SOCRATIC HOSPITALITY: HEIDEGGER, DERRIDA AND THE PRIMACY OF THE GUEST

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In the *Crito*, Socrates argues that we cannot simply elect to shed or cast off the laws by which we were raised.[1] These laws are constitutive of our very way of being—even of our ability to reach a point at which we disagree with them; thus, whatever our stance may be toward those laws—including a stance of protesting them—we owe our stance and our very selves to them in an important and binding way. Socrates' argument is an acknowledgment that we cannot escape our roots, our home; we cannot cast off that by which we have constituted ourselves. In view of this, the home demands a certain justice—a justice that acknowledges our character of owing to home our very way of being, of being entrenched in its supportive and constituting framework.

In his lecture course on *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'*,[2] Heidegger argues, on the other hand, that we are fundamentally unhomely—i.e., that we ultimately lack a secure base on which we can rest or claim to rest our being. Since we are beings who always have our own being as a question, we can never finally fix in place what we are or even what other beings—human and non-human—are to or for us. As such, our home—our way of being—always has a non-settled core to it; beneath our being-at-home is forever our character of being ultimately unhomely. Thus, in what seems a contrary conclusion to Socrates' position, Heidegger insists that our being is never secured, and that in a very significant way we are rootless or homeless.

These two lines of thought are united, however, in the idea that we are forever not-at-home in our being-at-home, or, again, that it is only through engaging with what is alien that we can be at home. This is, in fact, the position that Heidegger develops, ultimately suggesting that it is only through the recognition of the other as both an unsettling and a constitutive force in our lives that we authentically embrace our being-in-the-world, and that we can, recalling Socrates' concern in the *Crito*, give justice to our traditions.

In this paper, I use Heidegger's *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'* and Derrida's *Of Hospitality*[3] and *Rogues*[4] to examine the argument that the foreigner-guest is essential for our ability to be-at-home, and I conclude with an argument that it is cosmopolitan political settings that provide us the politically healthiest home environment. Section I introduces Socrates' argument from the *Crito* that our experience of self-identical self-possession is not our given nature, but that our ability to be ourselves comes from making a home in the laws. Section II draws on Heidegger and Derrida to argue that this very effort to be ourselves, to be at home, requires nonetheless that we answer to the other: the alien is not something to which we can be indifferent. Section III cashes out the implications of these analyses in an argument for our irreducible ethnocentricity, and, drawing on Derrida's *Rogues*, considers how the political imperative of hospitality can be interpreted in this context. Section IV, finally, argues that it is cosmopolitan political settings that offer us the healthiest environment for cultivating the political habits of plasticity that are essential to our multicultural political world. I conclude that it is precisely such existentially healthy homemaking that ultimately captures the essential spirit of Socrates' own approach to making his home in the laws.

I. Socrates and Our Home in the Laws

Implicitly drawing upon the Greek language in which he was raised, and upon the literary traditions of Greek drama, Socrates, in the *Crito*, composes an imaginary dialogue between himself and the laws.[5] His friend Crito has encouraged him to escape from the jail in which he is awaiting the execution of his death sentence, and Socrates brings the legitimacy of this course of action under philosophical scrutiny. Through this rhetorical trope of conversing with the laws, Socrates argues that it is only on the basis of living under, and by means of, the laws that he is able to be who he is. It is the laws, he claims, that allowed his very existence by making possible the marriage of his parents, that allowed his development by requiring that his father have him educated in music and gymnastics, and that allowed the free development of his self-identity as an adult citizen by allowing him an equal share in the community life made available by the laws.[6] The laws are the very matrix of the self: it is only on the basis of the laws that he is able to be the choosing, 'self'-articulating person that he is.

Crito has encouraged Socrates to break the laws, to turn against the laws and abandon them. Socrates argues against this, maintaining

that our deliberate living under the laws and our enjoyment of what they offer is a tacit consent to their legitimacy that obliges us to accept their judgment upon us.[7] More deeply, his argument shows that to abandon the laws is ultimately impossible for him, since it is only on their basis that he is capable of making the gesture of 'abandoning.' We cannot cast off the laws for it is these laws that shaped us and secured who we are: they have supplied us with our very capacities for meaningful action and we would thus deploy them even as we attempt to reject them; casting them off—if it were even possible—would amount to casting ourselves off.[8]

Socrates' discussion with the laws acknowledges the debt we owe to the 'home' in which we were raised, and acknowledges this primarily by noting that it is our 'home' that makes us into the specific beings we are. Home in general—whether as the laws that shape us or simply as our familial home—is that which has supported us in becoming ourselves; it is that resource by which we build ourselves.[9] Even as we differentiate ourselves from our initial family home, we are doing so on the basis of the support of that home. Even in the case of that most unhappy rebellion from a home that is our rejection of it, this rebellion is given its 'legs' by means of this home. In situations of poor laws or poor upbringing, this original home may have given us paltry tools, and even 'tools' that forever inhibit us from finding a satisfactory home, but that original home is still that out of which we live and by means of which we define ourselves—even if in opposition. With this Socratic exploration into the essentiality of our political home in mind, let us now turn to Heidegger's philosophical reflection on the core nature of our 'being-at-home' in his study of Hölderlin's hymn 'Der Ister.'[10]

