistress’, nothing else.

(II.v.39-43)

Discussing the development of listening habits, Barthes notes that, even today, the situation is not always as sophisticated as we might expect:

For the mammal, its territory is marked out by odours and sounds; for the human being – and this is a phenomenon often underestimated – the appropriation of space is also a matter of sound: domestic space, that of the house, the apartment – the approximate equivalent of animal territory – is a space of familiar, *recognised* noises

that the ghetto, the first in Europe, could have escaped his notice. Shylock, however, appears to live in a Christian quarter and employs a non-Jewish servant, much as a Christianised Jew would have done in Elizabethan London’ (p. 12). For more on Shakespeare’s presentation of Italy in the theatre, see *Shakespeare’s Italy: Functions of Italian Locations in Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Michele Marrapodi (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997). See also Jonathan Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁵¹ Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, p. 237.

⁵² Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, p. 231.

whose ensemble forms a kind of household symphony: differentiated slamming of doors, raised voices, kitchen noises, gurgle of pipes, murmurs from outdoors.⁵³

When the soundscape of our home is comfortingly familiar, then it feels safe. If we suddenly need to prick up our ears at strange noises, however, an older instinct for danger resurfaces. The way that we listen has much in common still with how animals use their ears to guard themselves against predators. At least, this is how Shylock listens indoors. His snooping on other people's conversations has a largely defensive purpose, indicative of his own precarious civilian position. In general, Shakespeare's characterisation of Shylock is complex. We feel intense sympathy for his losses and his awkward life in Christian Venice, while at the same time condemning his intended violence against Antonio towards the end of the play. This conflicting impression of Shylock as both villain and victim is also reflective of his listening habits at home, for any disapproval his eavesdropping elicits is counterbalanced by empathy for his fragile civilian status.

The rude unpredictability of metropolitan life worsens the already vulnerable status of a Jewish alien living in a largely Christian state. Shakespeare's Venice is noisy and at times violent. From the beginning of *The Merchant of Venice*, the audience is made aware that Shylock has been publicly abused in the past and by his Christian neighbours.⁵⁴ Negotiating the bond's conditions in Act I, Shylock accuses Antonio of humiliating him in front of the other merchants on the Rialto:

You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gabardine,
And all for use of that which is mine own.

⁵³ Barthes, *Responsibility of Forms*, p. 246.

⁵⁴ For the most comprehensive analysis of the historical complexities surrounding religious toleration in early modern England, see Alexandra Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500-1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006). Of verbal abuse, Walsham says, 'Flung out loosely and often indiscriminately, such nicknames index the irritation and hostility that could mark everyday interaction with those who espoused different faiths' (p. 127). Also useful is Eric Griffin's essay on 'Shakespeare, Marlowe, and the Stranger Crisis of the Early 1590s' in *Shakespeare and Immigration*, pp. 13-37.

(I.iii.103-105)

Public spaces in this play are loud and openly hostile towards Shylock and his moneylending practices. In contrast, his home is a place of quiet refuge. He reprimands Lancelot for shouting to Jessica without first asking his permission, and tries hard to uphold silence. Considering the way that he has been verbally abused and spat on, it is perhaps unsurprising that Shylock is so sensitive about the noise levels inside his house.

One of the most enduring attractions of the house has long been its quiet soundscape. Michel Serres writes in *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies* that ‘Beyond the reach of water, beyond wind, cold, fog, light and dark – even beyond noise, in the past – the house protects us just as the belly of a vessel separates us from the cold of the sea’.⁵⁵ The silent household is distinguished from the oceanic roar of noise normally engulfing us in daily life. As Serres writes elsewhere, ‘The *noise* – intermittence and turbulence – quarrel and racket – this sea *noise* is the originating rumour and murmuring, the original hate. We hear it on the high seas’.⁵⁶ Certainly, the home is adept both at muffling noises from outside and giving the illusion of safely barricading us away from the world at large. Serres relates how ‘The house closes up its openings too: shutters, windows, double-glazing, stained glass, net curtains, drapes, decorative pelmets, and until not so long ago, doorways and windows with deep alcoves’.⁵⁷ Our homes can contract deeper inside their shells like molluscs, yet they never become the completely sealed vessels which we might wish to imagine, since there must always be some opening that leads to the external environment.⁵⁸ For the nervous

⁵⁵ Michel Serres, *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies*, trans. by Margaret Sankey and Peter Cowley (London and New York: Continuum, 2009), p. 147.

⁵⁶ Michel Serres, *Genesis*, trans. by Geneviève James and James Nielson (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1995), p. 14.

⁵⁷ Serres, *Five Senses*, p. 146.

⁵⁸ Or as Derrida puts it in *The Sydney Seminars*, ‘there is no home, no cultural home, no family home without some door, some opening and some ways of welcoming guests’ (p. 97). Liminal architectural spaces were historically very important to daily Jewish and Christian interactions in early modern Europe. House windows allowed neighbours to exchange bits of news and gossip, and were convenient for spying purposes, yet they were also subject to violent assaults. Jewish homes routinely had their windows smashed, while religious

homeowner like Shylock, these architectural apertures are a source of genuine disquiet. Shylock can regularly be heard reminding those around him of the importance of fastening doors and windows:

Well, Jessica, go in;
Perhaps I will return immediately.
Do as I bid you, shut doors after you.
Fast bind, fast find:
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind.

(II.v.49-53)

In a hospitable house, the doors and windows are thrown invitingly open to the outside world, but Shylock is compulsive about making sure his are firmly locked, his suspicions foreshadowing Jessica's subsequent elopement.

Jessica's flight from Shylock's home in Act II of *The Merchant of Venice* brings me on to the relationship between gender and the household. Sexual difference is of ongoing relevance to the discussion of hospitality in this thesis. In the next chapter on *Troilus and Cressida*, we see Cressida and Helen tread uncomfortable lines between being welcoming and being overly inviting in a way that implies loose morals. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Jessica's femininity complicates the desirability of open ears as set out in the clerical conduct literature. The early modern patriarchs thought that women's ears should be kept demurely shut, and, if a woman had willing ears, then she was regarded with suspicion. Gina Bloom has shown how 'Early modern writers figure closed ears as especially important for the maintenance of female chastity'.⁵⁹ Discussing the antitheatricalists Stephen Gosson and

curfews imposed during Christian festivals ordered Jews to keep both doors and windows shut. For more on this historical background, see Daniel Jütte's essay 'They Shall Not Keep Their Doors and Windows Open: Urban Space and the Dynamics of Conflict and Contact in Premodern Jewish-Christian Relations', *European History Quarterly*, 46: 2 (2016), 209-37.

⁵⁹ Bloom, *Voice in Motion*, p. 133. See also Peter Stallybrass's influential essay on 'Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed' in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Margaret Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan and Nancy Vickers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 123-45. Describing how social control worked in the early modern period, Stallybrass writes that 'Silence,

William Prynne, Bloom argues that ‘prescriptions like Prynne’s for female aural defensiveness are grounded in misogynist assumptions about female aural vulnerability – assumptions that were used throughout the period to justify women’s subordinate positions in social and political hierarchies’.⁶⁰ Bemoaning the likely consequences of feminine ears being made obliging to their male interlocutors stoked pre-existing cultural anxieties regarding the need to confine women’s bodies in some way. But, at the same time, admiration for attentive listening was invariably gendered female. Once again, where we see this most clearly is in the religious writings. Hence, when they sought to promote the spiritual benefits of paying careful attention during church sermons, Protestant ministers drew on biblical stories such as the parable of the sower. In this agricultural example, the pious ear which became fertilised through religious instruction was always gendered feminine. Wes Folkerth notes that ‘The Protestant discourse pertaining to sound and hearing associates this entire perceptual domain with obedience, duty, receptivity and penetrability – all concepts which were gendered feminine in the period, and were officially codified as such with the state’s sanction in the *Book of Common Prayer*’.⁶¹ Official attitudes towards female listening embodied a contradictory place somewhere in the midst of praise and misgivings.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, competing assumptions about open female ears converge on the figure of Jessica, whose elopement with the Venetian gentleman Lorenzo is simultaneously a conversion to Christianity.⁶² Dismayed to learn from Lancelot in Act II that

the closed mouth, is made a sign of chastity. And silence and chastity are, in turn, homologous to woman’s enclosure within the house’ (p. 127).

⁶⁰ Bloom, *Voice in Motion*, p. 134.

⁶¹ Folkerth, *Sound*, p. 51.

⁶² For a historicist account of Jews who converted to Christianity during the early modern period, see James Shapiro’s chapter on religious conversion entitled ‘The Hebrew will turn Christian’, in *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 131-67. In particular, Shapiro addresses the gendered nature of conversion arguing that there was a vast difference separating how male and female Jewish converts were perceived by the early moderns (p. 132). More specifically on the relationship between gender and Jewishness in *The Merchant of Venice*, see Lisa Lampert-Weissig, *Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

masques are planned for that very evening when he will be dining out at Bassanio's place, Shylock instructs Jessica to soundproof his house. Although this might seem a straightforward response to noisy neighbours, there are hints that Shylock is also worrying about Jessica's chastity:

What, are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica,
Lock up my doors, and when you hear the drum
And the vile squealing of the wry-necked fife,
Clamber not you up to the casements then
Nor thrust your head into the public street
To gaze on Christian fools with varnished faces;
But stop my house's ears – I mean my casements –
Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
My sober house.

(II.v.27-35)

Playing musical instruments had numerous sexual connotations across early modern culture, while carnival was recognised as a period of wild licentiousness.⁶³ Understandably perhaps, then, Shylock is just as intent on ensuring that the music specifically does not reach Jessica's ears as he is on soundproofing his home. During this speech, Shylock's anthropomorphisation of his house also explicitly aligns it with his daughter's body. His confused instructions – 'But stop my house's ears – I mean my casements' (II.v.33) – demonstrate how he is thinking in a parallel, and imprecise way, both about Jessica's fleshy ear lobes and the window casements. Deaf ears are just as important as closed windows for

⁶³ For continued discussion of the carnival background to many of Shakespeare's plays, see the following works: C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and its Relation to Social Custom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959); François Laroque, *Shakespeare's Festive World: Elizabethan Seasonal Entertainment and the Professional Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Ronald Knowles, *Shakespeare and Carnival: After Bakhtin* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998), Michael D. Bristol, *Carnival and Theatre: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England* (New York and London: Methuen, 1985). See also Jonathan Goldberg's essay on 'Carnival in *The Merchant of Venice*', *Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies*, 4: 4 (2013), 427-38.

Shakespeare's anxious fathers as, in a similar fashion to Desdemona in *Othello*, Jessica has made her ears greedily open to male wooing.

Inside the imaginative space of the play text, his daughter's elopement fundamentally alters the shape of Shylock's household.⁶⁴ Shylock had previously warned Jessica not to watch the Christian masques from the upstairs house windows:

Clamber not you up to the casements then
Nor thrust your head into the public street
To gaze on Christian fools with varnished faces

(II.v.30-32)

She disobeys his instructions wholeheartedly, though, as it is from the upstairs window that she thrusts her head outside to talk to Lorenzo, afterwards throwing the money down for him to catch. If the scene was originally performed from the upper musician's balcony, then the sight of Jessica's head poking out into the air would distend the neat lines of Shylock's house. Its usual perimeters enlarged, Shylock's home would therefore begin to look grotesque in silhouette. In his ground-breaking study of the early modern carnivalesque, *Rabelais and his World*, Bakhtin provides the following account of the grotesque body:

Contrary to modern canons, the grotesque body is not separated from the rest of the world. It is not a closed, completed unit; it is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits. The stress is laid on those parts of the body that are open to the outside world, that is, the parts through which the world enters the body or emerges from it, or through which the body itself goes out to meet the world. This means that the emphasis is on the apertures or the convexities, or on various ramifications and offshoots: the open mouth, the genital organs, the breasts, the phallus, the potbelly, the nose.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ For further discussion of how domestic loss is depicted across Shakespeare's plays, see Heather Dubrow, *Shakespeare and Domestic Loss: Forms of Deprivation, Mourning, and Recuperation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁶⁵ Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, p. 26.

Further on in the book, Bakhtin points out that ‘Mountains and abysses, such is the relief of the grotesque body; or speaking in architectural terms, towers and subterranean passages’.⁶⁶ By transgressing its normal architectural limits, the Jewish residence appears similarly grotesque. Furthermore, and as we will see, for the early moderns, this potential bulging outline had powerful ideological implications.

In *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy in Early Modern England: The Material Life of the Household*, Catherine Richardson has shown how, in the early modern imagination, house and body shared a common language of deformity:

The recourse to material comparisons in order to describe human relationships is particularly prevalent in images of the house itself. William Whately describes the consequences when men fail to take up their natural position of domestic authority: ‘That house is a misshapen house, and (if wee may use that terme) a crump-shouldered, or hutch-backt house’.⁶⁷

Through use of personification, the early moderns pathologised the mismanaged household so that it came to resemble a round-shouldered or hunchbacked person. Its crooked silhouette symbolised how, without proper domestic government, the world gets turned upside down. Across Renaissance culture, bad shape was rooted in powerful ideological assumptions. Deformity was thought to be symptomatic of inner evil, as we see clearly in Shakespeare’s *Richard III*.⁶⁸ In the case of Shylock’s household, its imaginative grotesqueries imply a corresponding collapse in domestic government. Extending the metaphor of twinned body

⁶⁶ Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, p. 318. It is worth noting that the ear itself possesses a grotesque anatomy, with its jutting bone structure and protruding fleshy parts. Discussing the ear’s shape in *The Five Senses*, Serres comments that ‘the topology of depth requires varieties in every dimension, hollows them out, folds them, creates edges, mountains and valleys, passes, chimneys, tubes and lobes; architecture, landscape’ (p. 144). More specifically on the sexualised nature of the ear in Shakespeare, see Folkerth, *The Sound of Shakespeare*. He compares the ear to a grotesque Bakhtinian organ at pp. 98-102. Seeking to account for the somewhat curious fact that Bakhtin himself does not mention the ear in any great detail, Folkerth makes a convincing argument: ‘I would argue that the reason Bakhtin appears to overlook the ear in his theory of the grotesque body is not that he considers it peripheral, but that he takes its centrality so completely for granted that he neglects even to mention it’ (p. 99).

⁶⁷ Richardson, *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy*, p. 45.

⁶⁸ On deformity in Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, see Marjorie Garber’s chapter ‘Descanting on Deformity: *Richard III* and the Shape of History’ in *Shakespeare’s Ghost Writers: Literature as Uncanny Causality* (London and New York: Methuen, 1987), pp. 28-52.

and house, it is perhaps interesting to note that, in the early modern period, protuberances such as cancerous growths were implicitly regarded as female. In *Constructions of Cancer in Early Modern England: Ravenous Natures*, Alanna Skuse writes that ‘The feminine body – in particular, the female breast – was, for early modern medical practitioners and lay observers, the paradigmatic site of cancerous growth. This paradigm was rooted in medical, social and aesthetic discourses in which the female body variously appeared as fecund, feeble, dangerous and secret’.⁶⁹ By revealing the patriarchal authority of the Jewish household to be overturned, the play effeminises Shylock’s house, in the process reflecting widespread cultural myths that connected Judaism with aspects of femininity in the early modern period.⁷⁰

The sight of Jessica’s body disobediently appearing at the upstairs window anticipates the scene later in *The Merchant of Venice* where the Sallies jeer at Shylock’s domestic losses:

Shylock My own flesh and blood to rebel!
Solanio Out upon it, old carrion! Rebels it at these years?
 (III.i.28-29)

While we cannot know for certain how the elopement scene was staged in the early performances – or if Jessica’s head really was bulging from the upstairs musicians’ balcony – the imagery of grotesque shape is nonetheless present within the language of the text. Indeed, the cruel humour in this brief exchange comes from Solanio’s smutty pun on rebellious flesh, which he takes to mean an unwanted erection, as opposed to the elopement of Shylock’s adulterous daughter. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock’s home acquires

⁶⁹ Alanna Skuse, *Constructions of Cancer in Early Modern England: Ravenous Natures* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 40. Her chapter on ‘Cancer and the Gendered Body’ is particularly helpful to my reading of *The Merchant of Venice*, pp. 40-60.

⁷⁰ James Shapiro has shown how the male Jewish body often overlapped with ideas of female experience in the popular imagination. In *Shakespeare and the Jews*, Shapiro explains how Jewish men were often associated with female traits, including: menstruation, dressing in women’s clothes, and breastfeeding (pp. 37-9). He concludes ‘when it came to the Jews, the boundaries between male and female were often seen as quite slippery’ (p. 38).

connotations of deformity and sexual transgression. These associations satirise the moral life of the occupants, yet end up saying more about the Venetian requirement for a monstrous doppelgänger from whose hospitality it can distinguish its own.

Returning to *The Poetics of Space* with which I opened this section, Bachelard argues that, ‘At times when we believe we are studying something, we are only being receptive to a kind of day-dreaming’.⁷¹ Exploring the portrayal of Shylock’s house in *The Merchant of Venice* also means being attentive towards what dreaming is gathered on that place.

Domestic fantasises in this play are rarely neutral. Indeed, perhaps the most emotive of them all is Shylock’s own desperate need for sanctuary inside his home, as he seeks a place of refuge away from a community which frequently bullies and ostracises him. In the beginning, this desire takes the form of a fairly innocent sequence of reminders to the other residents that they should keep all doors and windows securely closed, but it becomes darker in mood further on. By Act III, Shylock has discovered Jessica’s elopement and the robbery and, in an agonised speech to Tubal, he says:

Why there, there, there, there! A diamond gone cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfurt! The curse never fell upon our nation till now, I never felt it till now. Two thousand ducats in that, and other precious, precious jewels! I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear: would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin.

(III.i.66-71)

In these morbid daydreams, Shylock wishes that his daughter was dead ‘and the jewels in her ear’, entombed at his foot, ‘and the ducats in her coffin’. Building upon his former conflation of house and body, he now imagines his daughter’s body becoming a storehouse for his gold. The interment imagery related to funeral monuments, coupled with Shylock’s descriptions of ‘precious, precious jewels’, recalls Catholic holy relics, and a time when saints were commemorated by embalming their dead bodies with ornate jewels. By vengefully blocking

⁷¹ Bachelard, *Poetics of Space*, p. xxxviii.

up his daughter's ear cavities, Shylock is implicitly safeguarding her virginity as well. She is now a perfectly sealed vessel, with not even breath leaving or entering the body. Discussing the containment of female sexuality throughout Shakespeare's plays, Valerie Traub concludes that 'the metaphoric displacement of sexually threatening women into jewels, statues and corpses attests that these plays contain rather than affirm female erotic power'.⁷² Yet in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, it remains only a fantasy of containment, since Jessica and the jewels are, according to Tubal, not to be found. Nonetheless, the house retains its imaginative power. It does not stop inspiring daydreaming, even if this is now only a yearning for revenge.

'Hearing applause and universal shout'

In contrast to the silence of Shylock's empty nest, as Act III of *The Merchant of Venice* opens, the Sallies are gossiping together. While they exchange the latest news from the Rialto, it soon becomes clear that Antonio has lost another ship:

<i>Solanio</i>	Now, what news on the Rialto?
<i>Salarino</i>	Why, yet it lives there unchecked that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wrecked on the Narrow Seas; the Goodwins I think they call the place – a very dangerous flat, and fatal, where the carcasses of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip Report be an honest woman of her word.
<i>Solanio</i>	I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapped ginger or made her neighbours believe she wept for the death of a third husband.

(III.i.1-9)

Gossip is personified here as an old woman who munches ginger and pretends to be sad at the death of yet another husband. Discussing the gendered nature of gossiping in the early

⁷² Valerie Traub, 'Jewels, Statues, and Corpses: Containment of Female Erotic Power in Shakespeare's Plays', in *Shakespeare and Gender: A History*, ed. by Deborah E. Barker and Ivo Kamps (London and New York: Verso, 1995), pp. 120-42 (p. 137).

modern period, Bernard Capp points to ‘The emotional and practical value of belonging to a network of friends or gossips’.⁷³ In *The Merchant of Venice*, rumourmongering serves a similarly dual purpose. It not only allows members of the group to trade useful information, but creates populations of sympathetic listeners. The Sallies empathise with Antonio’s losses at sea, and the sound of their gossiping elicits powerful feelings of community spirit that go beyond mere neighbourly relations. From this starting point, in this section I wish to explore how noise is used to amplify the hospitality which Bassanio receives in Belmont. In the middle of Act III comes an important scene when Bassanio successfully chooses the lead casket and therefore wins Portia’s hand in marriage, at the same time being joyfully welcomed into his new household community at Belmont. This episode signifies something of a twist on the usual performance of hospitality for, at this point in the play, Bassanio is already Portia’s most precious guest. Having won the lottery, however, he is inducted into permanent residency in her home. I argue that the play’s soundscape has a crucial role throughout this hospitality scene. Far more than a simple accompaniment to the main plot developments, Shakespeare uses noise to generate community feeling.

The audience is left in no doubt that, up until the final casket scene, Bassanio has been a cherished guest in Portia’s home. Like Hermione at the beginning of *The Winter’s Tale*, in the second scene of Act III, Portia can first be heard pleading with her male guest to prolong his visit to Belmont:

I pray you tarry, pause a day or two
Before you hazard, for in choosing wrong
I lose your company

⁷³ Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 58. Capp outlines how neighbours and gossips offered one another multiple small acts of kindness and companionship. In general, see the section on ‘Gossiping’, pp. 55-68. More specifically on the gendered portrayal of gossip across early modern drama, see Keith M. Botelho, *Renaissance Earwitnesses: Rumour and Early Modern Masculinity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) and Ina Habermann, *Staging Slander and Gender in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

(III.ii.1-3)

As opposed to *The Winter's Tale*, however, there are no vulgar insinuations that Portia has been sexually generous with her favours as a hostess. Bassanio is quite clearly the preferred suitor, and he is also the only one whose turn at the casket test is accompanied by music.

Portia gives instructions to her attendants to:

Let music sound while he doth make his choice;
Then if he lose he makes a swan-like end,
Fading in music. That the comparison
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
And watery deathbed for him.

(III.ii.43-47)

Music performs a varied role throughout this long scene as Bassanio selects the right casket.

In this speech, for example, Portia's description of a swan singing before its death immediately heightens the romantic atmosphere of the scene. In Shakespearean drama, music frequently serves as an agent of transformation. Here, the music accompanies (or even, as some critics of the play have suggested, actually influences⁷⁴) Bassanio's transformation from temporary guest to full-time resident of the Belmontian household.

Delaying still further his moment of selection, Portia says:

He may win,
And what is music then? Then music is
Even as the flourish when true subjects bow

⁷⁴ There is some debate amongst critics about whether the music directs Bassanio's choice of the lead casket. It could be that the end rhymes in the song hint towards the lead casket or perhaps there is something magical about the musical harmonies themselves which influences Bassanio's success at the lottery. In *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* Barber argues that 'The notion that it serves as a signal to warn Bassanio off gold and silver is one of those busy-body emendations which eliminate the dramatic in seeking to elaborate it' (p. 174). I am rather inclined to agree with Fiedler, however, who, in *The Stranger in Shakespeare*, remarks that both the spell of the music and its internal rhyme scheme appears calculated to inspire Bassanio's mind in the right direction (p. 114). For more general discussion of what special effects music was believed capable of accomplishing on the early modern stage, see Lindley's *Shakespeare and Music*, especially pp. 1-9. While in *Shakespeare After All* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), Marjorie Garber comments that 'When it is Bassanio's time to choose, his moment of choice is accompanied by music, one of the characteristic signs of the Belmont world, and an element usually associated in Shakespeare's plays with semimagical, "wonderful" transformation' (p. 290).

To a new-crownèd monarch. Such it is
As are those dulcet sounds in break of day,
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear
And summon him to marriage.

(III.ii.47-53)

Portia's examples of a monarch on coronation day and a bridegroom on the morning of his wedding symbolise two figures on the cusp of a change in personal status. The play is again returning us to the idea of the threshold as a liminal space. Indeed, her lines anticipate Bassanio's new social status when he will become her husband and acting head of the Belmont household. In a little while, Portia will make another speech metaphorically transferring to Bassanio the authority of her household:

But now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,
This house, these servants, and this same myself
Are yours, my lord's.

(III.ii.167-71)⁷⁵

As Frank Kermode notes, in Shakespeare's plays, 'Music is order, harmony in celestial as well as human relations',⁷⁶ so that here music helps to equate Belmont with harmonious domesticity. The play's soundscape thus implicitly contrasts Belmont with Shylock's fractious household, as the antithesis of each other, neither hospitable to the other.

I noted previously that part of what makes Shakespeare's representation of hospitality in *The Merchant of Venice* so intriguing is the way that he draws our attention to the things we do not normally hear when welcoming one another. Music has been playing while

⁷⁵ Mahood notices an interesting similarity between Portia's wording in this speech and that used by the patriarchally rehabilitated Kate at the ending of *The Taming of the Shrew*, 3.2.165n.

⁷⁶ Frank Kermode, *Shakespeare's Language* (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 75.

Bassanio studies the three caskets, but it is not the only acoustic accompaniment to hospitality. On learning that he has won Portia's hand in marriage and will therefore be taking up permanent residency in Belmont, Bassanio says that he feels:

Like one of two contending in a prize
That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
Hearing applause and universal shout,
Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt
Whether those peals of praise be his or no

(III.ii.141-45)

In spite of this being an intimate moment between future husband and wife, Bassanio pictures himself as the victorious champion of a contest appearing in front of a loudly cheering audience. This account of an imaginary soundscape helps to amplify his welcome reception into Portia's household. Bassanio returns yet again to this imagery of the joyfully disorientated subject when he comments to Portia that he feels as confused as someone who is part of a deafening multitude:

Madam, you have bereft me of all words.
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins,
And there is such confusion in my powers
As after some oration fairly spoke
By a belovèd prince there doth appear
Among the buzzing, pleasèd multitude,
Where every something being blent together
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy
Expressed, and not expressed.

(III.ii.175-83)

On stage at this moment, Portia and Bassanio are making polite speeches to one another, yet Shakespeare uses the noisy descriptions of crowd-filled joy to hint at the passionate turmoil the individual experiences during the receiving of hospitality. Bassanio's allusion to the

sound of blood drumming through his veins also presents another more intimate soundscape. Michel Serres notes the infinitesimal biological processes which occur deep inside the body and which normally remain beyond the reach of human ears: ‘The primary source of noise is within the body, whose subliminal murmur our proprioceptive ear sometimes strains to hear: billions of cells dedicated to biochemical reactions, the likes of which should have us all fainting from the pressure of their collective hum’.⁷⁷ In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare keeps on directing our attention towards those microscopic sounds not ordinarily perceptible when welcoming one another. He reminds us that, while we might attempt to smother hospitality in bureaucratic red tape or legal bonds, it never stops being a visceral event. In the following chapter on *Troilus and Cressida* we will revisit the sensory disturbances of the threshold when Troilus feels himself dizzy and whirled around with expectation while outside Cressida’s door, but for the time being, I wish to place these impassioned responses to outsider figures in relation to the wider legal context of *The Merchant of Venice*.

Legal Hearings

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare appears determined to negotiate the problematic question of what binds guests and hosts to one another. On the one hand, the plot is synonymous with the theme of bonds, or what Julia Lupton calls ‘that quintessentially Shakespearean word for contract, affiliation, and obligation’.⁷⁸ On the legal background to the play, Anthony Miller similarly notes that ‘*The Merchant of Venice* is governed by

⁷⁷ Serres, *Five Senses*, p. 106.

⁷⁸ Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Thinking with Shakespeare: Essays on Politics and Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 132. Compare in *Shakespeare’s Binding Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) where John Kerrigan notes that this is ‘a script so intensively structured by the keeping and breaking of bonds’ (p. 203).

legalisms: contracts, wills, marriage oaths; fidelity to bonds and release from bonds'.⁷⁹ By foregrounding the judicial system in this fashion, however, Shakespeare reveals the gulf separating our legal responsibilities from our far vaguer moral obligations to the people around us. In order to be meaningful, hospitality must push beyond the mandatory legal requirements, asylum laws and immigration checks imposed by governments.⁸⁰ By the time we get to the trial in Act IV, the audience knows that Antonio's ships have all miscarried and, since he has failed to meet the conditions of the bond, Shylock is legally authorised to claim his pound of flesh. While it still looks as if *The Merchant of Venice* is heading for a grisly conclusion, a disguised Portia tests Shylock on the issue of moral obligation:

Portia Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,
 To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.

Shylock Is it so nominated in the bond?

Portia It is not so expressed, but what of that?
 'Twere good you do so much for charity.

Shylock I cannot find it, 'tis not in the bond.

(IV.i.253-58)

⁷⁹ Anthony Miller, 'Matters of State' in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Comedy*, ed. by Leggatt, pp. 198-215 (p.202). For more on the pound of flesh plotline in *The Merchant of Venice*, see Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, especially pp. 113-31. Jacques Derrida writes about the trial scene of *The Merchant of Venice* in his essay 'What is a "Relevant" Translation?', trans. by Lawrence Venuti, *Critical Inquiry*, 27: 2 (2001), 174-200. Derrida discusses what he sees as the central problem of translation in the play. For further reading on Shakespeare's legal imagination, see, for example, Kevin Curran, *Shakespeare's Legal Ecologies: Law and Distributed Selfhood* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2017), Derek Dunne, *Shakespeare, Revenge Tragedy and Early Modern Law: Vindictive Justice* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), *The Law in Shakespeare*, ed. by Constance Jordan and Karen Cunningham (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), *Shakespeare and the Law*, ed. by Paul Raffield and Gary Watt (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2008), Owen Hood Phillips, *Shakespeare and the Lawyers* (London: Methuen, 1972), B. J. Sokol and Mary Sokol, *Shakespeare's Legal Language: A Dictionary* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004).

⁸⁰ One of Derrida's main problems with Kant's definition of hospitality was that it imposed a number of limits and restrictions on welcoming. In *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. by Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (London: Routledge, 2001), he describes the dangers of what happens when hospitality becomes 'dependent on and controlled by the law and the state police' (p. 22).

During the trial, Shakespeare presents a struggle between what it is legally permissible for guests and hosts to do to one another and what is ethically tolerable. The scene stretches hospitable relations in Venice to breaking point.

When Act IV of the play opens, Shylock is vengefully preparing to cut the heart out of his neighbour in what is a spectacular instance of the guest transgressing the status quo. Despite the play's repeated assurances of the impartiality of the Venetian legal system, the audience now discovers that a hidden clause authorises the persecution of any aliens like Shylock who overstep the mark. While in disguise as Balthazar, it is Portia who discloses this legal loophole:

Tarry, Jew:

The law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
If it be proved against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize the one half his goods, the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state,
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the Duke only

(IV.i.342-52)

I think the most disturbing aspect of this nasty bit of legislation is that, all along, Shylock's life in Venice has been far less free than he supposed. Indeed, the hospitality that Shylock has been receiving from the Italian government has been conditional and dependent on his own obedient behaviour. In any interim arrangement of hospitality such as this one, the power imbalance between guest and host is at all times clearly demarcated. Derrida explains that 'The host remains the master in the house, the country, the nation, he controls the

threshold, he controls the borders, and when he welcomes the guest he wants to keep the mastery'.⁸¹ One of the many unspoken rules of hospitality stipulates that the guest will always behave himself in an obliging manner, and that, if he fails to do so, then he might swiftly discover that he has overstayed his welcome. In practice, of course, this means fitting in with what the host wants. Or as Derrida puts it, 'But in that case the hospitality is conditional, in that the Other is welcome to the extent that he adjusts to the *chez soi*, to the home, that he speaks the language or that he learns the language, that he respects the order of the house, the order of the nation state and so on and so forth'.⁸² This is the same brutal universe that Derrida outlines in the *Of Hospitality* seminars as one where 'the foreigner doesn't only have a right, he or she also has, reciprocally, obligations'.⁸³ In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock is tolerated by the Republic right up until the moment when he seeks Antonio's life, afterwards becoming an alien threat to be neutralised. In Shakespeare's Venice, the hospitality is so provisional that it might be suspended at any time, which is precisely what happens during the courtroom incident. When Portia reads aloud the hidden sub-clause of the law, Shakespeare is once again giving a voice to the normally unheard terms and conditions of the hospitality relationship.

By its very nature, a legal hearing is a particularly intense form of listening, and one where to be a foreign speaker is disadvantageous. In *The Merchant of Venice*, racial intolerance is inscribed within the legal system. And yet, even in other situations when the prejudice is less overt, the problems begin whenever outsiders are held accountable before a law court that is, by definition, alien to them. In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida says:

⁸¹ Derrida, *Questioning Ethics*, p. 69. For continued discussion of the sustained contrast that Derrida makes separating unconditional hospitality from conditional hospitality, see, for example, *Questioning Ethics*, pp. 69-71, *Deconstruction Engaged*, pp. 97-9, 'Derelictions of the Right to Justice', in *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews, 1971-2001*, ed. by Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. 133-44, *Paper Machine*, pp. 66-7 and *Of Hospitality*.

⁸² Derrida, *Deconstruction Engaged*, pp. 97-8.

⁸³ Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 23.

Among the serious problems we are dealing with here is that of the foreigner who, inept at speaking the language, always risks being without defence before the law of the country that welcomes or expels him; the foreigner is first of all foreign to the legal language in which the duty of hospitality is formulated, the right to asylum, its limits, norms, policing, etc.⁸⁴

Nor does the foreigner need to be speaking a different language from the members of the hosting court in order to encounter difficulties, since Derrida describes how the injustice starts whenever a newcomer is less fluent in the language of the courtroom than a native citizen. Elsewhere in an essay on ‘Force of Law: The “Mystical Foundation of Authority”’, Derrida suggests that ‘however slight or subtle the difference of competence in the mastery of the idiom would be here, the violence of an injustice has begun when all the members [*partenaires*] of a community do not share, through and through, the same idiom’.⁸⁵ Derrida gives the example from Plato’s *The Apology of Socrates* where Socrates is defending himself against some charges brought against him:

This is my first appearance in a court of law, at the age of seventy, and so I am a complete foreigner to the language of this place [. . .] Now if I were really a foreigner [. . .] you would naturally excuse me if I spoke in the accent and dialect in which I had been brought up.⁸⁶

Even though Socrates is speaking the same language as his Athenian judges, he is still comparing himself to a non-native speaker because ‘he doesn’t know how to speak this courtroom language, this legal rhetoric of accusation, defence, and pleading: he doesn’t have the skill, he is *like* a foreigner’.⁸⁷ In the courtroom scene of *The Merchant of Venice*, the alien quality of Shylock’s way of speaking is also emphasised and, specifically, his

⁸⁴ Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 15.

⁸⁵ Jacques Derrida, ‘Force of Law: The “Mystical Foundation of Authority”’, in *Acts of Religion*, ed. by Gil Anidjar (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 228-99 (p. 246).

