

A DERRIDEAN RECLAMATION OF HOSPITALITY
IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

by

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ABSTRACT

The goal of my research is to introduce Derridean hospitality to Library and Information Science in a way that frames the service model of librarianship as well as elevates the labor of hospitality within the field. Derridean hospitality encompasses Derridean deconstruction, so I explore hospitality in LIS by writing in a series of deconstructions. First, I explore the self-deconstruction within the etymology of the term “hospitality,” an endeavor which tears hospitality from the complacent and transactional ways it has previously been invoked in LIS scholarship and practice. Next, I present Derrida’s conceptual deconstruction of hospitality, exploring the mediation between unconditional and conditional hospitality. This deconstruction is used in fields adjacent to LIS to re-frame service and elevate hospitality labor, benefits which I argue it can also accomplish within LIS. Finally, I explore Derrida’s deconstruction of host and guest, applying this deconstruction to the librarian’s role as host and outlining the intellectual and affective responsibilities of such a role. Together, these deconstructions complicate and elevate hospitality within LIS while providing an ethical heuristic through which to mediate tension in the field.

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
PART ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
PART TWO: ETYMLOGICAL DECONSTRUCTION.....	9
PART THREE: CONCEPTUAL DECONSTRUCTION.....	24
PART FOUR: RELATIONAL DECONSTRUCTION.....	42
PART FIVE: CONCLUSION	58
REFERENCES.....	66

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Libraries are places of hospitality. The simplicity of this statement masks questions unaddressed in Library and Information Science (LIS). Namely, what is hospitality? Is there a conceptual framework of hospitality already present within LIS? How does a shift in such a conceptual framework affect the service model of librarianship and the scholarship associated with it?

These questions prompted my initial research into hospitality, and, after surveying theorists and ideas inside and outside of LIS, they led me to the works of Jacques Derrida. Derrida is an Algerian-born French critical theorist best known for creating the post-modern understanding of deconstruction.¹ A controversial academic figure, he refused to attach himself to a traditional academic discipline, instead writing in a space between philosophy and literature in order to question structuralism and dismantle the hierarchical power dynamics within dichotomous traditions of thought. Derrida also wrote a critical theory of hospitality, intertwining the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas with his own theories of deconstruction, ethics, and cosmopolitanism. It is Derrida's critical theory of hospitality that I aim to place into dialogue with LIS scholarship and practice, both problematizing and bolstering the concept of hospitable librarianship. Before launching into such a project, however, I aim to situate Derrida within LIS, contextualize his theory of hospitality, explain his use of the term Other and his theory of

¹ Leonard Lawler, "Jacques Derrida," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2019, para. 1.

deconstruction, and, finally, extrapolate on how I use his deconstructive process in my own writing to argue for a Derridean reclamation of hospitality in LIS.²

Derrida may, initially, seem an odd choice in critical theorist to use in this specifically LIS context. His contemporaries, including Foucault, Bourdieu, and Habermas, are more commonly found in recent LIS scholarship. Moreover, Derrida's writing style is purposefully chaotic and contradictory, opposite to the order that is so frequently sought after in a profession built around enlightenment ideals.³ Derrida rarely adhered to straightforward, argumentative, academic prose. Rather, he invented his own rules; his books live in zones of contradiction and he relies on aporetic structure to create a tension that "dislocat[es] the tranquility of the obvious."⁴ In many ways, he is the Socratic gadfly of postmodernism, intent on "revealing the uncanny at the heart of the most familiar" while simultaneously gaining a reputation for his travelling lectures and critique of power structures.⁵

Understanding Derrida's background provides a glimpse behind his radical nonconformity, and this glimpse helps in understanding his theory of hospitality. His childhood in Algeria was marred by poverty and antisemitism. These forces came to the surface when he "was expelled from the Ben Aknoun high school in 1942" for being Jewish, which, in his words, "I didn't understand at all and which no one explained to me, the wound was of another order, and it never healed."⁶ To finish his primary education, Derrida was sent to a different school specifically for Jewish students and taught by Jewish professors who had themselves been

² Throughout my paper, I capitalize the term Other when I am using it in its Derridean sense. I do this to make it clear when I am using the Derridean Other and also to emphasize the radical singularity of this Other.

³ Wayne Bivons-Tatum, *Libraries and the Enlightenment* (Los Angeles: Library Juice Press, 2012).

⁴ Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, trans. Rachel Bowlby, ed. Mieke Bal and Hent de Vries (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000): 43.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁶ Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Roudinesco, *For What Tomorrow... A Dialogue*, trans. Jeff Fort, ed. Mieke Bal and Hent de Vries (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2004): 109.

excluded from universities throughout the region. Derrida hated it, and “it was there, I believe, that I began to recognize-- if not to contract-- this ill, this malaise, the ill-being that, throughout my life, rendered me inapt for ‘communitarian’ experience, incapable of enjoying any kind of membership in a group.”⁷ His radical discomfort with group membership accompanied him throughout his career, and it greatly informed his academic nonconformity. Additionally, his early experience of religious persecution informed his scholarly pursuit of using theory to bring about practical justice towards the Other in a given society.

It is this orientation towards the Other which ultimately inspired Derrida’s theorizing on hospitality. In the 1990s, Derrida presented a series of lectures on hospitality that were then published in *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* and *Of Hospitality*. These lectures were contrived during a “particularly dark year for France’s reputation as a place of hospitality and refuge from oppression, with the clumsy and violent imposition of the Debret laws on immigrants and those without rights of residence, the so-called ‘sans papiers’, which provoked mass demonstrations of protest in Paris.”⁸ Throughout the years that Derrida spent theorizing on this concept, he always kept the immigrant, the refugee, the foreigner, the Other at the focal point of his texts, arguing for hospitality to transcend the pages of scholarship and affect real-world change. He saw the need for a critical theory of hospitality as pressing, and even the most abstract elements of his theory are grounded in opposition to “the crimes against hospitality endured by the guests [*hôtes*] and hostages of our time, incarcerated or deported day after day, from concentration camp to detention camp, from border to border, close to us or far away.”⁹

⁷ Ibid., 111.

⁸ Jacques Derrida. *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (New York: Routledge, 2001): IX.

⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, ed. Werner Hamacher and David E. Wellbery (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999): 71. Bracketed French included in the original quote.

However, though Derrida was an advocate for these groups of people, he was himself an ardent opponent to group membership, and he thus aimed to avoid discussing the Other strictly as a member of a group. Rather, he used the term “Other” to refer to each Other in singularity: “the absolute and infinite, finite-infinite singularity of the other.”¹⁰ Here he is posing an aporetic question, asking us to evaluate our collective individual relationship with every individual Other.¹¹ This singularity then becomes indicative of a larger cultural understanding of hospitality. Beginning with the singular relationship of self and Other, one is led to a questioning of larger institutional relationships like that between State and Other or, in this case, Library and Other.

Sometimes Derrida, emphasizing the singularity of the Other, discusses the “other of the other,” also called the Third.¹² He does so, following the footsteps of Levinas, to emphasize the complexity of relationships when duality is necessarily breached. What is best for one Other might end up being detrimental to the Other of the Other. Because of this, the question of the Third becomes one of a mediating justice: “For justice, I have to take account of the other of the other, of another other, of a third.”¹³ The figure of the Third is important for understanding Derridean scholarship because it breaks through the duality of self and Other that is sometimes portrayed by critics as an oversimplification. Even when it is simply self and Other in relationship, this Third must be taken into account. Derrida explains:

when the third appears, and when the demand of the third appears, then the call for justice appears also. But [...] the third one does not appear after the other two as someone else-- one, two and then three-- but is already involved in the face to face relation as a call for justice. At this point we encounter a terrible situation: in

¹⁰ Jacques Derrida, “Hostipitality,” in *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Andijar (New York: Routledge, 2002): 388.

¹¹ The term “aporia” and “aporetic” are used frequently by Derrida. They serve to denote an irresolvable internal contradiction.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

order to be just, by taking into account the third one, I have to betray in some way my pure asymmetrical-- but dual-- relation with the other.¹⁴

Moving forward in my scholarship, I reference Derrida's Other as I argue he intended—as a term for a figure of absolute singularity. Moreover, I do so while acknowledging that the relationship with Other is always complicated by the Third.

In addition to the Other and the Third, Derrida's theory of deconstruction is integral to his theory of hospitality. In 1967, when Derrida was thirty-seven, he published his first “three books at once: *Writing and Difference*, *Voice and Phenomenon*, and *Of Grammatology*. In all three, Derrida uses the word ‘deconstruction’ [...] in passing to describe his project. The word catches on immediately and comes to define Derrida's thought.”¹⁵ This theory is a philosophical commentary on structuralism in which dichotomous relationships held for granted throughout intellectual history are acknowledged, then reversed, then dismantled. In *Of Grammatology*, for example, Derrida works with the dichotomy of speech and writing, first attributed to Plato, in which speech is traditionally viewed as philosophically more pure than the alternative. He first flips this dichotomy, and then works with the previously inferior term in order to “re-inscribe [it] as the ‘origin’ or ‘resource’ of the opposition and hierarchy itself.”¹⁶ In exemplifying this deconstructive process, many elements of structuralism, a philosophy popular in the fifties and sixties and built around dichotomies rather than against them, came into question.¹⁷ More importantly, the power inherent to such hierarchies is also questioned: “By creating meaning in systems of binary oppositions, the power relationship is concealed and the reality polarized. By

¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, “Hospitality, Justice, and Responsibility,” in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, ed. Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (New York: Routledge, 1999): 68.

¹⁵ Lawler, “Jacques Derrida.”

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation: Texts and Discussions with Jacques Derrida*. trans. Peggy Kamuf, ed. Christie McDonald (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985): 86.

separating and analysing pieces of text in relation to hidden values, deconstructionists try to illuminate and reduce the gap between binary oppositions.”¹⁸ The concept of deconstruction grew outside of Derrida’s works and also evolved within them. In later writing, the process of deconstruction itself became less structured. Rather than first flipping dichotomies and then describing their interconnectivity, Derrida used deconstruction “to draw forward aporias not resolve them [...] simply to show their opposing existences.”¹⁹ It is this latter conception of deconstruction that he applies to his theory of hospitality.

The reason deconstruction is so important for understanding Derrida’s theory of hospitality is because he frequently combines and equates the two theories. In his chapter, “Hostipitality,” intentionally misspelled to emphasize the etymology of hospitality, Derrida explains, “Hospitality is the deconstruction of the at-home; deconstruction is hospitality to the other, to the other than oneself, the other than ‘its other,’ to an other who is beyond any ‘its other.’”²⁰ Derrida recognizes that hospitality operates at borders. A place of hospitality is a place where self confronts Other, where Other confronts the Third. Hospitality, therefore, involves interacting with difference. Deconstructive hospitality blurs these borders by placing into question the dichotomies that form precisely at the border, dichotomies like host and guest, public and private, sameness and difference, collective and individual, possible and impossible, practical and abstract. The goal of questioning these dualities is not to destroy them but to reveal hidden hierarchies within them and to interrogate the way power works through them.

Perhaps the language of this introduction seems too steeped in philosophy, too abstract to find applicability in LIS. However, it is precisely the connection between deconstruction and

¹⁸ Stina Öresland, Kim Lutzén, Astrid Norberg, Birgit H. Rasmussen, and Sylvia Määttä, “Nurses as ‘guests’ – a study of a concept in light of Jacques Derrida’s philosophy of hospitality,” *Nursing Philosophy* 14 (2013): 119.

¹⁹ Lawler, “Jacques Derrida.”

²⁰ Derrida, “Hostipitality,” 363.

hospitality that makes Derrida's critical theory so relevant to the library setting. This is because the library itself is situated as a border.²¹ It exists, for example, as a border between disciplines, mediating between different subjects and writing styles and research methods. It exists as a border between people, a place where the diverse public comes together, where students of different backgrounds and at different places in their education gather, where scholars wander. The library increasingly operates at the border of ideas and epistemologies, providing access to collective study spaces, traditional stacks, makerspaces, computer labs, community services, etc. Tasked with mediating these borders are librarians in service-oriented positions. Insofar as librarians accomplish this task of mediation, they are already engaged in hospitable labor. However, for reasons I explore throughout the rest of this paper, it is a labor that is enormously undervalued. Explicitly drawing forth a critical theoretical deconstructive hospitality and then applying it to LIS allows for an articulation and framing of the process of mediating tensions in libraries by librarians, ultimately leading to an advocacy of service positions of librarianship.

To accomplish this, I write in a series of Derridean deconstructions and reconstructions, constantly weaving Derrida's critical theory of hospitality with LIS scholarship. The body of my thesis focusses on three major deconstructions: the self-deconstructive etymology of hospitality, the deconstruction of the concept of hospitality, and the deconstruction of the host-guest relationship. This deconstruction, however, is not destruction, and is rather a positive way to negotiate tension within hospitality and librarianship, re-examine the service model of librarianship, and advocate for the integration of radical hospitality in LIS. I begin with an etymological deconstruction in order to explore the origins of hospitality, origins which reveal a complicated history of the concept pre-dating Derrida's critical theory. Such a history allows for

²¹ James Elmborg, "Libraries as the Spaces Between Us: Recognizing and Valuing the Third Space," *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 50 no. 4 (2011): 346.

a critical examination of the evolving relationship between hospitality and LIS. Within this examination I argue away from past uses of hospitality in LIS, specifically addressing the negative effects of hospitality when it is used as a tool for complacency as well as the negative effects of hospitality when it is conflated with industry. This examination of the narrative of hospitality in LIS sets up Part Three in which I explore Derrida's bifurcated, aporetic definition of hospitality, explain how this definition has been used as a tool for professionalization in fields adjacent to librarianship, and, finally, connect Derrida's theory to different ALA core values in order to demonstrate how it can be reconstructed and integrated into practice and scholarship within LIS. Yet, in order to argue for a reclamation of hospitality within LIS, I have to argue for the role of librarian as host. I undertake this argument in Part Four, deconstructing host and guest and then reconstructing librarian as host. In order to connect Derridean hospitality to theories already present in the field as well as draw forth the affective and intellectual responsibilities of librarians engaged in the labor of hospitality, I then situate Derrida's critical theory between Freirean critical pedagogy and a feminist ethics of care. I conclude by connecting these strands of argumentation into a single, ethical heuristic of Derridean hospitality through which service models of librarianship can be framed.