II. The Un-homely Character of Being-at-Home, and the Role of the Guest

In his 1942 lecture course, *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'*, Heidegger translates the second chorus of Sophocles' *Antigone* as declaring that man is by far the most *unheimlich* (*deinon*)—the most uncanny—of beings. Heidegger writes:

> The uncanny [*unheimlich*] means that which is not 'at home,' not homely within whatever is homely.... Being unhomely is no mere deviance from the homely, but rather the converse: a seeking and searching out the homely, a seeking that at times does not know itself.[11]

Heidegger argues that this unhomeliness reflects our way of

always being amidst beings in such a way that we are outside of them insofar as we are the sort of being that has the question of being before us.[12] We are never settled, can never finally arrive at what we *are*, nor, for that matter, can we ever settle what other things *are* in light of our own indeterminacy and, thus, our indeterminate look on other things. Thus, Heidegger writes: 'In those beings they come to, and in which they think themselves at home, they come to nothing. Thinking they are homely, human beings are those who are unhomely.'[13] Heidegger pursues this theme in his study of Hölderlin's poem. Following Heidegger, let us dwell awhile with Hölderlin's own words. Hölderlin writes in the poem now titled 'The Ister':

> Not without pinions may
> Someone grasp at what is nearest
> Directly
> And reach the other side.
> Here, however, we wish to build.
> For rivers make arable
> The land. Whenever plants grow
> And there in summer
> The animals go to drink,
> So humans go there too.[14]
> . . . . . .
> The rock, however, has need of cuts
> And of furrows the earth,
> Inhospitable it would be, without while;
> Yet what that one does, that river,
> No one knows.[15]

In these two excerpts from Hölderlin's 'The Ister,' we are told of the virtually ungraspable character of the river. We are told that in spite of its nearness, it is inaccessible and uncrossable save with the aid of 'pinions'; that it possesses the ability to 'cut' and 'furrow' even the most solid ground; that its way of doing (or being) escapes any knowing. Yet, we are also told in these same passages of the attraction and need we and the world have for the river and what it definitively offers us. In other words, we are told of ways in which we and others very much do grasp what the river is and gives to us: the river makes the land able to bear plants and it gives animals water to drink, and because of this we also go to the river and 'wish to build' *here*; the river also answers to the 'need' of rock and earth to be cut and furrowed, for without these cuts and furrows both would be 'inhospitable' and incapable of 'while.' These passages, then, tell of

the river's double nature as that which forever unsettles and settles both the surrounding world and us. It is a source of fluctuation that can never be stopped or absolutely figured, but it is because of this that it can continue to offer us (and the animals and the earth) more.

When Hölderlin identifies the river as the 'here' where we wish to build, and elsewhere in 'The Ister' when he describes the Ister as dwelling beautifully and also as inviting Hercules as a guest, Hölderlin draws us to notice the unsettledness that underlies the seemingly quite settled character of home.[16] Perhaps it initially seems easiest to understand this character of the home in the experience of the guest: though we might expect a certain feeling of lack or unease insofar as the guest is one who is quite admittedly 'settling' in a territory that is not her own, Hölderlin, however, does not suggest in his example that the guest—Hercules in this case—feels first and foremost this unease. To the contrary, Hölderlin describes the need that even the 'spirits' would have to *travel*—pointedly away from the unchanging heights of Olympus—in search of the cooling shade and uncharted and roam-worthy depths of forest of the Ister. In other words, we might say that Hercules, a guest and, thus, a foreigner to the river, feels relief and rejuvenation rather than unease and unrest at the river's unsettled offerings. So, even the guest of this example is not one who first and foremost experiences the unsettled character of the river as unsettling, but rather is one who feels this very character of the river to be inviting and productive. Even more so is it the case that the residents of the river—those who do build there as well as the animals who drink there and the forest and land that grow there—are able to be at home at the river and to flourish at the river precisely because the river is not marked by stillness, stagnancy, or fathomability. Hölderlin seems to emphasize this point when he describes how one can hear the 'growth' in the resinous trees of the Ister directly following descriptions of the *river's* forest as having scent that wafts 'high above' (i.e., unreachable), as being 'black' (i.e., in-visible), and as having 'depths' in which one 'roam[s]' (i.e., resistant to definitive mapping or charting); here again, Hölderlin emphasizes the development that arises from and stands upon the always moving, always ungraspable character of the river and what it 'mysteriously' does and offers. Settling arises in the unsettled.

Further, it is the guest, the foreigner-guest, who actually allows us to 'embrace' *ourselves* as 'at home' precisely in being 'unhomely.' Heidegger argues that '[b]ecoming homely demands a going away into the foreign',[17] because *our* being-at-home is precisely a journey through beings that are *not like us* and to which we must give accommodation and to which we must accommodate ourselves. It is

through the foreigner and through this dynamism of accommodation that we are made to notice our comportment with respect to beings, to notice and feel what is 'ours,' to experience the way we have made a home.[18] The foreigner allows us to 'own' what is ours in a way we cannot do on our own: we are not our own on our own.