⁸⁶ Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 19.

⁸⁷ Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 15.

unfamiliarity with the letter of the law.⁸⁸ In his opening words to the assembled court, Shylock says to the Duke:

I have possessed your grace of what I purpose,
And by our holy Sabaoth have I sworn
To have the due and forfeit of my bond.

(IV.i.35-37)

Shylock's mention of the Jewish holy day emphasises his religious otherness and builds on his references earlier in the text to the parable of Jacob and Laban as well as the religious prohibitions on eating pork. Our sense of alterity is reiterated several lines later when he praises Portia as 'A Daniel come to judgement; yea a Daniel!' (IV.i.219), using a reference from the Old Testament. In *Shakespeare and the Bible*, Steven Marx observes that 'Shylock also fashions himself with biblical allusion. This is an aspect of his identity with "our people", the Jews, known by Renaissance Europeans as "people of the book"'.⁸⁹ Shakespeare's inclusion of Hebrew allusions during the trial stresses that Shylock is an outsider to legal proceedings. His evident unfamiliarity with the native law court only strengthens our impression that he is treated cruelly.

Despite the fact that his life is spared, the punishing treatment of Shylock at the end of the courtroom scene is uncomfortable to witness. The Duke states that he will show mercy to Shylock only on the condition that he instantly converts to Christianity. The second part of the penalty sees his personal wealth confiscated and then redistributed amongst members of the hosting nation. In this moment, Venice is discovered to be intent on protecting both the interests and power of its native citizens. Shylock's financial penalty is, however, only the

⁸⁸ For continued discussion of how differently Shylock sounds when compared with Shakespeare's Christian characters see, for example, Brian Vickers, *The Artistry of Shakespeare's Prose* (London: Methuen, 1968), Stephen Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), Jonathan Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference*, and B. J. Sokol, *Shakespeare and Tolerance*.

⁸⁹ Steven Marx, *Shakespeare and the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 104.

culmination of *The Merchant of Venice*'s underlying unease at the sharing of economic resources with outsiders. Judith Still has said of hospitality, 'It is also perceived as potentially dangerous in economic terms because it implies sharing scarce resources, although in fact guests may be productive and may bring their gifts to the economy'.⁹⁰ The globalised world of Shakespeare's Venice inspires a jealous approach towards the accumulation of financial capital. In Act III of the play, Lancelot's teasing remarks to Jessica on the subject of Jewish conversion illustrate the type of economic disquiet prompted by living in a cosmopolitan society:

Jessica I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a Christian.

Lancelot Truly, the more to blame he; we were Christians enow before, e'en as many as could well live one by another. This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs; if we grow all to be pork eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money.

(III.v.15-20)

In his seminal study of *The Philosophy of Money*, Georg Simmel argues that 'The role that the stranger plays within a social group directs him, from the outset, towards relations with the group that are mediated by money'.⁹¹ Throughout *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock manipulates his economic ties with the hosting state for reasons of either friendship or revenge, yet he fails to recognise that the law has its own forceful grip on him. The Shakespearean guest always remains bound to his host in some way that is disquieting. In *The Merchant of Venice*, I suggest, Shakespeare forcefully prompts us to reconsider the illusion that guests are truly free.

⁹⁰ Judith Still, *Derrida and Hospitality: Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 13.

⁹¹ Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, trans. by T. B. Bottomore and D. Frisby (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 224. In general see the section entitled 'money's congruence with those who are marginal', pp. 221-7.

During the trial scene, Shylock refuses to listen to the intercessions of the Christian characters, and yet this selective deafness actually begins much earlier on in the play.⁹² A noteworthy example of this occurs when Shylock is robbed of his daughter and his money. Refusing to empathise with Shylock in his time of shock and grief, the Christians instead gossip about him in private, once more eliciting a sense of an acoustic community from which Shylock is excluded:

Solanio I never heard a passion so confused.
 So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
 As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
 [. . .]
Salarino Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
 Crying his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.
 (II.viii.12-24)

Their failure to respond sympathetically is, understandably perhaps, imitated by Shylock not long afterwards. In a short episode preceding the trial, the imprisoned Antonio enters with his jailer, beseeching Shylock to listen to him:

Antonio Hear me yet, good Shylock –
Shylock I'll have my bond, speak not against my bond;
 [. . .]
Antonio I pray thee hear me speak –
Shylock I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak;
 I'll have my bond, and therefore speak no more.
 I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,
 To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield

⁹² For continued discussion of characters who refuse to listen to other people in Shakespeare's plays, see, for example, Folkerth's analysis of *Coriolanus* in *The Sound of Shakespeare*, pp. 82-3, and Botelho's chapter on "I hear a bustling rumour": Shakespeare's Aural Insurgents', in *Renaissance Earwitnesses*, pp. 75-95. Botelho specifically concentrates on the relationship between gender and closed ears, as does Bloom in her detailed discussion of Shakespeare's late plays in *Voice in Motion*, pp. 111-59. More specifically on selective deafness in *The Merchant of Venice*, see Lawrence Danson, *The Harmonies of The Merchant of Venice* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978). While not neglecting the Christian characters' deafness either, Danson argues that 'Shylock becomes deafer, as well as increasingly speechless, as the play proceeds' (p. 123).

To Christian intercessors.

(III.iii.3-16)

With the prospect of a grim amputation looming on the horizon, the play's imagery is rich in body parts. Increasingly, though, this corporeal vocabulary is indicative of unapproachability, since Shakespeare repeatedly depicts shut ears alongside hardened hearts. Kiernan Ryan argues that 'The whole point of Shylock's demanding payment of "a pound of flesh", and of Antonio's heart in particular (III.i.127), lies in its grotesque attempt to translate the heartlessness of Venice into reality. Venice is a world where the human heart is literally a quantifiable lump of meat'.⁹³ Of inhospitality more generally, Ben Jelloun says, 'Time is precious and space limited. There's a shortage of accessibility, or in other words of generosity and freedom, because everything is calculated and measured. Doors are shut and so are hearts'.⁹⁴ This scenario is exactly what happens in *The Merchant of Venice*, where Shakespeare brings to life how people and governments have a vicious tendency to go selectively deaf when it suits them.

In the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter I quoted Shylock's famous speech from Act III of *The Merchant of Venice* when he challenges his Christian adversaries on whether or not the human senses are universal. Holly Dugan perfectly captures the central meaning of the lines when she notes that 'Shylock's eloquent defence of his truly awful desire for revenge asks his tormentors a profoundly evocative question: what moves us?'.⁹⁵ There is no answer to the question. Indeed, by the time we get to the courtroom drama of Act IV, the pressing issue is no longer what moves us, but, in a society as heartless as

⁹³ Kiernan Ryan, *Shakespeare* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2002), p. 19.

⁹⁴ Ben Jelloun, *French Hospitality: Racism and North African Immigrants* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 37.

⁹⁵ Holly Dugan, 'The Senses in Literature: Renaissance Poetry and the Paradox of Perception', in *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Renaissance*, ed. by Herman Roodenburg (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 149-167 (p. 150).

Shakespeare's Venice, are we still capable of being moved at all? Before the trial gets properly underway, the Duke has a few sympathetic words for Antonio's ears:

I am sorry for thee. Thou art come to answer
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch,
Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.

(IV.i.3-6)

The Duke's insinuation that Shylock is heartless is reiterated in his allusion to those people with 'brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint' (IV.i.31), as well as in Gratiano's complaint that Shylock is an 'unfeeling man' (IV.i.63). These and other related image clusters of hardheartedness converge on Shylock during the courtroom episode, when the Christian characters repeatedly imply that there is something abnormally cold about his inner body.⁹⁶ It appears that what the Venetian characters find most disconcerting about Shylock's attitude is his obduracy to outside influence. Following on from the remarks made by the Duke and Gratiano, it is Antonio who gives the longest speech denouncing Shylock's inflexibility:

I pray you think you question with the Jew.
You may as well go stand upon the beach
And bid the main flood bate its usual height;
You may as well use question with the wolf
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops and to make no noise
When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven;

⁹⁶ For continued reading on ideas of inwardness across a broad range of early modern texts, see Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). Also relevant is David Hillman's essay on 'Visceral Knowledge: Shakespeare, Scepticism, and the Interior of the Early Modern Body', in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp 81-107. Hillman relates the desire to understand the secret thoughts and motivations of others to imagery of entrails. In the next chapter on Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, I discuss in more detail what this early modern language of interiority means for the representation of hospitality in Shakespeare's plays.

You may as well do anything most hard
As seek to soften that – than which what’s harder? –
His Jewish heart.

(IV.i.70-80)

In this list of examples borrowed from the natural environment, Antonio stresses the sound and motion of the landscape, from the bleating of lambs to the pine trees rustling noisily in the wind. The animated landscape he describes is very different from Shylock’s obstinate stubbornness to adhere to the letter of his bond.

For the early moderns, the emotions had a far more powerful association with tangible movement than we might assume today. In her introduction to *Emotional Excess on the Shakespearean Stage: Passion’s Slaves*, Bridget Escolme writes that ‘I want to retain, throughout this book, the sense of “motion” in “emotion” with which the early moderns would have been familiar and to take quite literally and theatrically the early idea that when in a heightened emotional state, we are “moved”’.⁹⁷ Even today, to be welcoming means allowing oneself to be emotionally affected, as well as literally intruded upon, by the newcomer’s entrance. As Jean-Luc Nancy puts it, ‘To welcome a stranger, moreover, is necessarily to experience his intrusion’,⁹⁸ while Judith Still similarly suggests that ‘Hospitality implies letting the other in to oneself, to one’s own space – it is invasive of the integrity of the self, or the domain of the self. This is why it may be seen as both foundational (to be fully human is to be able to alter, to be altered – as Rousseau suggests) and dangerous’.⁹⁹ In *The Merchant of Venice*, the extent to which the figures on stage have ceased to listen or to be moved by one another is an indication that hospitality has failed. Near the beginning of this chapter, I noted that some early modern writers such as Thomas

⁹⁷ Bridget Escolme, *Emotional Excess on the Shakespearean Stage: Passion’s Slaves* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. xx1.

⁹⁸ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, trans. by Richard A. Rand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), p. 161.

⁹⁹ Still, *Derrida and Hospitality*, p. 13.

Wright theorised the sensation of musical pleasure as the literal tickling of the heart caused by the fluttering of the air inside the body. In *The Merchant of Venice* Shylock never does get to carve out Antonio's heart, but, in a way, the human heart is already a defunct organ. The ability to be moved is not solely a prerequisite of hospitality, but it is evidence of being part of our environment. In his *Mourning Diary: October 26, 1977 – September 15, 1979*, begun upon his mother's death, Roland Barthes reflects, 'But all my life haven't I been just that: *moved?*'¹⁰⁰

In his essay on 'Hospitality', Derrida acknowledges the vital role that the emotions play in the hospitality relationship. He notes that 'it is hard to imagine a scene of hospitality during which one welcomes [*accueille*] without smiling at the other, without giving a sign of joy or pleasure'.¹⁰¹ What makes heartfelt emotion so necessary is that it is what elevates things beyond the formal conventions dictated by social politeness. Despite its necessity, however, there is a clear downside to hospitality's dependence on the inner life of the emotions. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare shows how our impassioned responses to outsiders can place hospitality on a dangerously unpredictable footing. When Shylock is asked by the Venetian courtroom why he would prefer to cut a pound of flesh from Antonio's body than receive the value of the bond, he replies:

What, are you answered yet?

Some men there are love not a gaping pig;

Some that are mad if they behold a cat;

And others when the bagpipe sings i'th' nose

Cannot contain their urine: for affection

¹⁰⁰ Roland Barthes, *Mourning Diary: October 26, 1977 – September 15, 1979*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), p. 43.

¹⁰¹ Jacques Derrida, 'Hospitality' in *Acts of Religion*, ed. Anidjar, pp. 358-420 (p. 358). According to Derrida, if I welcome someone solely out of politeness, without experiencing any genuine joy at their coming, then this is not hospitality. Engaging with Derrida's argument in *Derrida and Hospitality*, Still comments that 'Hospitality is a material structure but overlaid with crucial affective elements: the emotional relations associated with hospitality such as heartfelt generosity or sincere gratitude' (p. 12).

Masters oft passion, sways it to the mood
Of what it likes or loathes.

(IV.i.46-52)

In lines that connect the play's dominant themes of musical enjoyment and the inward life of the emotions, Shylock tells the listening court that his hatred of Antonio is no more comprehensible than another man's dislike of bagpipe music.

Throughout this section I have been suggesting that, in spite of the way that hospitality in Venice gets entangled in the bureaucracy of the legal system, it never loses sight of the body or the emotions. The argument that Shylock is making here between musical preferences and liking some people but not others resonates across the play as a whole. Hospitality in *The Merchant of Venice* is wholly inseparable from the senses and emotions, but, as we saw earlier on with Portia's overseas suitors, this puts the relationship between guests and hosts on a capricious and even dangerously arbitrary footing. By presenting just how unknowable our personal tastes can be, Shakespeare again challenges on what grounds we make decisions about whom we are prepared to welcome inside our homes.

Disharmony

In the last section of this chapter, I wish to look briefly at the puzzling and anticlimactic ending of *The Merchant of Venice*. Following Shylock's defeat in the law court, it is now apparent that hospitality has failed, only to be replaced with forced integration and a compulsory conversion to Christianity. Even though the alien threat that Shylock poses is expelled from the stage by the end of the trial and he makes no reappearance during the closing moments of the play, we cannot forget the violence which has so recently taken place. Furthermore, and in spite of the fact that Portia appears every inch the gracious hostess in

Belmont during the final scenes, her hospitality is undermined by the memory of her cruel toying with Shylock in the courtroom. *The Merchant of Venice*'s romantic dénouement in the green world of Belmont, and, in particular, its abrupt change in mood, has thus presented a problem to many critics. In his edition of the play, John Drakakis writes that 'It is as though we are offered a conventional comic ending, replete with a series of marriages, but also, at the same time, a critical commentary upon its now precarious efficacy'.¹⁰² In what follows, I suggest a reading of the play's soundscape in Act V that emphasises the jarring nature of this conclusion. On a simple level, Shakespeare depicts Belmont as filled with music and hospitality. Stephen Greenblatt quite correctly says of Portia that 'her special values in the play are bound up with her house at Belmont and all it represents: its starlit garden, enchanting music, hospitality, social prestige'.¹⁰³ In their celebration of harmony and descriptions of the music of the spheres, the residents and visitors at Belmont certainly produce the impression of restoring order to the play's comic universe. And yet, Shakespeare includes so many jarring notes as to immediately problematise the ending. In addition to the matrimonial disagreements between both sets of couples and the stage business over the rings, there are the wrong notes struck by Jessica and Lorenzo's conversation in the moonlit garden. Most of all, there is the silence of the absent Shylock, and of Antonio, who is also left out of the romantic pairings at the end. By simultaneously presenting for our ears two incompatible soundscapes, Shakespeare encourages his audience to be very sceptical of the hospitality that we see happening on stage. Having spent the preceding acts showing us how to listen out for the uncomfortable moments it is as if, with the dénouement of *The Merchant*

¹⁰² Drakakis, 'Introduction' to *The Merchant of Venice*, p. 109. For a more optimistic interpretation of the final scene of *The Merchant of Venice* that views it as a harmonious resolution see, for example, C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* and Lawrence Danson, *The Harmonies of The Merchant of Venice*. This more conventional viewpoint is encapsulated by Barber's point that 'No other comedy, until the late romances, ends with so full an expression of harmony as that which we get in the opening of the final scene of *The Merchant of Venice*. And no other final scene is so completely without irony about the joys it celebrates' (p. 187).

¹⁰³ Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse*, p. 43. Greenblatt then goes on to contrast Belmont with Shylock's 'cold, empty house' (p. 43).

of *Venice*, Shakespeare is yet again vocalising the insincerity behind the myth of Venice as an open and tolerant society.

The final act of *The Merchant of Venice* begins with Jessica and Lorenzo who are sharing a quiet moment in the garden outside Portia's house at Belmont. Lorenzo's first words to his new wife are:

The moon shines bright. In such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
And they did make no noise, in such a night
Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls
And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night.

(V.i.1-6)

In these romantic few lines Lorenzo emphasises quiet sounds that are evocative of being in love, like kissing and sighing with longing. This creates a calmer impression of the body and its unconscious movements than we have seen in the previous few scenes. The stillness of the evening is soon interrupted, however, by the appearance of messengers. Jessica hears footsteps approaching, and the first visitor is shown to be Stephano, who brings news that Portia is on her way home to Belmont. Stephano's entrance is then immediately followed by Lancelot's comically noisy interruption:

Lancelot Sola, sola! Wo ha, ho! Sola, sola!
Lorenzo Who calls?
Lancelot Sola! Did you see Master Lorenzo? Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!
Lorenzo Leave holloaing, man! Here!
Lancelot Sola! Where, where?
Lorenzo Here!

(V.i.39-45)

With the silence now well and truly broken, we learn that Bassanio and Antonio are also travelling home to Belmont. These sudden intrusions into the stillness of the night air disrupt our expectations of romance. Other problematic allusions crowd into the dialogue between the lovers. Catherine Belsey has pointed out that the classical lovers they allude to, including Troilus and Cressida, are all caught at unhappy moments,¹⁰⁴ while Lorenzo's reference above to the tree tops making no sound in the wind is the first of several glances backwards to the silence of Shylock and his house.

As the preparations inside the house get underway to ensure that Belmont is made suitably hospitable for its approaching guests, Lorenzo calls for some musicians to come outside. In the brief pause before they arrive, he says to Jessica:

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears; soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold.
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still chording to the young-eyed cherubins.
Such harmony is in immortal souls,
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

[*Enter Stephano with musicians*]

Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn.
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,
And draw her home with music.

¹⁰⁴ See Catherine Belsey's essay on 'Love in Venice', in *New Casebooks: The Merchant of Venice* ed. by Martin Coyle, pp. 139-61 (p. 141).

Music plays

(V.i.54-68)

Continuing the play's fascination with sounds that we cannot normally hear onstage, Lorenzo is alluding here to the music of the spheres. This was a familiar concept in the English Renaissance which had developed from the Pythagorean idea that the mathematical distances between the rotating planets produced the same ratios as those eliciting melodious sounds from musical instruments.¹⁰⁵ Even though the resultant celestial hum was believed to be inaudible to human ears, it was a model that served to evoke a universe of soothingly harmonious proportions.

Once the musicians start playing, Jessica makes a perhaps surprising confession to her husband, telling him that she is 'never merry' (V.i.69) when she is listening to music. In response, Lorenzo heaps praise on her sensory faculties:

The reason is your spirits are attentive.
For do but note a wild and wanton herd
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud –
Which is the hot condition of their blood –
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turned to a modest gaze
By the sweet power of music.

(V.i.70-79)

Jessica is alert to the music in a manner that recalls the early modern instructional treatises on the right way to hear an early modern sermon. Arnold Hunt notes that 'The art of hearing

¹⁰⁵ In his essay on 'The Sum of Something: Arithmetic in *The Merchant of Venice*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 36: 1 (1985), 10-30, David Bady comments that '*Merchant* itself has often been credited with one important mathematical locus, Lorenzo's discourse on harmony' (p. 14). For continued discussion of the function of music in Shakespeare's plays, see Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music*.

demanded close and sustained attention to a sermon, and intellectual and emotional engagement with its content, for perhaps an hour or more'.¹⁰⁶ In Belmont near the end of *The Merchant of Venice* the newly converted Jessica has been transformed into an idealised Protestant listener. Nearly approaching the house a few lines later, Portia also hears the music playing and she remarks to Nerissa that:

The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
When neither is attended; and I think
The nightingale, if she should sing by day
When every goose is cackling, would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things by season seasoned are
To their right praise and true perfection.

(V.i.102-108)

By comparing the melodies of different birdsongs, Portia also presents herself as a perceptive listener.¹⁰⁷ But, in the midst of these depictions of dutiful listening habits, there comes another reminder of Shylock. While praising Jessica, Lorenzo says:

The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night
And his affections dark as Erebus.
Let no such man be trusted.

(V.i.83-88)

¹⁰⁶ Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, p. 71. In *The Harmonies of The Merchant of Venice*, Danson says of the ending of *The Merchant of Venice* that 'The idea of musical harmony has by then become a dominant metaphor for the play's actions, and the attitudes of the characters to music has become an important means of knowing them' (p. 33).

¹⁰⁷ In his edition of *The Merchant of Venice*, Drakakis notes that 'Portia is concerned to emphasise the consequences of inattentiveness (and hence lack of discrimination) to the relative merits of the singing of crow and lark' (V.i.102n). At the beginning of *Renaissance Earwitnesses*, Botelho discusses contemporary attitudes towards discernment at pp.1-3.

With this reference to Shylock, the ostensibly harmonious mood at the ending of *The Merchant of Venice* strikes yet another discordant note.

The sense of disharmony deepens when Portia welcomes Antonio to Belmont. Her hospitality is loudly interrupted by the sound of the new lovers arguing:

Portia Sir, you are very welcome to our house.
It must appear in other ways than words:
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.

Gratiano [to Nerissa] By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong!
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk,
Would he were gelt that had it, for my part,
Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.

Portia A quarrel ho, already! What's the matter?

(V.i.139-46)

It is not long before both pairs of newlyweds will be quarrelling over the business involving the rings, in the process fulfilling Nerissa's prediction from earlier on that the men's loose generosity with their wives' gifts might well make for 'an unquiet house' (IV.i.290). Once again the concluding performance of hospitality at Belmont is problematised by a disharmonious soundscape. The sadness which opened *The Merchant of Venice* now brings the events on stage to a close, with Antonio stating that he is 'th'unhappy subject' (V.i.238) of the squabbles between the lovers. The harmony at the dénouement is superficial and comes at a great spiritual and financial cost to the alien residents of Venice.

* * *

In this chapter, I have attempted to suggest some new connections between the senses and hospitality. For the early moderns, sound was the most trustworthy way of fathoming the interior feelings and motivations of other people. In *The Sound of Shakespeare*, Wes Folkerth notes that 'In early modern culture, sound is considered a privileged mode of access

to the deeply subjective thoughts, emotions, and intentions of others'.¹⁰⁸ Comparing hearing with some of the other senses further on in the book, Folkerth adds that 'It was contemporarily believed that unlike sight which mainly gives knowledge about surfaces and exteriors, sound has the special capacity to provide knowledge about interiors'.¹⁰⁹ *The Merchant of Venice* is a play about deciphering what is contained inside three ornate caskets, but it is also a play that probes other interiors, both domestic spaces, but also the unknowable inner life of the emotions. Owing to the fact that the early moderns relied on sound as a dependable means of understanding the opaque intentions of other people, the man who refuses to listen to music or to let himself be emotionally swayed by the pleas of others is deeply troubling and threatening to the whole social edifice. And yet there is no single moment in which hospitality in *The Merchant of Venice* breaks down. I have sought in this chapter to rather identify a number of smaller instances when the characters on stage are failing to behave hospitably, even if this does not always take the form we might expect. There are few scenes where characters shut the door on one another, for instance, but the quiet hardening of hearts and selective deafness become a significant feature of Shakespeare's staging of hospitality going wrong. In Shakespeare's Venice, Jews and Christians alike completely stop listening to one another, instead gossiping about one another's domestic misfortunes rather than empathising with them, while simultaneously exploiting the legal and financial bonds that inevitably yoke residents of a crowded metropolis together. All of this, I suggest, is part of the complexity of Shakespeare's performances of hospitality on the early stage.

¹⁰⁸ Folkerth, *The Sound of Shakespeare*, p. 33. For a comprehensive overview of the early modern concept of sounding out the other, see especially pp. 28-33.

¹⁰⁹ Folkerth, *The Sound of Shakespeare*, p. 75.

We will witness more of the devastating consequences of failing to discover in time the ulterior motives of the guest in the next chapter on *Troilus and Cressida*. The play begins in the middle of the lengthy Trojan War, when the hosting city of Troy is under siege, and when the Greeks and Trojans are in violent confrontation with one another in a way that we have not previously seen with the Jewish and Christian characters in *The Merchant of Venice*. The wartime setting of *Troilus and Cressida* lends a new urgency to some of the problems relating to hospitality which I have begun to outline throughout this opening chapter. In particular, the violent consequences of encounters going badly wrong becomes far more of a likely threat, while time, and the present moment, above all, assumes greater dramatic importance. In addition, the battlefield context puts the categories of guest and host under intense pressure. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock is quite plainly classified as an alien outsider in predominantly Christian Venice; in the besieged environment of *Troilus and Cressida*, however, we find enemies who appear more like friends and vice versa. Most of all, this fascinating play about military conflict is haunted by the impending devastation that will be brought about by the wooden horse. Presented to the city of Troy as an alleged parting gift, the Trojan horse will become the exemplary parasite that is capable of destroying its host from the inside out, and so ending all trust in hospitality.

Chapter Two

Wartime Encounters in *Troilus and Cressida*

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare uses the troubling relationship between guests and hosts to explore the theme of bonds, while also exploiting hospitality's theatrical potential for violence. This chapter considers Shakespeare's staging of wartime hospitality in *Troilus and Cressida*, arguing that the play deepens and problematises what we have seen of hospitality so far. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock's intended violence against a native citizen remains unrealised because he is never allowed to cut off his pound of flesh, and the threat that he poses to the state is neutralised by the end of the play. Even some of the relatively petty hostilities in that play, such as Antonio's spitting on Shylock's Jewish gabardine, for instance, are left offstage, although we do hear the incidents described. Shakespeare's Venice is allegedly at peace with its alien population, and therefore it is necessary to listen hard in order to distinguish some of the violence that undermines scenes of welcoming. In contrast, the action of *Troilus and Cressida* begins in the middle of the Trojan War, which immediately makes the violence explicit as Shakespeare presents dangerous meetings between the Greek and Trojan combatants. While violent encounters on the battlefield are to be expected, however, what is most powerful about the depiction of hospitality in this play is

that, even in the quieter moments, the relationship between guests and hosts is characterised by a deep sense of uneasiness. Shakespeare's classical heroes repeatedly speak about feeling vulnerable when confronted with outsiders. This vulnerability is complicated further by the fact that Shakespeare blends the love and war plots together, which has the effect of tinging some of the soldierly encounters with emotion, while at the same time militarising some of the civilian greetings.

In this chapter, then, I am building on some of the problems surrounding Shakespeare's dramatisation of hospitality which I had begun to explore in *The Merchant of Venice*, but I am also extending the discussion in new directions. The wartime context of *Troilus and Cressida* lends an urgency to its presentation of hospitality, while introducing pressing ideas of time and death. Throughout the play, Shakespeare lingers over the staging of welcoming scenes, often to an astonishing degree, repeatedly using the idea of the encounter to investigate the trauma of letting a stranger get close enough to hurt you. This is where the intermingling of the love and war plots becomes particularly intense, for it creates unexpected connections between violence and hospitality that I develop throughout the argument. *Troilus and Cressida* is, after all, a play where both lovers get their hearts broken and warriors are disembowelled on the battlefield. As I will show in the chapter, Derrida has argued that being truly welcoming inevitably means exposing oneself to risk, and that this condition of vulnerability cannot be wholly eradicated without also sacrificing the circumstances that are essential to hospitality. In *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare uses the vulnerability of guests and hosts to one another to reveal a deeper sense of the troubling nature of welcoming.

In Elizabethan England, retellings of the legendary siege of Troy remained immensely popular.¹ After a lengthy war, the siege famously came to an end when the Greeks built an enormous wooden horse which they used to infiltrate the city secretly. The Trojans were persuaded that the horse was a ritual offering, and that the Greeks had at last sailed home in their ships, and so they brought the gift inside their walls. Once darkness fell, though, Greek warriors poured out of the horse's hollow belly and devoured the host city from within. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, the Trojan warrior Aeneas relates what happened:

Broken by war and rebuffed by the Fates
For so many years, the Greek warlords
Built a horse, aided by the divine art
Of Pallas, a horse the size of a mountain,
Weaving its ribs out of beams of fir.
They pretended it was a votive offering
For their safe return home. So the story went.
But deep within the horse's cavernous dark
They concealed an elite band, all their best,
Stuffing its huge womb with men at arms.²

Troilus and Cressida has so far received little attention in the scholarship on hospitality in early modern drama, yet the story of the Trojan War is one of the great classical exempla of how relations between hosts and guests can deteriorate on both sides with devastating

¹ For more on the Troy legend in the early modern period, see John Tatlock, 'The Siege of Troy in Elizabethan Literature, Especially in Shakespeare and Heywood', *PMLA*, 30: 4 (1915), 673-770, and Heather James, *Shakespeare's Troy: Drama, Politics, and the Translation of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Of most relevance to the play is the chapter entitled: "'Tricks we play on the dead': Making History in *Troilus and Cressida*", pp 85-119.

² Virgil, *Aeneid* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2005), trans. by Stanley Lombardo, Book 2, ll. 17-26. For more on Shakespeare's reading of Virgil, see Leah Whittington, 'Shakespeare's Virgil: Empathy and *The Tempest*', in *Shakespeare and Renaissance Ethics*, ed. by Patrick Gray and John D. Cox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 98-120. See also Charles Martindale, 'Shakespeare and Virgil', in *Shakespeare and the Classics*, ed. by Charles Martindale and A. B. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 87-106.

consequences.³ The conflict begins and ends with spectacular abuses of hospitality. Indeed, from the original theft of Helen from Sparta by the guest, Paris, to the treacherous parting gift of the wooden horse that brought destruction on the city, the fall of Troy is one of the earliest cautionary tales of hospitality in Western literature. In our vocabulary today a ‘Trojan horse’ is still synonymous with sabotage. The *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that it signifies both ‘the hollow wooden horse in which Greeks were concealed to enter Troy’, but is more commonly used to refer to a stratagem that is ‘insinuated to bring about an enemy's downfall; a person or thing that undermines from within’.⁴ Playing on popular fears over migration levels at a rally during the 2016 United States presidential election campaign, for example, Donald Trump said of immigrants: ‘This could be the great Trojan horse of all time’.⁵ He went on to say, ‘I’m telling you, I’ve said it before: This could be the great Trojan horse of all time. They’re coming in. They’re coming in’.⁶ The wooden horse is a particularly charged image to use when discussing hospitality or, in this case, immigration, not simply because it is so iconic in Western culture but for the reason that it embodies fundamental human anxieties about being the victim of unanticipated violence at the hands of outsiders.

³ There is an essay on hospitality in *Troilus and Cressida* by Andrew Hiscock entitled: “‘Will you walk in, my lord?’: Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida* and the Anxiety of Oikos”, in *Shakespeare and Hospitality: Ethics, Politics, and Exchange*, ed. by David Goldstein and Julia Reinhard Lupton (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp.17-38. Hiscock examines the play in relation to classical ideas about dwelling spaces. See also Maria Del Sapio Garbero, ‘Fostering the Question “Who Plays the Host?”’, in *Identity, Otherness and Empire in Shakespeare’s Rome*, ed. by Maria Del Sapio Garbero (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 91-106. On the classical context in relation to hospitality, see James Heffernan’s chapter on ‘Classical Hospitality’ in *Hospitality and Treachery in Western Literature* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 13-40.

⁴ “Trojan, adj. and n.” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2017, www.oed.com/view/Entry/206609. [Accessed 12 September 2017].

⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/08/05/donald-trump-now-says-even-legal-immigrants-are-a-security-threat/> [Accessed online October 2016].

⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/08/05/donald-trump-now-says-even-legal-immigrants-are-a-security-threat/> [Accessed online October 2016]. Emotive political rhetoric has a long history of fearmongering the public. In *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic: Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Jonathan Gil Harris argues that ‘Western political rhetoric has amassed this century a sizeable lexicon loosely derived from pathological medicine whose terms (e.g. the “purge”, “foreign bodies”, “infection”, “containment”, perhaps even “ethnic cleansing”) presume an organic notion of nation or civil society’ (p. 3).

Despite never appearing onstage in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, the wooden horse remains something of a disquieting presence. It seems uncannily to haunt the performance and is indirectly responsible for some of the unease surrounding Shakespeare's portrayal of hospitality in wartime. In one of the very early scenes in the Greek camp in Act I, for instance, the conversation keeps on returning portentously to timbered sides and ribcages. Nestor is comparing the warring factions when he says:

But let the ruffian Boreas once enrage
The gentle Thetis, and anon behold
The strong-ribbed bark through liquid mountains cut,
Bounding between the two moist elements
Like Perseus' horse. Where's then the saucy boat
Whose weak untimbered sides but even now
Co-rivalled greatness?⁷

Nestor's imagery of the horse and the 'weak untimbered sides' of the little ship is, of course, ironically prophetic. This impression is reiterated a few lines later when Ulysses is impersonating Achilles laughing at some joke and he says:

'O, enough, Patroclus,
Or give me ribs of steel! I shall split all
In pleasure of my spleen.'

(I.iii.176-78)

In the previous chapter on *The Merchant of Venice* we saw how Shakespeare used the theme of vessels and caskets to add resonance to the difficulty of sounding out the other. Here in *Troilus and Cressida*, it is the legendary hollow ribcage of the Trojan horse which lends the play a strong fascination with what may be concealed on the inside. Yet, whereas in *The Merchant of Venice* a great deal of the preoccupation with interiors and glittering

⁷ William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, ed. by David Bevington (London: Cengage Learning, 1998), I.iii.38-44. All further references to the play are to this edition unless otherwise stated and are given parenthetically in the text.

ornamentation was confined to the world of material objects, the wooden horse behind the story of *Troilus and Cressida* redirects our attention onto the body itself as the originary site of treachery.⁸ (This argument will be developed further on in the chapter when I discuss the play's paranoia over counterfeits and forgeries.)

The present chapter considers the overlap in Shakespeare's representation of hospitality and violence in *Troilus and Cressida*. Throughout, I will be engaging closely with Derrida's ideas on the interdependence of hostility and hospitality. Despite being intensified in wartime, there is always a possibility that hospitality might end in violence. It is to account for this dual phenomenon that Derrida coins the term 'hostipitality'. In his essay of the same name he says:

Hospitality, what belabours and concerns hospitality at its core [*ce qui travaille l'hospitalité en son sein*], what works at it like a labour, like a pregnancy, like a promise as much as like a threat, what settles in it, within it [*en son dedans*], like a Trojan horse, the enemy (*hostis*) as much as the *avenir*, intestine hospitality, is indeed a contradictory conception.⁹

In addition to the other bodily imagery of pregnancy and the intestines, the wooden horse becomes, for Derrida, a way of articulating the fact that we never know for certain the inward intentions of guests or hosts to one another. Indeed, what the Trojan horse so memorably demonstrates, in fact, is our innate capacity to harbour violent desires beneath a welcoming façade. Linda Charnes has shown that the heroic figures in *Troilus and Cressida* display an

⁸ The play's interest in bodily interiors and imagery has long been noted by critics. In *Shakespeare from the Margins: Language, Culture, Context* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), Patricia Parker discusses the presence of dilated or swollen bodies in *Troilus and Cressida*. She comments that 'Lacking any satisfactory end [. . .] the play itself is all distended middle, figuring the grotesque possibility of a bloated simulacrum of pregnancy' (p. 226). While in *Shakespeare's Entrails: Belief, Scepticism and the Interior of the Body* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), David Hillman argues that the intestinal ending of the Trojan War becomes the starting point for Shakespeare: 'The ending of the Trojan legend, we might here recall, is ineluctably linked to the idea of full intestines – to the Trojan horse, that is, with its bellyful of Greek warriors [. . .] Here, again, Shakespeare neatly turns around the question of origins and ends: the normative *conclusion* of the Trojan story is in the horse's belly; *Troilus and Cressida*, as we will see, makes the belly the origin rather than the culmination of the tale' (p. 66).