PART TWO: ETYMOLOGICAL DECONSTRUCTION

What is hospitality?

There is a seemingly simple answer to this question: hospitality is an interaction between host and guest in which the former welcomes the latter. Yet I question if this definition, this idea of hospitality as simple welcoming, is allowing “the nature of language [...] to let our speech drift away into the more obvious meanings of words”?²² Is hospitality more than simple welcoming? In order to answer this question, I begin Part Two with a Derridean exploration into the etymology of the term “hospitality.” This dive into the history of the term then leads to an examination of the history of hospitality in US librarianship. This history reveals two different dominant narratives: an early narrative of complacency and a contemporary narrative of transaction. However, in early librarianship and today, counternarratives exist which invoke a conception of hospitality as something active, a reason to experiment with public engagement. These narratives are important to explore because if I am arguing for a reclamation of hospitality, then I must be clear which perceptions of hospitality I aim to be reclaimed and advanced through Derrida’s critical theory.

Derrida’s theory of hospitality certainly encompasses welcome, but it also differentiates itself from so simple a definition. Part of this differentiation lies in what Derrida describes as the

²² Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking*, trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968): 118.

“self-deconstruction” of hospitality.²³ This self-deconstruction occurs in the very word itself, in the etymology of hospitality, something Derrida explores in *Of Hospitality, Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, and “Hostipitality.” At the root of the word hospitality lies the Roman Latin *hostis*, a single word which has contradictory translations: enemy, friend, and stranger.²⁴ In medieval Latin, *hostis* evolved to mean, at the same time, both host and guest—invoking the relationship between strangers, enemies, and friends.²⁵ Hospitality is therefore rooted in a dichotomy of meaning: deriving from enemy *and* friend, host *and* guest. It is this etymology that explains the varying connotations of terms such as host, hostage, hostile, hostel, and hospital. They are all derived from the same Latin *hostis*, but they pertain to different uses of the root word.

The etymology of hospitality not only complicates the concept, but it also invites further dichotomous relationships. For example, hospitality as an action involves “crossing boundaries [...] including those between self and other, private and public, inside and outside, individual and collective, personal and political, emotional and rational, generous and economic.”²⁶ Derrida frequently draws forth such contradictions inherent to the term hospitality and muses that, “if we gather [*nous recueillons*] all these words, all these values, all these significations [...] we see this same contradictory tension at once working, worrying, disrupting, the concept and experience of hospitality, while also making it possible.”²⁷ This is a Derridean aporia: the impossibility and possibility of hospitality. However, “Derrida’s interest in exploring the tensions within ‘hospitality’ is not aimed at cynically unmasking it as just more mastery and power [...] on the

²³ Jacques Derrida, “Hospitality,” *ANGELAKI journal of the theoretical humanities*, trans. Barry Stocker with Forbes Morlock, 5 no. 3 (2000): 5.

²⁴ Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 43.

²⁵ Anatoly Liberman, “‘Guests’ and ‘Hosts.’” *Oxford University Press’s Academic Insights for the Thinking World*, 2013.

²⁶ Judith Still, *Derrida and Hospitality: Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010): 4.

²⁷ Derrida, “Hostipitality,” 360. The bracketed French is included in the original quote.

contrary he wants to show that hospitality is inhabited from within, inwardly disturbed by these tensions, but he does this precisely in order to open hospitality up, to keep it on guard against itself, on the *qui vive*, to open-- to push-- it beyond itself.”²⁸ Hospitality, when explored from within, self-deconstructs, revealing contradictions which both make it possible and impossible and which open Derrida’s theory of hospitality to an equally bifurcated definition explored further in Part Three. This self-deconstruction not only complicates hospitality and allows for theorization, but also, “Exposing binary oppositions such as guest and host is a way to illustrate and thereby highlight more or less hidden values and norms that underpin dominant ways of thinking about ourselves and others.”²⁹ Thus, it is the etymology of hospitality, the simultaneous encapsulating of host and guest, friend and enemy, which allows for further theorization and also practical implementation. It allows us to question core assumptions about hospitality as well as assumptions about the relationship between librarian and patron.

It is the tension inherent to the word itself that opens the concept of hospitality to further deconstruction, “For it is only that internal tension and instability that keeps the idea of hospitality alive, open, loose. If it is not beyond itself, it falls back into itself and becomes a bit of ungracious meanness, that is, hostile.”³⁰ Before exploring the conceptual deconstruction of hospitality, I bring in the etymological self-deconstruction of hospitality in order to make two points particularly clear. First, the hospitality I aim to reclaim in LIS is complicated by its very origins. It is not simple but plagued by sometimes unresolvable internal contradictions. Only through the untangling and mediating of such contradictions can it be elevated as a value in librarianship and used as a point of guidance in navigating critical problems within the field.

²⁸ Derrida, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, 112.

²⁹ Öresland et al., “Nurses as ‘guests’ – a study of a concept in light of Jacques Derrida’s philosophy of hospitality,” 119.

³⁰ Derrida, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, 112.

Second, though this radical hospitality was explicitly drawn forth and theorized by critical theorists in the past half-century, it is not a new concept. Hospitality has always been radical and complicated and encompassing of contradiction—the very word spells out such a history. This is important because, though Derrida theorized hospitality, he did not alter its definition. Rather, he returned the concept of hospitality, a concept sometimes marred by social and economic influences, to its more radical roots. In line with Hamington, an ethicist who combines feminist care ethics with Derridean hospitality in his article, “Toward a Theory of Feminist Hospitality,” I use the term “radical” to emphasize that hospitality is not abstract but “a performed activity directed at particular individuals.”³¹

Though hospitality is derived from an active origin, the history of hospitality in LIS is plagued by complacency. This history is comprehensively drawn forth and examined by Dee Garrison in her 1973 article titled, “The Tender Technicians: The feminization of public librarianship, 1876–1905,” as well as in her subsequent book published in 1979, *Apostles of Culture: The Public Librarian and American Society, 1876-1920*. It is worth spending time on her specific analysis and critique because it largely shapes the current relationship between hospitality and LIS. Only by first addressing the perception of hospitality she puts forth can I then present an argument for reclaiming a more radical hospitality for the field.

Much of Garrison’s historical critique surrounds the “the genteel library hostess;” the figure of the female librarian that became common during the turn of the twentieth century.³² While she spends more time writing about the figure of the subservient, female, librarian “hostess” than she does on the nature of hospitality itself, her research largely equates such

³¹ Maurice Hamington, “Toward a Theory of Feminist Hospitality,” *Feminist Formations* 22 no. 1 (Spring 2010): 32.

³² Dee Garrison, “The Tender Technicians: The feminization of public librarianship, 1876–1905,” *Journal of Social History* 6 no. 2 (1973): 153.

hostesses and, in turn, hospitality, with regressive and gendered amiability.³³ Piecing together scholarship and testimony from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Garrison concludes that female librarians were historically encouraged to be hostesses who embodied a Victorian era femininity and remained agreeable to the gendered roles of library staff that, amongst other things, precluded them from leadership roles supposedly more naturally suited for men.³⁴ Library literature reinforces this view. In a 1905 article from the *Library Journal*, the female librarian was idealized as a “gentle librarian” whose role was that of simple and humble service: “To the stranger, the passing inquirer, [she] does the honors of the library as a hostess and is always ready to ‘lend a hand’ in helping her to the desired book.”³⁵ In the same journal just one year prior, librarian Salome Fairchild wrote, “It is quite certainly conceded that in positions which do not involve the highest degree of executive or business ability but which require a certain ‘gracious hospitality,’ women as a class far surpass men [...] Here it is said her ‘broad sympathies, her quick wits, her intuitions and her delight in self sacrifice’ give her an undoubted advantage.”³⁶ Essentially, the menial, tedious, day-to-day tasks of the library were left open as low paying jobs to be allotted to the “respectable middle-class lady who does indeed demonstrate some of the stereotypical traits of that grim, prim, spinster librarian who has become a commonplace figure in American popular thought.”³⁷ These “prim, spinster” librarians offered hospitality, and part of that hospitality involved remaining removed from social unrest as well as remaining comfortable with their position in society and in librarianship.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Dee Garrison, *Apostles of Culture: The Public Librarian and American Society 1876-1920* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979): xiv.

³⁵ Virginia Graff, “The Gentle Librarian,” *Library Journal* 30 no. 12 (1905): 922.

³⁶ Salome Fairchild, “Women in American Libraries,” *Library Journal* 29 no. 12 (1904): 162.

³⁷ Garrison, *Apostles of Culture: The Public Librarian and American Society 1876-1920*, xiv.

Though Garrison wrote within the library context, it is more broadly understood that there are “social and political implications of hospitality,” and these implications extend to the “socially prescribed roles of those who administer hospitality and those who receive it - metaphorically, the host and guest. Too often women have been unwilling hosts and unwelcome guests.”³⁸ This complicated, gendered history may serve as a reason why “Hospitality is currently a low-ranking value when compared to the list of values usually espoused in North America.”³⁹ The library is simply a microcosmic example of such regressive and gendered hospitality evolving into a reductive understanding of what hospitality is and its subsequent devaluation. When it is hospitality itself that “offered women the opportunity not to change their status but confirm it, not to fulfill their self but to perpetuate their limited self-image,” there seems little motivation to reclaim it as a value in librarianship.⁴⁰ This is especially true given that, as a profession, librarianship is still struggling to diversify and remains female-dominated.⁴¹

Why, then, do I seek to do just that—reclaim hospitality in librarianship? Why reignite a concept that has previously been used as a force for subjugation within the field? Where does Derrida, an Algerian-born French philosopher rather than a librarian or information scientist, fit into this relationship between librarianship and hospitality?

The answer to these questions, in part, is found once again in the works of Garrison, who writes on the importance of recognizing “the way in which the complex, conflictual relationship between the American economic structure and the institutions within that social system generate protest and countercurrents to the reigning elite forces.”⁴² What were the “countercurrents” to

³⁸ Hamington, “Toward a Theory of Feminist Hospitality,” 22.

³⁹ Ibid, 26.

⁴⁰ Garrison, *Apostles of Culture: The Public Librarian and American Society 1876-1920*, xv.

⁴¹ American Library Association, “ALA Diversity Counts.” *Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services* (2012).

⁴² Garrison, *Apostles of Culture: Public Librarian and American Society 1876-1920*, 80.

this narrative of hospitality? Scholarship from the early twentieth century reveals a counternarrative of hospitality in which it is invoked as a value that spurs action rather than complacency, encourages progress rather than stagnancy, and challenges Victorian ideals rather than reinforces them.

This counternarrative is seen as early as 1902 when librarian Alice Sheppard described “an informed and hospitable” library team as ideally “ventur[ing] on such experiments as home delivery, duplicate collection, vacation reading of children, evaluation of novels by outside readers, the exhibition of appropriate collections, the gathering and distribution of pictures, the extension of the hours of opening, and the relaxing of the rules of administration as the public come in contact with them.”⁴³ She was quick to caveat that not “all these new lines of work or new methods would be of necessity [or] be permanently successful, but believing that only by testing these things and others, and by the constant taking of the public into its confidence,” can the library progress to “the full possibilities of its usefulness.”⁴⁴ The ideas Shepard put forward remain relevant, and there exists the same push today for “the constant taking of the public into its confidence.” Now such techniques are sometimes labeled community-led programming.⁴⁵ Then, they were done, at least in part, in the name of hospitality.

In 1904 a connection was again drawn between reaching out to the public, experimenting in the library, and hospitality. At this point in time, it was said that “The most valuable asset of the library is a reputation for hospitality.”⁴⁶ Such hospitality, when invoked by the librarian, sought to “turn the casual visitor into a firm friend of the library” and included analyzing circulation statistics, growing the collection, giving free lectures for the community, providing

⁴³ Alice Shepard, “General Report: Springfield, (Mass),” *Library Journal* 27 no. 9 (1902): 850.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Kenneth Williment, “It Takes a Community to Create a Library,” *Public Libraries* 50 no. 2 (2019): 32.

⁴⁶ EAH, “Ontario Library Association,” *Library Journal* 29 no. 5 (1904): 252.

free meeting rooms for gatherings “of a public nature,” and “be[ing] in touch with the public at as many points as possible.”⁴⁷ Today such suggestions may seem more banal than radical, but in the early twentieth century many libraries still had closed stacks and strict rules about who could enter and request material. Additionally, many libraries enforced a strict and almost sacred silence, so providing such services as lectures or meeting rooms would have been particularly controversial as these would have interrupted the quiet so frequently sought.