Reminding us of Socrates' own discussion of our home in the laws, Heidegger directs this analysis to the *polis*. The *polis*, like the river, is a site—a pole, as Heidegger describes it—around which we gather and define ourselves and experience ourselves *as this* definite being opposed to what is beyond us or different than us and our festivities, laws, practice, habits, etc.: '[W]hat is essential in the historical being of human beings resides in the pole-like relatedness of everything to this site of abode, that is, this site of being homely in the midst of beings as a whole.'[19] The *polis* is the established reality in which—as Socrates showed—we give ourselves an established and settled identity. Continuing his focus on the second chorus of Sophocles' *Antigone*, Heidegger, however, emphasizes the 'counter-turning' nature that Sophocles identifies as belonging to humans in his description of humans as belonging to the *polis*, but also as being capable of behaving against the *polis*:

> As venturing forth in all directions, human beings arrive everywhere and yet everywhere come to nothing, insofar as what they attain in venturing forth is never sufficient to fulfill and sustain their essence. Whatever human beings undertake turns in itself—and not in the first instance in any adverse consequences—counter to what humans are fundamentally seeking from it, namely, becoming homely in the midst of beings.[20]

Here too, Heidegger argues, the *polis* reveals itself—in its changes, its revolving history, its ability to be influenced—not to be settled, not the answer to what we are. Though the *polis* is precisely our 'own' place, as Socrates argued, it is not so easily 'owned.' Indeed, Heidegger asserts that 'what is properly one's own, and appropriating it, is what is most difficult.' He continues: '[L]earning what is foreign, as standing in the service of such appropriation is easier for precisely this reason.'[21] So, it is to this end that he calls for an outward journey or the creation of a guest-house, for a place that will support an encounter with the foreign.[22]

In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida develops further this argument that it is only in the having of a guest to one's home that one truly 'comes into one's own' in the home.[23] Derrida writes:

> In order to constitute the space of a habitable house and a home, you also need an opening, a door and windows, you have to give up a passage to

> the outside world [*l'étranger*].... The monad of home has to be hospitable in order to be *ipse*, itself at home, habitable at-home in the relation of the self to itself.[24]

One truly begins to *have* a home through the guest, for the guest allows the home to become thematic for the host. The encounter with the guest necessarily involves a crossing of and, implied in this, a basic highlighting of a threshold. The illumination of this threshold brings to the fore the question of how 'we' do things versus how 'you' do things.[25] Thus, the guest allows the home to cohere as 'what is ours,' inciting the home's 'owner' to experience this own-ness for the first time. Derrida writes: 'We thus enter from the inside: the master of the house is at home, but nonetheless he comes to enter his home through the guest—who comes from outside. The master thus enters from the inside *as if* he came from the outside.'[26]

The guest forces the host to step outside of and, thus, notice her regular rhythm with her home insofar as the homeowner is called, as a host, to address the needs of the guest rather than her own. In order to accommodate the guest, the host's home must now operate to some extent according to the guest's home-rules. In making such an adjustment toward the 'objective' guest, the homeowner finds herself in the unusual situation of living in her home according to another person's ways of doing things, and, thus, becomes like a guest in her own home.

While initially this seems like a fundamental unsettling of the experience of home, it is, Derrida argues, the very activity by which the homeowner comes to be at home.[27] To begin, the encounter brings to the fore the question of whether there is (at this time as well as for all time) a proper place—a home—for the other established here. In the activity of attempting to make the home a homely place for someone and doing so precisely with the recognition of the utterly unaccomplishable nature of this task, one most fully grasps the character of *homemaking*. To make a home is forever an unsettled and unfinished activity, and the having of a guest allows one to grasp how this is so even for one's own self.[28]

Even after the guest departs, the home continues to be experienced differently: the homemaker may be proud of the home; may be relieved to be free of the situation of having attention drawn to her/his own or another's way of being; may be ashamed of her- or himself or of her/his treatment of the other; may be longing for more contact with the other, etc. When the guest leaves and the host no longer needs (or gets) to address the guest's foreign ways, the host may encounter the feeling of 'returning to normal,' of 'getting back to

my way of doing things,' and in so doing has a further experience of what 'normal' and 'my way' actually are. The guest, in other words, enables the host to 'own' her home for the first time by forcing her first to depart from the home and, then, by offering her the ability to see her home for the first time upon her return to her home. The guest makes visible and palpable to her what is typically 'too close to home' to notice. It is precisely through the guest that one 'comes home.'

Socrates' analysis of the laws of the *polis* may have seemed like a conservative defense of established ways, but the analyses of Heidegger and Derrida now suggest that the nature of the *polis* is only fulfilled in its openness to the foreign—the very opposite of conservatism. Socrates showed that the resources for our determinate identities—our material existence, the formation of our specific identities, the specific resources for communal life that are available to us—come to us from the laws, and thus reveals that the individual identities we take for granted are identities that we in fact *receive* from the laws. Heidegger and Derrida add to this the recognition that our very experience of 'ownness' comes to us from without, and, specifically, comes to us from what is not our own—from the foreign. For this reason, then, the *polis* can only properly be a home for us in our distinctive 'unhomely' nature by being open to what is beyond it. Let us consider, now, the challenge of making our political homes hospitable to others.