⁹ Jacques Derrida, 'Hostipitality' in *Acts of Religion*, ed. by Gil Anidjar (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 356-421 (p. 359).

uncanny premonition of their own future afterlives.¹⁰ I suggest that the wooden horse also haunts the play, affecting its dramatisation of hospitality by enveloping moments of welcoming with a paranoid fear of violence. Furthermore, in the fledgling capitalist society of *Troilus and Cressida*, hospitality also shares an intriguing relationship with the marketplace. As I will demonstrate over the course of this chapter, hospitality is endlessly being evaluated for its worth and assessed against the risks.

While there is a longstanding critical tradition of viewing *Troilus and Cressida* as unremittingly bleak in mood, I argue that the performance of hospitality contains glimmers of hopefulness. The Trojan warriors decide that the consequences of prolonging the war by keeping Helen as their guest any longer are too costly, and yet they proceed to do so anyway. Hector is warned about the danger of having sympathy with the Greeks and then expecting them to do the same, but he nevertheless chooses to let his guard down. Hospitality in this play moves beyond thought or calculation. We become spectators of an overwhelming impulse to be welcoming in spite of the difficulties. It is as Derrida argues: ‘Calculate the risks, yes, but don’t shut the door on what cannot be calculated, meaning the future and the foreigner – that’s the double law of hospitality’.¹¹

Hospitality and Disarmament

In *Troilus and Cressida* any attempt to separate out the intermingled love and war plots feels destined to failure. Nevertheless, I begin by isolating some of the quieter encounters that take place between the lovers in the Trojan camp early on in the play. The purpose of this section

¹⁰ Linda Charnes, *Notorious Identity: Materializing the Subject in Shakespeare* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

¹¹ Jacques Derrida, ‘The Principle of Hospitality’, in *Paper Machine*, trans. by Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp.66-70 (p. 67).

is to begin exploring the implications of the vulnerability of guests and hosts to one another, suggesting some of the ways that this informs the love plot. The associations between hospitality and vulnerability have long been noted by critics. Julia Lupton and David Goldstein suggest that ‘hospitality’s most frightening trait’ is ‘the absolute vulnerability of guests and hosts to each other’,¹² while James Heffernan has likened hospitality to the helpless sensation of falling in love:

If hospitality can occasionally furnish something like the pleasures of love, it also resembles love in exposing all of its parties to the perils of intimacy. To fall in love is to give someone the power to break your heart. To ask one or more people into your home, whether to dine at your table, sleep under your roof, or simply converse, is to give them the power to complicate your life right up to the act of taking it.¹³

In *Troilus and Cressida*, the sense of vulnerability that comes from encounters with strangers is repeatedly expressed through a language of disarmament. Within the militarised world of the play, disarmament is a recurring subject that runs from the prologue right up to the eventual death of the unarmed Hector at the end of the play.¹⁴ But, and according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, ‘disarming’ also denotes what ‘allays suspicion or hostility, chiefly by means of charm or attractiveness. Hence simply: charming, winning’.¹⁵ Shakespeare plays with the different meanings of disarmament in his dramatisation of the meetings between the lovers. In addition to the physical removal of armour when inside the

¹² Lupton and Goldstein, ‘Introduction’ to *Shakespeare and Hospitality*, pp. 1-16 (p. 2).

¹³ Heffernan, *Hospitality and Treachery*, p. 1. In *Hospitable Performances: Dramatic Genre and Cultural Practices in Early Modern England* (Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1992), Daryl W. Palmer links hospitality with performances of vulnerability in Renaissance tragedy, arguing, ‘I suggest that when Renaissance playwrights wanted to imagine entrapment and the poignant nuances of vulnerability, they represented practices of hospitality’ (p. 157). On love and vulnerability in Shakespeare, see *The Art of Loving: Female Subjectivity and Male Discursive Traditions in Shakespeare’s Tragedies* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1992), where Evelyn Gajowski notes that ‘The fragility of the love between two people lies in its peculiar vulnerability to happenings in the world’ (p. 122).

¹⁴ In *Shakespeare After All* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), Marjorie Garber comments that ‘This language of arming and unarming, artfully established from the very beginning of the play, will continue throughout, and will provide the underlying design of a plot that mingles love and war with tragic results for both’ (p. 541).

¹⁵ “Disarming, adj.” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2017, www.oed.com/view/Entry/59449442. [Accessed 14 September 2017].

private household, the scenes hint at a more unnerving experience of sensory disorientation and bewilderment.

When *Troilus and Cressida* opens, the speaker of the prologue comes on stage dressed in armour clearly appropriate for the play's wartime setting. He explains that the action is beginning in the middle of the Trojan War and he invites the audience into the imaginative space of the play. In *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre: Performance and Liminality in Early Modern Drama*, Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann argue that early modern prologues are 'Tied to both a highly specific Elizabethan use of theatrical space and a language marked by a recurring imagery of ushering and culinary service'.¹⁶ The imagery of food and banqueting stresses the prologue's hospitable role. However, while theatrical prologues are normally very welcoming hosts, the one that opens *Troilus and Cressida* draws immediate attention to the inhospitable nature of its own play world. Consistent with the siege context, the prologue outlines the garrisoned city of Troy:

Now on Dardan plains

The fresh and yet unbruised Greeks do pitch
Their brave pavilions. Priam's six-gated city –
Dardan and Timbria, Helias, Chetas, Troien
And Antenorides – with massy staples
And corresponsive and fulfilling bolts,
Spar up the sons of Troy.

(Prologue: 1.13-9)¹⁷

¹⁶ Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre: Performance and Liminality in Early Modern Drama* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 165n.

¹⁷ Several critics have compared the mood in Elizabethan London at the turn of the century to the besieged city of Troy. In 'Emulous Factions and the Collapse of Chivalry: *Troilus and Cressida*', *Representations*, 29 (1990), 145-79, Eric Mallin writes that 'Despite its renowned military force and well-fortified capital city, England suffered a pervasive fear of attack. Frequent skirmishes with Ireland and rumours of imminent Spanish invasion fostered a national preoccupation with war [. . .] The neurosis of invasion made England something of a Troy, a nation ten years at war without strong hope of either victory or truce' (pp. 145-6). For continued discussion, see Theodor Meron, *Bloody Constraint: War and Chivalry in Shakespeare* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). In particular, see the chapter entitled: 'The Homeric Wars through Shakespeare', pp. 63-97.

We saw in *The Merchant of Venice* that Shakespeare places household spaces in juxtaposition to one another for dramatic effect. Here, the strongly defended Trojan city is contrasted with the flimsy and temporary structure of the Greek tents.¹⁸ The epitome of inhospitality, Troy has barricaded itself against outsiders. Our first impression of a city that is not at all welcoming soon gives way to other suggestions of inhospitable behaviour. Renaissance prologues typically allude to food and domestic service, thus inviting the audience to enjoy the theatrical spread, but the prologue to *Troilus and Cressida* contains only one grotesque reference to digestion:

To tell you, fair beholders, that our play
Leaps o'er the vaunt and firstlings of those broils,
Beginning in the middle, starting thence away
To what may be digested in a play

(Prologue: l. 26-29)

This deflating of audience expectations establishes the tone for the remainder of the play. In *Shakespeare and the Poets' War*, James Bednarz has argued that Shakespeare appears to be poking fun at Ben Jonson in *Troilus and Cressida* thereby intensifying the hostile atmosphere. He cites the prologue as an example of literary critique, arguing that Shakespeare's reference to 'A Prologue armed' (Prologue: l. 23) is a satiric imitation of Jonson's *Poetaster*.¹⁹ Prologues in general might be hospitable ushers, but the opening to *Troilus and Cressida* lingers over descriptions of shut gates and indigestion.

Yet the instant the prologue leaves the stage and *Troilus and Cressida* begins, our impression of early modern homeland security and tight border control is immediately

¹⁸ Julia Lupton discusses fabric structures such as tents in her essay on 'Shakespearean Softscapes: Hospitality, Phenomenology, Design', in *The Return of Theory in Early Modern English Studies, Volume II*, ed. by Paul Cefalu, Gary Kuchar and Bryan Reynolds (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 143-64.

¹⁹ James Bednarz, *Shakespeare and the Poets' War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001). In particular, see pp. 45-6, but the whole chapter on 'Shakespeare's Purge of Jonson: The Theatrical Context of *Troilus and Cressida*' is useful, pp. 19-54.

problematised. The opening scene takes place in Troy where Troilus is speaking to Cressida's uncle, Pandarus:

Call here my varlet; I'll unarm again.
Why should I war without the walls of Troy,
That find such cruel battle here within?
Each Trojan that is master of his heart,
Let him to field; Troilus, alas, hath none.

(I.i.1-5)

Troilus and Cressida continues to deflate our chivalric expectations from the outset, as Troilus now decides to remove his armour and stay home from the fighting. The question of what happens once we take down our defences is one of the foundational questions of hospitality and one that Shakespeare explores throughout the play. In particular, Shakespeare seems determined to interrogate how hospitality reflects and intensifies other kinds of defencelessness before strangers. For Troilus, the action of disarmament quickly leads to more sensitive confessions. He goes on to describe to Pandarus the effect his love for Cressida has had on him:

The Greeks are strong, and skilful to their strength,
Fierce to their skill, and to their fierceness valiant;
But I am weaker than a woman's tear,
Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance,
Less valiant than the virgin in the night,
And skillless as unpractised infancy.

(I.i.7-12)

Comparing himself unfavourably with the Greeks, Troilus lingers over delicate imagery of tears, sleep and virginity in this feminised self-portrayal. Later in the scene and after Pandarus has been praising his niece, Troilus says:

I tell thee I am mad

In Cressid's love. Thou answer'st 'She is fair',
Pour'st in the open ulcer of my heart
Her eyes, her hair, her cheek, her gait, her voice;

[. . .]

But, saying thus, instead of oil and balm,
Thou lay'st in every gash that love hath given me
The knife that made it.

(I.i.48-60)

Troilus pictures his heart as an 'open ulcer', while Cressida's beautiful qualities become the bloody gashes of stab wounds. Alexander Leggatt says of these lines that 'From the start, love registers as damage and loss. Troilus feels it as an assault on his body'.²⁰ Other people intrude forcefully upon the individual in this play and this experience informs both the romantic encounters and the violent skirmishes on the battlefield. From the beginning, then, *Troilus and Cressida* undermines our initial impression of securely defended cities and armoured bodies. In this play, when bodies come into contact with one another they are vulnerable to harm.

Cressida's entry later in Act I of the play establishes the same narrative movement from armament to a dismantling of those defences. When Cressida first comes onstage, she looks the epitome of defensiveness. She playfully teases her uncle until Pandarus becomes exasperated by her witty evasions and exclaims: 'You are such another woman! One knows not at what ward you lie' (I.ii.249-50). In response, Cressida says:

Upon my back to defend my belly, upon my wit to defend my wiles, upon my secrecy
to defend mine honesty, my mask to defend my beauty, and you to defend all these;
and at all these wards I lie, at a thousand watches.

(I.ii.251-55)

Cressida talks about herself using terms borrowed from fencing to denote parrying tactics, also mentioning how she shields her white skin from the sun behind her facial mask. She

²⁰ Alexander Leggatt, *Shakespeare's Tragedies: Violation and Identity* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 95.

implies that she is particularly vigilant of her chastity as well. In his edition of the play, David Bevington notes that ‘Cressida blends metaphors of fencing and siege warfare to express her wariness of sexual encounter [. . .] Lying on her back seems an odd way for a woman to resist penetration of her *belly* or womb, but in siege warfare a city’s gates face the ever present enemy and must resist assault’.²¹ From the beginning of the play, Cressida is associated with the walled city of Troy because she appears similarly intent on keeping the enemy at bay.²² By the end of the scene, Cressida has confessed to the audience her love for Troilus, but made clear that she is keeping it a closely guarded secret:

Women are angels, wooing;
Things won are done; joy’s soul lies in the doing.
That she beloved knows naught that knows not this:
Men prize the thing ungained more than it is.
[. . .]
Then, though my heart’s contents firm love doth bear,
Nothing of that shall from mine eyes appear.

(I.ii.277-86)

Building on Troilus’s earlier metaphors of love as a violent assault on the body, Cressida pictures her body as a stronghold, safeguarding her inward desires from prying eyes. Yet, notwithstanding her good intentions, Cressida’s defensive posturing collapses when she meets Troilus for the first time.

²¹ In his edition of the play, Bevington notes this point at I.ii.251*ln*. In “‘This is and is not Cressid’: The Characterisation of Cressida”, in *The (M)other Tongue: Essays in Feminist Psychoanalytic Interpretation*, ed. by Shirley Nelson Garner et al. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 119-141, Janet Adelman discusses this early speech of Cressida’s and argues that ‘Her soliloquy confirms our sense that her chief concern is with her vulnerability and her means of defence against it’ (p. 121). Leggatt makes a related point in *Shakespeare’s Tragedies* when he suggests, ‘Cressida, a besieged woman in a besieged city, sees herself fighting a defensive war’ (p. 92).

²² In *The City in the Age of Shakespeare* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), Gail Kern Paster has demonstrated that, ‘Because the city is walled for most of its history, it is early associated with the female principle’ (p. 4).

The greatly anticipated encounter between the lovers finally takes place in the middle of the play in Act III. Pandarus is mediating between the pair and instructs Troilus to wait in the orchard while he fetches his niece. This welcoming scene brings a new meaning to the sensation of being disarmed, for Troilus repeatedly speaks about feeling giddy and disorientated by the imminent meeting with Cressida. Hovering about outside Cressida's doorway, and while waiting for Pandarus to return, he says:

I am giddy; expectation whirls me round.
Th'imaginary relish is so sweet
That it enchants my sense. What will it be,
When that the wat'ry palates taste indeed
Love's thrice-repured nectar?

(III.ii.16-20)

Whirled around so completely by desire, Troilus's feels unsteadied by the forthcoming encounter. Emphasising again the sudden, dizzying change to his senses, Troilus tells Pandarus:

Even such a passion doth embrace my bosom.
My heart beats thicker than a feverous pulse,
And all my powers do their bestowing lose,
Like vassalage at unawares encount'ring
The eye of majesty.

(III.ii.33-37)

Troilus's comparison of himself to someone suddenly encountering a monarch and his emphasis on sensory disorientation are reminiscent of Bassanio's experience of receiving hospitality at Belmont in *The Merchant of Venice*. Often in his plays, Shakespeare returns to liminal threshold scenes and, in particular, their tendency to unsettle those characters who find themselves caught in a moment of hesitation while on the cusp of receiving hospitality.

The threshold nature of hospitality is something that Derrida has discussed at length in a number of texts. In *Aporias*, he argues that feelings of unsteadiness can come to affect the very boundary line itself:

But if the new *arrivant* who arrives is new, one must expect – without waiting for him or her, without expecting it – that he does not simply cross a given threshold. Such an *arrivant* affects the very experience of the threshold, whose possibility he thus brings to light before one even knows whether there has been an invitation, a call, a nomination, or a promise (*Verheissung, Heissen, etc.*).²³

This blurring of borders is partly why it is so difficult to distinguish the roles of guest and host, for the experience of hospitality tends to unsettle things. We see this happening in *Troilus and Cressida* while Troilus is hesitating outside in the orchard and waiting for Cressida to join him. His sensation of giddiness is so intense that it becomes unclear precisely what border Troilus believes himself to be crossing. As he puts it to Pandarus:

I stalk about her door
Like a strange soul upon the Stygian banks
Staying for waftage. O, be thou my Charon,
And give me swift transportance to those fields
Where I may wallow in the lily-beds
Proposed for the deserver!

(III.ii.7-12)

Despite being on the cusp of a romantic tryst, Troilus's imagery reveals a morbid fascination with death and the afterlife. In classical mythology, Charon was the ferryman who transported dead souls across the river in Hades, and Troilus compares himself to one of those souls awaiting passage to the pleasurable Elysium fields. Eroticising death is a familiar trope in Renaissance literature.²⁴ But Troilus's blurring of the borders between desire and

²³ Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. by Thomas Dutoit (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 33. Elsewhere Derrida says, 'that is what hospitality does, blur the border', in 'Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility: a Dialogue with Jacques Derrida' in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, ed. by Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 65-84 (p. 73).

²⁴ For more on death and eroticism in Renaissance literature, see Jonathan Dollimore, *Death, Desire and Loss in Western Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1998). Dollimore very briefly discusses Troilus's speech at p. 69. In

death also says something important about threshold crossings. In this quiet moment of pause before the lovers' meeting, Shakespeare uses imagery of the disarranged senses and emotions to convey the uncertain momentousness of the encounter.

The disarming nature of hospitality in *Troilus and Cressida* becomes clearer when the lovers finally meet one another for the first time. Supervised sleazily by Pandarus, the moment can be read as a series of confessions and denudings. When Cressida comes onstage she is veiled, which only heightens the mood of erotic anticipation. She stays covered up until Pandarus chides her to show herself to Troilus:

Come, come, what need you blush? Shame's a baby. [*to Troilus*] Swear the oaths now to her that you have sworn to me [*Cressida draws back.*] What, are you gone again? You must be watched ere you be made tame, must you? Come your ways, come your ways; an you draw backward, we'll put you i'th' thills. [*to Troilus*] Why do you not speak to her? [*to Cressida*] Come, draw this curtain, and let's see your picture.

(III.ii.38-45)

With Pandarus acting as embarrassing intermediary, the play stresses the utter awkwardness of meeting someone new. Pandarus's reference to shame and, specifically, to blushing is significant because it visibly conveys the discomfort of bodies coming into intimate contact with one another. In *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare emphasises the fumbling and shamefaced nature of greetings to the extent that it sometimes feels like nobody in this play knows how to welcome another properly. Earlier on in Act III, for instance, Pandarus is looking for Paris when he waylays his servant and says:

Pandarus I come to speak with Paris from the Prince Troilus. I will make a complimentary assault upon him, for my business seethes.

Servant Sodden business! There's a stewed phrase indeed.

(III.i.37-41)

Aporias, Derrida writes that death is the definitive border-crossing: 'according to an almost universal figure, death is represented as the crossing of a border, a voyage between the here and the beyond, with or without a ferryman, with or without a barge' (p. 6).

The servant plays amusingly on Pandarus's meaning of 'seethes' as demanding urgent action to imply instead that this will be a 'stewed' encounter in the gastronomic sense of boiled or overcooked. When Pandarus happens upon Paris and Helen not long afterwards, his greeting to them is no less awkwardly phrased:

Pandarus Fair be to you, my lord, and to all this fair company! Fair desires, in all fair measure, fairly guide them! – especially to you, fair queen. Fair thoughts be your fair pillow!

Helen Dear lord, you are full of fair words.

(III.i.42-46)

Helen wittily picks up on Pandarus's exaggerated use of the word 'fair' which lends his 'complimental assault' (III.i.38) on her and Paris an absurd quality. Humiliating or simply inept greetings like this one flood *Troilus and Cressida*. And this has the effect of foregrounding the body and its fragility.

Cressida's removal of her veil is a revealing motion that anticipates the more sensual undressing that will take place offstage when the lovers spend their first night together. In a few perhaps unexpected ways there is an overlap between the conditions of nudity and hospitality, or of being nude and being a host. Similarly to two people in a hospitality relationship, the nude is a subject defined through its soft and fragile exposure to other bodies. In *Being Nude: The Skin of Images*, Jean-Luc Nancy and Federico Ferrari ask: 'Isn't all nudity facing itself or facing another? Isn't nudity first of all a "facing"? [. . .] Nudity is not a being. It is not even a quality. It is always a relation, several simultaneous relations, with others, with the self, with an image, and with the absence of an image'.²⁵ Nudity is relational for the nude is always orientated in the direction of an implied observer. Hospitality is also defined primarily by the connections it engenders between people. Derrida

²⁵ Jean-Luc Nancy and Federico Ferrari, *Being Nude: The Skin of Images*, trans. by Anne O'Byrne and Carlie Anglemire (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), p. 29.

points out that ‘The welcome orients, it *turns* the *topos* of an opening of the door and the threshold toward the other’.²⁶

The encounter between the lovers in Act III begins with the simple enough gesture of Cressida removing her veil, but from here it leads on to more troubling disclosures. Hence, Cressida now takes this opportunity to confess to Troilus that she has secretly been in love with him for months:

Cressida Boldness comes to me now, and brings me heart.
Prince Troilus, I have loved you night and day
For many weary months.

Troilus Why was my Cressid then so hard to win?

Cressida Hard to seem won; but I was won, my lord,
With the first glance that ever – pardon me;
If I confess much, you will play the tyrant.
I love you now, but till now not so much
But I might master it. In faith, I lie;
My thoughts were like unbridled children, grown
Too headstrong for their mother. See, we fools!
Why have I blabbed? Who shall be true to us
When we are so unsecret to ourselves?

(III.ii.109-21)

With this perhaps unwise admission, the tone of the welcoming scene alters to something darker in mood. Whereas before the imagery of the body had been intent on eroticising it, Cressida’s allusion to tyranny and forced confession evokes the violent partitioning of bodies on the early modern scaffold when, by means of torture, the eviscerated body was made to divulge its innermost secrets. Or as Katharine Eisaman Maus explains in *Inwardness and Theatre in the English Renaissance*, ‘The traitor comes to the scaffold quite literally to spill

²⁶ Derrida, *Adieu*, p. 54.

his guts, to have the heart plucked out of his mystery'.²⁷ The description is an appropriate one for this scene in *Troilus and Cressida* where Cressida also spills her guts to reveal a seemingly involuntary level of intimacy with Troilus. The private discoveries of guests and hosts to one another are becoming more disquieting, moving from nudity into more uncomfortable and gory regions of the body that are only revealed in torture.

Blushing also makes the hidden interiors of the body momentarily visible beneath the surface of the skin, by causing the capillaries to dilate and the facial skin to appear inflamed. Troilus has a few words to say on the blush near the beginning of the play when complaining about the futility of the war:

Peace, you ungracious clamours! Peace, rude sounds!
Fools on both sides! Helen must needs be fair,
When with your blood you daily paint her thus.

(I.i.85-87)

In these lines Troilus imagines the blood of the men wounded on the battlefield being used by Helen as a rouge cosmetic to add colour and therefore beautify her complexion. His gruesome conceit makes explicit the connection between blood and the blush, usually remaining concealed beneath the outer layer of skin. In *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture*, Jonathan Sawday makes an interesting point about when the interior of the body becomes visible to the naked eye, and notes that it is usually in moments of trauma. He says, 'Those traces, often (though not always) encountered at moments of trauma or potential danger – the glimpse of a wound cavity, the fluids of the body and its expelled substances in sickness or in childbirth – are greeted with varying degrees of fascination and horror'.²⁸ In *Troilus and Cressida*, the inward turmoil

²⁷ Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 195.

²⁸ Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 8.

which causes figures to blush with embarrassment when faced with the newcomer foreshadows the bloody wounds of the conflict.

Blushing not only makes the blood fleetingly visible beneath the skin but it has another secret disclosure for the world, which is to say that it exhibits our self-conscious interest in our surroundings. In *Blush: Faces of Shame*, Elspeth Probyn argues that ‘Shame is an effect of proximity. It is about bodies being close to one another and an acute sensitivity of one’s sense of self’.²⁹ She goes on to explain that blushing is the body’s most visible response to those sensations: ‘And you blush, the only feeling that physically covers the face. In French, one blushes to the whites of the eyes, to the ears, and to the roots of one’s hair. The tentacles of the blush, of blood rushing to the face, attest to the inner cringe’.³⁰ Ewan Fernie makes a related point on this in *Shame in Shakespeare* when he argues that ‘Shakespearean shame turns out to be the way to relationship with the world outside the self’.³¹ Nudity, blushing, being hospitable, are all relational circumstances that are dependent on coming into close contact with other people and of being acutely aware of that proximity. In *Troilus and Cressida*, the welcoming scene between the lovers is cringingly embarrassing, with pink faces galore. Pandarus voyeuristically draws Troilus’s attention to the fact that Cressida is modestly blushing:

She’s making her ready; she’ll come straight. You must be witty now. She does so blush, and fetches her wind so short, as if she were frayed with a sprite. I’ll fetch her. It is the prettiest villain! She fetches her breath as short as a new-ta’en sparrow.

(III.ii.28-32)³²

²⁹ Elspeth Probyn, *Blush: Faces of Shame* (New South Wales: University of New South Wales Press, 2005), pp. 34-5.

³⁰ Probyn, *Blush*, p. 2.

³¹ Ewan Fernie, *Shame in Shakespeare* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 1.

³² For more on male reactions to female blushing on the early modern stage, see Derek Dunne’s recent essay, ‘Blushing on Cue: The Forensics of the Blush in Early Modern Drama’, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 34: 2 (2016), 233-52. Dunne suggests that ‘Linked as it was to the sudden movement of blood to defend the face, a blush could be understood variously as a sign of guilt or indicative of chastity, albeit with an implicit awareness of sexuality’ (p. 234).

In another sleazy attempt to increase the sexual tension of the encounter, Pandarus tells Troilus that Cressida is blushing and short of breath, or in other words that she is aroused by his presence and ready for intercourse.

Continuing the theme of embarrassment and botched greetings, the scene ends with Cressida inviting Troilus to step indoors. Her choice of phrase is poorly judged. She says to him: ‘Will you walk in, my lord?’ (III.ii.59), an expression that had connotations in the early modern period of far seamier propositions. David Bevington suggests that ‘She might have found something else to say first; the expression is too close to what one might expect from a prostitute inviting her client upstairs. Perhaps she means it innocently, or even sardonically, but it is not a well-chosen greeting’.³³ Once again the characters’ verbal clumsiness focusses attention on the body at the moment of encounter, in this instance with allusions to the forthcoming copulation of the lovers. When we next see the lovers the morning afterwards, Cressida’s second request for Troilus to step inside is again misinterpreted:

Cressida *One knocks.*
Who’s that at door? Good uncle, go and see. –
My lord, come you again into my chamber.
You smile and mock me, as if I meant naughtily.

Troilus Ha, ha!

Cressida Come, you are deceived. I think of no such thing.
How earnestly they knock! Pray you, come in.
I would not for half Troy have you seen here.

(IV.ii.36-42)

From the implied stage directions in the text that he smiles and teases her, Troilus plainly assumes that Cressida has some vulgar objective in mind with this second invitation to enter her chamber. Considering the violent background of the Trojan War, awkward or

³³ Bevington, ‘Introduction’ to *Troilus and Cressida*, pp.1-117 (p. 47).

misconstrued greetings are hardly the worst thing that could happen upon encountering a stranger. And yet, hospitality in *Troilus and Cressida* does appear to be peculiarly embarrassing for all involved.

‘Time is like a fashionable host’

In this section I consider how the dramatisation of a fledgling capitalist society in *Troilus and Cressida* informs Shakespeare’s staging of hospitality. In what follows, my intention is to begin exploring hospitality’s relationship to the economy, and I return to this subject once again in the final chapter on *Timon of Athens*. With *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare depicts a society that is fixated on the valuation of worth, and this also extends to performances of hospitality. Time has a special importance, since with the city of Troy at war and under violent siege it becomes one of the most precious commodities on offer.³⁴ In the play, the costliness of hospitality is dependent on the length of time involved, with leisurely greetings being infinitely prized over rushed encounters. In the very opening scene of the play, and while he is comforting Troilus about his unrequited love for Cressida, Pandarus introduces the importance of being able to wait patiently:

<i>Troilus</i>	Have I not tarried?
<i>Pandarus</i>	Ay, the grinding; but you must tarry the bolting.
<i>Troilus</i>	Have I not tarried?
<i>Pandarus</i>	Ay, the bolting; but you must tarry the leavening.
<i>Troilus</i>	Still have I tarried.
<i>Pandarus</i>	Ay, to the leavening; but here’s yet in the word hereafter the kneading, the making of the cake, the heating the oven, and the baking. Nay, you must stay the cooling too, or ye may chance burn your lips.

(I.i.16-24)

³⁴ For further discussion of the role of time in the play, see John Bayley’s seminal essay on ‘Time and the Trojans’, *Essays in Criticism*, 25 (1975), 55-73.

The most prized encounters in this play are the ones that are unhurried and, indeed, worth waiting for. Pandarus's metaphor of slowly baking a cake from scratch is a case in point of the delay that is distinctive of hospitality in *Troilus and Cressida*. In a corrupt setting like this one where prostitution is rampant,³⁵ welcoming strangers with open arms is deemed cheap and somehow suspect. Instead, we frequently find characters delaying and procrastinating in efforts to ensure their hospitality is sought after.

The associations that I am trying to draw out here between time and value in relation to hospitality in *Troilus and Cressida* become clearer if we compare the meeting between the lovers with their goodbye scenario the morning afterwards. The lovers spend seemingly ages lingering in the orchard when they are first introduced to one another. Pandarus gives us an indication of the very leisurely pace of things when he tries to hurry things along by prompting the pair: 'What, blushing still? Have you not done talking yet?' (III.ii.96-7). Their mutual hesitation is in stark contrast to Troilus's departure from Pandarus's house the following morning when it looks as if he cannot get away quickly enough:

<i>Troilus</i>	Dear, trouble not yourself. The morn is cold.
<i>Cressida</i>	Then, sweet my lord, I'll call mine uncle down. He shall unbolt the gates.
<i>Troilus</i>	Trouble him not. To bed, to bed! Sleep kill those pretty eyes And give as soft attachment to thy senses As infants' empty of all thought!
<i>Cressida</i>	Good morrow, then.
<i>Troilus</i>	I prithee, now, to bed.
<i>Cressida</i>	Are you aweary of me?

(IV.ii.1-8)

³⁵ More generally on prostitution in the play, see 'Base Trade: Theatre as Prostitution', *ELH*, 60: 4 (1993), 833-55, where Joseph Lenz argues that 'Elsewhere in Shakespeare the world is a stage; in *Troilus*, however, it is a brothel' (p. 846).

Troilus's condescending manner and his obvious desire to leave the house quickly are not lost on Cressida, who says:

Prithee, tarry. You men will never tarry.
O foolish Cressid, I might have still held off,
And then you would have tarried!

(IV.ii.17-19)

This uncomfortable parting scene is then interrupted, firstly by Pandarus who begins mocking Cressida for having spent the night with Troilus, and then by a knocking at the door. This turns out to be the Trojan warrior Aeneas, who has come to alert Troilus that Cressida has been promised to the Greek camp in return for the release of Antenor, a prisoner from Troy whom the Greeks are holding captive. Shakespeare now presents us with another performance of leave-taking, as Troilus tells Cressida that she needs to depart from Troy hastily as the Greeks are waiting for her outside:

And suddenly, where injury of chance
Puts back leave-taking, jostles roughly by
All time of pause, rudely beguiles our lips
Of all rejoindure, forcibly prevents
Our locked embrasures, strangles our dear vows
Even in the birth of our own labouring breath.
We two, that with so many thousand sighs
Did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves
With the rude brevity and discharge of one.
Injurious Time now with a robber's haste
Crams his rich thiev'ry up, he knows not how.
As many farewells as be stars in heaven,
With distinct breath and consigned kisses to them,
He fumbles up into a loose adieu
And scants us with a single famished kiss,
Distasted with the salt of broken tears.

(IV.iv.32-47)

The beginning of Troilus's speech is a clichéd description of romantic farewell scenes between lovers (the kissing, embracing, and swearing of vows), which is quite different from his exit attempt that we have just witnessed. The second half of his speech confirms that hospitality in Shakespeare's play is entrenched in the spirit of the marketplace. Troilus personifies Time as a criminal who has a 'robber's haste', and he imagines Time stealing his and Cressida's customary parting rites, and then cramming this 'rich thiev'ry' up into a bundle of loot. The lines are filled with commercial image clusters of buying and selling, since Troilus implies that the rushed nature of his separation from Cressida is impoverishing to them both. Of course, the irony of the passage is that the surprise entrance of the Greeks has actually slowed down Troilus's farewell by making Cressida seem unobtainable and therefore valuable again in his eyes.

Recent scholarship is largely in agreement that *Troilus and Cressida* presents an emergent capitalist society, albeit one that is diseased or sick at heart.³⁶ But what has not been noticed previously by critics is how economic imagery influences Shakespeare's portrayal of hospitality. In the play, the exchange of gifts typical of the hospitality relationship is reversed, so that hospitality becomes a series of reciprocal abuses and thefts. Act II finds the Trojan warriors wearily debating amongst themselves whether it is really worth keeping Helen as their guest in Troy any longer, when Troilus observes that:

It was thought meet

³⁶ For more on money in *Troilus and Cressida*, see Hugh Grady, *Shakespeare's Universal Wolf: Studies in Early Modern Reification* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). Grady points out that 'Critics have long been aware of the extraordinary number of mercantile images in the play – references to trading, selling, buying, and valuing various commodities' (p. 85). Also useful is Douglas Bruster, *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Bruster argues, '*Troilus and Cressida* echoes traditional reservations over mercantile exchange and merchant adventurism, locating the source of the city's ills in the uncontrolled dynamism of the market' (p. 99). Meanwhile in *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare's England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), Jonathan Gil Harris describes how, in this play, both money and diseases circulate across national borders, in the process staging a contaminated 'global marketplace' (p. 106). See also Lars Engle, *Shakespearean Pragmatism: Market of his Time* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

Paris should do some vengeance on the Greeks.
 Your breath of full consent bellied his sails;
 The seas and winds, old wranglers, took a truce,
 And did him service; he touched the ports desired;
 And for an old aunt whom the Greeks held captive
 He brought a Grecian queen, whose youth and freshness
 Wrinkles Apollo's, and makes stale the morning.
 Why keep we her? The Grecians keep our aunt.
 Is she worth keeping? Why, she is a pearl
 Whose price hath launched above a thousand ships
 And turned crowned kings to merchants.