I do not wish to downplay the role of gender in this narrative of hospitality. Outside of librarianship, “gender oppression does not easily map onto the host/guest metaphor. Both men and women have played the role of host but, in the case of women, ‘host’ is not always a freely chosen role nor does it always entail power or decision-making ability.”⁴⁸ Looking at early library literature, this holds true within librarianship as well. For example, in a 1908 article by Gertrude Forrest, the male librarian, rather than the female library staff, was described as hospitable: “He must have absolute intellectual hospitality, he must be a good mixer, interested in all human interests, having sympathy with all tastes. By his toleration he will get all people to the library, by his enthusiasm he will make it pleasant for them.”⁴⁹ This hospitality is immediately different from the gentle, subservient kind Garrison critiqued. Rather than encourage complacency, such masculine hospitality is “intellectual,” an opening of the mind towards new ideas and a subsequent ability to lead the library towards those new ideas. When, in early literature, the term hospitality is paired with the pronoun “he,” it becomes capable of invoking change, making decisions, and steering the library in a way that feminized hospitality rarely included. However, the term itself is sometimes left genderless, as when it is the library

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Hamington, “Toward a Theory of Feminist Hospitality,” 22.

⁴⁹ Gertrude E. Forrest, “Massachusetts Library Club,” *Library Journal* 33 no. 6 (1908): 242.

itself that is described as hospitable, and sometimes it is even the “hostess” herself that is engaging and active. This is seen in 1919 when Eleanor Ledbetter writes, “The library staff consider the library [...] as a place of hospitality, and their duty first to act as hostesses [...], to extend courtesy to the stranger, the new comer, and the ‘foreigner’ who wavers on the doorstep.”⁵⁰ Ledbetter elaborates that such hospitality should be accomplished by addressing the newcomers in their own language, actively inviting them to enter, and allowing them the freedom to explore on their own.⁵¹ The women here are described as “library staff” rather than librarians, but it is still the feminine “hostesses” who are taking the initiative to open up the library and engage an underserved population. I bring up such an example to demonstrate the complexity of hospitality and LIS, hospitality and gender, as well as gender and LIS. However, when hospitality is localized in such examples, it becomes clear that a counter-narrative of hospitality existed, and it existed as an active force of change in progressive librarianship.

The relationship between this narrative and counternarrative introduces an additional bifurcation to the concept of hospitality. The same duality exists in contemporary LIS scholarship, except the driving narrative today is economic rather than socially complacent. Currently, this dominant narrative of hospitality ties it to the industry in which paying guests are served by paid hosts; hospitality is extended to those who can afford it. Such a narrative extends beyond the hospitality industry and into national politics; conversations surrounding immigration and refugees often focus on the economic impact of varying policies. It is this narrative of economic hospitality which leads to hospitality being “rendered somewhat innocuous through its commercialization.”⁵²

⁵⁰ Eleanor E. Ledbetter, “A Library for Bohemians,” *Library Journal* 44 no. 12 (1919): 792-793.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Hamington, “Toward a Theory of Feminist Hospitality,” 22.

One notable attempt at integrating an economic hospitality into the field is a 2011 *Library Quarterly* publication, “Library Hospitality: Some Preliminary Considerations” by Eric Johnson and Michelle Kazmer. In it, Johnson and Kazmer advocate for a near opposite understanding of hospitality than that put forward by Garrison. Garrison viewed hospitality as it was historically used towards the close of the nineteenth century: synonymous with the “warmth of a well ordered home” presided over by a woman and consequently antithetical to the “cold impersonality of the business world” predominated by men.⁵³ Johnson and Kazmer, however, turn precisely to the business world, to the industry of hospitality, to draw forth a new definition for LIS. In examining the hospitality industry, they conclude that hospitality in librarianship is “the provision of library resources by a genuinely motivated employee to fulfill the library need of a patron in an environment conducive to the provision of those resources.”⁵⁴ They then apply this industry-driven definition of hospitality to the current library setting, focusing on what they deem the six tenets of library hospitality: library resources, service motivation, library employee, library need, patron, and environment.⁵⁵ The goal of their research is to provide “a framing device for the entire service approach for the institution [of public librarianship] as a whole.”⁵⁶ This goal mirrors, in a way, what I aim to do—redefine hospitality from how it has been previously used in LIS scholarship so that it can be valued and utilized in librarianship. However, I argue that turning to the hospitality industry for such redefining is problematic.

The industry-driven approach to hospitality used by Johnson and Kazmer mirrors the trend of the past few decades outside of LIS in conflating the concept of hospitality with those

⁵³ Garrison, *Apostles of Culture: The Public Librarian and American Society 1876-1920*, 179.

⁵⁴ Eric D. M. Johnson and Michelle M. Kazmer, “Library Hospitality: Some Preliminary Considerations” *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* 81 no. 4 (2011): 387.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 392-397.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 397.

businesses which profit from it. This interpretation of hospitality contributes to viewing libraries as primarily commercial entities. In doing so, the library patron transforms into a library “customer” or “consumer,” and the motivation for hospitality becomes self-serving and financial.⁵⁷ This commercialization of librarianship has been critiqued before. For example, Sweeney and Rhinesmith use a feminist ethics of care to question why “infomediaries [...] are increasingly encouraged to view the public as customers rather than as community members” as well as to assert that “care is a process, not a service or commodity.”⁵⁸ Even though the industrialization of hospitality is prevalent outside of LIS, the domination of the “language of consumerism and commodification [...] beyond the sphere of libraries is not sufficient reason to accept it uncritically. The library’s language, and practice, should flow from as clear an idea of purpose as possible. And librarians should examine purpose independently from the pressures of capitalism and consumption.”⁵⁹ When these pressures are asserted on hospitality, the very concept becomes “a vacuous instrument of industry that offers the appearance of welcoming and goodwill to customers from paid employees without challenging underlying economic structures.”⁶⁰ Derrida himself both recognized this larger narrative of hospitality and wrote against it, going so far as to write that such flawed motivation for providing hospitality “inscribe[s individuals] in the circular commerce of the most inhospitable exchange possible, the least giving.”⁶¹ In line with both Derrida and other LIS professionals, I argue that hospitality in librarianship must deviate from the hospitality industry. Such deviation may begin to reinforce a more selfless and less economic understanding of the term. The divorcing of hospitality from

⁵⁷ Johnson and Kazmer, “Library Hospitality: Some Preliminary Considerations,” 386, 390, 395.

⁵⁸ Miriam E. Sweeney & Colin Rhinesmith, “Creating caring institutions for community informatics,” *Information, Communication & Society* (2016): 2, 8.

⁵⁹ John M. Budd, “A Critique of Customer and Commodity,” *College and Research Libraries* 58 no. 4 (1997): 319.

⁶⁰ Hamington, “Toward a Theory of Feminist Hospitality,” 22.

⁶¹ Derrida, “Hostipitality,” 398.

industry also connects back to Garrison's critique of hospitality, specifically that it led to a lack of diversity within the field. When hospitality is redefined, it is then also possible to reevaluate the "The labor of hospitality," labor which "has been repeatedly undervalued in modern free-market economies and, not surprisingly, disproportionately relegated to women and people of color."⁶² It is in this revaluation, this redefining of hospitality, where Derrida's critical theory can play a particularly crucial role.

In order to move away from narratives of hospitality rooted in complacency and industry, it is important to understand what these narratives have in common. How can one concept be construed in such variant ways? Ultimately, such variance is tied together by a singular principle—ownership. Hamington, in developing a feminist theory of hospitality by combining Derrida's critical theory with a feminist ethics of care, writes, "Males, as the historic holders of property - a category that often included women and children - were able to perform acts of hospitality as an extension and instantiation of their identity."⁶³ Perhaps this is why the feminine hospitality critiqued by Garrison is so non-assertive; the female hostesses did not own property and thus were deemed unworthy or incapable of extending true, active hospitality. The economic focus of the hospitality industry is just a continuation of "masculine manifestations of hospitality," concerned more with generating revenue and protecting property than with entering into a genuine relationship with Other.⁶⁴ Derrida himself recognizes the gendered "violence of the power of hospitality" when it is based on "a conjugal model, paternal and phallogocentric."⁶⁵ While he never advocates for a negation of property rights nor deems hospitality as incapable

⁶² Ibid., 26.

⁶³ Hamington, "Towards a Theory of Feminist Hospitality," 25.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 149. The term "phallogocentric" is a neologism coined by Derrida to describe a privileging of masculine logocentrism.

with ownership, he does question how the concept of hospitality is altered when it is based on the relationship with Other rather than on property. Dufourmantelle, collaborator in *Of Hospitality*, elaborates: “Hospitality gives as unthought, in its ‘night,’ this difficult, ambivalent relation to place. As though the place in question in hospitality were a place originally belonging to neither host nor guest, but to the gesture by which one of them welcomes the other—even and above all if he is himself without a dwelling from which this welcome could be conceived.”⁶⁶ This reframing of hospitality is interesting and pertinent specifically to the library setting. Who, after all, owns the library? The tax-payer? The librarian? The board of directors? The public itself? There already exists “a mitigated sense of ownership” in libraries, and thus it is precisely in the library where hospitality as a concept can be wrenched from its gendered and economic conceptions.

There is a notable exception in recent LIS scholarship regarding the treatment of hospitality: a 2018 article by Nicole A. Cooke titled “Leading with love and hospitality: applying a radical pedagogy to LIS.” In this article, Cooke asks, “How does ‘radical hospitality’ fit within the larger Library and Information Science (LIS) landscape?”⁶⁷ This is the question I too seek to answer. The term “radical hospitality” was utilized by Levinas as well as Derrida, who defined it as “*receiving without invitation*, beyond or before the invitation.”⁶⁸ Cooke, however, draws a broader definition of “radical hospitality” from the field of religious studies, and she does not cite either of the aforementioned critical theorists in her article. Additionally, she focuses mostly on first-hand accounts of various pedagogical approaches, ultimately concluding: “Elements of radical love, radical hospitality, radical honesty and radical candor are easy to incorporate and

⁶⁶ Ibid., 60-62.

⁶⁷ Nicole A. Cooke, “Leading with love and hospitality: applying a radical pedagogy to LIS,” *Information and Learning Sciences* 120 no. 1-2 (2018): 120.

⁶⁸ Derrida, “Hostipitality,” 360. Emphasis included.

are especially effective when working with students of color or students from otherwise oppressed or marginalized communities. The challenge is to be radical and implement humanizing pedagogy in a consistent and overarching way.”⁶⁹ I do think that there is an interesting corollary between radical hospitality and the various critical pedagogies she lays forth. Cooke differentiates this kind of hospitality from “the tourism industry” and from “the duties associated with hosting guests and entertaining,” but only redefines it as a concept “about inclusion and creating a sense of belonging.”⁷⁰

To explore what it means to be radical and to draw Derridean hospitality into LIS, it is important to deconstruct not just the etymological roots of hospitality, but also the concept of hospitality. This is the next step in its reclamation and will be explored further in Part Three. Here, however, it is beneficial to retrace the counter-narrative of hospitality in LIS, for it is precisely this counternarrative that I aim to draw forth and contextualize with critical theory. A hundred years ago, this counternarrative of hospitality was used as a reason to open up the stacks, provide services in addition to books, serve communities excluded from other sectors in society, create rooms for children, and expand collections.⁷¹ In the past two decades, this counter-narrative of hospitality has begun to creep back into scholarship. It has recently been used as a reason to provide essential services to communities suffering under the immense weight of racism; it has started to appear in LIS blogs to describe the library mission, especially in times of turmoil; and it has provided a reason for academic librarians to fight for radical

⁶⁹ Cooke, “Leading with love and hospitality: applying a radical pedagogy to LIS,” 130.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 119-120.

⁷¹ I want to make it clear that hospitality was far from the only reason to venture towards such experiments. For example, in chapter five of *Apostles of Culture: The Public Librarian and American Society 1876-1920*, Garrison discusses how these then-progressive decisions were a product of a fledgling institution trying to attract more patrons in order to survive.

pedagogy and a more equitable higher education environment.⁷² Yet, as encouraging as these strands of radical hospitality are, they exist in an nebulous state—appearing sporadically, tied down by the negative history of hospitality and LIS, and lacking a unifying theory. It is only through such a unifying theory that hospitality can be comprehensively reclaimed in LIS, and it is only in reclaiming it can it then be applied as a heuristic through which to view contemporary problems in the field.

⁷² Cooke, “Leading with love and hospitality: applying a radical pedagogy to LIS,” 119-132; Deb Baker, “A Fringe Benefit of the Trump Era for Librarians?,” *The Nocturnal Librarian* (2018).

PART THREE: CONCEPTUAL DECONSTRUCTION

My goal, in this section, is to deconstruct Derridean hospitality and then reconstruct it in an LIS setting. The term “reconstruction” here may seem odd. After all, I maintain, in line with Derrida, that “deconstruction is to be understood as a form of hospitality, that deconstruction is hospitality.”⁷³ Can one reconstruct a deconstruction? I choose to use the term “reconstruction” here in order to emphasize the very nature of deconstruction as something that is productive and active rather than destructive and passive. Deconstruction is a positive concept, something Derrida himself emphasizes: “Deconstruction is not opposed to reconstruction [...] I have always insisted that deconstruction is not destruction, is not annihilation, is not negative. As soon as you realize that deconstruction is not something negative, you cannot simply oppose it to reconstruction. How could you reconstruct anything without deconstruction?”⁷⁴ In Part Two, I wrote on the self-deconstruction of hospitality, the deconstruction intrinsic to the very etymology of the term that tears it from a passive, economic, or simplistic definition. Now, I reconstruct hospitality as a critical theory, and this critical theory itself exists as a duality that is in a constant state of reconstruction and deconstruction.