III. Hospitality: Conditioned and Unconditional

Like the way we experience the body, we ultimately experience home as the constitutive structure of support in the *background* of our daily activities, as the comfort that we know is there when we need it and so needs no second thought.[29] This is true politically and culturally, as well as 'domestically.' Typically, becoming a successful, functioning adult involves integration into a wide range of cultural practices that come to establish our political home. It is precisely by embracing these shared ways of behaving that we accomplish a cultural form of 'joint attention,' an experiencing-together, that allows us to coordinate and integrate our experience with that of others, thereby overcoming the arbitrariness and idiosyncrasy of merely 'private opinion' and embracing a shared sense of reality.[30] Such cultural practices, however, are not universally shared, that is, different cultures develop different forms for practicing joint perception, and growing up to be a successful, 'normal' participant

in culture typically involves developing a rigid commitment to one's own cultural forms of behavior: an unquestioning presumption of its normalcy that, as we said, 'needs no second thought.' Though our political way of being-at-home is not given to us, but rather is a perspective *established* historically and contingently, the very contingent and perspectival character of this experience is repressed and experienced by us *as if* it were simply given, and is so because it is the level we live from.[31]

Our home is our platform for engaging with the world, our very ability to have an openness to what is outside us is.[32] But our political home is embodied in a prejudicial perspective, which is to say, a *closedness* to the outside. Because our cultural practices are not universally recognized, but because we nonetheless live them as 'natural,' our cultural ways of being-at-home are naturally oppressive of the ways of others: our typical rigidity of cultural presumption is naturally a closure to the ways of others. The price of our 'making ourselves at home' in the world is that we make the world that we inhabit inhospitable to others. This duplicity of our way of being-at-home—its simultaneously being open and closed to what is foreign to it—is not a condition that can be overcome or 'corrected,' but is intrinsic to our experience of establishing a functioning relationship with the inter-human world. Indeed, it is the permanent condition within which all our interactions with the outside must be developed.

The very processes of cultural development that make us 'healthy adults,' amount to various forms of political rigidity. Overcoming our political rigidity, though, cannot be a matter of a wholesale abandonment of our situation of inherent closedness, but must be a transformative way of operating within the determinate terms of our political home. Political progress, rather, will come through changing the way we relate to our political homes: we must find an openness to transformation within our political being-at-home. This need to find an openness *within* our closed situations is what Derrida defends under the idea of 'democracy to come.'

In *Rogues*, Derrida writes that '[o]nly an unconditional hospitality can give meaning and practical rationality to a concept of hospitality.'[33] Hospitality must be unconditionally open to the ultimate other if it is to honor the demand of leaving aside the self-same in favor of listening and responding genuinely to what is beyond. Derrida connects the practices of hospitality and democracy, arguing that both lack a proper meaning, in that there is no rule or law or even sense that is determined in advance without the participation of those who come together to ask the question of how things, how the

other, and how oneself is to count. Rather than being the enactment of a fixed rule, democracy is the collective practice of determining 'What is 'living together'?' [34]

> For what is lacking in democracy is proper meaning, the very [*même*] meaning of the selfsame [*même*] (*ipse*, *metipse*, *metipissimus*, *meisme*), the it-self [*soi-même*], the selfsame, the properly selfsame of the it-self. Democracy is defined, as is the very ideal of democracy, by this lack of the proper and the selfsame.[35]

This meaning of democracy, for it to be *meaningful*, must be open, not 'proper' to something in advance.

For this reason, the hospitality that defines democracy can never be simply the application of a fixed procedure: there is no fixed method that can be guaranteed in advance to succeed. 'Unconditional hospitality,' Derrida writes, 'exceeds juridical, political, or economic calculation ... just as justice exceeds law, the juridical, and the political.'[36] He writes:

> A calculable event, one that falls, like a case, like the object of some knowledge, under the generality of a law, norm, determinative judgment, or technoscience, and thus of a power-knowledge and a knowledge-power, is not *at least in this measure*, an event. Without the absolute singularity of the incalculable and the exceptional, no thing and no one, nothing *other* and thus *nothing*, arrives or happens.[37]

Without the incalculable, there is no happening of meaning, only captivation and instinct or a form of meaning that is already decided, and, thus, as Derrida argues, not an event of democracy, of cooperative, questioning engagement. The unconditional hospitality that defines democracy, then, must always be 'to come' insofar as it must forever be open to questioning what will count as law for its members and also who will count as its members, and, thus, ultimately, always be open to questioning itself.[38]

At the same time, however, there is no hospitality *unless* it is conditional: any political situation must be determinate and specific if it is to offer its guest something particular, if it is to provide anything but the self-same to the guest. There is no 'event' of hospitality except in the case of an encounter between a home and one who is excluded from that home.[39] That is to say, hospitality and democracy require and are marked by the dialogue of at least two 'others.' Each 'other' brings the particularity proper to him- or herself, brings the conditionality of being a specific person with specific demands and interests. It is only through these specificities and conditions, and their challenges to one another, that a dialogue

becomes possible: there must be otherness for a conversation to begin. If these conditions were to disappear, so too would the event of an unconditional, that is, a never-to-be-fully-finished conversation. I must never let go of myself entirely to become the other, or else I will fail to see that other, to be able to honor that other and his or her view, insofar as I will have lost the perspective that my own otherness had allowed me to have on the other. The only meaningful hospitality, then, is a conditioned hospitality, an invitation for you to meet me on my conditions—the irreducible conditions that make me a specific someone.