(II.ii.72-83)

The stealing of Helen from Sparta by the Trojan guest Paris is now discovered to be payback for the Greeks' earlier abducting of Priam's sister Hesione.³⁷ Hospitality in *Troilus and Cressida* is revealed to be a revenge economy of circulating abuses. This is the same logic we witness onstage in *Titus Andronicus*, where the grisly dispatches of lopped-off limbs circulate between the rival factions. Even though *Troilus and Cressida* is less bloodthirsty, the continual exchange of hostages between the Greek and Trojan camps attests to the same

³⁷ In *Hospitality and Treachery*, Heffernan has a section on 'Reciprocity and Retaliation', pp. 14-22. Discussing hospitality in classical literature, he explains that 'First of all, whenever hosts or guests mistreat or offend one another, the system of benign reciprocity that governs hospitality as an exchange of benefits can all too readily turn into its dark double, retaliation' (p. 14). On the historical context of the reciprocal exchange of gifts and favours in early modern England, see Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011). Heal relates how Elizabethan courtesy literature advised readers on hospitality and stressed how reciprocity was the norm (p. 196). In *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), Valerie Traub suggests that 'The exchange of bodies is a primary thematic and structuring principle of the play' (p. 74). Katharine Eisaman Maus, meanwhile, makes a more general point on this theme in *Inwardness and Theatre* when she suggests that, 'A fascination with the substitutability of one body for another is recurrent in Shakespeare' (p. 171). On the philosophy of hospitality and the substitution of bodies, see Derrida, 'Hostipitality' in *Acts of Religion*, p. 410 and Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, trans. by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 55-7. In *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, trans. by Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), Derrida comments that 'The guest becomes the host's host. The guest (*hôte*) becomes the host (*hôte*) of the host (*hôte*). These substitutions make everyone into everyone else's hostage. Such are the laws of hospitality' (p. 125).

principle of competitive inhospitality. In support of his argument in favour of retaining custody of Helen, Troilus also gives this example:

We turn not back the silks upon the merchant
When we have soiled them; nor the remainder viands
We do not throw in unrespective sieve
Because we now are full.

(II.ii.69-72)

Hospitality's most recognisable trope of banqueting is here perverted into a disgusting portrait of leftover scraps of food. The lines recall the prologue's opening mention of digestion as well as numerous other unpleasant references to eating in the play. David Hillman is surely right to argue that 'it would not be going too far to call *Troilus and Cressida* a bulimic play'.³⁸ Reinforcing our impression that hospitality has become morally unsavoury, the play's language inclines towards oily, greasy foodstuffs or else representations of binge eating, digestion or vomiting.

I noted earlier on that allusions to the wooden horse lend *Troilus and Cressida* a suspicion about counterfeits, and this anxiety is intensified by the thematic centrality of the marketplace. Economies reliant on the material circulation of objects are vulnerable to the threat of forged copies.³⁹ But in this play, people also come in for a great deal of scrutiny. The rascally Greek Thersites, for example, is 'bastard begot, bastard instructed, bastard in

³⁸ Hillman, *Shakespeare's Entrails*, p. 70.

³⁹ In an essay on 'Imprints: Shakespeare, Gutenberg and Descartes', in *Alternative Shakespeares, Vol. 2*, ed. by Terence Hawkes (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 63-94, Margreta de Grazia comments that 'with all stamping techniques – whether of wax, coins or paper – there is always the possibility of forgery' (p. 75). In the early modern period, illicit or pirate copies of texts were said to have been printed privately in nooks and dark corners. In *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), Adrian Johns says of the print trade that 'it must avoid being labelled "private" in the seventeenth-century sense, meaning illicit, secret, or seditious. Printers engaged in such dubious operations were said to do their printing in "holes" or in "corners"' (p. 128).

mind, bastard in valour, in everything illegitimate' (V.viii.9-10). The old Greek warrior Nestor describes him by saying:

Thersites –

A slave whose gall coins slanders like a mint –
To match us in comparisons with dirt,
To weaken and discredit our exposure

(I.iii.192-95)

In the same way that counterfeiting threatens to devalue an economic currency by flooding the market with spurious copies, the Greeks worry that Thersites will 'discredit' their honourable reputation through his slanderous comments. Scenes of welcoming in *Troilus and Cressida* are problematised by the risk of counterfeits, worsened still further by the general difficulty of identification.

Failing to recognise strangers is a peculiarly widespread problem for the characters in *Troilus and Cressida* and has a number of implications for the hospitality relationship. Not only do the figures in this play seem unable to greet other people politely, but they struggle even to recognise one another. This has been commented on by Alexander Leggatt who, in *Shakespeare's Tragedies: Violation and Identity*, argues that:

The problem Troilus has with Cressida brings into sharp focus a pervasive problem, the questionable nature of identity. The *Hamlet* question, 'Who's there?' is asked over and over. When Hector comes to the Greek camp he is passed around, like Cressida, to be introduced one by one to the men he has been fighting; and in general introductions are necessary when Greeks and Trojans meet. Given that they are used to seeing each other armed and helmeted, this is not too surprising, but it plants the thought that these warriors are fighting enemies they know as reputations, as armoured shapes, but not as faces or people. It is more surprising when Cressida asks 'Who are those went by?' and her man Alexander replies 'Queen Hecuba and Helen' (I.ii.i). Even familiar identities need to be constantly checked.⁴⁰

Leggatt makes a number of interesting points here, and his allusion to 'the *Hamlet* question' recalls something Derrida says in the *Of Hospitality* seminars about how 'The question of

⁴⁰ Leggatt, *Shakespeare's Tragedies*, p. 86.

hospitality is thus also the question of the question'.⁴¹ But whereas in the opening to *Hamlet*, the sentries are on the parapets and they are questioning one another in the darkness, in *Troilus and Cressida* even daytime encounters with familiar faces are baffling for the civilians involved. Owing perhaps to his own sordid trade in bodies, Pandarus is especially bad at identifying people. Early on in Act I, for instance, he promises Cressida that he will point Troilus out to her as they stand watching the Trojan warriors returning home from the battleground. After a few men have passed across the stage, Cressida then asks him, 'What sneaking fellow comes yonder?' (I.ii.218). In reply, Pandarus says, 'Where? Yonder? That's Deiphobus. – 'Tis Troilus! There's a man, niece! Hem! Brave Troilus, the prince of chivalry!' (I.ii.219-21). Pandarus hastily attempts to cover up his embarrassing blunder of failing to tell apart Troilus from the others by praising him extensively to Cressida:

Mark him, note him. O brave Troilus! Look well upon him, niece, look you how his sword is bloodied, and his helm more hacked than Hector's, and how he looks, and how he goes! O admirable youth! He ne'er saw three-and-twenty. Go thy way, Troilus, go thy way! Had I a sister were a grace, or a daughter a goddess, he should take his choice. O admirable man! Paris? Paris is dirt to him, and I warrant Helen, to change, would give money to boot.

(I.ii.223-31)

In these lines Pandarus is evidently protesting too much and trying to overcompensate for a lack of difference between Troilus and the other warriors. In *Troilus and Cressida*, the presence of uncanny doppelgängers brings to life the suspicions over imitation copies and problematises the hospitality relationship still further. It not only amplifies the likelihood of mistakes being made, but hints once again at the disorientating sensory experience of encountering somebody new.

Hospitality is, after all, a dangerously easy currency to forge. In Act III of *Troilus and Cressida*, Ulysses has the following words to say on the theme of welcoming:

⁴¹ Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 29.

For Time is like a fashionable host
That slightly shakes his parting guest by th' hand,
And, with his arms outstretched as he would fly,
Grasps in the comer. Welcome ever smiles,
And Farewell goes out sighing.

(III.iii.166-70)

Ulysses outlines some of the more recognisable outward gestures of hospitality, from the outstretched arms to the smiling face. Hospitality lends itself to these big theatrical gestures, which is what makes it so easy to pretend to be welcoming even if one is not. In Shakespeare's tragedies, these signs of greeting can be manipulated to terrifying effect. In *Macbeth*, for instance, Lady Macbeth coaches her husband to make himself appear more welcoming and thus allay any suspicions that they wish their royal guest harm. She says to Macbeth:

To beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like th' innocent flower,
But be the serpent under't.⁴²

In *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare is similarly interested in the performative nature of hospitality, and this is developed further in the scenes set in the Greek camp. Ulysses comments early on in the play that the legendary Greek warrior Achilles has been impersonating the Greek commanders to the amusement of his companion Patroclus:

The great Achilles, whom opinion crowns
The sinew and the forehead of our host,
Grows dainty of his worth and in his tent
Lies mocking our designs. With him Patroclus,
Upon a lazy bed, the livelong day
Breaks scurrile jests,

⁴² William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. by Kenneth Muir (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1951), I.v.1.63-66.

And with ridiculous and awkward action –
Which, slanderer, he imitation calls –
He pageants us. Sometime, great Agamemnon,
Thy topless deputation he puts on,
And, like a strutting player, whose conceit
Lies in his hamstring, and doth think it rich
To hear the wooden dialogue and sound
'Twi'xt his stretched footing and the scaffoldage,
Such to-be-pitied and o'erwrested seeming
He acts thy greatness in.

(I.iii.142-58)

In this highly metadramatic account, Ulysses compares Achilles to a 'strutting player' who likes to stride flamboyantly about the playhouse stage. In his description it is the domestic environment which becomes the site of theatrical performance.

But where the relationship between theatre and the private household in *Troilus and Cressida* becomes most apparent is when the Greek leader Agamemnon decides to visit Achilles, who has taken to staying at home in his tent. On learning from Patroclus that Achilles is within his tent, Agamemnon says:

Let it be known to him that we are here.
He shent our messengers, and we lay by
Our appertainments, visiting of him.
Let him be told so, lest perchance he think
We dare not move the question of our place
Or know not what we are.

(II.iii.75-80)

In these grandiose lines, Agamemnon makes it plain that he is bestowing an accolade upon Achilles by visiting him at home. But Achilles refuses to step outside and welcome his guests, instead sending Patroclus to deliver the following message:

Achilles bids me say he is much sorry
If anything more than your sport and pleasure
Did move your greatness, and this noble state,
To call upon him; he hopes it is no other
But for your health and your digestion sake,
An after-dinner's breath.

(II.iii.105-110)

Once again, the figures onstage allude to the language of food and banqueting, but only to deflate expectations. Hence Achilles says that he hopes Agamemnon walked to visit him merely as part of an evening stroll to help his 'digestion'. This disrespectful show of inhospitality is not lost on Agamemnon, who angrily tells Patroclus:

Much attribute he hath, and much the reason
Why we ascribe it to him; yet all his virtues,
Not virtuously on his own part beheld,
Do in our eyes begin to lose their gloss,
Yea, like fair fruit in an unwholesome dish,
Are like to rot untasted.

(II.iii.114-119)

Agamemnon again picks up on the culinary theme to imply that, if the Greek campaign must stop relying on Achilles, then his usefulness will be akin to fruit that has begun to turn rotten.

Agamemnon then says to Patroclus:

Go tell him this, and add
That if he overhold his price so much,
We'll none of him, but let him, like an engine
Not portable, lie under this report:
'Bring action hither; this cannot go to war'.

(II.iii.130-134)

It is clear that Agamemnon believes that Achilles is being deliberately inhospitable in order to 'overhold his price' or inflate his personal value. Once again we see the same interesting interplay between hospitality, time and economics. In Act I of *Troilus and Cressida*, Cressida told the audience that she has been holding off on making her feelings for Troilus known because 'Men prize the thing ungained more than it is' (I.iii.280). Here, Achilles employs similar stalling tactics with Agamemnon. In this play, Shakespeare presents characters such as Cressida or Achilles who delay offering hospitality so as to make themselves look more valuable in the eyes of others.

In keeping with the play's unchivalric ethos of trading petty insults and abuses, in Act III, Ulysses devises a childish plan to get revenge on Achilles' former refusal to welcome his guests. He proposes to Agamemnon that the Greek warriors should pass by the tent once again but that this time they should snub Achilles:

Achilles stands i'th' entrance of his tent.
Please it our general pass strangely by him,
As if he were forgot; and, princes all,
Lay negligent and loose regard upon him.
I will come last. 'Tis like he'll question me
Why such unplausible eyes are bent, why turned on him.
If so, I have derision medicinable
To use between your strangeness and his pride,
Which his own will shall have desire to drink.
It may do good.

(III.iii.38-47)

This second procession of Greeks will form a mock pageant of inhospitality designed to cure Achilles of his pride. Ulysses touches on the highly performative nature of salutations when he tells the Greeks to 'Lay negligent and loose regard upon him'. He also says that they should encounter Achilles 'strangely'. David Bevington explains that this means 'as though

encountering a complete stranger'.⁴³ Agamemnon willingly agrees to lead this line of aloof visitors past Achilles' tent and says:

We'll execute your purpose, and put on
A form of strangeness as we pass along.
So do each lord, and either greet him not
Or else disdainfully, which shall shake him more
Than if not looked on.

(III.iii.50-54)

Ulysses and Agamemnon note that the centrepiece of this spectacle is the men's unfriendly looks. Sure enough, when the Greeks do take it in turns to pass over the stage they encounter Achilles indifferently, as if he was an absolute outsider to their camp. This is one of the most artificial performances of inhospitality in *Troilus and Cressida*. René Girard has picked up on its depiction of the male gaze as part of a wider discussion of sexual jealousy in Shakespeare's plays. He says that 'Shakespeare insists too much on this little play within the play not to attach a great importance to it. And yet it is neither very dramatic nor truly comical. It does not lead to some great action. Its whole interest lies in what it reveals regarding the configuration of mimetic desire that the insane popularity of Achilles represents'.⁴⁴ In *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare is at pains to associate the male gaze with appraisals of value during moments of encounter.

That the gaze becomes an unexpected part of the economic logic of hospitality in the play is confirmed in Achilles' response to the line of unfriendly faces. The moment the pageant has gone past, Achilles and Patroclus both wonder aloud what has happened:

⁴³ *Troilus and Cressida*, ed. by Bevington, III.iii.39n.

⁴⁴ René Girard, 'The Politics of Desire in *Troilus and Cressida*', in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. by Patricia Parker (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 188-209 (p. 205). Girard goes on to note later on in the essay that 'The woman herself is far from enough. Troilus needs the admiring look of other men, in very much the same sense that Achilles does in another part of the play. It always takes other men to make an erotic or military conquest truly valuable in the eyes of the conqueror himself' (p. 193).

Patroclus They pass by strangely. They were used to bend,
To send their smiles before them to Achilles,
To come as humbly as they use to creep
To holy altars.

Achilles What, am I poor of late?
'Tis certain, greatness, once fall'n out with fortune,
Must fall out with men too. What the declined is
He shall as soon read in the eyes of others
As feel in his own fall;

[. . .]

 But 'tis not so with me;
Fortune and I are friends. I do enjoy
At ample point all that I did possess,
Save these men's looks, who do, methinks, find out
Something not worth in me such rich beholding
As they have often given.

(III.iii.71-92)

Patroclus remarks that the Greeks would previously 'send their smiles before them' upon encountering Achilles. Friendly expressions are one of the more obvious indications of hospitality, even though the principle is exploited here to send Achilles a message about the dangers of pride. In the previous chapter on *The Merchant of Venice*, I discussed the importance of hearing to the hospitality relationship, but sight is naturally another of the senses that is stimulated when encountering another person. In *The Nature of Sympathy*, the philosopher Max Scheler argues, 'I can tell from the expressive "look" of a person whether he is well or ill disposed towards me, long before I can tell what colour or size his eyes may be'.⁴⁵ Thus, as soon as the Greek visitors are no longer gazing admiringly on him, Achilles construes it as an instant devaluation of his personal capital. Image clusters of poverty

⁴⁵ Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, trans. by Peter Heath (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Press, 1970), p. 244.

multiply throughout this scene and, when Ulysses appears, Achilles complains to him that the Greeks filed past him ‘As misers do by beggars, neither gave to me/ Good word not look’ (III.iii.144-5). It is surprising perhaps that, when considered against the violent backdrop of the Trojan War, the figures on stage should assign this level of importance to salutations. But, as the action keeps on revealing, there is a heightened sensitivity to the idea of encounter in the play, as Shakespeare dramatises the hidden calculations that go into hospitality.

‘O, these encounterers’

In this section I turn away from some of the more peripheral performances of hospitality in the Greek camp to the one that takes centre stage. Cressida’s entrance in the enemy encampment in Act IV of *Troilus and Cressida* is generally referred to as the play’s principal staging of greeting. In *The Wheel of Fire: Interpretations of Shakespearean Tragedy*, G. Wilson Knight describes this handing over of Cressida to the Greeks as ‘the pivot incident’ of the play, while Karen Bjelland has more recently described the moment as Shakespeare’s ‘welcoming scene’.⁴⁶ One of the most intriguing things about Cressida’s entrance in the enemy camp is that, at this point in the play, she does not appear to be anticipated. The Greeks have gathered together to wait for the arrival of the Trojan warrior Hector, who is on his way to take part in a chivalric contest against his Greek opponent Ajax. But, because Hector has not yet appeared, there is a bit of a delay. While the Greeks are waiting, Ajax gives money to the trumpeter and says:

Thou, trumpet, there’s my purse.

⁴⁶ G. Wilson Knight, *The Wheel of Fire: Interpretations of Shakespearean Tragedy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 51. Karen Bjelland also discusses this scene in her essay on ‘Cressida and the Renaissance “Marketplace” – The Role of Binarism and Amphibology in Shakespeare’s Articulation of the Troy Legend’, in *Ideological Approaches to Shakespeare: The Practice of Theory*, ed. by Robert P. Merrix and Nicholas Ranson (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1992), pp. 165-86 (p. 182).

Now crack thy lungs and split thy brazen pipe.
Blow, villain, till thy sphered bias cheek
Outswell the colic of puffed Aquilon.
Come, stretch thy chest, and let thy eyes spout blood;
Thou blowest for Hector.

(IV.v.6-11)

Ajax speaks in an overblown style in an attempt to lend a sense of grandeur to the tournament. Our chivalric expectations are yet again frustrated, however, for after the trumpet has finished sounding there is still no sign of Hector:

Ulysses No trumpet answers.

Achilles 'Tis but early days.

[*Enter Diomedes with Cressida.*]

Agamemnon Is not yond Diomed, with Calchas' daughter?

(IV.v.12-14)

In the place of Hector, it is Cressida who unexpectedly arrives in the Greek camp, and the timing leaves her entrance feeling anticlimactic.⁴⁷ In this section of the chapter I consider how this sense of frustration informs Shakespeare's dramatisation of Cressida's welcome reception, focussing specifically on issues relating to gender and sexuality.

Following Agamemnon's example, the Greek warriors take it in turns individually to welcome Cressida to their encampment, many of them also kissing her in greeting. It is a lengthy hospitality scene but worth quoting in full:

Agamemnon Most dearly welcome to the Greeks, sweet lady.

[*He kisses her.*]

Nestor Our general doth salute you with a kiss.

⁴⁷ In an essay on 'Visual Patterns and Linking Analogues in *Troilus and Cressida*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 37: 4 (1986), 440-50, Linda LaBranche comments that 'visually, Cressida takes Hector's place in her arrival on the scene, and by this linking device her maltreatment by the Greeks foreshadows Hector's unhappy fate later in the play' (p. 448).

Ulysses Yet is the kindness but particular;
'Twere better she were kissed in general.

Nestor And very courtly counsel. I'll begin. [*He kisses her.*]
So much for Nestor.

Achilles I'll take that winter from your lips, fair lady.
Achilles bids you welcome. [*He kisses her.*]

Menelaus I had good argument for kissing once.

Patroclus But that's no argument for kissing now;
For thus popped Paris in his hardiment,
And parted thus you and your argument. [*He kisses her.*]

Ulysses O deadly gall and theme of all our scorns,
For which we lose our heads to gild his horns!

Patroclus The first was Menelaus' kiss; this, mine.
Patroclus kisses you. [*He kisses her again.*]

Menelaus O, this is trim!

Patroclus Paris and I kiss evermore for him.

Menelaus I'll have my kiss, sir. – Lady, by your leave.

Cressida In kissing, do you render or receive?

Menelaus Both give and take.

Cressida I'll make my match to live,
The kiss you take is better than you give;
Therefore no kiss.

Menelaus I'll give you boot; I'll give you three for one.

Cressida You are an odd man; give even, or give none.

Menelaus An odd man, lady? Every man is odd.

Cressida No, Paris is not, for you know 'tis true
That you are odd, and he is even with you.

Menelaus You fillip me o'th' head.

Cressida No, I'll be sworn.

Ulysses It were no match, your nail against his horn.
May I, sweet lady, beg a kiss of you?

Cressida You may.

Ulysses I do desire it.
Cressida Why, beg too.
Ulysses Why then, for Venus' sake, give me a kiss,
 When Helen is a maid again, and his –
Cressida I am your debtor; claim it when 'tis due.
Ulysses Never's my day, and then a kiss of you.
 (IV.v.19-53)

In performance, Cressida's reception can be staged in a number of different ways. Hugh Grady explains that 'The text as we have it permits a large spectrum of interpretations of Cressida's mood here, from terrified victimization to courtly bantering to lusty and shocking sexual pleasure – with of course the possibility of seeing her actions as involving elements of all three of these affects'.⁴⁸ Often the welcoming scene is presented as quite uncomfortable to watch. Our discomfort arises not only from the large number of men surrounding their female guest, but also because of her isolated position, and her vulnerability as she is kissed multiple times in quick succession. Hugh Grady argues that 'given the complete powerlessness of Cressida before all these powerful men, what follows will seem to many of us obvious Elizabethan sexual harassment'.⁴⁹ What appears to happen is that the atmosphere of male rivalry from the delayed chivalric tournament gets displaced onto Cressida's greeting. While they are ostensibly welcoming Cressida, the Greeks are in competition with one another, and we see this most clearly during the humiliation of Menelaus who is cuckolded out of his kiss. This displacement also accounts for a lot of the male chauvinism, not to mention the general locker room mood. In the predominantly homosocial world of

⁴⁸ Grady, *Universal Wolf*, p. 80.

⁴⁹ Grady, *Universal Wolf*, pp. 79-80. Comparing the play to *Titus Andronicus* in *Shakespeare's Tragedies*, Leggatt suggests that 'when Cressida comes into the Greek camp, her situation bears a resemblance to Lavinia's from the murder of her husband to the offstage rape: she is alone, surrounded by enemies [. . .] Whatever this is, it is not a love scene' (p. 85). On stage, the air of sexual aggression can be easily intensified, as in Howard Davies' 1985 Stratford production for the Royal Shakespeare Company, which left audiences struck by its 'atmosphere of gang rape', Anthony B. Dawson, 'Introduction' to *Troilus and Cressida* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 1-70 (p. 56).

Troilus and Cressida, chivalry is soon forgotten, and Cressida's welcome becomes a pretext for the warriors to compete amongst themselves.

I have been arguing in this chapter that Shakespeare's representation of hospitality in *Troilus and Cressida* is ingrained in the economic spirit of the marketplace, and Cressida's welcome reception in the Greek camp is no exception. In the beginning, Cressida stays silent as the Greeks take it in turns to kiss her, but by the end of the scene she is more emphatically holding her own. Douglas Bruster, discussing the scene in *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare*, suggests that she 'appears to realise the nature of her predicament, and flirtatiously moves to assert control over her own value and use [. . .] Realising that she is seen as a commodity, Cressida decides to take control of her commodity function'.⁵⁰ This is plain during her exchanges with Menelaus and Ulysses. She taunts Menelaus, for instance, over how little his kiss is worth: 'I'll make my match to live/ The kiss you take is better than you give/ Therefore no kiss' (IV.v.38-40). Furthermore, when it is Ulysses' chance politely to request a kiss, Cressida puns on his allusion to begging:

<i>Ulysses</i>	May I, sweet lady, beg a kiss of you?
<i>Cressida</i>	You may.
<i>Ulysses</i>	I do desire it.
<i>Cressida</i>	Why, beg too.
<i>Ulysses</i>	Why then, for Venus' sake, give me a kiss, When Helen is a maid again, and his –
<i>Cressida</i>	I am your debtor; claim it when 'tis due.
<i>Ulysses</i>	Never's my day, and then a kiss from you.

(IV.v.48-53)

In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida has demonstrated that economic bartering and haggling over price go back to the very earliest stories of hospitality. Referring to the biblical story of Lot and

⁵⁰ Bruster, *Drama and the Market*, p. 98.

his daughters, Derrida says that ‘Sodomy and sexual difference: the same law of hospitality gives rise to an analogous bargaining, a sort of hierarchy of the guests and the hostage’.⁵¹ Systematically deflating any notions of chivalric romance in *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare discloses an underlying suspicion that hospitality must always be remunerated with some form of monetary payment.

Considering all of the kissing, the lewd banter, and the bartering over cost, there are insinuations that Cressida’s welcome reception in the Greek camp could slide into more sordid economies like prostitution. It is Ulysses who makes such suspicions blatant. Although he has only just been introduced to Cressida, the moment that she steps aside, he makes a strangely embittered outburst:

Fie, fie upon her!

There’s language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,
Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out
At every joint and motive of her body.
O, these encounterers, so glib of tongue,
That give accosting welcome ere it comes,
And wide unclasp the tables of their thoughts
To every tickling reader! Set them down
For sluttish spoils of opportunity
And daughters of the game.

(IV.v.55-64)

Ulysses makes explicit connections between female hospitality and prostitution when he compares Cressida to one of those ‘encounterers’ or ‘daughters of the game’. Throughout *Troilus and Cressida* the cost of female hospitality is debated, and routinely criticised for being either overpriced or perilous. Here, Ulysses accuses Cressida of offering an ‘accosting

⁵¹ Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 153.

welcome ere it comes', which sounds very expensive, for it implies that she could pose a threat to the recipients of her hospitality both financially, yet also because of the risk of contracting sexual diseases. Such concerns over the dangers of female hospitality are part of a long literary tradition. In *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity, and the Expropriation of Identity*, Tracy McNulty argues that:

If Western literature is full of tragic hosts, it is equally replete with nefarious or conniving hostesses: Shakespeare's evil Lady Macbeth and ungrateful Regan and Goneril, Aeschylus's Clytemnestra, Milton's wanton Eve, and the murderous biblical heroines Jael and Judith are but a few examples of the many hostesses charged with duplicitously receiving guests under the cover of an offer of hospitality, only to slaughter them or bring about their ruin.⁵²

Often the vulnerability felt on the part of the male guest who is confronted with a powerful hostess figure is imbued with an erotic charge. The depiction of Ulysses in *Troilus and Cressida* adheres partly to this pattern, but the play also keeps returning to the financial implications of hosting.

Ulysses introduces the issue of timeliness into his criticism of Cressida's hospitality, for when he says that she gives the welcome *before* it comes, he is saying that she offers her hospitality prematurely. He thus gives the impression of a welcome that is rash and not at all circumspect. The crude comparison to a hinged table book eager to uncover its secrets to 'every tickling reader' anticipates Thersites' later satirical aside upon seeing Cressida together with Diomedes: 'How the devil Luxury, with his fat rump and potato finger tickles these two together!' (V.ii.1.57-59).⁵³ What Ulysses does, then, throughout his bitter outburst,

⁵² Tracy McNulty, *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity, and the Expropriation of Identity* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), pp. xlii-xliii. For a different and, indeed, very complementary perspective on female hospitality, see Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: an Essay on Exteriority*, ed. and trans. by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA.: Duquesne University Press, 1969).

⁵³ Later on in *Troilus and Cressida*, this 'tickling reader' is personified on stage when Cressida adulterously meets with Diomedes, and Thersites is on hand to observe: 'How the devil Luxury, with his fat rump and potato finger, tickles these together! Fry, lechery, fry' (V.ii.57-9). Wendy Wall has written at length about how, in the early modern period, publishers' prefaces frequently drew on the sexualised conceit of woman as book. This served a range of purposes (it offered a way for male authors to excuse the immodest self-promotion of print, for example), but it was foremost a marketing technique, designed to convince the new buyer he was glimpsing a

is to transform Cressida from being a guest in the Greek camp into a hostess or prostitute figure. Thus, when he complains that ‘There’s language in her eye, her cheek, her lip’, he is blaming Cressida for being overly sexually inviting through her body language.⁵⁴ Ulysses’ unflattering blazon of the separate parts of Cressida’s body anticipates Leontes’ violent jealousy at the beginning of *The Winter’s Tale* when he examines the minutiae of his wife’s body language, looking for evidence that she is inviting adultery. Female hostesses must walk a very fine line between being welcoming to their guests and inviting sexual immorality. Judith Still points out that ‘hostess is a generally denigrated term in both French and English. It has overtones that are commercial, including the commercialisation of sex’.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, while Hermione does at least perform a hostess function during the opening scenes of *The Winter’s Tale*, in *Troilus and Cressida*, Cressida is a newly arrived guest at the Greek military base. Yet by misogynistically grafting words of seduction onto her body, Ulysses makes her appear a wanton hostess. Ulysses might be feeling resentful because he does not manage to get a kiss from Cressida, but his speech is disturbing for what it says about female hospitality. Indeed, Cressida’s welcome reception in the Greek camp demonstrates that the female hostess always runs the risk of being mistaken for a prostitute, even when she is really only a guest herself.

naughty secret. In her article, ‘Disclosures in Print: The “Violent Enlargement” of the Renaissance Voyeuristic Text’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 29: 1, *The English Renaissance* (1989), 35-59, Wall explains that ‘Writers frequently impressed upon their readers the intense privacy of their texts by figuring them as female bodies; in this way, publication is a striptease for the public’ (p. 40).

⁵⁴ Discussing Ulysses’ speech here in *Desire and Anxiety*, Traub notes, ‘As elsewhere in Shakespeare, female glibness of tongue is made to correspond to a veritable “body language” in which women’s oral facility signifies sexual wantonness [. . .] Like Gertrude, Desdemona, Hermione, and Falstaff, Cressida becomes representative of the “grotesque body”: impure, open, loose, transgressive. Too open in speech, excessively inviting in body, Cressida becomes positioned – is projected – as a member of the “hold-door trade”’ (p. 81).

⁵⁵ Judith Still, *Derrida and Hospitality: Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 21. In general, see the chapter on ‘Friendship and Sexual Difference: Hospitality from Brotherhood to Motherhood and Beyond’, pp. 93-143. Still suggests that ‘the welcoming smile is conventionally even more necessary for women than for men, yet the hostess must not herself *invite* transgression with “come hither”’ (p. 124).

Blended Knights

Remaining in the Greek camp, and yet turning away from female hospitality, this section of the chapter considers the strange meetings that take place between the Greek and Trojan warriors. I concentrate in some detail on the deferred chivalric tournament between Hector and Ajax that finally takes place in Act IV and which is followed by Hector's welcome reception among the Greek tents. In certain respects *Troilus and Cressida* shares similarities with *Coriolanus*, in that it, too, depicts a homosocial world where violence is the norm. Both plays also present intriguing encounters between enemies who, at the same time, have genuine warmth and affection for one another. In *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare uses metaphors of pollution and liquid contamination to dramatise how the meetings between the Greek and Trojan warriors become a struggle to isolate hospitality from the play's dramatisation of warfare. Irrespective of polite intentions on both sides, *Troilus and Cressida* shows how unfeasible it is to eradicate all traces of hostility from hospitality. While the play navigates this dilemma, Shakespeare is, I suggest, saying something more philosophical about the composite nature of hospitality. In order to better understand what is happening on stage at such moments, I first return to Derrida's concept of intestine hospitality, and the complex blending of violence with gestures of welcome.

In *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, Derrida writes about the relationship between hospitality and violence. Engaging closely with Levinas, Derrida argues that 'The closing of the door, inhospitality, war, and allergy already imply, as their possibility, a hospitality offered or received: an original or, more precisely, pre-originary declaration of peace'.⁵⁶ He goes on to say shortly afterwards that 'the phenomena of allergy, rejection, xenophobia, even war itself would still exhibit everything that Levinas explicitly attributes to or allies with

⁵⁶ Derrida, *Adieu*, p. 48.

hospitality [. . .] Whether it wants to or not, whether we realise it or not, hostility still attests to hospitality'.⁵⁷ According to Derrida, acts of hospitality are at the heart of our culture, even if they are denied or overturned into spectacular displays of violence and armed conflict. I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter that because this toppling over into violence is always a potential outcome of the hospitality relationship, Derrida sees hostility and hospitality as structurally interdependent. Defining his concept of 'hostipitality' in an essay of the same name, Derrida returns to the problems raised by the etymology of the word 'host': 'the troubling analogy in their common origin between *hostis* as host and *hostis* as enemy, between hospitality and hostility'.⁵⁸ We never truly know for certain if our host is a friend or an enemy, often not until it is too late. Hospitality has a cultural pervasiveness that still does not succeed in erasing its fundamentally unknowable quality and this, for Derrida, makes it the site of rich philosophical inquiry.

Shakespeare, I suggest, is exploring these same questions in *Troilus and Cressida*, although here they become a vital component of the play's anti-war sentiment. That the play seems scathing in its treatment of the Trojan War has been noted by critics, although it has not been linked to Shakespeare's dramatisation of 'hostipitality'. In *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, Jan Kott notes that '*Troilus and Cressida* is from the outset a modern play, a sneering political pamphlet', while, when comparing Shakespeare's play with the *Iliad*, David Bevington makes the point that 'Shakespeare's depiction of war, contrastingly, focuses on the absurd. Both sides in the conflict are aware of the ironies that link them to one another even as they long for slaughter'.⁵⁹ Kiernan Ryan notes that 'directors and critics, throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, hailed its prevision of an era convulsed by

⁵⁷ Derrida, *Adieu*, p. 50.

⁵⁸ Jacques Derrida, 'Hostipitality', *Angelaki*, 5 (2000), 3-18 (p. 15).

⁵⁹ Jan Kott *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, trans. by Boleslaw Taborski (New York and London: Norton, 1974), p. 78, and Bevington, 'Introduction' to *Troilus and Cressida*, p. 21.

relentless, futile warfare, political hypocrisy and duplicity, the demolition of obsolete sexual mores, and the impotence of ethical absolutes'.⁶⁰ Steven Marx, meanwhile, in an essay on 'Shakespeare's Pacifism', suggests that *Troilus and Cressida* marks a turning point in the thematisation of war over the course of Shakespeare's career. He says of the play that 'In it Shakespeare mounts an attack on classical war heroes and on the very arguments for going to war he had supported earlier, and he undermines the whole set of values and symbols that constitute Renaissance military culture'.⁶¹ In what follows, I seek to demonstrate that the anti-war stance depicted in *Troilus and Cressida* is embodied in the contradictory hospitality that is exchanged between the Greeks and Trojans. By dramatising a number of sentimental encounters between enemies who, despite being engaged in a violent struggle, essentially like and respect one another, *Troilus and Cressida* can be viewed in the same tradition as later postmodern novels such as Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*.