There are, therefore, two equally important components of Derrida’s theory: the law of hospitality on the one hand and the laws of hospitality on the other. The former is a more abstract understanding of hospitality and is sometimes referred to as absolute, unconditional, or pure hospitality. The latter is the practical dimension of hospitality, the part that grounds hospitality in

⁷³ Jacques Derrida, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, 109.

⁷⁴ Jacques Derrida, “Hospitality, Justice, and Responsibility,” in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, ed. Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (New York: Routledge, 1999): 77.

a social, cultural, and political reality. The laws of hospitality are also referred to as conditional or practical hospitality. These two parts of hospitality are irreconcilable with each other, creating a tension between the law and the laws that exists in a constant state of deconstruction.⁷⁵ It is through this act of deconstruction, this mediation between law and laws, that hospitality can be reclaimed in LIS. In order to complete such a reclamation, I aim to further delineate the law and the laws of hospitality. Exploring how the law and laws coincide and deconstruct then allows for a reconstruction of hospitality in LIS.

I begin, then, by further defining and explaining the law of hospitality. What is it? Why is it important? Ultimately, why does it fail to stand on its own? The law of hospitality is the absolute, idealistic, uninhibited, potentiality of a hospitality unconstrained by such faculties as fear or such practicalities as law or such competing principles as ownership. It means “to give the new arrival all of one’s home and oneself, to give him or her one’s own, our own, without asking a name, or compensation, or the fulfilment of even the smallest condition.”⁷⁶ This involves opening up home and self not simply to guests invited, but to strangers uninvited with the same pure intentionality that gives everything and asks nothing in return.⁷⁷ At its core, the law of hospitality is the complete humbling of self for the betterment of a vulnerable Other.

Derrida derives this law of hospitality primarily from Levinas who himself was responding against the Heideggerian prioritization of ontology over ethics. While I do not wish to spend too much time on Levinas, briefly examining his theory provides a foundation for Derrida’s theory of hospitality. Öresland et al. summarize Levinas’ argument: “our potential to open ourselves in the direction of the Other without conditionality establishes not only our

⁷⁵ Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 77-79.

⁷⁶ Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 77.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 25.

potential to develop ethical relationships but also our capacity to be human.”⁷⁸ Therefore, according to Levinas, practicing unconditional hospitality by completely opening up to any Other is what governs ethics and defines our very personhood. Levinas’s hospitality inspired Derrida to reflect on the concept as an ethical construct; “In his reading of Levinas’s formulation of the ethics of hospitality, Derrida orients our attention to the fact that in the lawful admittance of the other as guest there is a level that exceeds and hence cannot be captured by those analyses that take the nation-state and the juridical regulation as the model to work on.”⁷⁹ Hospitality, in so far as it encompasses our interaction with the people and the world around us, is far more than simple policy or industry or social codes. This is the motivating principle for creating the law of hospitality.

At the same time, Derrida questioned Levinas’s understanding of identity as well as the practical implications of his theory of hospitality. In “Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas,” Derrida argues, “Not only is the thought of Being not ethical violence [as Levinas claims], but it seems that no ethics--in Levinas's sense--can be opened without it. Thought--or at least the precomprehension of Being--conditions [...] the recognition of the essence of the existent [...] It conditions the respect for the other as what it is: other. Without this acknowledgment [...] no ethics would be possible.”⁸⁰ Essentially, in order to theorize on “self” and “other,” there has to preexist a differentiation between “self” and “other,” a “precomprehension” which is ontological in nature. Derrida recognizes that because identity itself requires this most basic differentiation, it cannot be an entirely mutual construct. Of equal

⁷⁸ Öresland et al., “Nurses as ‘guests’ – a study of a concept in light of Jacques Derrida’s philosophy of hospitality,” 119.

⁷⁹ Meyda Yegenoglu, “Liberal Multiculturalism and the Ethics of Hospitality in the Age of Globalization,” *Postmodern Culture* 13 no. 2 (2003).

⁸⁰ Jacques Derrida, “Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas,” in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: Routledge, 1978): 172.

concern is the implication that, if identity is mutual, then “The other exists as the giver of my identity.”⁸¹ This is important for each thinker’s individual understanding of hospitality because it explains where exactly Derrida took fault with Levinas’s theory and why he goes on to create his own which leans on, but which is ultimately quite different from, Levinas’s. Derrida argues that leaving absolute hospitality unqualified results in, at best, a logical impossibility in which identity becomes entirely mutual or, at worst, a self-alienating experience in which individuals open themselves completely and allow their identity to be defined by any uninvited Other.

As part of these ontological and ethical concerns regarding Levinas’s understanding of hospitality, Derrida acknowledges practical concerns. He repeats throughout all his works on hospitality that “It is indeed necessary to limit and condition hospitality.”⁸² This is because “Pure hospitality consists in leaving one’s house open to the unforeseeable arrival, which can be an intrusion, even a dangerous intrusion, liable eventually to cause harm.”⁸³ Unconditional hospitality exists as just that--unconditional--which entails the absolute opening of self and home to any uninvited arrival. It is this absolute nature which many critics latched onto when writing against Derrida. Why write on unconditional hospitality when it cannot, and, importantly, should not exist in the world? In response to such criticism, Derrida writes, “I have always, consistently and insistently, held *unconditional hospitality*, as *impossible*, to be *heterogeneous* to the *political*, the *juridical*, and even the *ethical*. But the impossible is not nothing. It is even that which happens, which comes, by definition. I admit that this remains rather difficult to think, but that's exactly what preoccupies what is called thinking, if there is any and from the time there is

⁸¹ Ivana Noble and Tim Noble, “Hospitality as a Key to the Relationship with the Other in Levinas and Derrida,” *Theologica* 6 no. 2 (2016): 50.

⁸² Derrida and Roudinesco, *For What Tomorrow*, 59.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

any.”⁸⁴ An allusion to Heidegger’s famous book, *What is Called Thinking*, Derrida emphasizes the importance of unconditional hospitality as just one half of an ontological, ethical whole of hospitality. The law of hospitality lifts hospitality above itself and forces us to question our own identity in the face of the Other. It deconstructs the Heidegger/Levinas argument regarding the prioritization of ontology and ethics by rooting both ethics and ontology in hospitality.

The other half of hospitality is easier to grasp and, perhaps because of this, Derrida spends less time defining it in his writing. It is practical hospitality. This half of Derrida’s theory serves to denote “both the political domain of laws and rights, and also a socially situated moral code.”⁸⁵ Derrida was appalled at the lack of hospitality shown to refugees, a practical, political, and global crisis that inspired his writing on hospitality itself.⁸⁶ The “laws” he discusses within the political domain are not theoretical but impactful as a “juridico-political” reality.⁸⁷ They indicate a practical reciprocity between host and guest-- a bestowing of rights by the host and a return of duties by the guest. Unlike the law of hospitality, this hospitality is asking for something in return. On a national level, a foreigner is ideally welcomed by the bestowment of rights and levied the duties of following national laws.⁸⁸ On a library level, the reciprocity of conditional hospitality is also present-- the patron is bestowed the rights of a library user (access to the collections, to the internet, to services and programs) while being levied the duty to follow policy (return policies, internet restrictions, hours of operation, etc.).

It is interesting how frequently critics discuss unconditional hospitality while ignoring conditional hospitality, something Judith Still spends time exploring in the introduction to her

⁸⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005): 172. Emphasis in the original quote.

⁸⁵ Still, *Derrida and Hospitality: Theory and Practice*, 5.

⁸⁶ Derrida and Roudinesco, *For What Tomorrow*, 59.

⁸⁷ Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 135.

⁸⁸ Still, *Derrida and Hospitality: Theory and Practice*, 5-6.

book, *Derrida and Hospitality: Theory and Practice*. Even those who utilize Derrida often slip into such a mistake. For example, Hamington, in an article I cite frequently throughout this paper, writes, “Without creating a false dichotomy, I pose feminist hospitality in contrast to what Derrida (2001) refers to as ‘conditional’ hospitality: A hospitality that serves to maintain or advance existing power hierarchies.”⁸⁹ He then proceeds to exclude conditional hospitality from his exploration, ultimately ignoring Derrida’s own analysis of the inseparable nature of the law and the laws.⁹⁰ Perhaps this tendency to exclude part of Derrida’s theory is because it may seem as if the law of hospitality is more important than the laws of hospitality, even more ethical and more just. Often, the law of hospitality is capitalized in Derrida’s works while the laws are left lower-case. Additionally, Derrida simply spends more pages wrestling with unconditional hospitality and exploring the ethics of Levinas. There is a certain beauty to welcoming without condition, a beauty and a violence that attracts critics and supporters alike. Yet, just focusing on one half of the dichotomy of hospitality leads to an acute misunderstanding of Derrida’s comprehensive theory. The laws of hospitality could not exist without the idea of unconditional hospitality, just as the idea of unconditional hospitality could never be actualized in perfection but rather relies on the laws of hospitality. The two are “both contradictory, antinomic, and inseparable. They both imply and exclude each other, simultaneously.”⁹¹ However, despite their interdependence, there is a reason Derrida spends so much time on unconditional hospitality:

The tragedy [...] is that the two antagonistic terms of this antinomy are not symmetrical. There is a strange hierarchy in this. The law is above the laws [...] but even while keeping itself above the laws of hospitality, the unconditional law of hospitality needs the laws, it requires them. This demand is constitutive. It wouldn’t be effectively unconditional, the law, if it didn’t have to become effective, concrete, determined, if that were not its being as having to be. It would

⁸⁹ Hamington, “Toward A Theory of Feminist Hospitality,” 23.

⁹⁰ Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 79.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 81.

risk being abstract, utopian, illusory, and so turning over to its opposite. In order to be what it is, the law needs the laws.⁹²

It is this tension between the law and the laws, their coming together and pulling apart, that constitutes the perpetual deconstruction of hospitality.

Perhaps “perpetual deconstruction” seems oxymoronic, an ultimately meaningless syllogism. This criticism was often posed to Derrida, and it is complicated by the fact that Derrida’s conception of deconstruction evolves throughout his works. When it comes to hospitality, however, Derrida clarifies, “Deconstruction is not a philosophy or a method, it is not a phase, a period, or a moment. It is something which is constantly at work and was at work before what we call ‘deconstruction’ started.”⁹³ This is important because it draws forth the fact that neither deconstruction nor hospitality are prescriptive processes. One cannot treat the dichotomy between the law and the laws as an Aristotelian virtue ethics, for example, finding the perfect median between the two, the perfect virtue of hospitality, and then applying it to various situations. That is not to say that the theory of hospitality cannot be applied. On the contrary, it must be applied; it was created with application, primarily justice-oriented application, in mind. Derrida saturates his works on hospitality with real-world examples of injustice in order to demonstrate that “deconstruction is not some obscure textual operation intimated in a mandarin prose style, but is a concrete intervention in contexts that is governed by an undeconstructable concern for justice.”⁹⁴ Yet, to find this justice in decisions of hospitality, hospitality itself must be deconstructed anew in every application, in every interaction with the Other and the Third. Such deconstruction leads the host to contemplate the law and the laws, and then it leaves the host in a moment of undecidability.

⁹² Ibid., 79.

⁹³ Derrida, “Hospitality, Justice, and Responsibility,” 65.

⁹⁴ Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, viii.

Before addressing this moment of undecidability, it is beneficial to spend more time exploring the act of deconstructing hospitality. Derrida repeats such deconstruction throughout his writing on this concept, and, in so doing, exemplifies the labor of hospitality. One such example he provides focusses on the first interaction between host and guest, and, more specifically, whether it is “more just and more loving to question [the new arrival] or not to question? to call by name or without name? to give or to learn a name already given? Does one give hospitality to a subject? to an identifiable subject? to a subject identifiable by name? to a legal subject? Or is hospitality rendered, is it given to the other before they are identified?”⁹⁵ Essentially, is it more hospitable to welcome a stranger by acknowledging their identity, by asking for a name, or is it more hospitable to skip such identification, such interrogation? The second option is what the law of hospitality demands. This unconditional hospitality dictates hospitality be extended “to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I give place to them [...] without asking of them either reciprocity or even their name.”⁹⁶ However, the law itself does not always provide the most just or loving outcome. It is itself “pervertible and perverting.”⁹⁷ What, then, do the laws of hospitality dictate of this first interaction? They are practical and contractual, so they call for a name. Yet, it is not just a name that is demanded from the new arrival, but, in asking a new arrival their name, the host is necessarily asking a greater question. Derrida recognizes that when you “begin by asking his name; you enjoin him to state and guarantee his identity, as you would a witness before a court.”⁹⁸ The question “what is your name?,” when asked by the host of the guest, can hold subtext, can come across as “In telling me what your name is, in responding on your own behalf, you are responsible before the law and

⁹⁵ Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 27.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

before your hosts, you are a subject in law.”⁹⁹ Thus the law and the laws provide opposite answers to a singular question. One is not obviously better than the other. Which, then, does Derrida settle upon? How does he decipher which is more just, to ask for a name or to invite unconditionally? He does not choose. Rather he interrogates himself: “Does hospitality consist in interrogating the new arrival? Does it begin with the question addressed to the newcomer (which seems very human and sometimes loving, assuming that hospitality should be linked to love [...]): what is your name? tell me your name, what should I call you, I who am calling on you, I who want to call you your name [...]. Or else does hospitality begin with the unquestioning welcome, in a double effacement, the effacement of the question *and* the name?”¹⁰⁰ Then he moves on in the text, on to the next deconstruction. In so doing, he leaves the reader in a moment of undecidability.