In sum, then, there is no escaping the command to *unconditional* hospitality; yet, at the same time, that command can only speak to a specific someone, to someone who makes a specific home in the world, and, therefore, to someone who could only ever enact that hospitality *conditionally*. Our political challenge, then, is not to eliminate the 'conditioned' or 'prejudicial' character of our being-at-home; it is, rather, to live our specificity *as* an openness to others, to replace an attitude of rigidity with an attitude of plasticity.

Ethnocentricity is a condition with which we must always contend. Because we are always politically perspectival, it is incumbent upon us to be self-critical with respect to our ways of being-at-home. Our political responsibility is to challenge our cultural rigidity, and develop in its place an attitude of plasticity in our inhabitation of our political homes. We must recognize, therefore, the need for a kind of political therapy.

IV. Cosmopolitan Living as Political Therapy

It is important to remember that the very *raison d'être* for the rigidity of one's political perspective is the need to coordinate one's perspective with that of others. As we saw above, the embrace of our festivities, laws, language, etc., is precisely our way of making our perspective answerable to the perspective of the other, and establishing a sharedness of vision. Just as it is the need to engage with others that initially motivates us to develop such a cultural home, so can *other people* provide us with alternative models of how to be and thereby motivate us to reform our cultural rigidities.[40] Drawing on the insights of Heidegger and Derrida on the nature of the guest, let us consider cosmopolitan living as a politically therapeutic model of making a home with others.[41]

It is the guest who has the capacity to give me my true 'homecoming,' for the guest teaches me how to be a host. It is the exposure to the

other that enables my own transformative growth into an attitude of plasticity. I propose that, similarly, what facilitates our cultural growth is precisely exposure to others and their different ways of being-at-home. Such cultural growth, though, like psychological therapy, involves opening a person to a situation of vulnerability, a situation in which the way of being for which a person is aiming is not yet securely hers. Care is needed here, then, since it is precisely in moments of vulnerability that we often revert to ways of perceiving or acting that are most ingrained in us: simply being thrust blindly into an alien way of being is not likely for most people to allow for an immersion in that culture that will bring about an ability to sympathetically reflect that culture. Good, psychologically therapeutic situations typically involve a *careful* exposure to what is challenging. Dramatic play therapy, for example, allows one to develop an empowered relationship to what one finds difficult by allowing one to 'play' at inhabiting different situations within the context of a supportive environment.[42] In general, the therapist provides a protected environment in which the patient can learn to deal with a challenge that might otherwise be overwhelming. In light of this notion of 'careful exposure,' we can see now why a culturally and politically varied—a cosmopolitan—social world is itself the appropriate therapeutic environment for one's 'cultural' health.

To counter the clash of perspectives that often characterizes the rigidity and ignorance with which members of different cultures often encounter each other, cosmopolitan political settings, like a good therapist, offer non-confrontational settings of multicultural exposure. Cosmopolitan living can be therapeutic, precisely because it offers its participants a vision of different ways to be, and calls for one's own creative responsiveness in accommodating oneself to this variety. We might say that, in a cosmopolitan culture, 'how to live' is precisely 'at play.' Making a home in a cosmopolitan setting constantly requires one to treat others as legitimate 'guests' in one's own home and, indeed, requires that one experience oneself as an alien 'guest' in the legitimate home of others. This 'careful exposure' to different and perhaps alien *cultural* ways of taking up the world that comes with cosmopolitan or multicultural living is crucial to the full development of our 'existential health.'[43]

Our ways of being-at-home, both personally and politically, can suffer, as Aristotle might say, from two opposed vices. On the one hand, our way of being-at-home may emphasize too fiercely our need for security from the other; such a home will sink us into an attitude of prejudice, of seeing ourselves and our surroundings only

in light of our already established views and customs; such a home encourages us to live more akin to the laws of necessity. On the other hand, we may hail from a home that pushes us continuously into what is other, and that lacks a certain continuity and reliability of perspective; such a home can leave us without a firm enough sense of self, and can leave us feeling lost and unable or unwilling to respond to others and our situation with decisiveness, with a settled perspective; in such a home we can neither settle meaningfully nor engage effectively with others.[44] Both of these 'vices of inhabitation' are simultaneously debilitating for both the self and the other.