There is an especially clear example of how Shakespeare dramatises 'hostipitality' near the beginning of Act IV when a Trojan soldier, Aeneas, is meeting his Greek counterpart Diomedes. The meeting that ensues between them is both emotional and, at the same time, quite ludicrous in their attempts to separate out a heartfelt welcome from the vicious backdrop of the Trojan War:

<i>Aeneas</i>	Health to you, valiant sir, During all question of the gentle truce; But when I meet you armed, as black defiance As heart can think or courage execute.
<i>Diomedes</i>	The one and other Diomed embraces. Our bloods are now in calm; and, so long, health;

⁶⁰ Kiernan Ryan, "'Here's Fine Revolution': Shakespeare's Philosophy of the Future", F. W. Bateson Memorial Lecture, in *Essays in Criticism*, 63: 2 (2013), 105-27 (p. 118).

⁶¹ Steven Marx, 'Shakespeare's Pacifism', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 45: 1 (1992), 49-95 (p. 59).

But when contention and occasion meet,
 By Jove, I'll play the hunter for thy life
 With all my force, pursuit and policy.
Aeneas And thou shalt hunt a lion that will fly
 With his face backward. – In human gentleness,
 Welcome to Troy! Now by Anchises' life,
 Welcome indeed! By Venus' hand I swear,
 No man alive can love in such a sort
 The thing he means to kill more excellently.
Diomedes We sympathise. Jove, let Aeneas live,
 If to my sword his fate be not the glory,
 A thousand complete courses of the sun!
 But in mine emulous honour let him die,
 With every joint a wound, and that tomorrow!
Aeneas We know each other well.
Diomedes We do, and long to know each other worse.

(IV.i.12-33)

As Paris immediately remarks, 'This is the most despiteful'st gentle greeting/ The noblest hateful love, that e'er I heard of' (IV.i.34-35). The dialogue is thick with black irony as the soldiers wish one another good health, but only until they can meet in more violent circumstances on the battlefield. It is the absurd and jarring nature of these soldierly greetings that helps to convey the play's pacifist sentiment.

Before the chivalric tournament between Hector and Ajax in Act IV, Aeneas first comes on stage and, whilst in conversation with Achilles, he lets it be known that Hector and Ajax are actually blood relations:

This Ajax is half made of Hector's blood,
 In love whereof half Hector stays at home;
 Half heart, half hand, half Hector comes to seek
 This blended knight, half Trojan and half Greek.

(IV.v.84-87)

There is something slightly monstrous about these intermingled descriptions of Hector and Ajax. Owing to the conflicted nature of their encounter, Hector is said to have left half of himself at home. Meanwhile, Ajax is referred to as a 'blended knight', composed wholly of amalgamated Greek and Trojan parts. Throughout *Troilus and Cressida* Shakespeare presents many other portraits of hybrid knights who are blended together from many disparate parts. This portrayal of Ajax, for example, recalls the earlier report of him that was given by Cressida's man Alexander:

This man, lady, hath robbed many beasts of their particular additions. He is as valiant as the lion, churlish as the bear, slow as the elephant; a man into whom nature hath so crowded humours that his valour is crushed into folly, his folly sauced with discretion. There is no man hath a virtue that he hath not a glimpse of, nor any man an attainment but he carries some stain of it. He is melancholy without cause, and merry against the hair; he hath the joints of everything, but everything so out of joint that he is a gouty Briareus, many hands and no use, or purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight.

(I.ii.19-30)

Once again perverting the language of cookery and banqueting, Alexander gives an amusing description of Ajax's overstuffed innards.⁶² With a quite different intention in mind, Pandarus also uses gastronomic imagery when he is heaping praise on Troilus. He says to Cressida: 'Do you know what a man is? Is not birth, beauty, good shape, discourse, manhood, learning, gentleness, virtue, youth, liberality and so forth the spice and salt that season a man?' (I.ii.243-6). In response to which Cressida quips, 'Ay, a minced man; and then to be baked with no date in the pie, for then the man's date is out' (I.ii.247-8). The joke picks up on Pandarus's allusion to seasoning to imply that Troilus is like a baked pie that is crammed with minced meat. All this talk of grotesquely piecemeal bodies is even repeated during the romantic encounter between the lovers. While she is teasing Troilus about the

⁶² In *Shakespeare's Entrails*, Hillman notes that 'Bloated entrails are one of the dominant images of the play' (p. 64).

hyperbolic promises that lovers make to each other, Cressida imagines a crossbreed animal somewhere between a lion and a rabbit:

They say all lovers swear more performance than they are able, and yet reserve an ability that they never perform, vowing more than the perfection of ten and discharging less than the tenth part of one. They that have the voice of lions and the act of hares, are they not monsters?

(III.ii.81-86)

By continually drawing our attention to the overcrowded innards of the Greek and Trojan warriors, Shakespeare heightens the staging of ‘hostipitality’. For what these monstrous portraits expose is the impossibility of distinguishing the disparate parts or combining them into a cohesive whole. The emphasis on intestine hybridity thus complicates the performance of hospitality in *Troilus and Cressida*. In the play, encounters between enemy soldiers comprise an extraordinary blend of the emotions, unable to be distilled into pure hospitality or hostility.

Shakespeare’s repeated use of images of impurity and contamination in *Troilus and Cressida* helps articulate the patent impossibility of distilling hospitality from out of a surrounding culture of violence. Throughout the play characters often use imagery of dirtied waters to describe the hospitality experience. When he is snubbed by the pageant of unfriendly visitors to his tent, for instance, Achilles says: ‘My mind is troubled, like a fountain stirred/ And I myself see not the bottom of it’ (III.iii.309-10). During their first meeting, Troilus asks Cressida why she is nervous:

Troilus What too-curious dreg espies my sweet lady in the fountain of our love?

Cressida More dregs than water, if my fears have eyes.

(III.ii.63-65)

Later on whilst Cressida is preparing to depart from Troy, she alludes to the same imagery of cloudy waters but to insist on her sorrow being undiluted in its essence. Speaking with Pandarus about her imminent departure, she says:

Why tell you me of moderation?
The grief is fine, full, perfect that I taste,
And violenteth in a sense as strong
As that which causeth it. How can I moderate it?
If I could temporize with my affection,
Or brew it to a weak and colder palate,
The like allayment could I give my grief.
My love admits no qualifying dross;
No more in grief, in such a precious loss.

(IV.iv.2-10)

Not long afterwards, of course, the audience members are made voyeurs to Cressida's sexual infidelity with Diomedes, yet she is hardly the exception to the rule. Hospitality in *Troilus and Cressida* is instead unfailingly impure and polluted in its essence.

The play's association of hospitality with metaphors of liquid impurity culminates in the chivalric contest between Hector and Ajax. Following a suspenseful build-up, the fighting stops abruptly with the following words from Hector:

Why, then will I no more.
Thou art, great lord, my father's sister's son,
A cousin-german to great Priam's seed.
The obligation of our blood forbids
A gory emulation 'twixt us twain.
Were thy commixtion Greek and Trojan so
That thou couldst say, 'This hand is Grecian all,
And this is Trojan; the sinews of this leg
All Greek, and this all Troy; my mother's blood

Runs on the dexter cheek, and this sinister
Bounds in my father's', by Jove multipotent,
Thou shouldst not bear from me a Greekish member
Wherein my sword had not impressure made
Of our rank feud. But the just gods gainsay
That any drop thou borrowed'st from thy mother,
My sacred aunt, should by my mortal sword
Be drained. Let me embrace thee, Ajax.
By him that thunders, thou hast lusty arms!
Hector would have them fall upon him thus.
Cousin, all honour to thee! [*They embrace.*]

(IV.v.120-39)

Discussing this speech in an essay on 'Fragments of Nationalism in *Troilus and Cressida*', Matthew Greenfield argues that 'In Hector's fantasy Ajax's mixed bloods are separated and his dual nationalities untangled'.⁶³ Hector expresses a longing to be able to distil out Ajax's blended bloodlines, so that he might kill the Greek part only, but since this is plainly an impossibility he calls an end to the competition and the opponents end up embracing one another instead. Despite the repeated talk of distillation, in the polluted atmosphere of *Troilus and Cressida* purification looks unattainable. It is, after all, a play that concludes with Pandarus discussing the hot sweats that are induced by the traditional bathtub treatments for venereal disease. Owing perhaps to this persistent foulness, the extraction of pure hospitality from contaminated elements remains only an unrealised ideal.

Following the tournament, the Greeks all gather around to greet Hector in what is, in many ways, a parallel scene to Cressida's earlier entrance. Similarly to before, the Greek warriors take it in turns individually to welcome Hector to their tents. On stage, this is

⁶³ Matthew Greenfield, 'Fragments of Nationalism in *Troilus and Cressida*', in *Shakespeare's Problem Plays: All's Well that Ends Well, Measure for Measure, Troilus and Cressida*, ed. by Simon Barker (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 199-223 (p. 211).

another group tableau of hospitality, where a single Trojan guest is outnumbered by a large number of Greek hosts. Agamemnon is again the first to approach the newcomer and he greets Hector with the words:

Worthy of arms! As worthy as to one
That would be rid of such an enemy –
But that's no welcome. Understand more clear:
What's past and what's to come is strewed with husks
And formless ruin of oblivion;
But in this extant moment, faith and troth,
Strained purely from all hollow bias-drawing,
Bids thee, with most divine integrity,
From heart of very heart, great Hector, welcome.

(IV.v.164-72)

These evocative lines can perhaps best be understood as another attempt to divorce a moment of hospitality from the violent backdrop of the Trojan War. Agamemnon uses more imagery of liquid purification when he explains that he has 'strained purely' his heartfelt greeting to Hector. Most of all, though, Agamemnon stresses the importance of the present moment to wartime hospitality. Isolating 'this extant moment' of hospitality from the ongoing bloodshed, Agamemnon then goes on to say to Hector that 'What's past and what's to come is strewed with husks/ And formless ruin of oblivion'. The lines beautifully capture the sad inevitability of the fate of Troy and evoke Cressida's prophetic words on the same theme earlier on in the play:

When time is old and hath forgot itself,
When waterdrops have worn the stones of Troy,
And blind oblivion swallowed cities up,
And mighty states characterless are grated
To dusty nothing

(III.ii.180-84)

In an influential essay on ‘Time and the Trojans’, John Bayley has argued convincingly for the importance of the present to *Troilus and Cressida*. Bayley points out that because the Troy legend is so powerfully ingrained in our cultural imagination, ‘The only surprise here must be a perpetual present’.⁶⁴ But the present moment is moreover essential to Shakespeare’s depiction of wartime hospitality, since encounters between opponents are always time locked and possible only under a temporary ceasefire.

I have been suggesting that hospitality in *Troilus and Cressida* straddles a very fine line between hostility and hospitality or between pathos and embarrassment. Once Agamemnon has finished welcoming Hector, it is now Menelaus’s turn to step forward. The greeting that ensues is amusingly awkward:

Hector [to *Aeneas*] Who must we answer?

Aeneas The noble Menelaus.

Hector O, you, my lord? By Mars his gauntlet, thanks!

Mock not that I affect th’untraded oath;

Your quondam wife swears still by Venus’ glove.

She’s well, but bade me not commend her to you.

Menelaus Name her not now, sir; she’s a deadly theme.

Hector O, pardon! I offend.

(IV.v.177-83)

Earlier in the chapter we saw some humiliating greetings being exchanged in Troy, and this one is equally uncomfortable. Hector puts his foot in it firstly by mentioning Menelaus’s

⁶⁴ Bayley, ‘Time and the Trojans’, p. 58. Bayley also suggests that, ‘In all Shakespeare’s other plays we feel that the present time as enacted on the stage, not only depends on the past but is in the service of the future [. . .] But in the formal impact of *Troilus* there is neither past nor future: everything takes place in and ends in, the present’ (p. 57). In *Hospitality and Treachery*, Heffernan notes, ‘Hospitality thus seems to furnish a respite from war, a moment of sympathy which, however fleetingly, transcends the murderous hatred and bitter resentment of the other, the stranger, the alien, the enemy’ (p. 14).

consumerist eye, as if he were intending to ‘buy’ him ‘joint by joint’ or ‘limb by limb’. Achilles speaks in metaphors borrowed from the butcher’s shop, which plays in interesting ways with hospitality’s usual trope of feasting. Indeed, the unsavoury implication is that, instead of being the guest at a feast, Hector is now on the menu, for Achilles is gorging himself on the sight of Hector in a dematerialised banquet. The scene recalls Achilles’ former description of his hunger to look upon Hector:

I have a woman’s longing,
An appetite that I am sick withal,
To see great Hector in his weeds of peace.

Enter Thersites.

To talk with him, and to behold his visage
Even to my full of view.

(III.iii.239-43)

Whereas Cressida was kissed by the Greeks in welcome, Hector’s reception is dominated by moments of intense looking. And yet, the scene feels no less physically intimate. In particular, Achilles’ greeting blends together hints of eroticism and violence, as if to underline hospitality’s complex nature.

In this section I have been arguing that the welcoming scenes between military opponents in *Troilus and Cressida* embody a curious blend of hospitality and violence. Shakespeare continually uses the theme of muddied or contaminated liquids to get across the awkwardness of wartime greetings. One more example of this appears in Act V when Achilles is planning to host Hector that evening and says:

I’ll heat his blood with Greekish wine tonight,
Which with my scimitar I’ll cool tomorrow.
Patroclus, let us feast him to the height.

(V.i.1-3)

In a gruesome few lines, Achilles visualises himself heating and then cooling Hector's blood, firstly with wine and then with weapons. His image conveys the impurity of hospitality throughout *Troilus and Cressida*. For Shakespeare lingers over the problem of welcoming in the play, time and again showing how any attempts to isolate pure hospitality from a backdrop of violence are doomed to failure. But I do not think that the implications of this impurity are as bleak as we might presume. Even though hospitality in *Troilus and Cressida* keeps collapsing into hostility, the characters still long for intimate encounters with one another in spite of the risks. It is, I suggest, this striving to be hospitable that counts over and above all the other calculations of price.

Invasion

In this concluding section of the chapter I return once more to the theme of vulnerability and disarmament in order to explore in greater detail how this intersects with Shakespeare's staging of hospitality in *Troilus and Cressida*. It has long been noted by critics that the play appears to be haunted by the spectre of invasion. Discussing desire in *Troilus and Cressida*, Valerie Traub suggests that 'The play in fact presents three interconnected fantasies of invasion: the prophesied (and, for the audience, legendary) Greek penetration and destruction of the walled city of Troy, the syphilitic infection of individual bodies, and the incursion of the "diseased" (Pandarus, Cressida, and prostitutes generally) into the body politic. The multiple deployment of these fantasies renders desire not only contagious, but deadly'.⁶⁵ These anxieties about the possibility of invasion also inform Shakespeare's dramatisation of hospitality, once more foregrounding the threat of violence. In this section of the chapter I focus the discussion on Shakespeare's characterisation of Hector up until his murder at the

⁶⁵ Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, pp. 73-74.

end of the play. Drawing on Derrida's texts, it is my intention to propose that Hector's death can be interpreted not simply as an act of brutal violence, but as a radical gesture of hospitality in the midst of battle.

All the way through *Troilus and Cressida*, narratives of invasion converge on the figure of Hector. Shakespeare stresses Hector's vulnerability to physical assault by repeatedly linking him to notions of disarmament. In Act III, for instance, Paris requests of Helen that she help to unbuckle Hector when he returns home from the fighting:

Sweet Helen, I must woo you
To help unarm our Hector. His stubborn buckles,
With these your white enchanting fingers touched,
Shall more obey than to the edge of steel
Or force of Greekish sinews. You shall do more
Than all the island kings: disarm great Hector.

(III.i.143-48)

Paris's romanticised description of disarming Hector is given more sinister expression further on in the play. Prior to Hector's murder comes a scene in which his wife Andromache and sister Cassandra plead with him to remove his armour and stay away from the battlefield because they have had dreams and premonitions of violent death. Andromache urges Hector: 'Unarm, unarm, and do not fight today' (V.iii.3), with Cassandra adding: 'Unarm, sweet Hector' (V.iii.25). Even Priam chimes in with the chorus of voices all imploring Hector to remove his armour and stay at home:

Come, Hector, come. Go back.
Thy wife hath dreamt, thy mother hath had visions,
Cassandra doth foresee, and I myself
Am like a prophet suddenly enrapt
To tell thee that this day is ominous.

(V.iii.62-66)

And yet, Hector unwisely ignores all of their presentiments of violence. It will not be long before he will begin disarming on the battlefield within full sight of the enemy Greeks.

In addition to removing his armour, Hector also makes himself vulnerable before strangers on account of his compassion. Within the world of the play, this is regarded as something of a problem. Thus, Troilus lectures Hector on his brother's misplaced sympathy for the Greeks:

Troilus Brother, you have a vice of mercy in you,
 Which better fits a lion than a man.
Hector What vice is that? Good Troilus, chide me for it.
Troilus When many times the captive Grecian falls,
 Even in the fan and wind of your fair sword,
 You bid them rise and live.
Hector O, 'tis fair play.
Troilus Fool's play, by heaven, Hector.

(V.iii.37-43)

Hector's display of empathy towards any weaker opponents whom he encounters on the battlefield is noticed by the Greeks as well. Ulysses remarks that 'Hector in his blaze of wrath subscribes/ To tender objects' (IV.v.106-7), while the old warrior Nestor relates witnessing Hector's sympathetic nature in action:

When thou hast hung thy advanced sword i'th'air,
Not letting it decline on the declined,
That I have said to some my standers-by:
'Lo, Jupiter is yonder, dealing life!'

(IV.v.189-92)

Near the beginning of the play, Hector alludes to this softheartedness when he tells his father:

There is no lady of more softer bowels,
More spongy to suck in the sense of fear,
More ready to cry out ‘Who knows what follows?’
Than Hector is.

(II.ii.11-14)

In the early modern period, the bowels were believed to be the body’s principal site of compassion,⁶⁶ though these lines more precisely foreshadow Hector’s disembowelment at the end of the play at the hands of Achilles and his Myrmidons. In his dealings with other people, Hector’s sympathy exposes him to harm. Emmanuel Levinas argues that ‘Every love or every hatred of a neighbour [. . .] presupposes this prior vulnerability, this mercy, this “groaning of the entrails”’.⁶⁷ In *Troilus and Cressida*, our vulnerability before others is embodied in the depiction of Hector’s sensitivity.

Hector’s murder near the ending of *Troilus and Cressida* is shocking in its depiction of group violence. Having slain one of the Greeks, Hector has paused for a minute of rest when he is surprised by Achilles and his mob of Myrmidons:

Hector Now is my day’s work done. I’ll take good breath.
Rest, sword; thou hast thy fill of blood and death.
[*He starts to disarm.*]

Enter Achilles and his Myrmidons.

Achilles Look, Hector, how the sun begins to set,
How ugly night comes breathing at his heels.
Even with the vail and dark’ning of the sun

⁶⁶ Bevington notes this in his edition of the play at II.ii.11*n*.

⁶⁷ Emmanuel Levinas, ‘No Identity’, in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. by Alphonso Lingus (Dordrecht and London: Kluwer Academic, 1993), pp. 141-53 (pp. 146-7). In *On Touching – Jean-Luc Nancy*, trans. by Christine Irizarry (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005), Derrida writes that “‘Tenderheartedness’, says Levinas, and the tender: extending privileges to tenderheartedness and speaking of the “tender” as an original category implies putting the accent in love and the erotic [. . .] on a movement toward appeasement, a moment of peace, and a disarming’ (p. 93).

To close the day up, Hector's life is done.
Hector I am unarmed. Forgo this vantage, Greek.
Achilles Strike, fellows, strike! This is the man I seek.

(V.ix.3-10)

Hector is ambushed by the Greeks in a moment of pause after he has already begun to disarm. In a gruesome outburst, the Myrmidons surround Hector and bayonet him with their weapons. In *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics*, Bruce Smith argues that there are homosexual overtones to Hector's death at the hands of a gang of men. Smith suggests that 'Seen in the terms that Achilles himself provides, the slaughter of Hector becomes an act of sexual consummation, a homosexual gang rape that Achilles and his Myrmidons carry out on their unarmed victim'.⁶⁸ Whether or not this potential homoeroticism is emphasised is a matter of staging, but the fact that Hector is surprised with his defences down is disturbing. And yet, while Hector's murder at the end of *Troilus and Cressida* might look like another act of violence, Derrida can help us to understand the moment differently as a hospitable performance.

In his writings on pure or unconditional hospitality, Derrida frequently emphasises the necessity of surprise. He argues that 'For pure hospitality or a pure gift to occur [. . .] there must be an absolute surprise. The other, like the Messiah, must arrive whenever he or she wants'.⁶⁹ If the host is fully prepared for the arrival of the visitor then they are in control of the situation, which puts their hospitality on a conditional footing. But for Derrida, to be truly hospitable means allowing oneself to be surprised by the coming of the new arrival who has not been invited and is certainly not expected. In his essay on 'Hostipitality', Derrida compares this experience to a rape or an abduction of sorts:

⁶⁸ Bruce Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 61.

⁶⁹ Derrida, 'Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility' in *Questioning Ethics*, p. 70.

To be hospitable is to let oneself be overtaken [*surprendre*], *to be ready to not be ready*, if such is possible, to let oneself be overtaken, to not even *let* oneself be overtaken, to be surprised, in a fashion almost violent, violated and raped [*violée*], stolen [*volée*] (the whole question of violence and violation/ rape and of expropriation and de-propiation is waiting for us), precisely where one is not ready to receive – and not only *not yet ready* but *not ready, unprepared* in a mode that is not even that of the ‘not yet’.⁷⁰

As Derrida goes on to say, ‘one must say *yes* [. . .] to let oneself be swept by the coming of the wholly other, the absolutely unforeseeable [*inanticipable*] stranger, the uninvited visitor, the unexpected visitation beyond welcoming apparatuses. If I welcome only what I welcome, what I am ready to welcome, and that I recognise in advance because I expect the coming of the hôte as invited, there is no hospitality’.⁷¹ In *Troilus and Cressida*, as the sympathetic Hector begins to disarm on the battlefield, I suggest that Shakespeare is encouraging us to reconsider what it means to be so radically unprepared before the appearance of the stranger. The way that Hector allows himself to be overtaken by other people is perhaps a unique dramatisation of what it means to be truly hospitable. Derrida explains that ‘For unconditional hospitality to take place you have to accept the risk of the other coming and destroying the place, initiating a revolution, stealing everything, or killing everyone. That is the risk of pure hospitality and pure gift, because a pure gift might be terrible too’.⁷² By performing in miniature the eventual destruction of Troy, Hector’s death shows that hospitality can be a terrible thing.

* * *

⁷⁰ Derrida, ‘Hostipitality’, in *Acts of Religion*, p. 361. In *Derrida and Hospitality*, Still comments, ‘Derrida uses the term *violé* (raped) for the general effect of the surprise visitor whose arrival may be experienced as a violent intrusion by the unprepared host’ (p. 123). Compare also in *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), where Derrida argues: ‘To overtake the other with surprise, be it by one’s generosity and by giving too much, is to have a hold on him, as soon as he accepts the gift. The other is taken, caught in the trap: Unable to anticipate, he is delivered over to the mercy, to the *merci* of the giver: he is taken in, by the trap, overtaken, imprisoned, indeed poisoned by the very fact that something happens to him in the face of which he remains – having not been able to foresee anything – defenceless, open, exposed. He is the other’s catch or take [*prise*], he has given the other a hold [*prise*]. Such violence may be considered the very condition of the gift’ (p. 147).

⁷¹ Derrida, ‘Hostipitality’, in *Acts of Religion*, pp. 361-2.

⁷² Derrida, ‘Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility’ in *Questioning Ethics*, p. 71.

The hospitality that Shakespeare presents in *Troilus and Cressida* is quite different to that we saw performed in *The Merchant of Venice*. In Troy, the wartime context has the effect of intensifying what is at stake during the many scenes of welcome. It lends a pressing urgency to social exchanges, and it edges meetings between guests and hosts towards the violence always informing hospitality. When the audience members are made spectators of Cressida's unfaithfulness with the Greek warrior, Diomedes in Act V, the encounter is filled with the same blend of hesitation and risk that we have seen already in the play. Reinforcing our impression of voyeurism, Shakespeare also includes two separate parties who witness the scene: Troilus and Ulysses, and, set apart from the others, the rascally Thersites. Unable to believe his eyes at what he has just seen, Troilus remarks: 'This is and is not Cressid' (V.ii.153). He continues:

Cressid is mine, tied with the bonds of heaven;
Instance, O instance, strong as heaven itself,
The bonds of heaven are slipped, dissolved and loosed,
And with another knot, five-finger-tied,
The fractions of her faith, orts of her love,
The fragments, scraps, the bits and greasy relics
Of her o'eraten faith, are bound to Diomed.

(V.ii.161-67)

Developing Shakespeare's thematic interest in the theme of bonds and demonstrative attachments, Troilus visualises Cressida loosening her prior commitment to him, while simultaneously pledging herself to Diomedes. Similarly to elsewhere in *Troilus and Cressida*, hospitality imagery is employed, but solely to draw attention to its deficiency. Troilus compares this scene of sexual infidelity before him to the leftovers or 'fragments, scraps, the bits and greasy relics' from the banqueting table. But, it is Troilus's doubt over what he has just seen that is an especially distinctive aspect of the way that Shakespeare stages hospitality in the play.

In *Troilus and Cressida* our attention is repeatedly drawn both to the fragility of the human body and the violence of its sudden encounters with outsiders, of which Hector's disembowelling at the end of the play is only the most spectacular example. With its persistent emphasis on being taken by surprise, Shakespeare's depiction of hospitality seems to anticipate Jean-Luc Nancy's idea of the intruder figure:

The intruder introduces himself forcefully, by surprise or by ruse, not, in any case, by right or by being admitted beforehand. Something of the stranger has to intrude, or else he loses his strangeness. If he already has the right to enter and stay, if he is awaited and received, no part of him being unexpected or unwelcome, then he is not an intruder any more, but then neither is he any longer a stranger. To exclude all intrusiveness from the stranger's coming is therefore neither logically acceptable nor ethically admissible.

If, once he is there, he remains a stranger, then for as long as this remains so – and does not simply become 'naturalized' – his coming does not stop: he continues to come, and his coming does not stop intruding in some way: in other words, without right or familiarity, not according to custom, being, on the contrary, a disturbance, a trouble in the midst of intimacy.⁷³

In these evocative few lines, Nancy captures the intrusiveness of the stranger's appearance and the somewhat excessive quality of it to transport the recipient far beyond what he or she might have been expecting. Nancy's portrayal of the intruder is close to Derrida's distinguishing of visitation from invitation, since both stress the wholly unforeseen nature of the event. Throughout *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare keeps returning to the unpredictability of new encounters, thus using hospitality as a way to explore the trauma and the horrors of warfare.

The performance of hospitality on the Shakespeare stage might initially appear to be a straightforward matter of entrances and exits, yet as I have been arguing so far in this thesis, scenes of welcoming form part of the darker visions of the plays. What connections we have seen already between hospitality and death are developed further in the next chapter on *Timon of Athens*, where Shakespeare's depiction of the hospitality relationship overlaps with

⁷³ Jean-Luc Nancy, 'The Intruder', in *Corpus*, trans. by Richard A. Rand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), pp. 161-70 (p. 161).

cultures of death and mourning in a number of interesting ways. *Timon of Athens* is a strangely discordant play, after all, that opens with the protagonist hosting a lavish banquet and ends with his lonely death. In between those moments of tension, Shakespeare explores issues of place, ritual and the gift. But it is the interrelated performances of welcoming and mourning that appear to fascinate Shakespeare most in this play. These are both ordinary and extraordinary aspects of the human experience, and Shakespeare interrogates their relationship in *Timon of Athens*, as the action of the play moves between scenarios of dining with friends and burying the dead. As I will show in the following chapter, at the play's heart is a set of preoccupations that leads us from the banqueting table into more ethical questions of memory, sacrifice and forgiveness.

Chapter Three

Economies of the Gift in *Timon of Athens*

In comparison perhaps to *The Merchant of Venice* and *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare and Middleton's *Timon of Athens* is more obviously a play about the hospitality relationship.¹ When the play begins, Timon is intent on being the most generous of hosts and we find him lavishly entertaining his friends and neighbours at his house in Athens, not only with a sumptuous banquet, but with a series of gifts and financial loans. Even when things quickly start to go wrong and Timon's debts accumulate to the point where he encounters problems with his creditors, he still holds on to the idea of the communal feast, using it as an imaginative means to get revenge on his former acquaintances. This second or mock banquet that Timon hosts and during which he furiously turns on his ungrateful guests, pelting them with stones and lukewarm water, is a spectacular turning point in the play. From then onwards, the sociable Timon goes into solitary exile in the woods outside of Athens, declaring himself a misanthrope who hates mankind. It seems, then, that *Timon of Athens* is far more straightforwardly about the material culture of hospitality in a way that we have not

¹ There is a general critical consensus that Thomas Middleton had some hand in the play's composition and that is assumed here. For a good overview of the evidence for collaboration, see Brian Vickers, *Shakespeare, Co-Author* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 244-90.

really seen so far. It is also a play that reveals a sustained interest in neighbourly relations. Timon begins the play as a very liberal host always surrounded by other people, but he winds up as an outsider figure exiled in a lonely landscape. The play features three strangers, one of whom is called Hostilius, who comment on the central action, and it has a loyal steward, Flavius, who returns to Timon in the woods during his hour of need. Creditors also appear onstage in *Timon of Athens* demanding to be reimbursed. As we saw in *The Merchant of Venice*, foregrounding the theme of debts and financial settlements enables Shakespeare to interrogate the broader issue of what really binds us to our friends, enemies and neighbours. In *Timon of Athens*, once again the more imprecise bonds formed by hospitality are contrasted with legal and financial settlements.

In the introduction to this thesis I stated that it was my intention to extend our awareness of how hospitality is performed across Shakespeare's plays, partly by turning away from food and banquet scenes. Up until now, I have not discussed food in any great detail, aside from noting the religious references to pork in *The Merchant of Venice* and alluding to several of the more grotesque images of digestion, vomiting and scraps of food in *Troilus and Cressida*. But, whereas the other two plays did not display a concern with feasting, in *Timon of Athens* the protagonist's hospitality in the early scenes of the play is intimately related to the staging of table fellowship, and so this chapter begins with an exploration into the dynamics of the banquet. My reading of the play is informed by anthropological approaches by Marcel Mauss, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Michel Serres, who help to illuminate the cultural meanings of cooking and gift-exchange. Developing some of the arguments I have been making in this thesis and which concern the association between hospitality and violence, I am particularly interested to analyse themes of cannibalism and sacrifice in relation to the feast. In the opening part of this chapter I also introduce the concept of parasitism and draw on Derrida's thinking in *Of Hospitality* on the overlap

between guests and parasites. In *Timon of Athens*, Shakespeare questions the disturbing ease with which guests can be transformed into parasites, and hosts into wandering misanthropes. The fluidity with which the characters in *Timon of Athens* move between the different social roles says something important about the interdependence of guests and hosts.

While this chapter begins by exploring Shakespeare's dramatisation of banquet scenes and gift-exchange, looking at hospitality in detail yet again leads us into unexpected areas of the text. The ending of *Timon of Athens* depicts Timon's mysterious death and his lonely burial on the edge of the coastline outside of Athens. In what is a reflection of Timon's misanthropic temperament in the latter half of the play, he makes it plain that he desires no mourning rites, no tears and, most of all, no visitors at his graveside. The sustained emphasis that Shakespeare places on death and mourning in the concluding part of *Timon of Athens* problematises the play's gift economy and its representation of hospitality. In the closing section of this chapter, I use Derrida's writings on the connections between works of hospitality and mourning to argue that hospitality in *Timon of Athens* relies on darker structures of debt and obligation than we might at first anticipate. Scholarship on debt in *Timon of Athens* is a familiar theme.² But it is crucial to broaden the traditional boundaries of the economic in order to fully appreciate both the nature of Timon's debts as well as his supposed acts of generosity. It is my intention in this chapter to argue that, despite being perceived as the most unselfish of gestures, hospitality and mourning in this play disclose a spirit of calculation that is disquieting. In particular, I show that Shakespeare's use of tears as an emblem in *Timon of Athens* can be read in terms of an economic symbolism that links

² For an introduction to the treatment of debt in the play, see John Jowett, 'Middleton and Debt in *Timon of Athens*', in *Money and the Age of Shakespeare: Essays in New Economic Criticism*, ed. by Linda Woodbridge (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003), pp. 219-35. On debt in early modern culture see, for example, Theodore Leinwand, *Finance and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) and Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998).

together performances of hospitality and mourning. Owing to their mysterious opacity, tears prompt questions concerning the insincerity of ritual, and help to encourage a reconsideration of hospitality's limitations as well as raising doubts about the nature of emotional generosity. Later on in the chapter I consider the mourning surrounding Timon's death and burial towards the end of the play, making comparison to Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* as another play ending in the hostile landscape outside of Athens and that is interested in the troubled relationship between hospitality and mourning. In the same way that Oedipus's death becomes a gift to his host city, I argue that Timon's burial can be understood as one last effort at generosity. When *Timon of Athens* concludes, the action remains caught in the dilemma of what it means to be welcoming, but the question has assumed a darker mood than we might perhaps anticipate.

Feast

In this opening section I concentrate on Shakespeare's portrayal of Timon's hospitality in the early part of the play. Timon's wasteful generosity to his friends has long been noted by critics. In a seminal essay that compares Timon's gifts to archaic potlatching practices, Coppélia Kahn argues that 'Timon's bounty is magical: in his eyes, it needs no replenishment, it cannot be depleted, it has no limits'.³ More recently, Ken Jackson has offered an innovative reading of the play that uses Derrida's work on religion and the gift. Of Timon, Jackson argues that 'his attempts at "truly" giving or moving outside the circular economy of exchange in the first part of the play are passionately, profoundly religious'.⁴ In

³ Coppélia Kahn, "'Magic of Bounty': *Timon of Athens*, Jacobean Patronage, and Maternal Power', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 38 (1987), 34-57 (p. 39).

⁴ Ken Jackson, "'One Wish" or the Possibility of the Impossible: Derrida, the Gift, and God in *Timon of Athens*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 52: 1 (2001), 34-66 (p. 47). Jackson also suggests that 'No other Shakespearean character gives himself up "to the other [. . .] and to the utterly other" in the way Timon does. No character

arguing that Timon's generosity is motivated by his spirituality, Jackson is claiming some affinity with G. Wilson Knight's famous praise for the play in *The Wheel of Fire: Interpretations of Shakespearean Tragedy*, where he discussed what he took to be 'the intrinsic and absolute blamelessness of Timon's generosity'.⁵ I share Jackson's conviction that Derrida can help to shed light on some of the difficulties of interpretation posed by *Timon of Athens*, yet where my approach differs is that I do not regard Timon's giving as a religious event. Rather, I argue later on in this chapter that Timon knowingly manipulates hospitality's tendency to accumulate debts and obligations in a way that undermines his generosity from the very beginning. In the early scenes of the play, Timon seemingly wants to give unreservedly to his friends, but as we will discover, his hospitality is far from being what Derrida terms pure or unconditional. For Derrida, pure hospitality demands nothing from the guest in return for his greeting. It is 'a welcome without reservations or calculation'.⁶ In *Timon of Athens*, although Timon's hospitality might appear overwhelming and one-directional, it is actually based on a principle of calculation that dilutes its effect. As Timon's guests soon find out, their host's outwardly limitless bounty comes with a number of stipulations attached. Before we turn to the demands that hosts make on their guests, however, it is helpful to begin by exploring the violence that guests can inflict on their hosts, since this is what concerns Shakespeare in the early part of *Timon of Athens*.

