



Welcome
please
Come In

PHD AND POSTDOCTORAL COURSE & CONFERENCE
MAY 9-10, 2023

HOSPITALITY, LISTENING AND DIALOGUE

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Paul Mendes-Flohr (Hebrew University Jerusalem & University of Chicago):
“Hospitality: A Taste of Eternity”

Johannes Nissen (Aarhus University): “Hospitality, Listening and
Dialogue in Diaconia and Pastoral Care”

VENUE

Aarhus University, Nobelparken

Registration via [this link](#)

Everyone is welcome!



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DESCRIPTION

HOSPITALITY, LISTENING AND DIALOGUE

In the recent upsurge in forced migration across international borders and the increasing anti-immigration sentiment in Europe and beyond, the question of who or what a stranger is has not always been translated into recognition for this 'other.' In view of this attitude, which is prevalent in pluralistic, multicultural, globalized democracies, it is becoming ever more urgent to gain an in-depth understanding of the origins and meaning of 'hospitality' as a key concept and practice. In this PhD course and conference, we will explore religious, literary, artistic, theological, philosophical, ethical, legal, and political sources and resources, and we will discuss diverse approaches to hospitality. Scholarly attention to the notion of hospitality has to a great extent been wielded by political discourses about the 'integration' of immigrants and refugees crossing national borders. However, the notion of hospitality has a long history. Hospitality was initially a sacred tradition and ultimately – since Immanuel Kant's political proposal in *Perpetual Peace* (1795) where "hospitality means the right of the stranger not to be treated with hostility when he arrives on someone else's territory" – an exemplary way in which Europe has identified its own humanitarian ethos. Currently, however, hospitality (or rather, the lack of hospitality) has come to test the hallmarks of Europe's self-acclaimed hospitality culture.

The present course and conference will focus on the question of how it is possible to orient oneself in border settings where hospitality and one's own personal or group identity are challenged to the point that one no longer feels 'at home,' and where attempts of establishing and/or maintaining an intercultural and interreligious dialogue depending on verbal language reach a critical limit. May practices of 'hospitable listening' and (more or less) silent gestures of hospitality like, for instance, serving a meal or offering a place to rest and, *a fortiori*, coordinated politics of hospitality vis-à-vis refugees help us transcend the limits of dialogue, and if so, how? The connection between hospitality, listening, and dialogue will be explored in an interdisciplinary setting.

The aim of this course is to provide

1. an overview of different approaches to hospitality in various traditions of thought,
2. an introduction to questions related to hospitality (e.g. the relation between hospitality, listening, and dialogue; the tension between conditional and unconditional hospitality; role reversals between the guest and the host; the understanding of 'the other' or 'stranger'; phenomenologies of crossing a threshold, border, or limit; an evaluation of various immigration policies; the status of displaced and stateless people; the granting of asylum and establishment of sanctuary cities),
3. a critical discussion of how hospitality has been defined in different disciplines and practiced in different contexts.





PROGRAM

HOSPITALITY, LISTENING AND DIALOGUE

TUESDAY, MAY 9

Venue: building 1453, room 415

9.00-9.15 Welcome and introduction

9.15-10.00 Reading session 1: Hebrew Bible and New Testament

10.00-10.45 Reading session 2: Kant

10.45-11.00 Coffee break

11.00-11.45 Reading session 3: Levinas

11.45-12.30 Reading session 4: Derrida

12.30-13.00 Lunch

13.00-13.45 Reading session 5: Chrétien

13.45-14.30 PhD paper by Linda Xheza (Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis): "Visualising Philoxenia: Between the Ethical and State Violence"

14.30-14.45 Coffee break

14.45-15.30 PhD paper by Thomas Froy (Antwerpen University): "'Nothing, and not even that': A Buberian Critique of Heideggerian Hospitality"

15.30-16.00 Discussion of the role of listening and dialogue for hospitality

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10

Venue: building 1453, room 415

9.00-10.00 Lecture by Johannes Nissen (Aarhus University): "Hospitality, Listening and Dialogue in Diaconia and Pastoral Care"

10.00-10.45 PhD paper by Hugo Boothby (Malmö University): "Hospitality In 'A Tender Time'"

10.45-11.00 Coffee break

11.00-11.30 Continuation of our discussion of the role of listening and dialogue for hospitality

11.30-12.00 Open questions, ideas for the future, feedback forms

12.00-13.00 Lunch and move to The Museum of Ancient Art

Venue: The Museum of Ancient Art

13.00-14.00 Lecture by Paul Mendes-Flohr (Hebrew University of Jerusalem/Chicago University): "Hospitality: A Taste of Eternity"

14.00-14.15 Coffee and cake

14.15-15.15 Presentation of Festschrift for Paul Mendes-Flohr and dialogues with contributors

15.15-15.45 The museum exhibits can be explored

15.45-16.30 Guided tour through the Royal Library's Book Tower in Aarhus (NB: limited seats, sign up at <https://events.au.dk/openseminaronhospitalitylisteninganddialogue>)

16.30-17.00 Piano concert with Stephen Whale in the 'green oasis' of the Book Tower

17.00-18.00 Reception in the library garden





ABSTRACTS

HOSPITALITY, LISTENING AND DIALOGUE

**Linda Xheza (Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis):
“Visualising Philoxenia: Between the Ethical and State Violence”**