I arrive, then, once again, at this moment of undecidability. Is this moment a positive one or does it simply denote a hopeless entanglement? Many critics saw such a moment as just another frustrating flaw coming from a frustrating theorist whose works “seem to consist in no small part of elaborate jokes and puns (‘logical fallacies’ and the like).”¹⁰¹ Derrida responded to critics regarding this moment of undecidability in an interview on “Hospitality, Justice, and Responsibility”:

Many of those who have written about deconstruction understand undecidability as paralysis in the face of the power to decide. That is not what I would understand by ‘undecidability’. Far from opposing undecidability to decision, I would argue that there would be no decision, in the strong sense of the word, in ethics, in politics, no decision, and thus no responsibility, without the experience of some undecidability. If you don't experience some undecidability, then the decision would simply be the application of a programme, the consequence of a premise or of a matrix.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 27-29.

¹⁰¹ Barry Smith, “Letter against Derrida's Honorary Degree,” *Times* (1992).

¹⁰² Derrida, “Hospitality, Justice, and Responsibility,” 66.

If hospitable action resulted from following a rote process, then there would be no decision to be made. Rather, hospitality “would simply be the application of a rule, the application of a premise [...]. Ethics and politics, therefore, start with undecidability.”¹⁰³ This does not render deconstruction or hospitality pointless. On the contrary, it complicates hospitality. It recognizes the singularity of the Other by acknowledging that no two interactions are the same and that what may seem most just and loving in one situation may very well seem unjust and unloving in the next. Hospitality, as understood by Derrida, is not prescriptive. One does not have to deconstruct hospitality once, and then apply that deconstruction from thereon out. Rather, when one is engaged in the labor of hospitality, one has to engage in constant deconstruction, has to be led constantly to the moment of undecidability. Then, one has to decide anyway. This is both what makes the decision difficult and also what allows the host to assume responsibility for the decision. It is the very undecidability that draws forth the labor of hospitality, often undervalued, and places it within a constant, difficult, intellectual deconstruction. In so doing, Derridean hospitality elevates the labor of hospitality.

Because Derrida complicates and elevates the labor of hospitality, his theory is finding increasing popularity in many disciplines engaged in such labor. Theorists within disciplines like nursing, social work, and education have utilized Derrida as a way to frame their work and fight for greater professionalization. For example, a group of five Doctors of nursing use Derridean hospitality to explore “the relationship between nurse and patient [...] as one between a guest and a host.”¹⁰⁴ They acknowledge that “such a description is problematic as ‘guests’ might not be considered to belong to the realm of professionalism,” but they fight against such an

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Öresland et al., “Nurses as ‘guests’ – a study of a concept in light of Jacques Derrida’s philosophy of hospitality,” 124.

understanding by, and I write this as praise, weaponizing Derrida.¹⁰⁵ They explore the host-guest dichotomy “etymologically, linguistically and philosophically,” drawing forth the complicated relationship of home care.¹⁰⁶ Cockburn-Wooten and Brewis, writing about social work, acknowledge that “the work of Derrida has been influential in this shift and call to develop a deeper and broader understanding of hospitality.”¹⁰⁷ They additionally argue that “workplace discourses, such as professionalism, can impose ideological norms, restrictions and obligations on both the individuals who provide hospitality as well as the thresholds they work within and across.”¹⁰⁸ In education, Derridean hospitality has been used to explore such concepts as “the ethics of internationalisation in higher education;” “the politics of pedagogy;” and “the racialized body of the educator.”¹⁰⁹

Librarianship shares many characteristics with education, social work, and nursing, characteristics which include being historically female dominated, undervalued, and assuming “the overt service functions” that “often take on the caring characteristics of [these] other helping professional fields.”¹¹⁰ Because of this, Derrida’s theory of hospitality offers LIS many of the same benefits that nursing, social work, and education have already begun to harness. Derridean hospitality allows for a redefining of the labor of librarianship. It invites deconstruction of the relationship between librarian and patron. It lends itself to a reclamation of hospitality and to clarifying many of the hospitable roles the library plays in society and in the academy. It assists

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 117.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 124.

¹⁰⁷ Cheryl Cockburn-Wooten and Joanna Brewis, “Crossing Thresholds: Hospitality and Professionalism in Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work,” *Hospitality & Society* 4 no. 2 (2004): 117.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 129.

¹⁰⁹ Marnie Hughes-Warrington, “The Ethics of Internationalisation in Higher Education: Hospitality, self-presence and ‘being late’,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 44 no. 3 (2012): 312-322; Michael A. Peters and Gert Biesta, *Derrida, Deconstruction, and the Politics of Pedagogy* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009); Shilpi Sinha, “The Racialized Body of the Educator and the Ethic of Hospitality: The Potential for Social Justice Education Re-visited,” *Studies in Philosophy & Education* 37 no. 3 (2018): 215-229.

¹¹⁰ Sweeney and Rhinesmith, “Creating caring institutions for community informatics,” 6.

in the fight for greater professionalization. Yet, unlike in these parallel fields, Derridean hospitality has yet to be utilized in LIS.

One way to examine how well Derridean hospitality aligns with librarianship as well as to introduce new areas of research into the field is to compare Derrida's theory with the core values of the profession as put forth by the ALA.¹¹¹ One such value is professionalism, which I have already explored in relation to parallel fields and which I will continue to explore in Part Four. Yet, professionalism is far from the only value invoked directly by Derrida. He also specifically discusses the importance of intellectual freedom, privacy, social responsibility, democracy, diversity, access, and education as being integral to the experience of his critical theoretical rendering of hospitality.

Derrida discusses intellectual freedom and privacy through an anti-censorship stance he expounds upon in *Of Hospitality*. First delivered as a series of lectures in the mid-1990s, Derrida pulls apart what he found to be some of the most egregious oversteps in State censorship of the time. He writes on internet censorship by the German government, phone tapping by several world powers, electronic surveillance of credit card transactions by the US government, and email and fax surveillance by the US government.¹¹² Acknowledging that internet communication technologies (ICT's) "completely transforms the structure of the so-called public space," he ponders their implications on hospitality.¹¹³ His theory of hospitality centers on boundaries and how we set these boundaries up. For example, what is the boundary between public and private? between host and guest? between self and Other? between Other and the Third? ICT's, however, dramatically blur these boundaries by restructuring space and changing

¹¹¹ American Library Association, "Core Values of Librarianship," *Issues and Advocacy* (2019).

¹¹² Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 44-65.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 47.

aspects of individual identity and the relationships between people. Therefore, in a world increasingly dependent on ICT's, "every element of hospitality gets disrupted."¹¹⁴ Derrida writes, in a passage that foreshadows the technological advancements of the 21st century: "if my 'home,' in principle inviolable, is also constituted, and in a more and more essential, interior way, by my phone line, but also by my email, but also by my fax, but also by my access to the Internet, then the intervention of the State becomes a violation of the inviolable, in the place where inviolable immunity remains the condition of hospitality."¹¹⁵ In many ways, Derrida's response to the censorship of the 1990's mirrors the response of librarians to censorship efforts of the 21st century and, more specifically, to the *USA Patriot Act*. Following its passage in 2001, librarians across the country united in resistance to the perceived overreach in censorship. They both advocated in written letters and scholarship as well as practiced non-compliance until, and even after, a legal clause was added to the *Patriot Act* in 2006 excluding libraries from National Security Letters.¹¹⁶ These actions by librarians are perfect examples of radical, Derridean hospitality in practice.

Of course, librarians advocated for privacy well before, and continue to advocate well after, the *Patriot Act*. More recently, LIS scholarship regarding privacy focusses on the "the post-snowden era" in which our attention is zeroed in "on information privacy and the chilling effects of surveillance on information-seeking habits."¹¹⁷ A new era is also emerging within this realm of information privacy research: the COVID-19 era. The world today is experiencing a rapid shift to exclusively online resources, bringing with it renewed concerns over privacy. What

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 51.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Chris Matz. "Libraries and the USA PATRIOT Act: Values in Conflict," *Journal of Library Administration*, 47 no. 3-4 (2008): 81.

¹¹⁷ Steve Witt. "The Evolution of Privacy within the American Library Association, 1906-2002," *Library Trends* 65 no. 4 (2017): 640.

if these concerns are framed through a hospitality lens? Derridean hospitality allows an argument to be built on the basis of care and responsibility towards the Other-- the librarian can only provide hospitality by defending the privacy of the patron. Conversely, an individual can be assured hospitality, a moment of privacy respite, within the library. What if the censorship is not as overt as that outlined in the *Patriot Act*? Additionally, what if there is no “within” the library? What if the library is virtual, rather than physical? Can hospitality be offered through internet space in addition to physical place?

While it would be anachronistic to claim that Derrida foresaw and answers these questions, he does emphasize the importance of privacy outside of State censorship. He does so through a critique of Kant, who also wrote on hospitality in his book *Perpetual Peace*. Specifically, Derrida questions whether one can engage in the act of hospitality while also advocating for “the imperative to veracity [... to] be absolutely unconditional,” as Kant infamously did.¹¹⁸ Derrida argues that an imperative towards absolute veracity cannot coexist with hospitality; Kant “destroys, along with the right to lie, any right of keeping something to oneself, of dissimulating, of resisting the demand for truth, confessions, or public openness.”¹¹⁹ In other words, a Kantian deontological imperative towards absolute veracity acts as its own form of censorship, stripping an individual of privacy and disrupting the frontiers of hospitality. Hospitality requires delineation between the public and the private, and a moral imperative to share all information upon request blurs this delineation, this boundary, this hospitality. When the frontiers of hospitality are disrupted in the library due to any form of censorship, then individual intellectual freedom is put at stake. Therefore, in actively valuing privacy and

¹¹⁸Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 67.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 69.

intellectual freedom, librarians are already committed to pieces of Derrida's theory, another reason why introducing this theory as a unifying heuristic is beneficial to the field.

In addition to connecting intellectual freedom and privacy with hospitality, Derrida also writes on how hospitality relates to democracy, social responsibility, and diversity. The hospitality Derrida establishes is a way in which he advocates for “‘democracy,’ which is supposed to be a generous receptacle for every difference imaginable.”¹²⁰ Derrida himself, in situating every discussion on hospitality around “the condition of justice,” in advocating not just for a greater theoretical understanding of hospitality but a greater practical implementation of it as well, invokes social responsibility.¹²¹ Additionally, as Hamington notes, “hospitality can be an occasion to enact a feminist commitment to diversity.”¹²² This occurs in part through a “commitment to pluralism and valuing diverse voices in the public sphere” and in part through a concretization of the Other.¹²³ Recognizing the Other as an embodied figure of singularity “is significant for fostering caring relations even in the face of social and political difference; for example, theorizing about immigration can keep the immigrant at arm's-length as a construct of discursive claims [...] When we think of immigrants as real, embodied people, it invokes feelings of care and compassion - hallmarks of feminist hospitality.”¹²⁴ This kind of praxis is important, especially when the word “diversity” can be used in LIS as a buzz-word generating little or no change.

Another intriguing connection to contemporary LIS scholarship is the link Derrida creates between hospitality and the value of Education and Lifelong Learning. Derrida

¹²⁰ Derrida, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, 107.

¹²¹ Derrida, “Hospitality, Justice, and Responsibility,” 68.

¹²² Hamington, “Toward a Feminist Theory of Hospitality,” 27.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

sometimes describes the act of deconstruction as an act of close reading. For example, in his interview on “Hospitality, Justice, and Responsibility,” Derrida claims:

political, ethical and juridical responsibility requires the task of infinite close reading. I believe this to be the condition of political responsibility: politicians should read. Now, to read does not mean to spend nights in the library; to read events, to analyse the situation, to criticize the media, to listen to rhetoric of the demagogues, that’s close reading, and it is required more today than ever. So I would urge politicians and citizens to practice close reading in this new sense, and not simply stay in the library.¹²⁵

He thus frames deconstruction as a type of literacy, a literacy which perhaps starts in the library even if he advocates it “not simply say in the library.” Moreover, with its emphasis on action over passivity, this Derridean deconstruction connects to contemporary theories of critical information literacy, inspiring a confrontation with difference that enables growth and education. Hamington recognizes the epistemic potential of Derrida’s hospitality, writing, “Whether it is a home, the city, or the nation-state, hospitality operates at the border of membership, but it is precisely at the border where learning takes place - learning about self and Others through confronting difference. Expanding the notion of guest inclusion unlocks the epistemic power of hospitality.”¹²⁶ Where, in the university setting, is difference confronted? Elmborg claims that students and faculty confront difference, primarily, in the library. In his 2006 article “Libraries in the Contact Zone: On the Creation of Educational Space,” he argues that the library is “a kind of space that recognizes culture, language, and individual identity. Recognizing difference initiates a process of translation across boundaries for both students and academics.”¹²⁷ The library, framed as a contact zone, is a place where students can express themselves and explore the ideas of the university in their own language rather than in the regimented and often unnatural

¹²⁵ Derrida, “Hospitality, Justice, and Responsibility,” 67.

¹²⁶ Hamington, “Toward a Theory of Feminist Hospitality,” 28.