When the play opens an unusually large crowd of guests is gathering outside Timon's house, leading the Poet to comment on 'this confluence, this great flood of visitors'.⁷ In their

pushes down through Christianity to its desire for the "other and [. . .] utterly other" in the way Timon does, forcing us to consider where that response and that responsibility to "give" comes from' (p. 37).

⁵ G. Wilson Knight, *The Wheel of Fire: Interpretations of Shakespearean Tragedy* (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 218.

⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Paper Machine*, trans. by Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 66.

⁷ William Shakespeare and Thomas Middleton, *Timon of Athens*, ed. by Anthony B. Dawson and Gretchen E. Minton (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), I.i.43. Further references to the play are all to this edition unless otherwise stated and given in the body of the text.

edition, Anthony Dawson and Gretchen Minton argue that ‘Such language expresses the fluidity, even the liquidity, of exchange, both monetary and social, that characterises the interaction in the early parts of the play’.⁸ In the initial few lines of scene one Shakespeare introduces the watery imagery that will accompany Timon’s hospitality for the remainder of the action, culminating in the lukewarm water that he throws in his guests’ faces during the mock banquet. This chapter analyses the role of these watery image clusters in relation to performances of hospitality by noticing how they range from descriptions of water, wine and other libations to tears and, eventually, the sea itself. Encountering one another outside Timon’s house, one of the Athenian lords asks another, ‘Come, shall we in and taste lord Timon’s bounty?’ (I.i.281), to which the second lord replies:

He pours it out; Plutus, the god of gold,
Is but his steward: no meed but he repays
Sevenfold above itself, no gift to him
But breeds the giver a return exceeding
All use of quittance.

(I.i.283-86)

As well as developing the liquid quality of Timon’s generosity, the second lord’s classical allusion to Plutus as a steward pouring from his cornucopia is one of many mentions in the play to Timon’s desire to give not only extravagantly but in excess of all return. Timon regards his generosity flowing in one direction, from him outwards towards the grateful recipients, and this is why, on the occasions when he does receive a gift, he immediately overwhelms the giver by returning a more expensive one.

The lavish banquet that takes place in Act I of *Timon of Athens* is a chance for the audience to witness Timon’s hospitality in action. Coppélia Kahn suggests that ‘Shakespeare sets Timon at the centre of an Athens given wholly to the pleasures of eating and drinking’,

⁸ Dawson and Minton, ‘Introduction’ to *Timon of Athens*, pp. 1-145 (p. 94).

while John Jowett has commented that ‘in Timon’s house he is himself the source of all nutriment, wealth, and pleasure’.⁹ The overpowering nature of Timon’s generosity is emphasised through the staging when his guests are seated at the banquet table. The copious helpings of wine are compared to the ocean tides as Timon passes the cup around his friends:

Timon My lord, in heart, and let the health go round.
2 Lord Let it flow this way, my good lord.
Apemantus Flow this way? A brave fellow! He keeps his tides well; those healths will make thee and thy state look ill, Timon.

(I.ii.53-57)

It is the sceptical Apemantus, performing a choral role not dissimilar to Thersites in *Troilus and Cressida*, who introduces a note of uneasiness at this immoderate hospitality. By drawing our attention to the insincerity of Timon’s guests and even of hospitality’s rituals – like the sharing of drinks – Apemantus turns the wateriness of Timon’s table fellowship into a cause for alarm. In his anthropological study of the gift, Marcel Mauss describes how, for the ancient Germans and Scandinavians, the archetypal gift was pourable. Mauss explains that thus ‘one can see that the uncertainty about the good or bad nature of the presents could have been nowhere greater than in the case of the customs of the kind where the gifts consisted essentially of drinks taken in common, in libations offered or to be rendered’.¹⁰ For Mauss, the drink’s inscrutable liquidity encapsulates its potential to be poisonous. Even at this early stage in the action, Apemantus is modelling a more cautious response to the table fellowship on stage.

Partway through the banquet there is a moment of pause as Timon makes an emotional toast to his dinner guests. He says to them:

⁹ Kahn, ‘Magic of Bounty’, p. 38 and Jowett, ‘Middleton and Debt’, p. 229. See also Chris Meads, *Banquets Set Forth: Banqueting in English Renaissance Drama* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), where Meads explains that Timon’s ‘generosity [is] made plain by the extravagance of the banquet fare’ (p. 148).

¹⁰ Marcel Mauss, ‘Gift, Gift’, in *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, ed. by Alan D. Schrift (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 28-33 (p. 30).

O, what a precious comfort 'tis to have so many like brothers commanding one another's fortunes. O, joy's e'en made away ere't can be born – mine eyes cannot hold out water, methinks. To forget their faults, I drink to you.

(I.ii.101-106)

Timon's weeping, whilst he drinks in honour of his friends, makes his toast especially wet.¹¹

Later in 1658, Thomas Hobbes would argue that 'Those that weep the greatest amount and more frequently are those, such as women and children, who have the least hope in themselves and the most in friends'.¹² Timon's emotional incontinence is effeminising and it also indicates his trusting nature at this point in the play. Sobbing is, moreover, a visible expression of his uneconomical behaviour. Discussing the 'conceptual linking of body fluids and emotions' during the early modern period, Deborah Lupton notes that despite being 'the most symbolically "clean" of the bodily fluids', tears still 'bespeak a loss of control'.¹³ By making his protagonist overly tearful, Shakespeare presents us with a man who has no control over either his spending habits or his body. That the early moderns placed great importance on moderate displays of grief has been shown by Bridget Escolme:

For Thomas Playfere in his sermon on *The Mean in Mourning* (1595), crying is compared to the weather: too much weeping is like an economically unproductive, physically destructive storm:

The water when it is quiet, and calm, bringeth in all manner of merchandise, but when the sea storms, and roars too much, then the very ships do howl and cry. The air looking clearly, and cheerfully refresheth all things, but weeping too much, that is, raining too much, as in Noah's flood, it drowns the whole world.¹⁴

¹¹ For further discussion of some of the more ceremonial aspects of hospitality see Margaret Visser's influential monograph on *The Rituals of Dinner: The Origins, Evolution, Eccentricities, and Meaning of Table Manners* (HarperCollins: Ontario, 1991). On tears in Shakespeare's plays see, for example, Joseph Campana, 'Crocodile Tears: Affective Fallacies Old and New', in *Affect Theory and Early Modern Texts: Politics, Ecologies, and Form*, ed. by Amanda Bailey and Mario DiGangi (New York: Palgrave, 2017), pp. 129-52; Heather Kerr, "'Sociable' Tears in *The Tempest*", in *Shakespeare and Emotions: Inheritances, Enactments, Legacies*, ed. by R. S. White, Mark Houlihan and Katrina O'Loughlin (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015), pp. 164-75. More generally on tears in early modern drama, see Matthew Steggle, *Laughing and Weeping in Early Modern Theatres* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

¹² Thomas Hobbes, as quoted by Marjory E. Lange in *Telling Tears in the English Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), p. 30.

¹³ Deborah Lupton, *The Emotional Self: A Sociocultural Exploration* (London: SAGE, 1998), p. 74 and p. 87.

¹⁴ Bridget Escolme, *Emotional Excess on the Shakespearean Stage: Passion's Slaves* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. xiv.

Intemperate weeping is thought to be emotionally unthrifty behaviour. Playfere's allusion to the elements anticipates Shakespeare's own future reference to shipwreck when Timon's cash-flow problems will render him homeless alongside his servants, one of whom says:

We are fellows still,
Serving alike in sorrow; leaked is our bark,
And we poor mates stand on the dying deck
Hearing the surges threat – we must all part
Into this sea of air.

(IV.ii.18-22)

The repeated allusions to tears, water and other libations are fitting emblems for the early part of the play with its emphasis on Timon's unrestrained expenditure.

Timon's hospitality is based on a principle of bountifulness, and not only because he keeps the wine flowing at his dinner table. He has an open house policy in Athens. Everyone is welcome inside his home, for there is 'No porter at his gate/ But rather one that smiles and still invites/ All that pass by' (II.i.10-12). In this respect, Timon is said to be 'like tapsters that bade welcome/ To knaves and all approachers' (IV.iii.214-215). And yet Timon's uncontrolled hospitality renders him vulnerable to the intrusions of his guests. By relinquishing control of his house to them, Timon exposes himself to the type of violence that I have been noting so far in the thesis. Thus, in Act II, Timon's loyal steward, Flavius, reprimands his master's spending in the following way:

So the gods bless me,
When all our offices have been oppressed
With riotous feeders, when our vaults have wept
With drunken spilth of wine, when every room
Hath blazed with lights and brayed with minstrelsy,
I have retired me to a wasteful cock
And set mine eyes at flow.

(II.ii.157-63)¹⁵

Flavius relates the spilt wine of the guests to his own sympathetic weeping in an image that conveys the liquidity of Timon's generosity. Flavius's lines are an indictment of some of the risks of hospitality, and his unappealing description of the visitors emphasises their bestial habits and bad table manners.¹⁶ Yet, in order for genuine hospitality to occur, you must be prepared completely to relinquish mastery of your home in this way. Derrida argues 'Even if the other deprives you of your mastery or your home, you have to accept this. It is terrible to accept this, but that is the condition of unconditional hospitality: that you give up the mastery of your space, your home, your nation. It is unbearable. If, however, there is pure hospitality it should be pushed to this extreme'.¹⁷ Derrida then goes on to say: 'Why did Kant insist on conditional hospitality? Because he knew that without these conditions hospitality could turn into wild war, terrible aggression. Those are the risks involved in pure hospitality, if there is such a thing and I am not sure that there is'.¹⁸ Near the beginning of *Timon of Athens*, Timon appears to be pursuing an agenda of unconditional hospitality in the way that he lets his guests take over the house. But, as we will discover later in the chapter, he is not as altruistic as he seems.

¹⁵ For continued discussion of Flavius's role in the play see, for instance, Maurice Hunt, 'Qualifying the Good Steward of Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*', *English Studies*, 82: 6 (2001), 507-20; Ellorasrhee Maitra, 'Toward an Ethical Polity: Service and the Tragic Community in *Timon of Athens*', *Renaissance Drama*, 41 (2013), 173-98; Drew Daniel, 'Syllogisms and Tears in *Timon of Athens*', *English Studies*, 94: 7 (2013), 799-820. In his chapter on 'Thinking Hospitably with *Timon of Athens*: Toward an Ethics of Stewardship', in *Shakespeare and Hospitality: Ethics, Politics, and Exchange*, ed. by David Goldstein and Julia Lupton (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), Michael Noschka offers a reading of the play that, as he puts it, 'seeks to shift critical attention away from gift exchange, biblical or otherwise, in order to better attend to hospitality in its vocation as stewardship' (p. 244).

¹⁶ Many critics of the play have noticed the prevalence of beast imagery, and dogs, in particular. Most notably, William Empson discusses the repetition of dog imagery in *Timon of Athens* in *The Structure of Complex Words* (London: Hogarth, 1985), pp. 175-84.

¹⁷ Jacques Derrida, 'Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility', in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, ed. by Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 65-83 (p. 70).

¹⁸ Derrida, 'Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility', in *Questioning Ethics*, p. 71. For more of Immanuel Kant's recommendations for more sedate dinner party planning, see *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* where, among other things, Kant stresses the importance of the host's 'skill in choosing guests who can engage themselves in mutual and general conversation', (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), (p. 145).

The threat of chaos that the guests pose is not limited to the interior of Timon's house, and as the banquet gets underway it begins to look as if the host himself is at risk of violence. Once again it is Apemantus who is a cynical voice in the middle of the feast. In Timon's house, Apemantus is a reluctant visitor and, as a result, he is seated conspicuously apart from the other diners. Joan Fitzpatrick suggests a link here to *Hamlet*, noting that 'Like *Hamlet*, *Timon of Athens* opens with a feast and a discontented observer who will not feed'.¹⁹ While at the banquet, Apemantus has a few words to say on the general perils of eating in company:

I scorn thy meat, 'twould choke me 'fore I should e'er flatter thee. O you gods, what a number of men eats Timon and he sees 'em not! It grieves me to see so many men dip their meat in one man's blood, and all the madness is, he cheers them up too. I wonder men dare trust themselves with men, Methinks they should invite them without knives – Good for their meat and safer for their lives. There's much example for't: the fellow that sits next him, now parts bread with him, pledges the breath of him in a divided draft, is the readiest man to kill him – 't has been proved. If I were a huge man I should fear to drink at meals, Lest they should spy my windpipe's dangerous notes; Great men should drink with harness on their throats.
(I.ii.38-52)

Feasts always carry the risk of eating badly; poisoning, choking or bad conversation are just a few examples of what can go wrong when a group of strangers gather around a table together.²⁰ Apemantus notes the dangerous presence of knives flying around everywhere (for it was usual practice for guests to bring their own knives with them in Shakespeare's time²¹). In another gruesome image he insinuates that men should be careful of exposing their windpipe in the act of drinking or they might find their throat is slit. Apemantus is clearly

¹⁹ Joan Fitzpatrick, *Food in Shakespeare: Early Modern Dietaries and the Plays* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 113.

²⁰ Maggie Kilgour writes that 'feasts are dangerous places' in *From Communion to Cannibalism: An Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), (p.89). In *Derrida and Hospitality: Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), Judith Still similarly points out that 'hospitality obviously carries the risk of creating the conditions of possibility for theft, assault or murder' (pp. 13-4).

²¹ Dawson and Minton note this in their edition of the play at I.ii.44n.

intent on debunking the table fellowship in *Timon of Athens* as not only superficial, but also potentially violent.

In another one of his more macabre images of public dining, Apemantus refers to Timon's blood as the communal dipping bowl, and his flesh as the meat for the whole table. He says, 'O you gods, what a number of men eats Timon and he sees 'em not! It grieves me to see so many men dip their meat in one man's blood'. The line refers to Judas's betrayal of Christ in Matthew 26:23: 'He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, he shall betray me'.²² The idea is reiterated later on when the first stranger comments: 'Who can call him his friend/ That dips in the same dish?' (III.ii.68-69). Biblical allusions to Christ's betrayal at the Last Supper are suggestive of the Eucharist or the heavenly banquet. The image transforms Timon into a Christ-like figure, offering up his flesh and blood for his guests to feed on hungrily. The sacrificial overtones of the opening banquet in *Timon of Athens* recall Freud's point in *Totem and Taboo* that 'Everywhere a sacrifice involves a feast and a feast cannot be celebrated without a sacrifice'.²³ But, at this banquet, it is Timon himself who is the sacrificial ram about to be devoured as, in Apemantus's description, the symbolic anthropophagy of the Eucharist comes to evoke a more disturbing cannibalism. With the real banquet on stage in full swing, his suggestion that 'a number of men eats Timon' begins to assume disturbing connotations. The conversation of cannibalism develops when the Athenian military captain Alcibiades appears at the feast:

<i>Timon</i>	Captain Alcibiades, your heart's in the field now. [. . .]
<i>Alcibiades</i>	You had rather be at a breakfast of enemies than a dinner of friends. So they were bleeding new, my lord, there's no meat like 'em; I could wish my best friend at such a feast. (I.ii.73-79)

²² This is noted by Dawson and Minton in their edition of the play at I.ii.39-41n.

²³ Sigmund Freud, *The Origins of Religion: Totem and Taboo, Moses and Monotheism and Other Works*, trans. by James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 195.

The discussion here is unsettling because it is unclear whether Alcibiades plans gorily to devour his enemies or his own friend. Either way, the exchange furthers the play's wider interest in unsavoury eating patterns. Hospitality puts the host at risk of violence, not to mention the guests themselves.

Timon's banquet concludes with a masque on the subject of the five senses which, I suggest, offers an emblematic commentary on some of the dangers of communal feasts.

Cupid is first onstage to announce the arrival of the masking ladies:

Hail to thee, worthy Timon, and to all that of his bounties taste! The five best senses
acknowledge thee their patron and come freely to gratulate thy plenteous bosom.
There taste, touch, all, pleased from thy table rise,
They only now come but to feast thine eyes.
(I.ii.121-126)

In the masque the senses are personified as guests rising satisfied from Timon's dining table.

We have seen so far in this thesis that the senses possess an intimate relationship to discourses and practices of hospitality because they put us in contact with our environment.

They also perform in miniature the host's vulnerability in the act of reception. Maggie

Kilgour has shown that 'The body must incorporate elements from outside itself in order to survive. The need for food exposes the vulnerability of individual identity, enacted at a wider social level in the need for exchanges, communion, and commerce with others'.²⁴ Making a

related point on the necessity of exchanges, Michel Serres notes 'An old tale that

demonstrates a wise bit of knowledge. We are hollow and empty; we cannot fill ourselves

with air and with sound. We need something substantial to mend us'.²⁵ In *Timon of Athens*,

Apemantus echoes this idea when asked if he is going to Timon's feast. He replies, 'Ay, to

²⁴ Kilgour, *Communion*, p. 6. In her seminal psychoanalytic reading of *Coriolanus* entitled "'Anger's My Meat": Feeding, Dependency, and Aggression in *Coriolanus*', Janet Adelman makes a similar observation when she suggests that 'the taking in of food is the primary acknowledgement of one's dependence on the world, and as such, it is the primary token of one's vulnerability', in *Shakespearean Tragedy*, ed. by John Drakakis (London and New York: Longman, 1992), pp. 353-73 (p. 356).

²⁵ Michel Serres, *The Parasite*, trans. by Lawrence R. Schehr (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), p. 35.

see meat fill knaves and wine heat fools' (I.i.268-69). But the problem is that the senses – like social exchanges such as hospitality – inevitably entail a dangerous mixture of the alien with the native. In an essay on 'Economimesis', Derrida explains that:

The senses of taste and smell are both more subjective than objective. The sense of taste is activated when the organ of the tongue, the gullet, and the palate come into touch with an external object. The sense of smell is activated by drawing in air which is mixed with alien vapours.²⁶

Taste and smell, two of the senses that are particularly associated with food and banquets, are highly subjective because they rely on outside elements being gulped inside the body, penetrating the inner organs of the mouth or nose, and getting mixed in with internal elements like 'saliva for example'.²⁷ This logic of dangerous proximity applies to hospitality as well, since we do not hold our guests at arm's length, but instead we invite them inside, fully inside, where they may well poison our taste buds. In *Timon of Athens*, Shakespeare brings to life some of the disquieting things that the guest can do to us in the act of reception. But although the nature of welcoming renders the host vulnerable and puts him at risk of being abused by his guests, as I will demonstrate in the next section of this chapter, the host is not entirely innocent of blame either.

'Thou weep'st to make them drink'

Whereas up until now I have been considering some of the ways in which Shakespeare's presentation of hospitality in *Timon of Athens* appears in danger of transforming Timon into a victim of sacrificial violence, in this section I look at the problem from a different perspective, by exploring the disturbing hold that hosts tend to exert over their guests.

Timon's inhospitable conduct towards his visitors during the mock banquet is only the most

²⁶ Jacques Derrida, 'Economimesis', trans. by Richard Klein, *Diacritics*, 11: 2, (1981), 3-25 (p. 23).

²⁷ Derrida, 'Economimesis', p. 19.

theatrical demonstration of an underlying dynamic of coercion which means that the recipients of his generosity end up becoming bound to him. Near the beginning of the play, Timon's hospitality does appear limitless. He monopolises generosity in Athens to the extent that he refuses to accept repayment on money he has loaned to friends. Julia Lupton finds that 'Timon aspires to a kind of economic martyrdom'.²⁸ We see this plainly in Act I, when his friend Ventidius offers to reimburse some bail money that Timon had lent him whilst he was in prison, but Timon declines the offer with the words:

O, by no means,
Honest Ventidius, you mistake my love:
I gave it freely ever, and there's none
Can truly say he gives if he receives.

(I.ii.8-11)

Timon insists that the money he gave to Ventidius was a gift, not a loan to be repaid. By Act II, however, Timon's economic situation has become desperate: creditors are circling his house like vultures and *now* Timon wants his money back. He sends one of his servants to Ventidius's home with instructions to remind his friend:

When he was poor,
Imprisoned and in scarcity of friends,
I cleared him with five talents. Greet him from me,
Bid him suppose some good necessity
Touches his friend which craves to be remembered
With those five talents

(II.ii.224-29)

In these lines a demand for financial repayment is woven in with the hospitable salutations. By requesting that Ventidius give back his gift, Timon annuls his former promise that it was

²⁸ Julia Lupton, *Thinking with Shakespeare: Essays on Politics and Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 146.

freely given without any hope of future reimbursement. It presently becomes clear that Timon views his friends as an alternative bank account for a rainy day, for although he might initially seem generous, he is quickly discovered to be relying on having made sound financial investments amongst his Athenian friends and neighbours.

In *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*, Derrida treats the gift's relationship to economy and shows how calculations of return on investment prohibit the gift from being truly free. Derrida writes that 'The moment the gift, however generous it be, is infected with the slightest hint of calculation, the moment it takes account of knowledge [*connaissance*] or recognition [*reconnaissance*], it falls within the ambit of an economy'.²⁹ Elsewhere in the same text he argues: 'Now the gift, if there is any, would no doubt be related to economy. One cannot treat the gift, this goes without saying, without treating this relation to economy, even to the money economy. But is not the gift, if there is any, also that which interrupts economy? That which, in suspending economic calculation, no longer gives rise to exchange?'³⁰ Derrida adds that:

The gift is not a gift, the gift only gives to the extent it *gives time*. The difference between a gift and every other operation of pure and simple exchange is that the gift gives time. *There where there is gift, there is time*. What it gives, the gift, is time, but this gift of time is also a demand of time. The thing must not be restituted *immediately and right away*. There must be time, it must last, there must be waiting – without forgetting [*l'attente – sans oubli*].³¹

We saw in the previous chapter on *Troilus and Cressida* that the value of hospitality was measured out in units of time. In *Timon of Athens*, the issue of time is what helps to undermine Timon's financial generosity. It is shown that the money he loaned Ventidius was borrowed time only, and never the pure gift that he had imagined. By depicting Timon

²⁹ Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. by David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 112.

³⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 7.

³¹ Derrida, *Given Time*, p. 41.

calling time on his gifts, Shakespeare reveals the darker side of hospitality. For if a guest is left bound to his host in such a way, then, as Derrida argues, ‘this hospitality of paying up is no longer an absolute hospitality, it is no longer graciously offered beyond debt and economy’.³² In *Timon of Athens*, Timon deliberately keeps the notion of repayment alive. This does not make him bountiful, of course. Instead, his emphasis on remembering his former gifts demonstrates how attempts at generosity in this play are curtailed by the economic logic of exchange.

Shakespeare’s representation of hospitality in *Timon of Athens* is complicated by the accrual of debts and obligations. Throughout the play, Shakespeare depicts a host who keeps on making demands upon his guests in ways that are not always financial. In Act I, for instance, Timon’s weepy toast at the banquet table initially resembles a spontaneous outpouring of emotion as he contemplates being surrounded by loyal friends. On closer inspection, however, it is implied that Timon expects something back from his guests in response to his outburst. Sure enough, his tears immediately prompt a flood of emulative weeping from the rest of the table:

2 Lord Joy had the like conception in our eyes
 And at that instant like a babe sprung up.
Apemantus Ho ho, I laugh to think that babe a bastard.
3 Lord I promise you, my lord, you moved me much.

(I.ii.108-111)

Feeling compelled to emulate their host’s sudden outpouring of emotion, the guests rush to reassure Timon that they, too, are overcome with joy. It is Apemantus who again provides a satirical commentary on the feast, by hinting that Timon’s friends are shedding only crocodile tears at this point. And yet, Apemantus is also critical of Timon’s weepiness. He says, ‘Thou

³² Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, trans. by Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 83.

weep'st to make them drink, Timon' (I.ii.107). The implication is that Timon's tears are pregnant with ulterior motives. Weeping is a perfect distillation of how a powerful dynamic of coercion is performed at the level of the emotions during *Timon of Athens*'s main hospitality scenes.

Human tears have always been intriguingly opaque. Marjory Lange notes that 'In their essence, tears, like all expressions of feeling, are ultimately mysterious',³³ and part of their opacity comes from never knowing for sure whether they are false or genuine ones. Evolutionary theories regarding tears have sought to demonstrate why weeping is so predisposed to self-interest. Although Charles Darwin wrote in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* that human tears were a meaningless biological side effect, recent studies have refuted this point. In *Why Only Humans Weep: Unravelling the Mysteries of Tears*, Ad Vingerhoets explains that sentimental tears might well have served an important evolutionary purpose by making us look defenceless and so deterring potential predators. He says that 'tears generally may induce empathy and positive feelings in others, and stimulate the provision of emotional support, while at the same time inhibiting aggressive impulses'.³⁴ Emotional weeping therefore appears evolutionarily designed to instil feelings of accountability in spectators. In any case, this is precisely what happens in *Timon of Athens*, where Timon's guests feel obliged to reciprocate his public display of sentiment, whether they want to or not. Supplementing the lavish quantities of wine, their crocodile tears become yet another liquid commodity that is exchanged for profit at Timon's banqueting table. Through the toast, Shakespeare draws his audience's attention to the manner in which a dependence on ritual leaves hospitality vulnerable to insincerity. In spite of appearances,

³³ Lange, *Telling Tears*, p. 2.

³⁴ Ad Vingerhoets, *Why Only Humans Weep: Unravelling the Mysteries of Tears* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 135.

little in *Timon of Athens* is given freely. Emotional tears offer further evidence of the indebted economy of Athens.

As a host, Timon demands returns on the generous financial outlays that he has made amongst his friends and neighbours. A. D. Nuttall makes a salient point about this in *Shakespeare the Thinker* when he argues that ‘Timon is not looking for “the money due to me”, he is looking for an *ethical* response [. . .] The recipient of bounty responds only because he wants to, but, from the ethical point of view, *he ought to want to*’.³⁵ Yet when Timon does ask for his money back, he is left disappointed. Enraged by his former friends’ ingratitude and their collective refusal to reimburse him, in Act III, Timon’s thoughts again turn to food. It was not very long ago that he fed all of these people at an extravagant banquet, making their present ungratefulness even harder to stomach. Flaminius is one of the servants Timon sends out begging for money to appease his creditors. After asking Timon’s old friend, Lucullus, for money and been denied his petition, Flaminius then angrily says:

Has friendship such a faint and milky heart
It turns in less than two nights? O you gods,
I feel my master’s passion. This slave
Unto this hour has my lord’s meat in him:
Why should it thrive and turn to nutriment,
When he is turned to poison?
(III.i.52-57)

Using culinary language appropriate to Lucullus’s lack of appreciation for Timon’s recent table fellowship, Flaminius likens their friendship to curdled milk that has gone sour. While the rich fare from Timon’s banquet table is still warm in Lucullus’s stomach, his ingratitude is such that it should turn to poison, Flavius suggests, rather than dietary sustenance. Having had a bellyful of his friends’ thanklessness, Timon decides to host a second dinner party. Outlining plans for this mock banquet to Flavius, he says:

I’ll once more feast the rascals.

³⁵ A. D. Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 314.

[. . .]
Go, I charge thee, invite them all, let in the tide
Of knaves once more: my cook and I'll provide.
(III.v.7-12)

Timon replicates the same watery imagery from earlier on in the play when he speaks about this new 'tide' of house guests and we are surely encouraged to make other connections between both performances. Discussing Timon's dinner parties in *Banquets Set Forth: Banqueting in English Renaissance Drama*, Chris Meads argues that they 'are structurally a pair; the first being a statement of the accepted Athenian hierarchy and the second depicting the breaking down of that order'.³⁶ Put in Bakhtinian terms, the mock banquet is a carnivalesque inversion of Timon's earlier generosity. It forms the dramatic centrepiece of *Timon of Athens*, dishing up a scathing satire of the first one.

The staging of *Timon of Athens* clearly invites us to see the two feasts as analogous. The crowd of hungry guests at the door is evocative, too, of the creditors, whose servants besieged Timon's house during the intervening period between the two banquets. Similar to the dinner guests, the creditors' servants became associated with ravenous feeding. Upon catching sight of Flavius 'in a cloak, muffled' (III.iv.40SD) clearly trying to hide while leaving the house, for instance, the creditors' servants inundate him with their financial petitions. In response to which, an irritated Flavius says to them,

Why then preferred you not your sums and bills
When your false masters ate of my lord's meat?
Then they could smile and fawn upon his debts,
And take down th'interest into their gluttonous maws.
You do yourselves but wrong to stir me up,
Let me pass quietly.
(III.iv.47-52)

Like hungry banquet guests, the creditors become associated with the image of the open chewing mouth. In these lines, the interest accumulating on Timon's debts becomes simply

³⁶ Meads, *Banquets*, p. 147.

another part of the banquet fare, since the creditors plan to swallow down everything ‘into their gluttonous maws’. Flavius uses a similar vocabulary when he tells Timon early on in the play that his remaining financial assets ‘will hardly stop the mouth/ Of present dues’ (II.ii.147-8). In *Timon of Athens*, both creditors and guests have limitless, voracious appetites, and this puts pressure on the hospitality relationship.

Not long after Flavius’s muffled appearance, Timon enters the stage in Act III and the creditors’ servants seize the chance to mob him, all presenting their bills at once:

Lucius Put in now, Titus.

Titus My lord, here is my bill.

Lucius Here’s mine.

Hortensius And mine, my lord.

Both Varro servants And ours, my lord.

Philotus All our bills.

(III.iv.82-87)

Punning on the secondary early modern meaning of ‘bills’ as a weapon with a concave blade,³⁷ Timon’s sarcastic answer to them is:

Knock me down with ’em, cleave me to the girdle.

[. . .]

Cut my heart in sums –

[. . .]

Tell out my blood.

[. . .]

Tear me, take me, and the gods fall upon you.

(III.iv.88-97)

In imagery further evocative of the cannibalistic dialogue at the first banquet, Timon offers his body as a flesh sacrifice to be divided amongst many ravenous mouths. He imagines the creditors carving him up like a piece of meat. The fact that they want their pound of flesh recalls Shylock’s desire to cut a bit off Antonio’s body in *The Merchant of Venice*, and Philip

³⁷ Dawson and Minton note this in their edition of the play at III.iv.88*n*.

Brockbank is surely right to suggest that ‘*Timon of Athens* looks like the play that waits for us when comic resources fail or when Portia runs out of money’.³⁸ So voracious is the creditors’ hunger that it even leaves the mobbed Timon breathless. As he says to Flavius: ‘They have e’en put my breath from me, the slaves. Creditors? Devils!’ (III.v.1-2). In *Timon of Athens*, the calling in of loans is repeatedly likened to a savage kind of feeding. The allusions anticipate the leviathan comparison made by one of the fishermen in *Pericles*, who says:

I can compare our rich misers to nothing so fitly as to a whale; a’ plays and tumbles, driving the poor fry before him, and at last devours them all at a mouthful: such whales have I heard on o’ the land, who never leave gaping till they’ve swallowed the whole parish, church, steeple, bells, and all.³⁹

In *Pericles*, the unhealthy ingestion of the rich misers, or land whales, is bad for the social body as a whole. In *Timon of Athens*, the guests’ greed threatens to overwhelm the hospitality on offer by eating Timon out of house and home.

During the preparations for the mock banquet, Timon intentionally whets his guests’ appetites. The stage directions tell us that, in Act III of *Timon of Athens*, there is ‘*The banquet brought in*’ (III.vii.46SD).⁴⁰ Laying the table on stage like this naturally increases the guests’ hopes that they are about to be served a delicious dinner, and it allows the action to slow down for a moment, so that we can hear their growing expectancy:

³⁸ Philip Brockbank, ‘Jesus, Shakespeare, and Karl Marx: *Timon of Athens* and *The Merchant of Venice*: Parables for the City’ in *On Shakespeare: Jesus, Shakespeare and Karl Marx, and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA.: Wiley Blackwell, 1989), pp. 3-29 (p. 19).

³⁹ William Shakespeare, *Pericles*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard and Katherine Eisaman Maus (London and New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1997), Scene 5, ll. 68-72. In his essay, ‘Cannibalism qua capitalism: the metaphors of accumulation in Marx, Conrad, Shakespeare and Marlowe’, Jerry Phillips writes, ‘Marx imagined capitalism as cannibalism with two ends in mind: to emphasise the sheer brutality of the profit-motive as a measure of human affairs, and to emphasise the profound irrationality of a system that must perforce devour itself’, in *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*, ed. by Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 183-204 (p. 185). On the link between oral and financial imagery in the Jacobean period, and in the play, see Kahn’s essay on ‘Magic of Bounty’. Giving some background to *Timon of Athens*, Kahn outlines ‘the fears of courtiers caught up in the vortex of patronage and dependent on James, who in 1607 lamented, in the oral imagery for patronage prominent in *Timon*, “There are so many gapers and so little to be spared”’ (p. 55).

⁴⁰ Discussing the staging of banquet scenes in *Banquets Set Forth*, Meads cites this as one example of the most common stage direction relating to banquets in English Renaissance drama. Meads notes, ‘Banquets *brought in* (or the instruction to *bring in*) occurs in nineteen plays and persists from 1592 to 1636’ (p. 37).