In this paper I focus on the striking photographs of three grandmothers who are seen feeding a baby at the moment of the baby's and their mom's arrival in the Greek island of Lesbos in September 2015. The photograph was taken by the Greek photographer Lefteris Partsalis and it has become iconic in Greece when the questions of responsibility and hospitality toward refugees arises. Although this photograph has been seen through an emancipatory lens and as a great teaching moment for all of us to see how we should receive refugees, I argue that the Greek media and the Greek state have instrumentalized this image to open a dialogue about hospitality. However, this is not a noble idea of a hospitality as an ethical and political responsibility. Instead, the Greek media and the state's visual discourses used this photograph to construct an idea of Greece and its people as the hospitable nation while effacing the Other. Emmanuel Levinas was adamant in his work *Totality and Infinity* that the visual field does not allow the Face to emerge. In this paper I challenge his view by arguing that it is not the photograph as such that did not allow a discussion of responsibility to arise but instead it is the ideological choices of the media and state actors that framed the image in ways that exclude hospitality and the Other while addressing the idea of hospitality at the same time. In order to support my argument, I focus on conditional and unconditional hospitality as discussed in the work of Jacques Derrida and the idea of violence that for Levinas exists in both of them. My aim is to explore the visual field as a space that allows a possibility for the ethical violence to reorient state politics and open a demand for hospitality that those in power are so desperately trying to evade.

Bibliography:

Lévinas, Emmanuel. 1969. *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Lévinas, Emmanuel. 1980. *Otherwise than Being: Or, Beyond Essence*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Hague; Boston: M. Nijhoff.





ABSTRACTS

HOSPITALITY, LISTENING AND DIALOGUE

Thomas Froy (Antwerpen University):

“Nothing, and not even that’: A Buberian Critique of Heideggerian Hospitality”

This text presents a Buberian critique of a certain notion of ‘hospitality’ in Martin Heidegger’s thinking on dwelling. Heidegger’s ontological project aims to the “reawaken an understanding for the meaning of [the question of Being]” (Heidegger 1962: 19): this reawakening works by removing subject-based thinking in order to build a space for new, unfamiliar thinking on dwelling. Thus, the Heideggerian gesture can be understood as a building-thinking which welcomes, or is hospitable, to the new and the unfamiliar. Martin Buber’s ‘What is Man?’ radically calls into question the openness, or hospitality, of Heidegger’s capacity to welcome the new and unfamiliar. According to Buber, Heidegger lacks a notion of the ‘eternal’ (Buber 1961: 203-4), and therefore lacks a notion of the truly unfamiliar: on such a reading, therefore, Heidegger’s welcome becomes highly conditional, being closed to the truly unfamiliar and new, only open to the familiar and old. Not only does Buber’s criticisms apply to Heidegger’s explicit thinking on dwelling, but to Heidegger’s entire ontological project, insofar as the latter can be understood as an attempt at building-thinking itself. In light of these limitations, Buber’s criticisms necessitate a revised understanding of the meaning of ‘hospitality’, and perhaps of the very notion of ‘thinking’ itself. Such a reading not only presents a new reading of the relationship between the work of Buber and Heidegger, but also opens new points of dialogue with later thinkers of home, and philosophy, notably Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida.

References:

Buber, Martin. *Between Man and Man*, 1961.

Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 2019.





ABSTRACTS

HOSPITALITY, LISTENING AND DIALOGUE

Hugo Boothby (Malmö University): “Hospitality In ‘A Tender Time’”

This paper presents the *Tender Time* sound and video installation, exhibited at *Time, Space and Existence* in Venice, May – November 2023 <https://timespaceexistence.com/>. Created by the author as part of Malmö University’s Medea Research Lab, the *Tender Time* installation takes NASA’s Voyager space mission as an inspiration. Launched more than 40 years ago the Voyager spacecraft carries a *Golden Record* that contains the sounds of Earth, including spoken greetings in 55 different languages, and 27 pieces of music. The messages on the *Golden Record* are addressed to extra-terrestrials, inviting them to make contact with earth, meaning that the *Golden Record* is an act of intergalactic hospitality. The *Tender Time* sound installation samples, loops and re-edits the sounds included on the *Golden Record* into a new sound collage, composing a polyglot soundscape that is inviting, immersive and disorientating by equal measure. Despite its hospitable intentions the sounds of the *Golden Record*, and the *Tender Time* composition that remixes these sounds, are both *haunted* (Derrida, 2006 [1994]) by what remains absent from the *Golden Record*. The engineers that curated the *Golden Record* decided to exclude the sounds of destruction, war, and distress and although eclectic the music included on the *Golden Record* remains biased towards the Western classical canon, meaning that the hospitality of the *Golden Record* is haunted by a Eurocentric vision of superficial geopolitical harmony. Created during a public performance in November 2022 the *Tender Time* composition invited members of the audience to address the ghosts of disharmony that haunt the *Golden Record* by contributing messages of regret that become part of the soundtrack that is created. Regrets are memories of futures that never happened, lost futures that continue to haunt the present. This paper considers the different modes of hospitality that are apparent in the listening experiences of *Tender Time* and how an application of Derrida’s writing on hospitality (Derrida, 2005) provides an important compliment to his concept of hauntology, that is already widely applied to the analysis of sound art and contemporary music (Demos, 2013; Fisher, 2014).

References:

- Demos, T. J. (2013). *Return to the Postcolony: Specters of Colonialism in Contemporary Art*. Berlin: Stenberg Press.
- Derrida, J. (2005). The principle of hospitality. *parallax*, 11(1), 6-9.
- Derrida, J. (2006 [1994]). *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. London: Routledge.
- Fisher, M. (2014). *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures*. Winchester: Zero Books.