An existentially 'healthy' home—both personal and political—amounts, on the contrary, to living in a way that reflects the world in its diversity. The world must, in other words, be able to show itself through us. This does not amount to reducing the subject to a projector of an alien reality, but rather acknowledges that the very nature of subjectivity is *to be* insofar as it is engaged with what *is* beyond itself. Subjectivity, on this account, loses a sense of relativism that is often used to question the 'validity' of the subjective viewpoint, and instead stands as *the* exemplary site of reflecting reality as it is. This reflection is never going to exist as a one-to-one correspondence with reality. As subjects, we are essentially characterized by our freedom. No immediate one-to-one correspondence between subjectivity and the world could exist, for this would be a situation lacking any reflection; it would be a situation of necessity, of natural law. Correspondingly, the world does not have one and only one interpretation. The givens it offers will, according to the situation in which they are taken up, have different, equally 'valid' interpretations. That said, it is not any interpretation that gears onto the givens of reality: central to subjectivity is the possibility of misinterpreting the world and its demands. Existential health is characterized by a subject's ability to be able to reflect adequately the reality of his or her intersubjective situation. It is a matter, that is to say, of making oneself at home *in* the world in such a way that one is reciprocally making oneself a home *for* the world, making a home that is simultaneously the other's and my own. As Heidegger and Derrida suggest, then, to take up adequately our nature as beings who are forever at home in unhomeliness—i.e., who are *free*—we must learn to be hosts such that we can accommodate the other as well as ourselves. Successfully inhabiting such a reality requires habits of plasticity and, indeed, it is precisely through our careful engagement with this multicultural reality that these habits of plasticity can be cultivated and developed.

Conclusion: Socratic Homemaking

In the *Crito*, Socrates argues that while it would be wrong of him to run from the commands of the law after his condemnation to death by those laws, it would not have been wrong for him prior to this condemnation to protest the laws that led him to this condemnation if he believed that such laws were unjust. Further, in his call to give justice to the laws, justice here should not be seen as merely repeating or regurgitating that which the original home outwardly professes. In Socrates' understanding of the laws, the laws may demand of a citizen that she in fact challenge those laws, as his approach to honoring the oracle of Apollo took the form of his challenging the words of the oracle. The laws, in Socrates' understanding, do not speak univocally and unambiguously. Here, it is interesting to compare Socrates' lawful behavior with that of the prosecutors: all are arguably expressing their living engagements with the laws, but the 'style' of this living is quite different. The prosecutors take up their laws precisely as a call to conservative cultural rigidity, whereas Socrates hears the laws precisely as a demand for dialogue, and, thus, for the very plasticity we have been studying. Socrates shows his way of having made and found a home through the laws, and it is *his* way in spite of it *also* being a way that is shaped by the laws. This fact that homes can be made in different ways out of the 'same' fodder shows that our actions cannot simply be dictated to us according to 'the' rule book of the laws. Socrates' own practice of enacting the laws required him to experience himself as under the imperative to think and act critically and ethically, and, indeed, precisely to challenge prevailing views and challenging them to the point that it cost him his life. In dying for the laws, he is primarily dying in defense of the plasticity of the laws: he is dying for the openness of law to the inherent demands of critical self-consciousness.

Socrates lives the laws as the demand that they be answerable to the demands of rationality and self-conscious subjectivity, just as much as he requires that self-conscious subjectivity hold itself answerable to the laws.[45] In requiring the laws to be laws of free inquiry, Socrates, in other words, demands that the laws be welcoming of what they had not anticipated, that they be hospitable to a guest that might transform them. Indeed, Socrates himself is effectively the stranger in his own city. With Socrates, then, as with Heidegger and Derrida, we see both the need to establish ourselves in a specific home, and that the very vitality of this home requires that it be open to the foreign guest.

The Athens that Socrates defended was itself, for its time, a cosmopolitan center.[46] The *Republic* begins with Socrates returning from a festival to celebrate the introduction of a foreign religious rite.[47] Again, in Book VIII of the *Republic*, Socrates identifies the democratic constitution (which is the constitution of Athens) as that political regime that inherently contains within itself all political regimes.[48] Our own investigation of the theme of the guest has allowed us to see that such cosmopolitan settings precisely mark the health of a political home, in that they are political societies inherently defined by the need for the mutual accommodation of aliens, reciprocally playing host and guest to each other. It is in multicultural cosmopolitanism that we see Socratic homemaking properly enacted.

Notes

1. Plato, *Crito*, in *Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo*, 2nd edn, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2002), 50c–51c.
2. Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'*, trans. William McNeill and Julia Davis (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996).
3. Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality: Anne Doufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, trans. R. Bowlby (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).
4. Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. P.-A. Brault and M. Nass (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005)
5. On the Greek language in which he was raised, see Plato, 'Alcibiades I,' in *Complete Works*, trans. J.M. Cooper (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1997), 111a; my attention was drawn to this passage by Patricia Fagan, who studies its significance in detail in '*Alcibiades I* and Pederasty,' Chapter 1 of *Plato and Tradition* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2012); on the *Crito* in particular, see 'Socrates and Achilles,' Chapter 6 of the same work. On Socrates' (and Plato's) indebtedness to the tradition of Greek tragic drama, see Patricia Fagan, 'Plato's Oedipus: Myth and Philosophy in the *Apology*,' John Russon, 'The (Childish) Nature of the Soul in Plato's *Apology*,' and James Crooks, 'Inventing Socrates: Truth, Jest, and Care in Plato's *Apology*,' Chapters 5, 9, and 6, respectively, in *Reexamining Socrates in the Apology*, eds Patricia Fagan and John Russon (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2009).
6. Plato, *Crito*, 50d–51d.
7. Ibid., 51c–53a.
8. This is an interesting parallel to Descartes' '*cogito*' argument, in which the attempt to deny 'I think' enacts a performative self-contradiction. See René Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, 4th edn, trans. Donald Cress (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1999), 63–64. See also Kant's use of a performative self-contradiction in the formulation of the categorical imperative in Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 31–34.
9. For a fuller discussion of the existential character of home, see Kirsten Jacobson, 'A Developed Nature: A Phenomenological Account of the Experience of Home,' *Continental Philosophy Review*, 42 (2009): 355–73.