2 *Lord* All covered dishes!
 1 *Lord* Royal cheer, I warrant you.
 3 *Lord* Doubt not that, if money and the season can yield it.
 (III.vii.48-50)

Covered dishes stimulate the appetite still further by creating the impression that the foodstuffs underneath need to be kept warm. When his guests take their places at the dinner table, Timon keeps up the pretence that they are about to enjoy a delicious spread. Feasts often entail their own internal hierarchy when it comes to the seating arrangements, yet Timon urges the visitors to just sit themselves down anywhere, telling them (with heavy irony) that ‘your diet shall be in all places alike. Make not a city feast of it to let the meat cool ere we can agree upon the first place. Sit, sit’ (III.vii.66-7). The ceremonial rituals of hospitality that we saw on stage in the opening banquet are, this time, spectacularly overturned. Timon thus says grace before the meal begins:

The gods require our thanks:

You great benefactors, sprinkle our society with thankfulness [. . .] Make the meat be beloved more than the man that gives it. Let no assembly of twenty be without a score of villains [. . .] For these my present friends, as they are to me nothing, so in nothing bless them and to nothing are they welcome.
 Uncover, dogs, and lap! [*The dishes are uncovered and prove to be full of lukewarm water.*]
 (III.vii.68-84)

By parodying the usual polite customs of hospitality, Timon draws our attention to the fact that his false friends have simply been going through the motions of politeness themselves. He later calls them ‘cap-and-knee slaves’ (III.vii.96), again mocking their insincere gestures of servility. Following the mock grace the covered dishes are revealed to contain only lukewarm water with submerged stones, and, before long, Timon is hurling both water and stones at his hastily departing guests and telling them: ‘What, dost thou go? / Soft, take thy physic first’ (III.vii.98-99). As one of the guests complains, ‘One day he gives us diamonds, next day stones’ (III.vii.115). Commenting on *Timon of Athens* in *Food in Shakespeare: Early Modern Dietaries and the Plays*, Joan Fitzpatrick suggests that ‘The meal of steaming

water and stones prepared by Timon against his false friends parodies his previous feasts by presenting that which we cannot consume (stones) with that which the early moderns believed we should consume with care (not all water was fit for drinking)'.⁴¹ In keeping with his desire to parody the conventions of hospitality, Timon's banquet table is laden with inedible objects.

Timon's substitution of stones for culinary delicacies introduces the logic of transferral which René Girard identifies as the basis for all sacrificial proceedings.⁴² At the earlier feast the guests came to 'taste Lord Timon's bounty' (I.i.281), and the table talk ended in cannibalism. Timon reminds his guests of this here, when he complains of being 'stuck and spangled with your flatteries' (III.vii.90). He compares himself to sacrificial animal meat offered up on a plate to be symbolically devoured. Yet this banquet is a parodic inversion of the first one, so Timon escapes his guests' hungry jaws this time around. The moment elicits the carnivalesque laughter that Hélène Cixous writes about:

But happiness is when a real wolf suddenly refrains from eating us. The lamb's burst of laughter comes when it's about to be devoured, and then, at the last second, is not eaten. Hallelujah comes to mind. To have almost been eaten yet not to have been eaten: that is the triumph of life. But you've got to have the two instants, just before the teeth and just after, you've got to hear the jaws coming down on nothing for there to be jubilation. Even the wolf is surprised.⁴³

In the mock banquet sequence, the guests' hungry mouths likewise close on nothing but the empty air. Timon might begin the play as a sacrificial lamb, but he now escapes his neighbours' gluttony by feeding them only stones and water.

In *Violence and the Sacred*, Girard shows how the iconic figure of the scapegoat is essential in protecting the rest of the community from violence:

⁴¹ Fitzpatrick, *Food in Shakespeare*, p. 9.

⁴² See René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. by Patrick Gregory (London and Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

⁴³ Hélène Cixous, 'Love of the Wolf', in *Stigmata: Escaping Texts*, trans. by Keith Cohen (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 84-99 (p. 94).

Society is seeking to deflect upon a relatively indifferent victim, a 'sacrificeable' victim, the violence that would otherwise be vented on its own members [. . .] with these qualities goes the strange propensity to seize upon surrogate victims, to actually conspire with the enemy and at the right moment toss him a morsel that will serve to satisfy his raging hunger.⁴⁴

Fittingly for *Timon of Athens*, Girard goes on to cite stone as the classic example of a surrogate morsel: 'The fairy tales of childhood in which the wolf, ogre, or dragon gobble up a large stone in place of a small child could well be said to have a sacrificial cast'.⁴⁵ The scapegoat principle depends largely on misdirection, as Girard continues, and yet 'It must never lose sight entirely, however, of the original object, or cease to be aware of the act of transference from that object to the surrogate victim; without that awareness no substitution can take place'.⁴⁶ In the same way, Timon's swapping of stones for roast meat works because the audience – not to mention the hungry dinner guests on stage – never lose sight of their awareness of the fact that tasty edible foodstuffs should really be underneath the covered dishes. Claude Lévi-Strauss has taken the ogre and stone analogy one step further. In *The Raw and the Cooked*, he explains that 'the episode of the ogre shows how the hero tricked his abductor by leaving him a stone to eat instead of a body. Stone, or rock, appears, then, as the symmetrical opposite of human flesh'.⁴⁷ It epitomises, for Lévi-Strauss, 'things *that are not to be eaten*'.⁴⁸ Within a structuralist approach to culinary mythology, stone is placed at the opposite end of the axis to edible meats. Lévi-Strauss suggests that stone signifies 'the reverse of cannibalism'.⁴⁹ In *Timon of Athens* the replacing of meats with stones also reverses the carnivorous mood of the former feast.

⁴⁴ Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, p. 4.

⁴⁵ Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, p. 5.

⁴⁶ Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, p. 5.

⁴⁷ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to a Science of Mythology*, trans. by J. and D. Weightman (London: Pimlico, 1994), p. 153. In *Shakespeare the Thinker*, A. D. Nutall sees a reference to Luke 11:11 in Timon's actions here, arguing that 'If Timon has indeed served them stones in water we have a reversal of Jesus' words, "If a son should ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?"' (p. 318).

⁴⁸ Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, p. 206.

⁴⁹ Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, p. 215.

Once the dinner bowls are uncovered and revealed to contain only lukewarm water, Timon sprinkles it in his guests' faces, telling them: 'Smoke and lukewarm water/ Is your perfection' (III.vii.88-9). Smoke or hot vapour has symbolic connotations, for it was traditionally regarded as distrustful in the early modern period, while water was associated with duplicity, as in *Othello*: 'She was false as water'.⁵⁰ It seems that revenge in *Timon of Athens* is a dish best served lukewarm, and tepid water is certainly a fitting testament to the lukewarm gestures of politeness on the part of the guests. Flavius previously criticised their 'half-caps and cold-moving nods' (II.ii.212): the allusion being to those who only remove their cap partway in greeting, thereby making an incomplete show of good manners. Lukewarm water is a reference to Revelation 3: 15-6: 'therefore, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, it will come to pass, that I shall spew thee out of my mouth'.⁵¹ The biblical allusion recalls some of the earlier comparisons of Timon to a Christ-like figure and underlines how his revenge is grounded in an ethic of anti-ingestion (spitting out of the mouth instead of swallowing; indigestible stones in the place of food; or hunger instead of satiety). While still furious with his ungrateful guests, Timon tells them:

This is Timon's last,
 Who, stuck and spangled with your flatteries,
 Washes it off and sprinkles in your faces
 Your reeking villainy. [Throws water in their faces.]
 (III.vii.89-92)

Karl Klein speculates that Timon firstly 'washes himself clean of the dirt of their flatteries' before throwing the unclean water back at his guests in a parody of baptismal cleansing.⁵² The water that Timon splashes in his guests' faces is 'reeking', which means it is emitting hot steam (although perhaps with the added sense of stinking). From the dialogue, too, it seems

⁵⁰ In his edition of William Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Karl Klein makes the connection to *Othello* at III.vi.76-7n. Compare also a little while later when Timon refers to his false friends as 'vapours' (III.vi.96).

⁵¹ Dawson and Minton note this in their edition to *Timon of Athens*, III.vii.84SDn.

⁵² Klein notes this in his edition to *Timon of Athens*, III.vi.79-80n.

that the bowls on stage are discharging vapours at this point. Anthony Dawson and Gretchen Minton argue that ‘It may seem contradictory to declare that *smoke* is emanating from lukewarm water, but it is not the chemistry of boiling liquids but the effect on stage which is paramount (the anticipation associated with steaming bowls and the consequent disappointment)’.⁵³ There is a poetic quality to Timon’s revenge on his guests. The vaporous mists produced by the bowls of warm water critique their insincere manners, suggest biblical allusions and, finally, create a strong impression of boiled food.

In *The Origin of Table Manners*, Lévi-Strauss draws an interesting distinction between the boiled and the roast in native culinary myths. The third volume in the *Mythologiques* series, *The Origin of Table Manners* extends Lévi-Strauss’ previous investigations into raw, cooked and rotten foodstuffs. Here, however, the basic categories are expanded to include the boiled and the roast, which in many cultures signal the main differences in cooking methods. In the text, Lévi-Strauss poses the question:

What, then, constitutes the opposition between the roast and the boiled? Roasted food, being directly exposed to fire is in a relationship of *non-mediatized conjunction*, whereas boiled food is the product of a two-fold process of mediation: it is immersed in water and both food and water are contained within a receptacle.

So, on two counts, the roast can be placed on the side of nature, and the boiled on the side of culture. Literally, since boiled food necessitates the use of a receptacle, which is a cultural object; and symbolically, in the sense that culture mediates between man and the world, and boiling is also a mediation, by means of water, between the food which man ingests and that other element of the physical world: fire.⁵⁴

Boiled food is symbolic of man’s cultural intervention in his gastronomic environment, both via the cooking receptacle and the immersion in water. On boiling, Lévi-Strauss also adds that:

Boiling takes place inside (a receptacle), whereas roasting is cooking from the outside: one suggests the concave, the other the convex. Thus, the boiled often

⁵³ Dawson and Minton note this in their edition to *Timon of Athens*, III.vii.88n.

⁵⁴ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Origin of Table Manners: Introduction to a Science of Mythology*, Vol. 3, trans. by J. and D. Weightman (London: Cape, 1978), pp. 479-80.

belongs to what might be called ‘endo-cooking’, intended for private use and for a small closed group. This is most forcefully expressed in the Hidatsa language, where the same word *mi dá ksi* is used for the fence surrounding the village, the cooking pot and the pan, since all three delimit an enclosed space.⁵⁵

Boiled food hints at a far more intimate form of food preparation. He argues that ‘The roast, on the other hand, belongs to “exo-cooking”, the kind that is offered to strangers’.⁵⁶ It is the rich language of culinary symbolism that is ingrained in these primitive cooking techniques which leads Lévi-Strauss to conclude that ‘Boiled meat could thus connote a strengthening of family and social ties, and roast meat a weakening of these ties’.⁵⁷ In *Timon of Athens*, the hot vapours rising from the bowls of steaming water rely on the same mythology of the boiled that Lévi-Strauss identifies. The vapours imply that boiled food is concealed underneath the bowls on stage and seemingly promise the guests that an intimate and civilised meal is about to be dished up.

Lévi-Strauss makes another interesting point about boiled food in *The Origin of Table Manners* that is relevant to a reading of the food symbolism in *Timon of Athens*. Having examined a variety of myths, he concludes that ‘I can make one or two tentative suggestions. For instance, boiling provides a method of preserving all the meat and its juices, whereas roasting involves destruction or loss. One suggests economy, the other waste’.⁵⁸ Timon’s two banquets reflect a similar divergence in cooking methods from extravagance to punishing economy. When the first banquet fare is laid out on stage, it is presumably filled with rich and varied foods, such as roast meats. Near the beginning of Jonathan Miller’s 1981 BBC version of *Timon of Athens*, for instance, the camera showed Timon’s guests enjoying a lavish meal of chicken and roast pork.⁵⁹ What makes roasting a very uneconomical cooking

⁵⁵ Lévi-Strauss, *Table Manners*, pp. 482-3.

⁵⁶ Lévi-Strauss, *Table Manners*, p. 483.

⁵⁷ Lévi-Strauss, *Table Manners*, p. 483.

⁵⁸ Lévi-Strauss, *Table Manners*, p. 484.

⁵⁹ Dawson and Minton note in their ‘Introduction’ to *Timon of Athens* that ‘in the BBC version Jonathan Pryce’s Timon did not participate in the indulgences of the feast; watching with anxious affection while the guests gnawed on chicken and roast pig, he ate nothing (the camera twice moving to his empty plate)’, (p. 48).

method is because, as Lévi-Strauss notes, it produces a lot of waste. Roasting methods scorch the meat, leaving it blackened and charred while the fatty juices drain out, running untasted into the fire. The wasteful associations of roasting food are, I suggest, characteristic of Timon's uneconomical spending in the early part of the play. Yet by the time we come to the mock feast, the situation at Timon's house in Athens has changed. Boiling is not only a cooking technique that thriftily preserves all of the liquid inside the cooking pot, but, extending the meaning of frugality even further, there is no food added to the pot this time. As we saw in *Troilus and Cressida*, the performance of hospitality in *Timon of Athens* has become entangled in a politics of revenge.

Parasites

Once he has sprinkled the lukewarm water in his dinner guests' faces, Timon carries on cursing at them. He says:

Live loathed and long,
Most smiling, smooth, detested parasites,
Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears –
You fools of fortune, trencher-friends, time's flies,
Cap-and-knee slaves, vapours and minute-jacks!

(III.vii.92-96)

The lines introduce a concept of parasitism which I wish to develop in the following section of the chapter. In Athens, similarly to in Troy and Venice, the hospitality that we see on stage is only provisional, always falling short of the absolutes necessary for it to be pure or unconditional. During the mock banquet in *Timon of Athens*, Timon melodramatically revokes his hospitality. The people who were formerly his guests have now become unwanted parasites. Timon accuses his guests of being social parasites because they have

taken advantage of his generosity. He calls them ‘mouth-friends!’ (III.vii.88) and ‘trencher-friends’ (III.vii.95). Both of these insults evoke the play’s recurrent image of hungry mouths, and imply that the newcomers are insincere. Timon also makes some unflattering comparisons to parasites from the insect and animal kingdoms. The description of his former friends as ‘time’s flies’ (III.vii.95), for example, brings to mind nasty buzzing little insects and looks ahead to his railing at Alcibiades later on in the play when he says, ‘The canker gnaw they heart/ For showing me again the eyes of man!’ (IV.iii.50-51), for a canker is a parasitical grub worms that eats plants. In this section I consider the gulf between hospitality and parasitism in *Timon of Athens*. Before I explore Shakespeare’s portrayal of parasitism, however, I begin by considering the overlap which Timon presents between human and animal applications of the term. For the crossover that the play appears to invite between human and animal parasites is ingrained in the science of parasitology itself, and this has implications for how we regard hospitality as an ethical practice.

In his influential investigation into *The Parasite*, Michel Serres draws on beast fables to illustrate how human relations simulate those of the parasite and its host organism. Describing the language of parasitology, Serres argues that ‘The basic vocabulary of this science comes from such ancient and common customs and habits that the earliest monuments of our culture tell of them, and we still see them, at least in part: hospitality, table manners, hostelry, general relations with strangers’.⁶⁰ The reason why a vocabulary of hospitality became grafted onto the science of parasitology is because man was the original parasite, long before the classification was ever applied to the natural world. This point has been noted by Anders Gullestad who argues that ‘until the concept of the parasite was adopted by the natural sciences in regards first to plants, and later to animals and insects, *no*

⁶⁰ Serres, *Parasite*, p. 6.

other parasites than men could properly be said to exist'.⁶¹ In the Shakespeare canon the word 'parasite' nearly always has a human application (similar to Mosca the fly's role in Jonson's city comedy *Volpone*). Parasitology was originally a human concept, then, and yet its appropriation by the natural sciences was to result in an unforeseen ethical slant. As Gullestad demonstrates, it caused scientists to 'understand the relationship between parasite and host in ethical terms foreign to nature'.⁶² Insects came to be talked about as if they unfairly profit from the larger animals, in the same way that human parasites are commonly said to sponge on their hosts by getting a free meal.

In *Timon of Athens*, Shakespeare blends together human and zoological meanings of the term 'parasite' in order to foreground the nature of the bonds between Timon and his guests. But the parasite is only one of many mentions in the play of bestial eating habits. Discussing the prevalence of animal imagery in *Timon of Athens*, Kenneth Burke argues that 'We are invited to think of eating, not as the pleasant gratification of a peaceloving appetite [. . .] but as rending, tearing, biting, destroying. Eating here is the rabid use of claws and jaws'.⁶³ Flavius's earlier account of how Timon's house guests 'brayed with minstrelsy' (II.ii.161) is another example of how terms borrowed from the plant and animal kingdoms are used to bring to life the unethical behaviour of the false friends. Shakespeare's repeated use of animal imagery throughout *Timon of Athens* helps to highlight the violent nature of the relationship between subjects, providing a different exploration of the theme of bonds than that which we saw performed in *The Merchant of Venice*. Here, it is the idea of the animal that raises questions about how we encounter one another meaningfully. When Timon is in

⁶¹ Anders M. Gullestad, 'Parasite' <http://www.politicalconcepts.org/issue1/2012-parasite/> [Accessed June 10 2015].

⁶² Gullestad, 'Parasite' <http://www.politicalconcepts.org/issue1/2012-parasite/> [Accessed June 10 2015].

⁶³ Kenneth Burke, quoted in Klein's 'Introduction' to *Timon of Athens*, pp. 1-67 (p. 27).

the woods later on in Act IV, for instance, he becomes obsessed by the voracity of the animal kingdom. He tells Apemantus:

If thou wert the lion, the fox would beguile thee; if thou wert the lamb, the fox would eat thee; if thou wert the fox, the lion would suspect thee when peradventure thou wert accused by the ass; if thou wert the ass, thy dullness would torment thee, and still thou lived'st but as a breakfast to the wolf; if thou wert the wolf, thy greediness would afflict thee and oft thou shouldst hazard thy life for thy dinner. Wert thou the unicorn, pride and wrath would confound thee and make thine own self the conquest of thy fury; wert thou a bear, thou wouldst be killed by the horse; wert thou a horse, thou wouldst be seized by the leopard; wert thou a leopard, thou wert germane to the lion, and the spots of thy kindred were jurors on thy life – all thy safety were remotion and thy defence absence. What beast couldst thou be that were not subject to a beast? And what a beast art thou already that seest not thy loss in transformation!

(IV.iii.327-44)

In this violent interpretation of the food chain, the principal relationship between animals is simply that of the hunter and its prey. With its sustained interest in the differing social roles of guest, host and parasite, *Timon of Athens* encourages us to wonder whether the figures on stage encounter one another ethically or as beasts in the wilderness.

When Timon refers to his false friends as parasites the insult betrays his one-directional view of the hospitality relationship. Earlier on in the play we witnessed Timon present himself as the fount of generosity in Athens, whereas now he says that he has been wholeheartedly abused by his guests. But the bond between host and parasite was not always seen as so unequal. J. Hillis Miller traces the earliest origins of the term 'parasite' in his essay on 'The Critic as Host', where he argues that: "Parasite" comes from the Greek *parasitos*, "beside the grain", *para*, beside (in this case) plus *sitos*, grain, food. "Sitology" is the science of foods, nutrition, and diet. A parasite was originally something positive, a fellow guest, someone sharing the food with you, there with you beside the grain'.⁶⁴ In *The Parasite*, Serres similarly adds that 'The parasite is invited to the *table d'hôte*; in return, he

⁶⁴ J. Hillis Miller, 'The Critic as Host' in *The J. Hillis Miller Reader*, ed. by Julian Wolfreys (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp. 17-38 (p. 19).

must regale the other diners with his stories and his mirth. To be exact, he exchanges good talk for good food; he buys his dinner, paying for it in words. It is the oldest profession in the world'.⁶⁵ Both Hillis Miller and Serres elaborate on an interdependence which has long been ingrained in the history of social parasitism. Because the earliest parasite was a professional guest who shared food alongside his neighbour, and because the stories that he told added to the communal enjoyment of the meal, the parasite would effectively pay his way. In the plant and animal kingdom, too, parasites perform an extremely important evolutionary function. Serres demonstrates that 'Evolution has a parasitic structure. It would not favour parasites as much as it does if it were not more or less favoured by them'.⁶⁶ The fact is that parasites tend to speed up the evolutionary mechanisms of their hosts since they force the larger organism to evolve at a quicker rate than is usual. The presence of parasites thus encourages the host organism to improve its own immunity against other predators. Contrary to our negative impressions of parasites, they are valuable to the hosts they frequent. Parasitism and hospitality are both relational structures that bring with them a plethora of mutual dangers and benefits.

This is certainly the case in *Timon of Athens* where, as I have been arguing in the chapter, the violence always informing relations between guest and host flows in both directions. I have already noted the appetite of Timon's guests yet, as the play begins, Shakespeare also presents Timon craving the sycophantic adoration of his friends and neighbours. In the opening banquet sequence, for example, the stage directions stipulate that there is '*much adoring of Timon*' (I.ii.145SD), and we witness Timon accepting gifts and offerings from a horde of admirers. Terry Eagleton argues that Timon's 'grotesque

⁶⁵ Serres, *Parasite*, p. 34.

⁶⁶ Serres, *Parasite*, p. 186.

generosity to his friends is a subtle form of egotism'.⁶⁷ Thus, although it might perhaps initially look like Timon's guests are the ones with voracious appetites who are eating him out of house and home, this is not, in fact, the whole story. Timon also sates his hunger on his guests by lapping up their gifts and ingratiating flatteries. In *French Hospitality: Racism and North African Immigrants*, Ben Jelloun writes that:

Moroccan expressions of welcome are very instructive. For example, to convey the pleasure and satisfaction you feel when you receive another person into your home you say, 'You have filled up my house' or 'You have filled up our house with us (or for us).' If you want to say something nice to someone you say: 'May your house always be full (of people, friends, love, blessings)'. When guests finally leave you call them back and tell them: 'After you've gone (or without you) the house will be empty.' [. . .] The act of entertaining a guest is something that both honours and humanises the host. But as well as filling his heart it does something more. It makes the guest recognise me, the host, as someone capable of sharing. It improves my status, as someone capable of existing in relation to others.⁶⁸

Jelloun nicely phrases the glut of benefits that the guest brings to the host's household, showing how these sentiments have entered the very language of Morocco. Not only does the guest on a simple level empower the host to be hospitable but, as Jelloun continues, 'When another person comes to my house, he teaches me things about myself. His mere presence makes me confront myself. He upsets my space and my habits and teaches me what I am'.⁶⁹ In practice, what this means, then, is that it becomes increasingly difficult to say with confidence who the host is and who the guest is, or who is the guest and the parasite, since everyone is feeding off everyone else. Yet there is a risk in this blurring of the boundary lines. In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida suggests that 'The guest becomes the host's host. The guest (*hôte*) becomes the host (*hôte*) of the host (*hôte*)'.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, Serres points out

⁶⁷ Terry Eagleton, 'Value: *King Lear*, *Timon of Athens*, *Antony and Cleopatra*', in *Shakespearean Tragedy*, ed. by John Drakakis (London and New York: Longman, 1992), pp. 389-419, (p. 395). In *Shakespeare After All* (New York: Anchor Books, 2005), Marjorie Garber likewise argues that Timon is 'a generous patron whose flaw, if he can be seen to have one, is that he seems invested in his own persona as a source of endless bounty' (p. 638).

⁶⁸ Ben Jelloun, *French Hospitality: Racism and North African Immigrants* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 2.

⁶⁹ Jelloun, *French Hospitality*, p. 3.

⁷⁰ Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 125.

that 'It might be dangerous not to decide who is the host and who is the guest, who gives and who receives, who is the parasite and who is the *table d'hôte*, who has the gift and who has the loss, and where hostility begins with hospitality. Who hasn't trembled with fear in a shady hotel?'⁷¹

There is only a fine line separating hospitality from parasitism, or invited guest from unwanted parasite. In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida poses us the question: 'How can we distinguish between a guest and a parasite?'⁷² The answer, as he goes on to reveal, lies not in some fundamental or biological difference, but depends on the spirit in which they are received by the host. If the outsider is wanted, then they are considered to be a guest, but if they are undesirable, then the same person may start to resemble a parasite instead. Curiously enough, this classificatory indeterminacy haunts the scientific field of parasitology as well. Gullestad explains that it is surprisingly hard for scientists to agree on what makes a parasite: 'In practice, of course, this is seldom a problem for those working in the field – they recognise a parasite perfectly well when they see one. It is only when they are forced to attempt a definition that they run into problems'.⁷³ It is equally difficult to tell a guest apart from a parasite in human relations. In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida says:

In principle, the difference is straightforward, but for that you need to have a law; hospitality, reception, the welcome offered have to be submitted to a basic and limiting jurisdiction. Not all new arrivals are received as guests if they don't have the benefit of the right to hospitality or the right of asylum, etc. Without this right, a new arrival can only be introduced 'in my home', in the host's 'at home' as a parasite, a guest who is wrong, illegitimate, clandestine, liable to expulsion or arrest.⁷⁴

The laws of asylum mean that hospitality is liable to violent and abrupt changes, as we saw in *The Merchant of Venice* when Shylock was tolerated by Venice only up until the moment that he sought Antonio's life. In *Timon of Athens*, the porousness in the different classifications

⁷¹ Serres, *Parasite*, pp. 15-6.

⁷² Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 59.

⁷³ Anders Gullestad, 'Literature and the Parasite', *Deleuze Studies*, 5 (2011), 301-23 (p. 308).

⁷⁴ Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, pp. 59-61.

of guest and parasite is dramatically brought to life when, during the mock banquet, Timon withdraws his hospitality by violently expelling his former guests – now become parasites – from his home. Shakespeare once again emphasises the deeply provisional nature of the hospitality relationship by demonstrating that the guest is only ever one step away from being an undesirable parasite.

Hospitality and the Natural World

Moving on slightly from the banquet conversation about social parasitism, in the next section of the chapter I consider Shakespeare's representation of hospitality in the natural environment. I am particularly interested to explore the fluid portrayal of Timon as alternately guest, host and parasite in the isolated woods outside of Athens. By this point in the play, Timon has become an exile, yet he still plays the host before a long line of visitors, including Apemantus, Alcibiades, the prostitutes, as well as some of the senators from Athens.⁷⁵ In addition to the continued analysis of hospitality and parasitism, I also wish to expand on the significance of gender identity in relation to welcoming that I began to elaborate on in the last chapter on *Troilus and Cressida*. Indeed, in the latter part of *Timon of Athens*, Shakespeare's male protagonist does appear to be uniquely jealous of the lush green hospitality of Mother Nature.

⁷⁵ For someone in a supposedly uninhabited woodland, the reclusive Timon does receive an unusually high proportion of visitors. Commenting on Act IV of the play in *Shakespeare's Language* (London: Penguin, 2001), Frank Kermode writes, 'Here begins a rather mechanical procession of visitors to Timon in the woods: Alcibiades and his whores, Apemantus, the bandits, Flavius the steward, the Poet and Painter [. . .] and the desperate Senators urging him to return to Athens' (p. 233).

From our companion thrown into his grave,
So do his familiars to his buried fortunes
Slink all away, leave their false vows with him
Like empty purses picked; and his poor self,
A dedicated beggar to the air,
With his disease of all-shunned poverty,
Walks, like contempt, alone.

(IV.ii.1-15)

Continuing the play's interest in abrupt reversals of fortune, the former host has now become an impoverished and homeless 'beggar to the air'. Whereas Timon threw his banquet guests out of doors, it is now his turn to join the ranks of what Derrida calls "Displaced persons", exiles, those who are deported, expelled, rootless, nomads'.⁷⁶ In *The Beast and the Sovereign*, Derrida argues that hospitality and exile are intimately related human conditions. He says, 'the scene of exile, obviously, is consonant with the scene of hospitality (they go together, exile and hospitality, those asking for hospitality are exiles)'.⁷⁷ Near the end of the play, Timon's exiled position gives us another perspective on the hospitality relationship.

The final part of *Timon of Athens* shares many affinities with *King Lear*.

Dispossessed of his house and worldly possessions, in the deserted woods Timon is exposed to the brutality of the natural elements. Earlier on in the play, one of the creditor's servants had mocked Timon for his homelessness by saying: 'No matter what, he's poor, and that's revenge enough. Who can speak broader than he that has no house to put his head in? Such many rail against great buildings' (III.iv.60-63). The line recalls the Fool's taunt to Lear that 'He that has a house to put's head in has a good headpiece'.⁷⁸ Once outside of the Athenian

⁷⁶ Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 87.

⁷⁷ Jacques Derrida, *The Beast and the Sovereign, Vol. I*, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 246.

⁷⁸ William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. by R. A. Foakes (London: Thomson Learning, 1997), III.ii.25-26.

city walls, Timon finds himself on geographically unfamiliar terrain. Outlining his new open-air living arrangement to Apemantus, Timon says:

But myself –
Who had the world as my confectionary,
The mouths, the tongues, the eyes and hearts of men
At duty more than I could frame employment,
That numberless upon me stuck as leaves
Do on the oak, have with one winter's brush
Fell from their boughs and left me open, bare
For every storm that blows
(IV.iii.258-65)

Like a child in a sweet shop, the fortunate Timon used to have his pick of willing followers in Athens. His reference to 'confectionary' might even be intended to recall some of the more decadent table spreads he served up to his former friends, for the early moderns sometimes concocted elaborate table decorations out of sugar. But now stripped of his admirers, Timon is like a leafless tree, exposed to the winter weather. The seasonal images here are reminiscent of Sonnet 73 in which the older speaker says to the young man:

That time of year thou mayst in me behold,
When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold.⁷⁹

In the poem, the yellowing or leafless trees are symbolic of seasonal decay, while also indicating the poet's likely baldness. The bare scalp is especially revealing of man's ill-equipped capability to endure the natural elements. Later on in the woods, for example, Timon advises the prostitutes accompanying Alcibiades that they should keep their heads warm by wearing wigs:

And thatch your poor thin roofs
With burdens of the dead – some that were hanged –
No matter, wear them, betray with them.
(IV.iii.144-46)

⁷⁹ William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. by Katherine Duncan-Jones (London: Methuen Drama, 2010), Sonnet 73, ll.1-3.

The domestic terminology is particularly apt here, for it draws attention to how – out of all the animals – it is man who is the most poorly sheltered against the elements. There are further resemblances to Lear’s embittered recognition of human bareness as he wandered unprotected on the stormy heath:

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe’er you are,
That bide the pelting of the pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these?⁸⁰

Lear and Timon have both been victims of inhospitality and they each rely, appropriately enough, on a household vocabulary to stress man’s miserable and underprovisioned state.

In a monograph on *The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopolity in Shakespearean Locales*, Laurie Shannon suggests a zoographic reading of *King Lear*, concluding that the storm poses not just a ‘literal problem of weather on skin’, but a more ‘dire elemental question of what it might mean, in the end, to lack a roof over one’s head [. . .] to be cosmically unaccommodated’.⁸¹ Biologically speaking, humans are ill provided for, particularly when compared with the relative autonomy of the animal kingdom. Shannon coins the phrase ‘pelt envy’⁸² to describe the effects of this fact on human beings. She writes that ‘In the early modern archive, the natural covering of animals spell out completeness and self-sufficiency, and the integral animal comes armed with a good coat already on its back’.⁸³ As opposed to the members of the animal world, man needs to rely on prostheses. He uses animal pelts, wools, feathers and silks to clothe his naked body, once more suggesting that it is the human animal who is, of necessity, the original parasite. The final part of *Timon of Athens* occupies itself with the same kind of concerns regarding man’s unaccommodated state

⁸⁰ Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. Foakes, III.iv.28-32.

⁸¹ Laurie Shannon, *The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopolity in Shakespearean Locales* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), p. 141.

⁸² Shannon, *Accommodated Animal*, p. 141.

⁸³ Shannon, *Accommodated Animal*, p. 142.

before inhospitable nature. But whereas *King Lear* portrays the violence of the meteorological elements in order to express man's impoverished condition when out of doors, *Timon of Athens* takes a different approach by focussing on man's relationship to food and cooking in a way that emphasises his natural deficiency.

Unaccommodated man is the only animal to spend time mediating between himself and his gastronomic environment through food preparation and cooking, rather than consuming his nourishment raw. When he is alone in the isolated woods, Timon's diet of raw roots is a recipe for man's disadvantaged state and his inability to survive easily in his natural environment. Similar to other desert regions, this one is a barren place where food is hard to come by. Shakespeare does not present a comforting vision of the pastoral; and when we first see Timon outdoors he is starving. A famished Everyman figure, he is digging hungrily in the soil looking for something to eat and cursing hospitality again:

Therefore be abhorred
All feasts, societies and throngs of men!
His semblance, yea himself, Timon disdains.
Destruction fang mankind! Earth, yield me roots.
[*Digs in the earth.*]
(IV.iii.20-23)

Inside the private household, it is the kitchen that is most symbolic of man's need for assistance in consuming food from his environment. Sara Guyer has argued that 'Of course it is the kitchen, and the work of the kitchen that is uniquely human, that announces a certain economy of the Good'.⁸⁴ Discussing the early modern kitchen, Sara Pennell has pointed out that it was used for a number of different functions: 'The early modern kitchen was the area for events as melodramatic as homicide, domestic violence and conjugal dispute, and as mundane as lease arbitrations and debt repayments'.⁸⁵ But Pennell concludes that, over the

⁸⁴ Sara Guyer, 'Albeit Eating: Towards an Ethics of Cannibalism', *Angelaki*, 2 (1997), 63-80 (p. 64).

⁸⁵ Sara Pennell, "'Pots and Pans History": The Material Culture of the Kitchen in Early Modern England', *Journal of Design History*, 11 (1998), 201-16 (p. 207).

course of the period, the kitchen gradually became synonymous with food preparation. She argues that ‘the term “kitchen” is increasingly used to denote the main food processing and preparation space in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century housing’.⁸⁶

In *Timon of Athens*, Timon’s consuming of roots lifted directly out of the soil collapses any distinction between him and the wild animals who get their nourishment raw and sometimes freshly bloodied. In *Food in Shakespeare*, Joan Fitzpatrick suggests that ‘Timon’s foraging for roots as much as his desire for solitude would have struck an early modern audience as distinctly bestial, indeed pig-like’.⁸⁷ Lévi-Strauss makes a more general point on this theme when he says, ‘We thus begin to understand the truly essential place occupied by cooking in native thought: not only does cooking mark the transition from nature to culture, but through it and by means of it, the human state can be defined with all its attributes’.⁸⁸ In *The Origin of Table Manners*, he writes that:

Food presents itself to man in three main states: it may be raw, cooked or rotten. In relationship to culinary operations, the raw state constitutes the unmarked pole, whereas the other two are strongly marked, although in opposite directions: the cooked being a cultural transformation of the raw, and the rotten its natural transformation. Underlying the main triangle, there is, then, a double opposition between *processed / non-processed*, on the one hand, and *culture / nature*, on the other.⁸⁹

For Lévi-Strauss, cooked food is characteristic of man’s intervention in his gastronomic environment, whereas the rotting of foodstuffs indicates nature’s own biological process of decomposition. In the final part of the play, Timon finds himself immersed in the natural world and hence removed from the fledgling sanitation of the early modern kitchen. The emphasis on rottenness in Act IV of *Timon of Athens* stresses the authority of nature and how far we have come from ostensibly civilised Athens.

⁸⁶ Pennell, ‘Pots and Pans’, p. 205.

⁸⁷ Fitzpatrick, *Food*, p. 118.

⁸⁸ Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and The Cooked*, p. 164.

⁸⁹ Lévi-Strauss, *The Origin of Table Manners*, p. 478.