¹²⁷ James Elmborg, “Libraries in the Contact Zone: On the Creation of Educational Space,” *Reference and User Services Quarterly* 46 no. 1 (2006): 59.

language of academia. Additionally, the university library serves as a contact zone for disciplines; it is a place where “academic disciplines negotiate their identities.”¹²⁸ This convergence of academic disciplines is what Derrida tries to accomplish through his interdisciplinary, non-traditional writing: he describes his writing style as “an attempt to blur the borders between literature and philosophy, and to blur the borders in the name of hospitality [...] by writing some sentences, some undecidable sentences, which put into question the limits of what one calls philosophy, science, literature.”¹²⁹ For a library to truly act as a generative contact-zone in which students feel comfortable negotiating difference rather than feeling intimidated by the academy, librarians must foster the epistemic power of hospitality.

While other connections can be drawn between the ALA core values and Derridean hospitality, I do not wish to dwell too long on this interconnectivity. This is for two reasons. First, Derrida explicitly states, “Hospitality is not simply some region of ethics [...] it is ethicity itself, the whole and the principle of ethics.”¹³⁰ This is because Derridean hospitality “inevitably touches on that fundamental ethical question [...] of the boundaries of the human, and how we set those up.”¹³¹ Hospitality is not itself an ethic, a virtue, a value, but instead underlies all ethics by mediating all interaction between self and Other, institution and Other, State and Other, sameness and difference. Therefore, it is no surprise that a vein of radical hospitality runs through the core values insofar as they are values. Because “ethics is hospitality; ethics is so thoroughly coextensive with the experience of hospitality,” then library ethics too will necessarily share in this coextensive nature.¹³² The second reason I do not wish to dwell too

¹²⁸ Ibid., 58.

¹²⁹ Derrida, “Hospitality, Justice, and Responsibility,” 73.

¹³⁰ Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, 50.

¹³¹ Still, *Derrida and Hospitality: Theory and Practice*, 4.

¹³² Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, 16-17.

extensively on the intersection of the core values and Derridean hospitality is because I foresee critics using such connections against the integration of this hospitality into LIS. Why go through the effort of deciphering a complicated theory if it merely reaffirms values librarians have already held for decades? My response to this criticism echoes the reason I initially brought up the connection: Derridean hospitality is not limited to a reaffirmation of what librarians already value, but, in demonstrating areas of similarity, the sometimes-abstract theory can be concretized within LIS. This concretization is significant for two primary reasons. First, it grounds the labor of hospitality, exemplifying deconstruction and articulating the difficulty in deconstructing anew in each interaction with Other. Second, it bolsters Derrida's theory as an ethical heuristic, framing the kinds of tension within LIS that can benefit from a hospitable perspective. Drawing Derridean hospitality into a specifically LIS context allows it to shape LIS practice and LIS scholarship.

PART FOUR: RELATIONAL DECONSTRUCTION

Thus far, I have examined two different deconstructions in conjunction with hospitality. The first was a deconstruction of the word itself which pulled apart hospitality's etymological roots to reveal a tension inherent to the concept. Is *hostis* friend or enemy, host or guest? This deconstruction allowed for a historical analysis of hospitality in LIS because it revealed the complex origins of the term, origins which pre-date Derrida's critical theory. Next, I explored the conceptual deconstruction of hospitality and the mediation between the law and the laws. Such a deconstruction complicates the labor of hospitality, one reason that fields similar to LIS are increasingly using Derrida's critical theory in their professional literature. Though I have explored two different deconstructions in relation to hospitality and LIS, there is another dichotomy attached to hospitality I have yet to deconstruct—the dichotomy of host and guest. Through a deconstruction of host and guest, librarian and patron, I aim to concretize the labor of librarianship as a discursive practice that must surmount an institutional language barrier. Then, in order to relate Derridean hospitality to complimentary theories already used within LIS, I explain how such a deconstruction situates Derrida's critical theory as a bridge between Freirean critical pedagogy and a feminist ethics of care for LIS.

Derrida's deconstruction of the host-guest relationship differs depending on what bifurcation of hospitality is being examined. He spends time breaking down the relationship in both unconditional and conditional hospitality in order to demonstrate the flaws of both models and further advocate for a mediation between the two. This mediation recognizes power differentials and works to break through them by destructing hierarchy and constructing a host-

guest reciprocity built on love, respect, and discourse. In order to reach this relationship, however, it is important to understand the ultimately flawed roles of host and guest in both the laws and the law of hospitality.

The laws of hospitality are conditional, and thus the host-guest relationship is cyclical; the host gives to the guest and the guest gives back to the host. The hospitality industry exemplifies such conditional exchanges. Everything is mediated by a system of transactions between host and guest, guest and host, and hospitality becomes trapped within “reciprocity, exchange, economy, and circular movement.”¹³³ Thus, “if the gesture of hospitality [is inscribed] within a circle, then it is not hospitality but conditional hospitality.”¹³⁴ In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida uses stronger language in warning against such cyclicity. He describes the circle that conditional hospitality generates as a series of substitutions; when the guest gives back to the host, “the guest becomes the host’s host.”¹³⁵ Returning to lean on the etymology of hospitality, Derrida states, “these substitutions make everyone into everyone else’s hostage. Such are the laws of hospitality.”¹³⁶ Conditional hospitality thus turns over into hostility, host into hostage.

Here a critic may push back, pointing out that such cyclicity is avoided in public librarianship because no commerce is directly exchanged on the host-guest level. The library is a public good, after all. Yet, conditional hospitality is not defined by an exchange of commerce. If the librarian’s role as host is one of strict policy enforcement—are the rules being met? are people being quiet? is order being maintained?—then the circular movement between librarian as host and patron as guest is still occurring. The host gives to the guest by providing library access, and the guest gives back to the host by following library rules. Hospitality, if strictly limited to

¹³³ Derrida, “Hospitality, Justice, and Responsibility,” 69.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 125.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

such role substitutions, is hostile. Perhaps it is this model of library hospitality that led to the complacent misunderstanding of hospitality in early librarianship. Without breaking apart the system of transactional exchanges between librarian and patron, it becomes difficult to question the host-guest relationship or the systemic gendered norms.

In absolute hospitality, this cyclicity is not just interrupted, it is entirely flattened into a lateral relationship in which the host gives all to the guest. This is because the law of hospitality requires the host to give one's self and one's property to any guest while asking for nothing in return. In this model, too, host becomes hostage to the guest. If one gives everything and asks for nothing, then there is a willing submission of oneself as hostage to the invited or uninvited guest. In fact, "substituting host and hostage is the first movement of absolute hospitality."¹³⁷ Yet, this substitution requires more from the host than the reciprocal substitution of conditional hospitality. Instead of requiring the host to substitute their *role* as host with the *role* of hostage, absolute hospitality calls the host to submit their *self*, their ipseity, as hostage.¹³⁸ This reveals a violence within the law of hospitality, for "with this concept of subjectivity or of ipseity as hostage, we have the inseparable concept of substitution, of the unique as hostage responsible for all, and therefore substitutable, precisely there where [...] he is absolutely irreplaceable."¹³⁹ Derrida argues that the self, of all things, is "absolutely irreplaceable," and yet absolute hospitality calls for one to allow that self to become hostage. Therefore, absolute hospitality turns over onto itself and also becomes hostile.

How then, is one to avoid hostile hospitality? More specifically, how is the relationship between host and guest saved from such hostility? How does host navigate hospitality to avoid

¹³⁷ Derrida, "Hostipitality," 376.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 365. Emphasis included.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

becoming hostage? It would be unfaithful to Derrida and an oversimplification of hospitality to claim a clean, analytical answer to such questions. Derrida repeats throughout his works that there is an impossibility present in laying forth “criteria, norms, or rules” for the labor of hospitality.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, “this impossibility is necessary. It is necessary that this threshold not be at the disposal of a general knowledge or regulated technique.”¹⁴¹ This necessity lies in part with the possibility of decision-making and accountability as discussed in Part Three. However, it is also “necessary that [hospitality] exceed every regulated procedure in order to open itself to what always risks being perverted (the Good, Justice, Love, faith—and perfectibility). This is necessary [...] so that good hospitality can have a chance, the chance of letting the other come, the yes of the other no less than the yes to the other.”¹⁴² In this quote, Derrida adds to his aporetic structure: perfectibility tied inextricably to pervertability just as hospitality is tied to the hostility and host to hostage. Yet, at the end of the quote, Derrida gives the reader something concrete to grasp at: “the yes *of* the other no less than the yes *to* the other.”¹⁴³ In switching prepositions, Derrida at once points towards the importance of language in navigating the aforementioned aporias as well as the ultimate reciprocity of the relationship between host and guest. These two aspects of the host-guest relationship, the importance of language and the importance of reciprocity, ultimately define the duty of host and, in turn, librarian. Therefore, they each deserve closer examination.

There is a connection between language and discourse, discourse and hospitality, that Derrida explores throughout his works on hospitality. Discourse involves opening the self to welcome the expression of the Other; “this interruption of the self by the self, if such a thing is

¹⁴⁰ Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, 35.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

possible, can or must be taken up by thought: this is ethical discourse and it is also, as the limit of thematization, hospitality. Is not hospitality the interruption of the self?”¹⁴⁴ To interrupt the self by the self means to allow, in thought and discourse, a receptivity to the Other. Therefore, hospitality involves a constant reevaluation of knowledge claims as these claims come into question with competing principles put forward by any Other and any Third. Such continual reevaluation interrupts thought and action, but it also interrupts the constant substitution between host and guest. Discourse allows for “a certain unbinding [which] opens the free space of the relationship to the incalculable singularity of the other.”¹⁴⁵ Through a recognition of this “incalculable singularity,” the librarian as host can remain open to those expected and unexpected patrons. Combining Derridean hospitality with a feminist ethics of care, Hamington argues, “openness to an uninvited stranger provides the greatest opportunity for mutual discovery; feminist hospitality frames a shared or connected identity. In this manner, hospitality can be truly disruptive.”¹⁴⁶ Hospitality, through discourse, through the *yes to* and *of* the Other, breaks open conditional hospitality. Yet discourse also necessitates the identity of the host. It calls this identity to be opened to the Other, but it does not ask that such identity is destroyed or consumed by any Other. If it were destroyed, the back and forth of discourse would become an impossibility, and the Other would be left on her/his/their own. Thus, even as discourse breaks open the laws of hospitality, it simultaneously rounds out the lateral nature of the host-guest relationship according to the law of hospitality. Host is saved from hostage, hospitality from hostility.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 53.

¹⁴⁵ Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, 150.

¹⁴⁶ Hamington, “Toward a Theory of Feminist Hospitality,” 26.

Promoting discourse, however, can be complicated by language barriers. Derrida dedicates several pages in *Of Hospitality* to an exploration of an institutional language barrier, and it is an exploration which holds applicability to library as an institution. Derrida's discussion occurs through the lens of Plato's *Apology*. In this text, Socrates stands before the court, an accused before his accusers, defending himself from life-threatening accusations. Socrates begins his defense by declaring "that he is foreign to the language of the courts, to the tribune of the tribunals: he doesn't know how to speak this courtroom language."¹⁴⁷ Because Socrates does not speak the language of the courts, he is already at a disadvantage, already apologizing for his lack of knowledge and eloquence. Is this simply an occurrence of antiquity, or does Socrates' experience mirror contemporary reality? Does an institutional language barrier in LIS discourage discourse? In discouraging discourse between librarian and patron, host and guest, does hospitality unintentionally regress back into hostility? If a library user examines the catalogue online before even entering physical library space, how does the language of the catalogue contribute to a language barrier? For whom and by whom was the language of the library setting and organizational systems created? Who is it thus excluding? These questions must be dealt with in order to then ask: how can an institutional language barrier be overcome? How can discourse be promoted and hospitality restored?

Language within the library has already gained considerable attention within the field. Elmborg argues, for example, that LIS professionals "often ignore the political and social dimensions of library language. The library is organized by subject classifications expressed in words. These words are not free words, but controlled words. Stated otherwise, to use the library, students and faculty must use the language of the library and of librarians—a language evolved

¹⁴⁷ Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 15.

precisely to reflect the white, middle-class construction of knowledge that education has always presumed to create and reflect.”¹⁴⁸ More recently, Collins published an article titled, “Language, Power, and Oppression in the LIS Diversity Void,” in which she uses critical discourse analysis and critical race theory to “explore the intersections of language, power, and oppression that specifically come into play or are overlooked in our broader discourse (all thirty years of it) about diversity in LIS, stalling change through rhetoric that works against the very goals it discusses.”¹⁴⁹ Central to her argument is the recognition that, “for all its inescapable presence, language, like many constants, is often taken for granted, and when, as is the case with interrogating lack of diversity, language is a tool for considering every other possible barrier, interrogating language itself is an easy omission to make.”¹⁵⁰ When the language of the library is interrogated, the results are disheartening. Racist language pervades systems of organization, categorization, and even scholarly communication that the library as an institution both utilizes and bolsters.¹⁵¹ These systems will not be quickly dismantled, but archivists, librarians, and other LIS professionals are becoming increasingly vocal about how prevalent and problematic such language is. Along with large, systemic problems of language within LIS, the institutional language barrier can also be propagated through small choices libraries make. Collins writes, “language itself is a form of social practice,” thus providing weight to even seemingly innocuous language displayed throughout the library, in other front-facing library communication, and in any interaction between librarian and patron.¹⁵² Language, even that which may appear menial, holds power.

¹⁴⁸ Elmborg, “Libraries in the Contact Zone: On the Creation of Educational Space,” 60.

¹⁴⁹ Anastasia M. Collins, “Language, Power, and Oppression in the LIS Diversity Void,” *Library Trends* 67 no. 1 (Summer 2018): 40.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 42.