10. Heidegger's *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'* is based on a lecture course delivered by Heidegger at the University of Freiburg during the summer of 1942. In the lecture course, Heidegger speaks in defense of the Third Reich for its opposition to the 'technological menace' and 'calculative domination' taking hold most clearly in the United States, a political culture marked by the scientific pursuit of 'space' and 'time' in their generalizable qualities, and, thus, on the denial of the necessity of home (42–48, 85–87, 123–25, 131–37, 165–67). For further discussion of these themes, and of the controversy surrounding Heidegger's involvement with Nazism, see the chapter 'Textuality and the Question of Origin: Heidegger's Reading of 'Andenken' and 'Der Ister,'' in Veroniqui Foti, *Heidegger and the Poets* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1992); Otto Pöggeler, 'Heidegger's Political Self-Understanding' and Martin Heidegger, 'Overcoming Metaphysics' and 'Only a God Can Save Us: *Der Spiegel's* Interview with Martin Heidegger' in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Wolin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 198–244, 67–90, and 91–116, respectively. The hermeneutical complexity of interpreting the relationship between Heidegger and Nazism is demonstrated throughout Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).
11. Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'*, 74.
12. For a discussion of Heidegger's view of language in this experience of being not-at-home, see the chapter 'Revolutionary Poetics' in Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei, *Heidegger, Hölderlin, and the Subject of Poetic Language: Toward a New Poetics of Dasein* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 202–36, esp. 228–36. For a discussion of the way in which Heidegger sees language as something that *can* return us to an experience of being-at-home, see the chapter 'The Saving Power of Art' in Miguel de Beistegui, *The New Heidegger* (New York: Continuum Books, 2005), 125–54.
13. Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'*, 76.
14. Ibid., 4.
15. Ibid., 6.
16. Ibid., 5.
17. Ibid., 142.
18. In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas argues that Heidegger's recognition of dwelling and building as the site of our way of being-in-the-world does not go far enough in emphasizing that it is the Other who allows us to enter into the domain of the human sojourn. Levinas writes: 'Things are not, as in Heidegger, the foundation of the site, the quintessence of all the relations that constitute our presence on the earth (and 'under the heavens, in company with men, and in the expectation of the gods'). The relationship between the same and the other, my welcoming of the other, is the ultimate fact, and in it the things figure not as what one builds but as what one gives.' [Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer, 1991), 77]. According to Levinas' argument, the Other, like ourselves, is the sort of being that is free and has the power to give shape and meaning to the world, and thus can disturb our sense of being-at-home by her own claims. As such, the Other prompts us to come into a new reality: 'To recognize the Other is therefore to come to him across the world of possessed things, but at the same time to establish, by gift, community and universality. Language is universal because it offers things which are mine to the Other. To speak is to make the

world common, to create commonplaces.... The world in discourse is no longer what it is in separation, in the being at home with oneself where everything is given to me; it is what I give: the communicable, the thought, the universal' (ibid., 76). While Levinas' points about the place of the Other are profound, I do not find his interpretation of Heidegger compelling. For a criticism of Levinas' interpretation of Heidegger, see Derrida's 'Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas,' in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 79–153.

19. Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'*, 82.
20. Ibid., 87.
21. Ibid., 124.
22. Ibid., 125.
23. There are surely stages to this. For instance, the child's sense of learning this is *my* home is different than the adult's, and the 'new' adult who is just now coming into her first 'personal' home has a different experience than that of an adult who has had a home throughout a marriage and the bearing and raising of children. In either case, though, engagement with the other is fundamentally at play.
24. Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 61.
25. 'We' is importantly ambiguous: it can mean 'you and I' (opposed to 'them/her/him') or it can mean 'they/she/he and I' (opposed to 'you'). See Émile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. M.E. Meek (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1971), 252–54. For further discussion, see Joanne Scheibman, 'Exclusive and Inclusive Patterning of the English First Person Plural: Evidence from Conversation,' Chapter 26 of *Language, Culture, and Mind*, eds Michael Achard and Suzanne Kemmer (Stanford: CLSI Publications, 2004), 377–96.
26. Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 125.
27. Heidegger makes a similar point when he writes about our venturing away from home: 'This venturing is no mere leaving something behind but is already the first and therefore decisive act of return to the home.' [Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'*, 133]
28. Heidegger's essay 'Building Dwelling Thinking' (in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, ed. and trans. A. Hofstadter [New York: Perennial Library, 1971]) takes up the character of our dwelling in a similar vein.
29. On the non-thematic experience of the 'lived' body, see Drew Leder, *The Absent Body* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 34–35; and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), 81–89, 142–47.
30. On the notion of 'joint attention,' see Timothy P. Racine and Jeremy I.M. Carpendale, 'The Role of Shared Practice in Joint Attention,' *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 25 (2007): 3–25; and Shaun Gallagher and Daniel D. Hutto, 'Understanding Others through Primary Interaction and Narrative Practice,' in *The Shared Mind: Perspectives on Intersubjectivity*, ed. Jordan Zlatev (Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins, 2008), 17–38.
31. See Kirsten Jacobson, 'The Experience of Home and the Space of Citizenship,' *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 48(3) (2010): 219–44.
32. On the theme of 'platform,' see John Russon, *Bearing Witness to Epiphany: Persons, Things, and the Nature of Erotic Life* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), Chapters 1 and 5.