On stage, Timon's new diet provides a dramatic shorthand which helps to further identify him as a foreigner in his new desert landscape. Vegetarianism was regarded as a strange dietary lifestyle by the early moderns. Fitzpatrick explains that 'Although Pythagoras stressed the importance of a vegetarian diet for maintaining physical and mental health, early modern physicians considered the avoidance of meat as positively unhealthy (a view propagated by the dietaries) and, since God had ordained animal flesh as fit for human consumption after the flood, heretical'.⁹⁰ Laurie Shannon adds that 'At a practical level, the early modern diet was unabashedly carnivorous [. . .] vegetarianism was shorthand for lunacy'.⁹¹ In *Timon of Athens*, Timon's new vegetarian fare labels him an outsider figure, but there are more troubling implications to his change in diet. While eating his freshly dug-up root, he says: 'That the whole life of Athens were in this!/ Thus would I eat it' (IV.iii.281-82). The line is resonant of Girard's argument in *Violence and the Sacred* that 'When unappeased, violence seeks and always finds a surrogate victim. The creature that excited its fury is abruptly replaced by another, chosen only because it is vulnerable and close at hand'.⁹² The imagery of appetite and the scapegoat recalls the mock banquet when Timon dished up stones and water in the place of tasty morsels. But this time it is Timon who is looking for something to eat in order to satisfy his appetite to be revenged on the occupants of Athens. Furthermore, his new vegetarianism is suggestive of his altered attitude to money. Upon discovering gold hidden in the soil while digging, Timon at first does not want it, and then when Alcibiades offers him more gold a little while later, he rejects that, too, with the words: 'Keep it, I cannot eat it' (IV.iii.100). It has been demonstrated that throughout *Timon of Athens*, economic greed is repeatedly associated with voracious eating habits, as we saw

⁹⁰ Fitzpatrick, *Food in Shakespeare*, p. 7.

⁹¹ Shannon, *Accommodated Animal*, p. 60n. For more discussion on changing attitudes towards vegetarianism in the early modern period, see Fitzpatrick's *Food in Shakespeare*, especially chapter three titled 'Strange Diets: Vegetarianism and the Melancholic', pp. 57-81.

⁹² Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, p. 2.

with the creditors earlier in the play. Encountering the thieves in the woods a short while later, Timon remarks on their dietary preferences,

I Thief We cannot live on grass, on berries, water
 As beasts and birds and fishes.
Timon Nor on the beasts themselves, the birds and fishes –
 You must eat men.
 (IV.iii.417-20)

In contrast to his frugal vegetarian fare, Timon implies that the dietary preferences of the thieves will lead them on from eating meat to cannibalistic practices.

In *The Parasite*, Michel Serres notes man's parasitism on the natural environment. He comments: 'But let us descend to the level of a tree. It gives shelter, decoration, flowers, fruits, and shade. And in return for its wages or more accurately for its rent – for it shelters and produces a territory – it is felled. The tree judges man to be an ingrate'.⁹³ He continues: 'history hides the fact that man is the universal parasite, that everything and everyone around him is a hospitable space. Plants and animals are always his hosts; man is always necessarily their guest. Always taking, never giving'.⁹⁴ Shakespeare dramatises how Timon lives parasitically off the natural world in *Timon of Athens*. Further on in the play, Timon sarcastically tells the Athenian senators that:

I have a tree which grows here in my close
That mine own use invites me to cut down,
And shortly must I fell it. Tell my friends,
Tell Athens, in the sequence of degree
From high to low throughout, that whoso please
To stop affliction, let him take his haste,
Come hither ere my tree hath felt the axe
And hang himself.
 (V.ii.90-97)

The lines are an extremely satirical continuation of the false hospitality that Timon offered his neighbours during the second banquet. Here, Timon volunteers to help the citizens of

⁹³ Serres, *Parasite*, p. 24.

⁹⁴ Serres, *Parasite*, p. 24.

Athens protect themselves against the invading Alcibiades and his army by allowing them to come and hang themselves on his tree. Timon's speech implies a sense of possession, not only in his repeated use of possessive pronouns to describe his woodland surroundings, but in the allusion to his 'close'. This architectural term usually designates a courtyard that is adjacent to a larger main building. By grafting household terms onto the natural landscape, Shakespeare demonstrates that Timon has made himself very much at home. Ironically, and having furiously raged at his freeloading friends near the beginning of the play, Timon has now turned into the ultimate parasite. Apemantus teases Timon on this very subject when he asks him:

What, think'st
That the bleak air, thy boisterous chamberlain,
Will put thy shirt on warm? Will these mossed trees
That have outlived the eagle page thy heels
And skip when thou point'st out? Will the cold brook,
Candied with ice, caudle thy morning taste
To cure thy o'ernight's surfeit? Call the creatures
Whose naked natures live in all the spite
Of wreakful heaven, whose bare unhoused trunks
To the conflicting elements exposed
Answer mere nature, bid them flatter thee.
(IV.iii.220-30)

Apemantus implies that Timon is a demanding house guest and sardonically points out that the elements are not going to make Timon comfortable in the civilized manner to which he was formerly accustomed at his house in Athens. And yet, even though the woods might not warm his shirt or make him a restorative morning beverage, Timon does obtain hospitality from his natural environment.

In the concluding part of this section, I now wish to turn to Timon's jealousy which is directed at his bountiful new hostess. In a seminal essay on the play entitled "'Magic of Bounty': *Timon of Athens*, Jacobean Patronage, and Maternal Power", Coppélia Kahn puts forward a feminist psychoanalytic reading where she argues that *Timon of Athens* is

organised around a core ‘fantasy of maternal bounty and maternal betrayal’.⁹⁵ Kahn explains that, near the beginning of the play, Timon regards his own bounty as ‘magical’.⁹⁶ But, as events unfold, he finds that his material generosity is abruptly curtailed. Kahn concludes that ‘Now he no longer plays the bountiful mother; he hits back at her for the betrayal he suffered at her hands’.⁹⁷ Timon’s anger at Mother Nature in the woods does appear to be prompted by his envy that hospitality is a uniquely female attribute. Judith Still points out that ‘The female body is uniquely hospitable, and that erotic, reproductive and nourishing specificity is a potent source of fantasy’.⁹⁸ Considering Timon’s earlier desire to be the only source of hospitality in Athens, his misogynist rhetoric during the final part of the play does start to sound like sour grapes.

While in conversation with Alcibiades in the woods, Timon complains about his fall from the apex of Lady Fortune’s wheel. He specifically blames his reduced circumstances on the fact that, unlike the natural environment, he is ill equipped for holistic growth and repair:

Alcibiades How came the noble Timon to this change?
Timon As the moon does, by wanting light to give;
 But then renew I could not like the moon –
 There were no suns to borrow of.
 (IV.iii.67-70)

Timon’s only ability to breed is his capacity to coin money at the beginning of the play, which is closer to Shylock’s moneylending practices in *The Merchant of Venice* than it is to bountiful Mother Nature. At the opening of *Timon of Athens*, for instance, Timon’s irresponsible spending is described by one of the Athenian senators in the following way:

If I want gold, steal but a beggar’s dog
And give it to Timon, why, the dog coins gold.
If I would sell my horse and buy twenty more
Better than he, why, give my horse to Timon –

⁹⁵ Kahn, ‘Bounty’, p. 35.

⁹⁶ Kahn, ‘Bounty’, p. 39.

⁹⁷ Kahn, ‘Bounty’, p. 51.

⁹⁸ Still, *Derrida and Hospitality*, p. 21. For more on female hospitality, see Tracy McNulty, *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity, and the Expropriation of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

Ask nothing, give it him – it foals me straight
And able horses.

(II.i.5-10)

Within the civic society of Athens, which Hugh Grady has described as ‘oddly female-less’,⁹⁹ Timon’s gift-giving becomes its own sterile form of breeding. In the woods, he delivers a series of outbursts cursing the earth in a manner that leaves him sounding very embittered. In one furious speech Timon apparently wants to disparage the fecundity of the natural world when he tells the thieves:

I’ll example you with thievery:
The sun’s a thief and with his great attraction
Robs the vast sea; the moon’s an arrant thief
And her pale fire she snatches from the sun;
The sea’s a thief whose liquid surge resolves
The moon into salt tears; the earth’s a thief
That feeds and breeds by composture stol’n
From general excrement.

(IV.iii.430-37)

In this grotesque description, Timon repositions the globe’s fruitfulness as simply another form of economic self-interest. Organic processes of renewal are redefined in terms of a capitalist rhetoric.

When he is digging in the soil and looking for roots to eat, Timon directly curses Mother Nature when he says:

Common mother – thou
Whose womb unmeasurable and infinite breast
Teems and feeds all, whose selfsame mettle
Whereof thy proud child, arrogant man, is puffed,
Engenders the black toad and adder blue,
The gilded newt and eyeless venom’d worm,
With all th’abhorred births below crisp heaven
Whereon Hyperion’s quickening fire doth shine –
Yield him who all the human sons do hate
From forth thy plenteous bosom one poor root.
Ensear thy fertile and conceptious womb,
Let it no more bring out ungrateful man.

[. . .]

⁹⁹ Hugh Grady, *Shakespeare and Impure Aesthetics* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 94.

Dry up thy marrows, vines and plough-torn leas,
Whereof ungrateful man with liquorish draughts
And morsels unctuous greases his pure mind.
(IV.iii.176-94)

Timon anthropomorphises his natural surroundings, conflating bodily and botanical images so that the earth curiously comes to possess both ‘marrows’ but also ‘vines’. His personification of the environment is plainly gendered through the repeated references to the female reproductive system. Not only does Timon call the earth ‘mother’, but he keeps on alluding to her ‘womb unmeasurable and infinite breast’, and again her ‘plenteous bosom’ and ‘fertile and conceitious womb’. The language becomes increasingly violent as Timon sounds sickened by the globe’s natural fecundity. Elsewhere, for instance, he refers to the soil as the ‘common whore of mankind’ (IV.iii.43). His disgust at Mother Nature’s sluttish hospitality recalls Ulysses’ speech about Cressida in *Troilus and Cressida*. Once again, Shakespeare shows us a male character who feels threatened by female hospitality.

Moreover, when Timon curses the natural environment with the words: ‘Dry up thy marrows, vines and plough-torn leas’ (IV.iii.92), his lines are evocative of Lear’s horrible wish for his daughter: ‘Dry up in her the organs of increase’.¹⁰⁰ Timon’s hatred of the earth is primarily centred on her fecundity. In particular, he seems disgusted by the fact that Mother Nature is such an indiscriminate hostess that man receives no special care from her. Instead, and as Timon’s blazon of venomous animals shows, the indiscriminating ground ‘feeds all’ of her guests equally. He imagines Mother Nature liberally serving up sugary drinks (‘liquorish draughts’) and oily food scraps (‘morsels unctuous’) to a group of hungry guests. Later on, Timon reminds the thieves of nature’s own rich storehouse of food provisions when he says to them:

Behold, the earth hath roots,
Within this mile break forth a hundred springs,
The oaks bear mast, the briars scarlet hips,

¹⁰⁰ Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. by Foakes, I.iv.271.

The bounteous housewife Nature on each bush
Lays her full mess before you.
(IV.iii.412-416)

The 'scarlet hips' he mentions refer to the wild rose flowers, but possess an obvious human connotation as well, so that the effect is to sexualise this 'bounteous housewife Nature'. In *Timon of Athens*, Athenian hospitality is male, carnivorous and dependent upon the cultural mediation of the kitchen. In the woods, however, we find a different type of domesticity emerging. Hospitality in the natural world is feminine, vegetarian, and, most disturbingly of all to Timon's mind, wholly limitless.

As part of Timon's growing bitterness at the lush hospitality of his new alfresco home, he starts becoming fixated on malodorous smells. Partway through Act IV, for instance, Timon imagines the globe to be sweltering under an adverse microclimate, where the humid air is festering with rotteness. Still cursing the globe he says:

O blessed breeding sun, draw from the earth
Rotten humidity, below thy sister's orb
Infect the air!
(IV.iii.1-3)

In Timon's diseased imagination, Mother Nature is both damp with moisture and foul smelling. The sentiment looks ahead to his hope that the invading Alcibiades will destroy Athens and therefore:

Be as a planetary plague when Jove
Will o'er some high-iced city hang his poison
In the sick air.
(IV.iii.108-110)

Timon is at pains to show how the hospitable earth is, in fact, a putrid dwelling place. The atmosphere has a palpably human odour of corruption to it, as in *Hamlet*, where something is rotten in the state of Denmark. It continues to be deeply ironic that, in the woods, it is Timon who is now the ungrateful guest, living off his hostess's generosity, simultaneously complaining that the food she dishes up smells rotten.

In the unwholesome environment of *Timon of Athens*, nature is strongly associated with femininity but also with rotteness, which produces something of a pungent triptych. This misogynist triangulation – linking nature, stench, and femininity – is ingrained in the language of cultural anthropology. In *The Raw and The Cooked*, Lévi-Strauss argues that ‘We are dealing with stench and decay which, as has already been established, signify nature, as opposed to culture, but this time they are expressed in terms of anatomical coding. And woman is, everywhere synonymous with nature’.¹⁰¹ Giving a few examples from the ethnographic source material, Lévi-Strauss notes that:

In their sexual life the Brazilian Indians are particularly susceptible to the smells of the female body [. . .] Seeing a rotten fruit full of worms, Mair, the Urubu demiurge, exclaimed: ‘That would make a nice woman!’ And straightaway the fruit turned into a woman. In a Tacana myth the jaguar decides not to rape an Indian woman after he has caught the smell of her vulva, which seems to him to reek of worm-ridden meat. A Mundurucu myth, which has already been quoted, relates that after the animals had made vaginas for the first women, the armadillo rubbed each of the organs with a piece of rotten nut, which gave them their characteristic smell.¹⁰²

In the European tradition, as well, the misogynist association made between woman and rotten food is well established. For the early moderns, rotten fruits and meats were eponymous dietary speak for expired female chastity. In *Much Ado About Nothing*, Claudio thus cautions Leonato to ‘Give not this rotten orange to your friend/ She's but the sign and semblance of her honour’,¹⁰³ while Joan Fitzpatrick cites ‘mutton’ as another example of popular slang for female flesh, usually prostitutes, ‘although it could be used for young female flesh, there is a sense, especially when used in the context of a brothel, that the “meat” referred to is rotten or contaminated and certainly past its best’.¹⁰⁴ Meanwhile, in *Measure for Measure*, Lucio irreverently says that the Duke would eat mutton on Fridays.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, pp. 269-70.

¹⁰² Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, p. 269.

¹⁰³ Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, IV.i.30-1.

¹⁰⁴ Fitzpatrick, *Food in Shakespeare*, pp. 30-1.

¹⁰⁵ Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, III.i.412-3.

Timon makes another association between prejudiced cultural ideas of femininity and unwholesome eating practices when he encounters the prostitutes in the woods. Giving Timandra money, he instructs her to:

Be a whore still, they love thee not that use thee;
Give them diseases, leaving with thee their lust.
Make use of thy salt hours: season the slaves
For tubs and baths, bring down rose-cheeked youth
To the tub-fast and the diet.
(IV.iii.83-87)

Salt was synonymous with lechery, and Timon therefore extends the sexual and culinary imagery. Comparable to a diabolical chef in a hot kitchen, Timandra is pictured using her ‘salt hours’ to ‘season’ her male customers with venereal diseases (the treatment for which was believed to be fasting in hot tubs). Speaking to Phrynia, the second prostitute, Timon uses still more imagery of rottenness when he tells her: ‘I will not kiss thee, then the rot returns/ To thine own lips again’ (IV.iii.65-6). Confronted by a veritable line of unsavoury female hostesses all proffering rotten food, Timon’s dietary policy in the woods increasingly becomes nil by mouth. Thus, when Apemantus arrives a short while later and offers Timon some fruit to eat, he refuses it:

Apemantus There’s a medlar for thee – eat it.
Timon On what I hate I feed not.
Apemantus Dost hate a medlar?
Timon Ay, though it look like thee.
(IV.iii.304-307)

The medlar is a small fruit, eaten when soft, pulpy and partially rotten, but in the early modern period, it was also slang for the female genitalia, and for prostitution more generally. Towards the end of *Measure for Measure*, Lucio comments of a prostitute, ‘They would else have married me to the rotten medlar’.¹⁰⁶ Kahn’s psychoanalytic approach to the play feels convincing and I hope to have extended her reading of the play in this discussion of hospitality in the natural world. In the woods, it seems likely that Timon’s unwillingness to

¹⁰⁶ Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, IV.iv.160-1.

eat the decomposed medlar fruit, as with his earlier refusal to kiss the prostitutes, can be understood as a phobic intolerance of the female part.

The Gift of Mourning

In the concluding section of this chapter I return to the emblem of tears in *Timon of Athens*, as well as to the recurrent idea of debts and obligations in order to suggest a reading of hospitality that includes Timon's death and burial in the final part of the play. With its emphasis on death and mourning culture, this play that began with lavish depictions of banqueting has perhaps arrived somewhere unexpected. In *Timon of Athens*, as in *Troilus and Cressida* and *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare dramatises the problem of what binds people to one another or brings them into conflict. *Timon of Athens* explores the connections between guests, hosts and parasites, between debtors and creditors and even, in the concluding scenes of the play, the relationship between the mourner and the dead. In *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, Judith Butler notes that:

What grief displays [. . .] is the thrall in which our relations with others hold us, in ways that we cannot always recount or explain, in ways that often interrupt the self-conscious account of ourselves that we might try to provide, in ways that challenge the very notion of ourselves as autonomous and in control [. . .] Let's face it. We're undone by each other. And if we're not, we're missing something.¹⁰⁷

In the following section, I suggest that Shakespeare does not offer us a way out of this thralldom in *Timon of Athens*. If anything, as the play concludes it seems to imply that being held in thrall to one another is still everything. Yet the ending gives us a deeper understanding of the debts and obligations which mourning might involve if we are to understand more fully the nature of generosity.

¹⁰⁷ Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London and New York: Verso, 2004), p. 23.

Over the course of the play, the audience has witnessed Timon change from sociable host into embittered misanthrope, and this dramatic movement is accompanied by an alteration in his feelings about weeping. Once Timon becomes penniless and the libations at his banquet table run dry, then so do his tears. By the time *Timon of Athens* concludes, the watery hospitality that characterised his giving in the early part of the play has been replaced with peculiarly unemotional mourning rites. Compared to Shakespeare's other great tragic protagonists, Timon's death is puzzling, since he dies offstage and in unknown circumstances. In his parting words to the senators, Timon tells them:

Come not to me again, but say to Athens
Timon hath made his everlasting mansion
Upon the beached verge of the salt flood,
Who once a day with his embossed froth
The turbulent surge shall cover

(V.ii.99-103)

The soldier confirms that Timon's burial spot is right on the edge of the seashore at the end of the play when he delivers the news of Timon's death to Alcibiades. It is Alcibiades who then reads aloud Timon's epitaph:

*Here lie I, Timon, who alive all living men did hate,
Pass by and curse thy fill, but pass and stay not here thy gait.*

(V.v.70-71)¹⁰⁸

In conjunction with the remote coastal location that he has chosen for his burial place, Timon's hostile epitaph is plainly designed to dissuade any future mourners from lingering to pay their respects. But while the protagonist's suspension of his own mourning rites might

¹⁰⁸ For further discussion of the multiple epitaphs in the play see the section of Dawson and Minton's 'Introduction' entitled 'Endings, Epitaphs and Editors', pp. 100-108.

look inhospitable, Derrida can help us to understand this moment differently as the most generous of parting gifts.

It is here that a comparison between *Timon of Athens* and Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* becomes instructive. A. D. Nuttall has noticed that '*Timon of Athens* has an oddly Greek feel to it',¹⁰⁹ and there are further similarities between the two plays. Both plays culminate in the lonely scenery outside of Athens and concern the troubled relationship between hospitality and mourning. In particular, the death of each protagonist is noteworthy for the lack of normal burial customs. In *Oedipus at Colonus*, Oedipus is laid to rest in an unidentified place and he tells Theseus, ruler of Athens, never to disclose the location to anyone, not even to his family. In the *Of Hospitality* seminars, Derrida shows how this produces mourning for the loss of mourning. Of Oedipus's daughter, Antigone, Derrida notes, 'She complains that her father has died in a foreign land and moreover is buried in a place foreign to any possible localization. She complains of the mourning not allowed, at any rate of a mourning without tears, a mourning deprived of weeping. She weeps at not weeping, she weeps a mourning dedicated to saving tears'.¹¹⁰ In comparison to the outpourings of tears that we observed in the opening part of *Timon of Athens*, this dry-eyed mourning is frugal behaviour in the extreme. Oedipus's parting gesture might seem needlessly cruel, but he puts things quite differently in the play. From the beginning of *Oedipus at Colonus*, Oedipus speaks about his own imminent death as being a generous gift to his adoptive city of Athens. He tells Theseus that:

I come with a gift for you,
my own shattered body . . . no feast for the eyes.

¹⁰⁹ Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker*, p. 320.

¹¹⁰ Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 111. Compare in *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), where Derrida argues that 'Nothing could be worse, for the work of mourning, than confusion or doubt: one *has to know* who is buried where' (p. 9).

but the gains it holds are greater than great beauty.¹¹¹

In his reading of Sophocles' play, Derrida argues that Oedipus is not only being generous towards his Athenian hosts here, for what looks like unkindness is actually a gift to his surviving relations:

It is as if he wanted to depart without leaving so much as an address for the mourning of the women who love him. He acts as if he wanted to make their mourning infinitely worse, to weigh it down, even, with the mourning they can no longer do. He is going to deprive them of their mourning, thereby obliging them to go through their mourning of mourning. Do we know of a more generous and poisoned form of the gift?¹¹²

When Derrida wonders if we know of 'a more generous and poisoned form' of generosity, the question has implications for how we might interpret the strange ending of *Timon of Athens*. Similarly to Oedipus, Timon forgoes all mourning rites, therefore depriving his loved ones of the normal opportunity to grieve over his death. His legacy is perhaps cruel but, at the same time, it can be seen as extraordinarily compassionate. By permitting no mourning tears at his graveside, Timon would appear to be liberating the people of Athens from their work of mourning.

Yet while Timon might give the impression of demanding nothing in return from his mourners, lingering feelings of outstanding debts and obligations nonetheless continue to problematise the gift economy of Shakespeare's Athens. Indeed, Timon's parting gift leaves his mourners bound to him through this final gesture of unnecessary generosity. So far in this chapter I have argued that hospitality in *Timon of Athens* is repeatedly undermined by the way that the protagonist keeps a running tally of what is owed to him. Near the end of the play, Timon's deferral of his own mourning rituals demonstrates an equivalent difficulty in divorcing the gift from an economy dependent on structures of repayment. In Western

¹¹¹ Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus*, in *Sophocles: The Three Theban Plays: Antigone, Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus*, trans. by Robert Fagles (London: Penguin, 1982), ll.649-51.

¹¹² Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 93.

culture, the visual iconography of balance sheets and account books surrounding representations of death has been well documented. Philippe Ariès has analysed how depictions of death during the medieval period became gradually consistent with the idea that 'Each man is to be judged according to the balance sheet of his life. Good and bad deeds are scrupulously separated and placed on the appropriate side of the scales. Moreover, these deeds have been inscribed in a book'.¹¹³ Ariès goes on to add that, 'at the end of the Middle Ages it became an individual account book'.¹¹⁴ Dying might be the ultimate settling of spiritual accounts, often expressed in terms of a more worldly reckoning. But works of mourning also reveal their own minute calculations, as the bereaved person is always left behind to come to terms with dues that will now be forever outstanding.

Mourning cultures can assume their own almost materialistic quality as one struggles to process unresolved debts and grievances. In the *Mourning Diary: October 26 1977 - September 15 1979* begun on his mother's death, for instance, Roland Barthes confesses a 'Difficult feeling (unpleasant, discouraging) of a *lack of generosity*'.¹¹⁵ Mourning makes demands on us, compelling us to behave in ways we cannot imagine. Another entry in Barthes's diary debates how, 'On the one hand, she wants everything, total mourning, its absolute (but then it's not her, it's I who is investing her with the demand for such a thing)'.¹¹⁶ Derrida discusses the indebted economy of bereavement in one of the texts gathered in *The Work of Mourning*, suggesting that 'There come moments when, as *mourning* demands [*deuil oblige*], one feels obligated to declare one's debts. We feel it our duty to say

¹¹³ Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death from the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. by Patricia M. Ranum (London: Marion Boyars, 1974), p. 32.

¹¹⁴ Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death*, p. 32.

¹¹⁵ Roland Barthes, *Mourning Diary: October 26 1977 - September 15 1979*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), p. 92.

¹¹⁶ Barthes, *Mourning Diary*, p. 32. Elsewhere in the text Barthes also speaks about 'The *measurement* of mourning' (p. 19).

what we owe to the friend.¹¹⁷ In a supplementary note, Derrida adds that ‘death obligates; it would thus be the other original name of absolute obligation’.¹¹⁸ Partly these obligations felt on the part of the bereaved can seem unbearable because of the fact that we *long* to be held in arrears to one another, even, or especially, after death. Derrida admits that the sensation of finality that results from settling up outstanding debts can be dreadful:

Inadmissible, not because one would have problems recognising one’s debts or one’s duty as indebted, but simply because in declaring these debts in such a manner, particularly when time is limited, one might seem to be putting an end to them, calculating what they amount to, pretending then to be able to recount them, to measure and thus limit them, or more seriously still, to be able to settle them in the very act of exposing them.¹¹⁹

Mourning also obligates the figures on stage in *Timon of Athens* into behaving a certain way. Once he learns of Timon’s death and has read out the epitaph, Alcibiades feels compelled to say a few words of remembrance:

These well express in thee thy latter spirits.
Though thou abhorred’st in us our human griefs,
Scorned’st our brains’ flow and those our droplets which
From niggard nature fall, yet rich conceit
Taught thee to make vast Neptune weep for aye
On thy low grave, on faults forgiven.

(V.v.72-77)

In *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy*, Michael Neill

suggests that ‘Alcibiades is driven, even in the absence of a body, to improvise a funeral rite of sorts to revive the memory of a man he wants to think of as “noble Timon”’.¹²⁰ As part of this improvised funeral eulogy, Alcibiades translates the unfriendly epitaph into more uplifting terms. Timon’s disgust at human weeping is thus transformed into a ‘rich conceit’ whereby the sea waves crashing over his burial site daily replace all of the traditional

¹¹⁷ Jacques Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, ed. and trans. by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 223.

¹¹⁸ Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, p. 223n.

¹¹⁹ Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, pp. 223-4.

¹²⁰ Michael Neill, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 296.

mourning customs. In this comforting vision of ecological weeping, Alcibiades also seems to hint at the deceased's generous forgiveness of past grievances. By restoring Timon's suspended burial rites in this manner, Shakespeare's play is attesting to the spirit of obligation inscribed in works of mourning.

Timon of Athens makes a number of calculations based on notions of hospitality and mourning. Long recognised for its interest in money, the play also raises a number of more ethical equations which Derrida helps us to understand. Throughout *Timon of Athens*, I suggest, performances that appear emotionally generous are undermined by a secret indebtedness which binds the recipient to his benefactor. Even at the end of the play, while pleading for Timon's help, one of the senators says that the city owes him an apology:

Together with a recompense more fruitful
Than their offence can weigh down by the dram,
Ay, even such heaps and sums of love and wealth,
As shall to thee blot out what wrongs were theirs,
And write in thee the figures of their love,
Ever to read them thine.

(V.ii.35-40)

The senators are appealing for forgiveness, in return for which they propose to recompense Timon with money. The financial image clusters reveal that the senators, like the wider civilian population of Athens, understand generosity only as an economic transaction, something to be counted out in tiny units of measurement. It is unsurprising, then, that, as John Kerrigan has pointed out recently, 'Timon rejects this calculated excess'.¹²¹ In his own writings *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, Derrida equally dismisses such strategic negotiating manoeuvres. He says, 'Must one not maintain that an act of forgiveness worthy of its name, if there ever is such a thing, must forgive the unforgiveable, and without

¹²¹ John Kerrigan, *Shakespeare's Binding Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 363.

condition?'¹²² In *Timon of Athens*, the presence of stipulations and conditions radically delimit the scope for generosity, while also demonstrating how death legitimately binds mourners to the dead. The gift of hospitality again turns out to be far less free than we imagine, but it might nonetheless help to blot out what wrongs have passed.

¹²² Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. by Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 39. On forgiveness in early modern drama, see Sean Lawrence, *Forgiving the Gift: The Philosophy of Generosity in Shakespeare and Marlowe* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2012).

Conclusion

The present thesis has looked at hospitality in three of Shakespeare's plays, drawing on ideas from Derrida and other recent theorists. It has particularly concerned itself with extending the meanings of hospitality and extending, too, its presence so that it is seen not just in large gestures of banqueting and household entertainments but also in the little details. By drawing on Derrida's writings, I have tried to show how hospitality depends upon these less tangible moments, and upon fine threads of language which are entangled in the very texture of the plays. While scenes of welcoming on the Shakespeare stage do include the solid reality of banquets and entertainments, in the end these turn out to be illusory and not the thing itself. Instead, time and again in these plays, hospitality descends into violence or what we might think of as its antithesis, but what Derrida sees as its risk or absolute quality. In the opening to this thesis I posed the question of whether Shakespeare's plays allow us to glimpse another, more hospitable world. I suggest that they do, since in each of them there is a noticeable striving to be welcoming in spite of the consequences. But for all that the plays have to say, the idea of hospitality remains troublesome.

Shakespeare provides examples of concerns similar to those raised in the thesis in many other places but perhaps nowhere more strongly or visibly than in the late plays. *The Winter's Tale* is a play that opens like a tragedy and displays many of the ideas we have seen

so far about how relations between guests and hosts can break down to terrible effect. Leontes's jealousy at the assumption that his pregnant wife might have been overly hospitable with her body, and his intended murder of his guest, Polixenes, builds on violent moments in *The Merchant of Venice*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Timon of Athens*. Yet the genre of romance enables the reversal of these early tragic scenes into resolutions that combine wonder and spectacle in a way not previously seen. In the pastoral setting of Bohemia in *The Winter's Tale*, for instance, the glimmers of pure hospitality that we have briefly caught sight of so far are given far greater ideological force. Once the shepherd comes across the baby Perdita, abandoned in the wilds, he says:

Mercy on's, a barne! A very pretty barne! A boy or a child, I wonder? A pretty one; a very pretty one. Sure, some scape: though I am not bookish, yet I can read waiting-gentlewoman in the scape. This has been some stair-work, some trunk-work, some behind-door-work: they were warmer that got this than the poor thing is here. I'll take it up for pity¹

The shepherd's tolerant response to finding Perdita and the fact that he adopts her without hesitation elucidates the greeting without reservations that is given to the new arrival. In his essay on 'Hostipitality' Derrida cites the changeling child as the epitome of pure or unconditional hospitality: 'For some, this is the utmost violence possible, an exceptional and exceptionally cruel violence. For others, this welcoming [*accueillir*] the substitute child, the child who replaces another or who is taken from his parents in order to be welcomed [*accueillir*], to be taken in [*recueilli*] by others, is the gift of hospitality *par excellence*'.² In the last phase of Shakespeare's career, the romances still grapple with the problem of hospitality and invite future inquiries.

¹ William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, ed. by J. H. P. Pafford (London: Thomson Learning, 1999), III.iii.69-76.

² Jacques Derrida, 'Hostipitality', in *Acts of Religion*, ed. by Gil Anidjar (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 356-421 (p. 410).

Where I think that the late plays, including *The Winter's Tale*, test the extreme limits of what is imaginable when it comes to hospitality is in their representation of miraculous scenes of forgiveness. In the conclusion to the last chapter on *Timon of Athens* I argued that forgiveness in that play – like works of mourning and hospitality – is inseparable from the logic of economic calculation, undermining its freedom to be truly generous. Yet what we find in Shakespeare's late romances is a challenging of such restrictions and limiting manoeuvres. Derrida relates hospitality to forgiveness when he writes that 'Whoever asks for hospitality, asks, in a way, for forgiveness and whoever offers hospitality, grants forgiveness – and forgiveness must be infinite or it is nothing: it is excuse or exchange'.³ In the dénouement of *The Winter's Tale*, then, Shakespeare presents the ultimate gift of forgiveness when the statue of the dead Hermione awakens and she returns to Leontes. The moment offers a second chance to pardon the abuses of hospitality from earlier on in the play. But the very promise of hospitality unconditionally to forgive in the final scene does not mean that the text can avoid the violent consequences set before us in the opening moments of *The Winter's Tale*, nor the death of the child Mamillius, nor the loss of the intervening years. There are no easy answers to the problem of hospitality in the late plays either, for they, too, remain caught between the extremes of forgiveness and hostility.

* * *

If we were to pause at this point to wonder whether we are any closer to understanding what hospitality looks and sounds like on the Shakespeare stage, then we would be posing the wrong kind of question. In this thesis I have not sought to offer a conclusive definition of the term in relation to Shakespeare studies. Rather, I hope to have demonstrated that hospitality in the three plays studied is anything but one-dimensional. While I have made frequent

³ Derrida, 'Hostipitality' in *Acts of Religion*, p. 380.

connections across the plays, I have also tried to emphasise their differences from one another as well. I very much wanted to be truthful to the waywardness of the plays themselves, and to let their complications speak to us in their own voice, rather than imposing a new or unified reading of hospitality on to them. As Daryl Palmer suggests in *Hospitable Performances: Dramatic Genre and Cultural Practices in Early Modern England*, ‘no body of major plays exists that one can label “plays about hospitality”. Any search for hospitality as a “unifying theme” or a “dominant motif” seems doomed to failure’.⁴ In writing this thesis I have been continually surprised by the depth and complexity of Shakespeare’s performances of welcoming, and it has taken me in directions I did not expect. One of the central arguments that runs through this thesis, however, is that Shakespeare treats hospitality as the site of urgent philosophical inquiry. Far more than a mechanical part of the stage business that brings characters on and off the performance space and into contact with one another and the audience, hospitality is allied to the darker visions of *The Merchant of Venice*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Timon of Athens*. It is a means by which Shakespeare confronts ideas about death and mourning, betrayal, and the problem of time and transience, encouraging us to reconsider what it means to be truly welcoming. Ultimately, these are plays that surprise their audiences, inviting continued reflections on hospitality and leaving us with unresolved tensions as opposed to neat conclusions. It is perhaps as Derrida says and that ‘We do not know what hospitality is [*Nous ne savons pas ce que c’est que l’hospitalité*]. Not yet. Not yet, but will we ever know? Is it a question of knowledge and of time?’⁵ We do, however, have a sense of what its commitments might involve and the risks that it necessarily brings with it.

⁴ Daryl Palmer, *Hospitable Performances: Dramatic Genre and Cultural Practices in Early Modern England* (West Lafayette, IN.: Purdue University Press, 1992), p. 39

⁵ Jacques Derrida, ‘Hostipitality’, *Angelaki*, 5: 3 (2000), 3-18 (p. 6).

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