In response to such power, it may seem attractive to regress into silence when possible rather than risk propagating the institutional language barrier. Silence is also powerful, however, and can result in just as much damage as poor language choices. In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida argues, “Keeping silent is already a modality of possible speaking.”¹⁵³ This statement parallels criticisms of library neutrality stifling social responsibility. The choice to stay silent on certain issues is not, in fact, neutral, but rather its own political and privileged stance. In their article, “Libraries on the Frontlines: Neutrality and Social Justice,” Gibson et al. make this same argument, writing, “seemingly ‘neutral’ libraries are often those that ignore the specific concerns of marginalized groups and address those of racial, social, and political majorities.”¹⁵⁴ Such apparent library neutrality is harmful, reflecting the complacent hospitality critiqued by Garrison and discussed in Part One of this paper. Derridean hospitality, on the other hand, recognizes the power of silence in conjunction with the power of language; “We will have to negotiate constantly between these two extensions of the concept of hospitality as well as of language.”¹⁵⁵ Understanding such power helps librarian as host deconstruct the hierarchy created by the institutional language barrier and form meaningful, hospitable relationships with patrons.

Here it is beneficial to pause and summarize the argument of Part Four thus far. Hospitality in the library involves a host-guest relationship between librarian and patron. This relationship requires discourse to save it from hostility, and this discourse requires surmounting an institutional language barrier. However, while discourse is critical to hospitality, a way to

¹⁵³ Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 135.

¹⁵⁴ Amelia N. Gibson, Renate L. Chancellor, Nicole A. Cooke, Sarah Park Dahlen, Shari A. Lee, and Yasmeeen L. Shorish, “Libraries on the Frontlines: Neutrality and Social Justice,” *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 36 n. 8 (2017): 753.

¹⁵⁵ Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 135.

save host and guest from becoming hostage, hospitality is more than discourse. To explain how, I situate Derridean hospitality between Freirean critical pedagogy and a feminist ethics of care.

While I have previously alluded to care ethics, it may seem abrupt to introduce Freirean critical pedagogy at this stage. Developing too many theories risks detracting from the one theory I am most intent on introducing to the field—that of Derridean hospitality. Yet, there are so many similarities between my discussion on discourse as it relates to hospitality and critical pedagogy that there is also a risk in not acknowledging so complimentary a theory. I must ask how the two are similar and, importantly, where the two diverge? What does Derridean hospitality add to the field that Freirean critical pedagogy does not? For a concise summary regarding what this liberation pedagogy entails and how it has been integrated into LIS, I turn to Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* as well as a chapter by Reidler and Eryaman titled, “Transformative Library Pedagogy and Community-Based Libraries: A Freirean Perspective” in *Critical Theory for Library and Information Science*.

Freire was a Brazilian theorist who “dedicated his life to helping oppressed communities become aware of their collective power and consequently create new conditions in overcoming oppression.”¹⁵⁶ He developed a pedagogy centered on a critical dialogue and reciprocity between teacher and student. This was specifically counter to what he deemed “the banking model of education” in which the teacher deposits knowledge for the students to unquestioningly memorize.¹⁵⁷ Librarians, inspired by Freire’s “dialogic process in which both teacher and student construct knowledge together,” have used Freire in public and academic settings to promote a

¹⁵⁶ Martina Reidler and Mustafa Yunus Eryaman, “Transformative Library Pedagogy and Community-Based Libraries: A Freirean Perspective” in *Critical Theory for Library and Information Science: Exploring the Social from Across the Disciplines*, ed. Gloria J. Leckie, Lisa M. Given, and John Buschman (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2010): 89.

¹⁵⁷ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum, 2005): 72.

new vision of the library as “community based and transformative.”¹⁵⁸ Rather than the more positivist learning approaches of traditional librarianship, critical pedagogist librarians situate “learning in libraries [as...] a process that acknowledges the non-causal, social, moral, and political nature of inquiry, making it a practical and interpretive accomplishment rather than a mere technical or technological activity.”¹⁵⁹ Essentially, Freirean critical pedagogy has been integrated into LIS as a way to resituate the learning process as one of mutual discovery, empowering students and patrons through the creation and promotion of dialogic discourse.

Similarities abound between Derridean hospitality and Freirean critical pedagogy. Both thinkers are concerned with translating theory into action in order to empower individuals. They advocate for an engagement in critical dialogue and a questioning of ourselves and the world around us. Both theorists take a justice-oriented approach and view discourse as a means of achieving such justice. Both construct identity as, at least in part, mutual. This means that, through both theories, teacher and student, host and guest, learn and grow together.

While both theories are complimentary, Derridean hospitality is broader in scope than Freirean critical pedagogy. Freire’s theory is one of pedagogy, and that is reflected in how it has been integrated into classrooms, libraries, and scholarship. Derrida’s theory of hospitality, on the other hand, incorporates pedagogy but also permeates theories of ontology, ethics, deconstruction, and any interaction between self and Other, whether this interaction is on a personal level, an institutional level, or a national level. The broad scope of Derrida’s theory is further evidenced in his statements of equation between hospitality and other concepts. Throughout his works, Derrida claims that “hospitality is culture;” “ethics is hospitality; and

¹⁵⁸ Reidler and Eryaman, “Transformative Library Pedagogy and Community-Based Libraries: A Freirean Perspective,” 90.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 92.

“deconstruction is hospitality.”¹⁶⁰ Because Derridean hospitality is so pervasive, it has been incorporated in areas of scholarship from theology to anthropology to medicine to psychology to philosophy to business and beyond. I argue that Derrida can be used in conjunction with Freire to frame librarians as educators. However, Derridean hospitality departs from Freire to place into question the entire service-model of librarianship.

This service-model of librarianship incorporates emotional labor, and it is this emphasis on affect that connects Derridean hospitality to a feminist ethics of care. A feminist ethics of care was first introduced by psychologist Carol Gilligan in 1982 as a response to fellow psychologist’s Kohlberg’s “negative assumptions about the moral development of women. Gilligan argued that Kohlberg’s research assumed a male model of moral reasoning and decision making, and that women were either left out of the studies altogether or judged to have less ability to reason.”¹⁶¹ While much of Gilligan’s original theory has been transformed by second wave feminist scholars and by theorists in fields outside of psychology, there remains consistency in her “idea that individuals are not the isolated and abstract entities described in traditional liberal theory, but are fundamentally relational and interdependent. Care theorists who bring this feature to the forefront highlight our embeddedness in networks of relationships that intersect at various levels of the personal and political in ways that shape people’s lives as well as the values, practices, policies, and institutions that affect them.”¹⁶² In a way, this ethics of care is its own form of deconstruction. Care theorists acknowledge a dichotomy between traditionally masculine-coded “traits such as rationality, independence, intellect, autonomy, will, and

¹⁶⁰Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, 16-17; Derrida, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, 109.

¹⁶¹ Christine Koggel and Joan Orme, “Care Ethics: New Theories and Applications,” *Ethics and Social Welfare* 4 no. 2 (2010): 109.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 110.

hierarchy” on the one hand and “culturally feminine traits such as emotion, empathy, interdependence, and community” on the other.¹⁶³ There exists a traditional hierarchy to such a dichotomy, with traditionally masculine-coded traits dominating ethical ideals in the Western tradition for centuries. This hierarchy is not just one of ethics, but also of explicitly political power.¹⁶⁴ Finally, care theorists seek to flip this dichotomy, building up an ethical tradition around the historically undervalued feminine-coded traits of care, emotion, empathy, and interdependence.

While Derrida does not explicitly write on a feminist ethics of care in conjunction with hospitality, he also does not ignore the often-gendered dimensions of hospitality. For example, in *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas* he puts forth a feminist reading of a controversial Levinas passage: “It might even, on the contrary, make of this text a sort of feminist manifesto. For this text defines the welcome par excellence, the welcome or welcoming of absolute, absolutely originary, or even pre-originary hospitality, nothing less than the pre-ethical origin of ethics, on the basis of femininity.”¹⁶⁵ Here Derrida is taking the first and second step of the same deconstruction that feminist care scholars take, ultimately flipping the tradition of ethics to base it in feminine-coded qualities. Yet, Derrida goes a step further in the deconstructive process, not just flipping the dichotomy but also questioning the new hierarchy. He asks, “Need one choose here between two incompatible readings, between an androcentric hyperbole and a feminist one? Is there any place for such a choice in ethics? And in justice? In law? In politics? Nothing is less certain.”¹⁶⁶ Both theories seek to reevaluate ethical systems through a deconstructive process. However, Derrida questions the new hierarchy and ultimately resists building an ethics to the

¹⁶³ Sweeney and Rhinesmith, “Creating Caring Institutions for Community Informatics,” 5.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, 44.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

exclusion of the traditionally masculine-coded values of justice and intellect. My argument is not that one theory is better than the other; each was created and adapted in different ways and for different purposes. Instead, I merely aim to show where the two theories converge and diverge in order to demonstrate the individual impact Derridean hospitality can have on LIS scholarship. To accomplish this task, I seek to draw forth two additional elements of both care ethics and Derridean hospitality that serve as areas of similarity and difference: the construction of identity and the elevation of service-based labor.

Both a feminist ethics of care and Derridean hospitality place value on interconnected identity formation. The Derridean deconstruction of host and guest seeks to dismantle the power dynamic between the two roles and create an “atmosphere for lateral exchanges.”¹⁶⁷ Breaking down the power in the hierarchy allows for mutual benefit between host and guest--both can learn and grow together. In a feminist ethics of care, as Sweeney and Rhinesmith argue, this mutuality serves to avoid “stigmatizing the need for caring as a vulnerability rather than as a basic part of the human condition.”¹⁶⁸ In a similar line of argumentation, Hamington writes, “women who help other women, not in the spirit of charity or to alleviate class guilt but with a generous disposition and for mutual benefit, exemplify acts of feminist hospitality.”¹⁶⁹ Both theories work against a classical understanding of lateral hospitality in which host simply gives to the guest, and they both do so by emphasizing the importance of interconnected identity. However, there is also a subtle and important difference in the formation of identity as put forward by these two theories. In a feminist ethics of care, similar to Levinas, identity is mutual: “individuals are not the isolated and abstract entities described in traditional liberal theory, but

¹⁶⁷ Hamington, “Toward a Theory of Feminist Hospitality,” 25.

¹⁶⁸ Sweeney and Rhinesmith, “Creating Caring Institutions for Community Informatics,” 8.

¹⁶⁹ Hamington, “Toward a Theory of Feminist Hospitality,” 25.

are fundamentally relational and interdependent.”¹⁷⁰ Derrida recognizes the importance of interconnectivity, continually placing the Other as the focal point of his scholarship, but ultimately ties together ontological independence of identity and ethics in a way that departs from traditional liberal theory differently than traditional care ethics.¹⁷¹ This does not deviate from certain strands of feminist care ethics, as the theory has been adopted and changed in different contexts. Yet, Derrida’s specific upholding of individual identity even in the face of interconnectivity and mutuality can help clarify the role of librarian as host.

One danger of mutual identity formation put forward by traditional feminist care ethics is the following potential critique. If identity is mutual, and if host and guest are mutually benefitting from the relationship between the two, why even keep the dichotomy of host and guest? The terms can, after all, hold a negative, gendered connotation and can imply an imbalance of power. Why attach the label of host to librarian? The reason I maintain librarian as host even while recognizing the importance of mutuality between host and guest is to avoid “disempowering caregiving.”¹⁷² Hospitality is complicated, and it is ultimately the responsibility of the host as individual to ensure its provision to the greatest extent possible. It is the responsibility of the librarian, rather than the patron, to dismantle the institutional language barrier in the library. It is the responsibility of the librarian to deconstruct between the law and the laws in every interaction. It is the responsibility of the librarian to provide care, to keep in mind the Other and the Third, to decide in the face of undecidability, and to create a hospitable atmosphere in which mutual growth can occur. Derrida’s recognition, however slight, of individuality bolsters the individual responsibilities of librarian as host, spurring this host away

¹⁷⁰ Koggel and Orme, “Care Ethics: New Theories and Applications,” 110.

¹⁷¹ Derrida, “Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas,” 172.

¹⁷² Hamington, “Toward a Theory of Feminist Hospitality,” 24.

from a harmful neutrality in which responsibility is split between librarian and patron, host and guest.

These responsibilities of host lead to the final similarity between a feminist ethics of care and Derridean hospitality that I aim to draw forward here: both theories place an increased value on affective care. Both theories recognize that the emotional labor of care is undervalued, and both seek to articulate why this work should be more supported. Higgins draws this critique specifically into the library setting through feminist care ethics, acknowledging, “Public services (access services) staff members who engage in more traditional affective labor—services with smiles—are viewed as providing unskilled labor. Skillfully determining the needs of students, faculty, staff, and administrators; knowledgeably referring those in need to appropriate individuals and services; and assisting in the navigation of the library’s resources and services with expertise and abilities of an empath is valuable work, deserving equitable pay.”¹⁷³ Outside of the library setting, combining Derridean hospitality with care ethics, Hamington argues, “Feminist hospitality has the potential to reframe emotional labor to a position of social value.”¹⁷⁴ Derrida similarly emphasizes the affective element of hospitality labor by linking this labor to love.¹⁷⁵ In deconstructive decisions, Derrida questions which actions are “more just and more loving” towards the Other and the Third.¹⁷⁶ Yet this quote also, once again, reveals a Derridean departure from care ethics—the emphasis on both affective and traditional justice-oriented care. In *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, Derrida writes on the importance of affective love in conjunction with hospitality, but also recognizes that one must distinguish “in short, between

¹⁷³ Shana Higgins, “Embracing the Feminization of Librarianship,” *LIS Scholarship Archive* (2017): 85.