33. Derrida, *Rogues*, 149. For a discussion of Derrida's notion of 'unconditional hospitality,' see the chapter 'A More Sufficient Response?' in Leonard Lawlor, *This Is Not Sufficient: An Essay on Animality and Human Nature in Derrida* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).
34. Derrida, *Rogues*, 11. Michael Naas connects this question to the practices of hospitality, political life, and the reading of philosophy in ''*Alors, qui êtes-vous?*' Jacques Derrida and the Question of Hospitality,' *SubStance*, 34(1) (2005): 6–17.
35. Derrida, *Rogues*, 37; see also *Rogues*, 87.
36. Ibid., 149.
37. Ibid., 148.
38. Ibid., 9–11, 84–86. On this point, see also Michael Naas, ''One Nation ... Indivisible': Jacques Derrida on the Autoimmunity of Democracy and the Sovereignty of God,' *Research in Phenomenology*, 36 (2006): 15–44.
39. Indeed, this becomes an aporetic problem revealed by Derrida's argument, since this demand for particularity means that a *democratic* call for cosmopolitanism will necessarily exclude certain other particularities—namely, governments and ideals that hold to exclusionary or fundamentally conservative views. Derrida argues in *Rogues* that 'democratic' *forces* such as the United States can end up becoming the most roguish states of all by demanding that other sovereignties give up their views and political commitments in order to become 'democratically enlightened' in the vein of the model *supplied by*—dictated by?—the U.S. Derrida, *Rogues*, 95–97, 102.
40. This argument is more fully developed in John Russon, 'Heidegger, Hegel, and Ethnicity: The Ritual Basis of Identity,' *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 33 (1995): 509–32; see also Réal Fillion, *Multicultural Dynamics and the Ends of History: Philosophical Explorations in Kant, Hegel, and Marx* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2009).
41. For a related argument, see Gideon Baker, 'Cosmopolitanism as Hospitality: Revisiting Identity and Difference in Cosmopolitanism,' *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 34 (2009): 107–28.
42. On dramatic play therapy, see Susana Pendzik, 'On Dramatic Reality and Its Therapeutic Function in Drama Therapy,' *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 33 (2006), 271–80; and Sue Jennings, *Introduction to Dramatherapy: Theatre and Healing—Ariadne's Ball of Thread* (London and Bristol, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1998).
43. See Sheldon Pollock's 'The Cosmopolitan Vernacular,' *Journal of Asian Studies*, 57(1) (1998): 6–37, for a discussion of the global–local interplay that can occur when a cosmopolitan 'setting' may urge a specific community to develop a vernacular language and 'sense of self' in opposition to the dominant universal. Pollock's essay also offers broader insights into the way in which certain models of cosmopolitanism can indeed tend toward leveling out the very differences that this essay's vision of cosmopolitanism (as incorporating otherness) is discussing. Pollock discusses, for example, the 'uniting' effects of a chosen trans-regional language—a move that can encourage a certain cosmopolitanism by bringing diverse people together through a shared discourse, but that equally can begin to wash out particularities in ways people think, create, and act owing to the consciousness-structuring impact of the language itself. In 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent,' in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, trans. Ted Humphrey (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1983), Kant insists

that the ideal cosmopolitan society must indeed maintain antagonisms among people with differing views, for without that reason and discourse will not be able to continue developing. He also, however, sees a necessity for diverse peoples coming together through unifying powers. Pollock's and Derrida's arguments reveal some of the challenges of reaching this ideal end.

44. For an argument that this is the basic situation of the agoraphobic, see Kirsten Jacobson, 'Embodied Domestics, Embodied Politics: Women, Home, and Agoraphobia,' *Human Studies*, 34 (2011): 1–21.
45. See the chapter 'Citizen Socrates' in Gregory Recco, *Athens Victorious: Democracy in Plato's Republic* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), 73–94.
46. It is significant to note that this cosmopolitan and democratic site was also one that supported slavery and prohibited women and non-citizens from participating in the political arena. That Athens can be considered the birthplace of democracy further urges us to heed Derrida's reminder that democracy is always yet to-come, and also to beware of the 'roguish' elements that are perhaps always present within any political situation.
47. *The Republic of Plato*, 2nd edn, trans. Alan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), Bk. I, 327a.
48. Plato, *Republic*, Bk. VIII, 561e. Derrida discusses this passage in *Rogues*, 25–27.