¹⁷⁴ Hamington, “Toward a Theory of Feminist Hospitality,” 27.

¹⁷⁵ Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 27.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

hospitality and love, since the latter does not accomplish the former.”¹⁷⁷ For Derrida, the labor of hospitality encompasses care, but also necessarily encompasses the aforementioned intellectual labor of deconstruction.

Derridean hospitality, then, captures the discursive orientation towards justice on which Freirean critical pedagogy focusses while simultaneously bolstering the importance of interconnectivity and care on which a feminist ethics of care focusses. Just as these two other theories have been drawn into scholarship to frame librarians as educators and caregivers, Derridean hospitality can frame the professionalization of library service positions as affective and intellectual. Yet, while situated between critical pedagogy and care ethics, Derridean hospitality ultimately extends beyond these two theories and thus carves out its own space in LIS research. Through the deconstructive process of hospitality, Derrida’s theory provides an ethical heuristic through which tension in the field can be productively mediated. Therefore, Derridean hospitality is situated between critical pedagogy and feminist care ethics, but, through its central element of deconstruction, also goes beyond these two theories to frame not just hospitality labor but also the entire service model of librarianship, actively providing a way to mediate the tensions inherent to this model.

¹⁷⁷ Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, 41.

PART FIVE: CONCLUSION

I conclude by asserting, once again, that the library is a place of hospitality. It is a place where the law tangles with the laws, hospitality tangles with hostility, theoretical tangles with practical, justice with love, host with hostage, discourse with silence, knowing with unknowing, internal contradiction with external contradiction, self with Other, Other with the Third. Each of these conceptual negotiations can be pictured as a thread: “certain threads go at once farther and less far than others [...] but all threads undeniably pass through the knot of hospitality.”¹⁷⁸ This knot of hospitality takes intellectual labor to untangle and examine because every conceptual negotiation is tied to others in ways that shape and define hospitality itself. To conclude, I return to this knot of hospitality, retracing the contours of Derrida’s theory and its application to LIS. I then contemplate an important question to be asked at the end of such a project: why commit to the intellectual labor of untangling the knot of hospitality?

In my first exercise in deconstruction, I focused on a central tension within hospitality which lies in the very etymology of the word. Hospitality is derived from the Latin *hostis*, which translates to friend and enemy, host and guest. These contradictory translations of *hostis* provide Derrida reason to argue for the self-deconstruction of the concept, meaning that hospitality is always at odds with itself, inherently complicated and complicating. It is important to start with this etymology because it shows that Derrida is not reinventing hospitality through his critical theory, but he is instead returning it to its active and tension-filled origins. Though hospitality is

¹⁷⁸ Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, 41.

rooted in the active, the history of hospitality in LIS is plagued by complacency. Using the works of Dee Garrison as well as the *Library Journal* archive, I pieced together a gendered narrative of hospitality in early librarianship that examines this complacency. Today, the dominant narrative of hospitality is largely economic rather than complacent, tied to the hospitality industry. This contemporary economic narrative of hospitality is connected to the historically complacent narrative through a gendered emphasis on hospitality rooted in ownership. What if, however, hospitality is rooted not in ownership, but in the act of welcome, the relationship between host and guest? It is this relocating of hospitality that sparked counternarratives in LIS scholarship and practice. Both historically and today, these counternarratives utilize hospitality as a means of public outreach, radical welcome, and experimentation within the library. Though such counternarratives are encouraging, they exist in LIS devoid of a unifying theory. Here, Derrida's critical theory can serve as particularly beneficial, as it is a way to both unite different counternarratives of radical hospitality within LIS as well as center hospitality within scholarship and practice.

This Derridean critical theory involves “an antinomy, an insoluble antinomy, a non-dialectizable antinomy between, on the one hand, *The* law of unlimited hospitality (to give the new arrival all of one's home and oneself, to give him or her one's own, our own, without asking a name, or compensation, or the fulfilment of even the smallest condition), and on the other hand, the laws (in the plural), those rights and duties that are always conditioned and conditional.”¹⁷⁹ I explore this aporia in Part Three, not only examining the law and the laws individually, but also explaining how “*the* law [...] needs the laws, which, however, deny it, or at

¹⁷⁹ Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 77; Emphasis included. It is interesting to note that Derrida uses “non-dialectizable” in this quote, an allusion to Hegelian philosophy. The fact that hospitality is “non-dialectizable” differentiates Derrida's deconstruction from the Hegel's dialectic.

any rate threaten it, sometimes corrupt or pervert it. And must always be able to do this.”¹⁸⁰

These two antithetical understandings of hospitality combine in deconstruction to form Derridean hospitality, and there is an intellectual labor to hospitality that involves completing this deconstruction in each interaction with Other. Such intellectual deconstruction is one way that Derrida’s theory can be used to complicate and elevate hospitality labor. Because of this, Derridean hospitality is found in nursing, social work, and education research as a way to fight for professionalization and frame different approaches to service. I argue that this theory can be similarly brought into LIS, and I demonstrate such applicability by connecting Derridean hospitality to different ALA core values. Ultimately, the deconstruction between the law and the laws of hospitality “touches on that fundamental ethical question [...] of the boundaries of the human, and how we set those up.”¹⁸¹ This is why Derrida claims, “Hospitality is not simply some region of ethics [...] it is ethicicity itself, the whole and the principle of ethics.”¹⁸² Through the conceptual deconstruction of hospitality, an ethical heuristic is established.

The labor of hospitality, however, is not simply framed by a conceptual deconstruction of hospitality. Instead, this deconstruction must extend to the roles of host and guest, a task I undertake in Part Four. The law of hospitality dictates a lateral relationship in which host gives all to the guest while asking nothing in return. The laws of hospitality, rather, dictate a relationship of transaction, requiring exchange between host and guest and back again. On their own, each model demonstrates a regression from hospitality to hostility, from host to hostage. This regression can only be countered when the laws and the law are placed in deconstructive relationship with each other. When this occurs, the relationship between host and guest becomes

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 79. Emphasis included.

¹⁸¹ Still, *Derrida and Hospitality: Theory and Practice*, 4.

¹⁸² Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, 50.

modelled on reciprocity rather than on the aforementioned cyclical or lateral models. Central to such reciprocity is discourse. In the library setting, I argue that such discourse is hindered by an institutional language barrier between librarian as host and patron as guest. Surmounting this barrier is important for fostering hospitality, yet it is not the only responsibility of librarian as host. In order to explore more deeply this labor of hospitality, I situate Derridean hospitality between a justice-oriented Freirean critical pedagogy and an affect-oriented feminist ethics of care. These two theories help clarify the role of librarian as host. Additionally, because they have already been used in an LIS setting, these two theories also demonstrate ways in which Derridean hospitality can be drawn into LIS scholarship. In order to effectively foster hospitality, LIS practitioners and scholars must keep questions of love and justice at the forefront of action and thought to avoid regression into hostage and hostility.

Together, the etymological deconstruction, conceptual deconstruction, and relational deconstruction of hospitality serve as a way to complicate and reclaim hospitality within LIS. However, the question still remains: why bother with the intellectual labor of untangling this knot of hospitality? Ultimately, this line of research opens LIS scholarship to new research questions while providing a deconstructive approach to such questions that embraces tension rather than resolves it.

This thesis introduces Derrida's critical theory of hospitality to LIS scholarship. As an introduction, it is far from a comprehensive examination of all the ways hospitality pervades LIS. Moving forward in my own research, I aim to continue examining questions surrounding hospitality in librarianship. For example, can the patron be construed, specifically, as an Information Other? What does a more robust analysis of the patron as Information Other reveal? How does focusing on the radical singularity of each Information Other differentiate from other

user-centered approaches already present in the field? What new library services can or should be built in the name of hospitality? How is hospitality transformed by ICT's? How is identity itself negotiated in librarian interactions with each Other? How is institutional identity formed through a reclamation of hospitality? How can hospitality be reclaimed specifically within LIS education? Can a cultural change in understanding away from transactional hospitality begin in LIS? How does this theory inform or interact with other theories already present in the field? These questions and others surface through a reclamation of hospitality, and they have the potential to shape future scholarship and inform future practice. Derrida writes, "It is not for speculative or ethical reasons that I am interested in unconditional hospitality, but in order to understand and transform what is going on today in our world."¹⁸³ My concluding question asks the importance of grappling with this pervasive theory, and here Derrida provides an answer—understanding hospitality connects to the ability to create positive change. Through continually questioning hospitality, I hope to contribute to this change.

However, it is not just the content of Derridean hospitality that has the potential to shape future scholarship and practice, but also the deconstructive style in which Derridean hospitality is explored. Throughout my paper I have interwoven deconstruction with reconstruction, exploring both Derrida's theory as well as assumptions present within LIS. Through such an in-depth exploration of deconstruction, I conclude that Derridean deconstruction, when embarked upon in the name of hospitality, provides a way to create, explore, and challenge tension within LIS in a productive rather than destructive manner. John Caputo's commentary in the first chapter of Derrida's *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* speaks to this same potentiality of Derridean deconstruction. In this chapter, Caputo uses the very idea of a

¹⁸³ Derrida, "Hospitality, Justice, and Responsibility," 70.

nutshell to demonstrate the value of deconstruction as a tool of disruption: “Whenever it runs up against a limit, deconstruction presses against it. Whenever deconstruction finds a nutshell—a secure axiom or a pithy maxim—the very idea is to crack it open and disturb this tranquility.”¹⁸⁴ Deconstruction thus denaturalizes concepts and hierarchies, seeking to recognize and disrupt power relationships. This lens is increasingly applied to LIS, mostly by archivists intent on “cracking open” systems of bibliographic description and classification.¹⁸⁵ Scholars like Joseph Deodato, Hope Olson, and Ronald Day have all related a Derridean deconstruction to the classification of information with the goal of highlighting “the unacknowledged assumptions that govern descriptions of reality and denaturalize[ing] them.”¹⁸⁶ This type of archival scholarship is especially important for dismantling the institutional language barrier discussed in Part Four, and it further speaks to the productive power of deconstruction. Other areas of LIS research, however, could benefit from this perspective.

Perhaps the greatest strength of hospitable deconstruction is its ability to embrace tension rather than resolve it. Resolving tension can serve to reinforce norms by slipping back into the comfort which precedes confrontation. Deconstructing tension, rather, challenges norms by exploring aporetic structure and placing power hierarchies into question. This is something Rauna Kuokkanen acknowledges in her article, “What is Hospitality in the Academy? Epistemic Ignorance and the (Im)Possible Gift,” writing, “attempting to do away with the existing tensions is not hospitality but the continuance of ignorance, and consolidation of the Self by the shadow of the Other.”¹⁸⁷ Often, tension is the result of challenging status quo, something which

¹⁸⁴ Derrida, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, 32.

¹⁸⁵ Leckie, Given, and Buschman, *Critical Theory for Library and Information Science*, 81.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁸⁷ Rauna Kuokkanen, “What is Hospitality in the Academy? Epistemic Ignorance and the (Im)Possible Gift,” *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 30 no. 1 (2008): 73.

Derridean hospitality welcomes. In fact, Derrida defines a “hospitality of reason [...] as the capacity to receive.”¹⁸⁸ What, in academia, is received? What is pushed to the outside? Who does academia most welcome? Which epistemologies are continually bolstered? If Derridean hospitality seeks justice, does it not also seek cognitive justice when applied to the academy? In Fisher and Klazar’s chapter in *Foundations of Information Ethics* titled, “Cognitive Justice and Intercultural Information Ethics,” they define “border thinking, or border gnosis, [as] the process of bringing previously repressed knowledges to the foreground, allowing them to become areas of research in their own right. Border thinking also encourages participation among academics and civil society, allowing for cross-industry dialogue.”¹⁸⁹ It is precisely at the border where hospitality operates as a tool of deconstruction and dialogue. It is precisely at the border where Derrida situated his own scholarship, operating between literature and philosophy. Libraries too are situated at the border, operating between disciplines and between the public and scholars and students. It is here, in the library and in LIS, where the epistemic power of Derridean hospitality can battle the epistemic ignorance of the academy.

Derridean hospitality, in its deconstructive complexity, has the potential to impact LIS. This theory provides a way to frame service models of librarianship, mediate and create tension within LIS, open scholarship to new and important questions, and turn the focus of librarianship towards the Other in all their radical singularity. Engaging in the labor of hospitality involves centering questions of love and justice, expanding dialogue both in the academy and in the library, and deconstructing the law and the laws of hospitality in every interaction. Hospitality is neither simple nor complacent nor transactional nor economic. It is always at the brink of being

¹⁸⁸ Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, 27.

¹⁸⁹ Rachel Fischer and Erin Klazer, “Cognitive Justice and Intercultural Information Ethics”, in *Foundations of Information Ethics* Ed. John T. F. Burgess, and Emily J. M. Knox (Chicago: ALA: Neal-Schuman, 2019): 104.

perverted, of turning over to what it is not, of slipping into hostility. Yet, in so far as hospitality pervades all interaction between self and Other and librarian and patron, in so far as it connects to all of ethics, to culture, and to deconstruction, it is also pervasive, transformative, and able to translate between theory and action in a way that creates tangible difference. Thus, I argue for a Derridean reclamation of hospitality within LIS, for a grappling with and embracing of the contradictory, deconstructive, ethical, knot of hospitality.

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