Cosmetics of Hospitality: A Question of Limits

JORDI VIVALDI

"Inmundo," "inmundicia," from the Latin term *inmunditia*, without purity or order.

When conceived in light of its etymology, the Spanish translation of the term "filth" reveals a subtle yet significant association: It connects physical uncleanness, dirtiness, and noisomeness to *inmunditia*, a deprivation from the Roman *mundus*, a lack of the universal systematics articulating the Greek *cosmos*. To be filthy would thus mean to be void of *kosmetikhe* (cosmetics), to be untouched by the *techne* providing order and decorum to the universe. It is the announcement of an exodus and exile: The abandonment of the *mundus*, a civilized realm governed by harmonic regularities and neat identities, in order to land in a worldless territory, a marginal province populated by all sorts of unorderable miscegenations.

By amalgamating beings and flesh conventionally indexed to different realms, today's acknowledgment of our zoe/geo/techno natures has brought about a new

situation. Chatbots, robotic rays, driverless cars, or synthetic landscapes appear as filthy entities whose enigmatic mixedness makes their worldness quiver—not by distancing them from a given *mundus*, but by engendering multiple forms of cosmetics. In its overlapping of multiple habitational tempers, this scenario questions the notion of home. Constructed of literal and metaphorical walls, the home has conventionally made sense as an architectural apparatus by erecting boundaries that, in parallel to the architecture's distinction between interior and exterior, segregate order from chaos, *civitas* from *barbarie*, and safety from peril. Culture from nature. However, in light of today's acknowledgment of the hybridization between these pairs, I propose to think of the question of the home in terms of hospitality, the *raison d'être* and leitmotiv of this essay. Hospitality, the Greek *xenia*, is a form of pact, a contract, a play of hide and seek, care and generosity towards the figure of the unknown, the foreign, the *xenos*, but also an opportunity for inventiveness and oxygenation that extends to the community, to the generation, to a genealogy today including multiple zoe/geo/techno regimes. How to conceive the notion of hospitality with respect to such multinatural constellations? Is it possible to think of it in terms that are affirmative or inventive rather than prescriptive or compassive? What could it mean to do that? And why try? How to imagine such hospitality with respect to today's amalgamation of modes of inhabitation involving beings of human and non-human affiliation? How to let them come, to let them arrive? How to cultivate figures of hospitality in which habits do not engulf or fortify us but leak into more active, more spectral, and perhaps even more exuberant manners of living well together today?

The following pages accommodate and attend to these questions by circling around the notion of limit. If inhabitation implies the articulation of spaces within spaces, aren't limits playing a cardinal role with respect to the question of hospitality? Doesn't their conceptual nature consist precisely in holding flesh together in their difference? I propose to interweave hospitality with the limit's differential sameness and autoreferential difference by foliating it into three codifications: the limit-contour (Where does something end?); the limit-action (How far does the power of something go?), and the limit-milieu (What might be opened within the limit itself?). The numerous turns, overlaps, collisions, angles, jumps, and intertwinings operating between these three limital codes orchestrate the *cosmetics of hospitality* proposed in this essay: Articulations of habitational techniques (*techne*) seeking to collect everything that can be considered yet without exhausting it all (*cosmos*). To this end, I suggest lodging ourselves into the enigmatic yet decisive Roman ceremonies of the *inauguratio*; in their cosmological vocation, the foundational rites of Roman cities constitute a promising camping ground and shifting land from which to experiment with new lines of flight regarding hospitality, coming into resonance with our times by articulating four figures of hospitality based on the notions of transmutation, triangularization, tuning, and *matryoshka*.

Hide and Seek

A lively excursus on Greek decorative painting is the folkloric scenario in which, for the sole time in his *De Architectura,* Vitruvius mentions the Greek term

xenia.[1] In this short yet colorful paragraph, generously seasoned with details on all sorts of customs regarding Greek hospitality, Vitruvius surreptitiously places, almost in passing, a revealing note: "it is only when the Greeks became more luxurious, and their circumstances more opulent, [that] they began to provide dining rooms, chambers, and store-rooms of provisions for their guests from abroad."[2] Luxury and opulence; in the imaginary of the foreign traveler, the host's house embodied the promise of a nurturing space of pleasure and refinement, a civilizing fortress safe from the perils of the outer forest (*foris*). Through its walls, floors, and ceilings, the home conventionally appears not only as a biological, climatical, and even spiritual interruption of planetary flows but also and "above all, [as] the insertion, the addition, the arbitrary introduction of a different space-time, other, supernumerary."[3] To establish a home thus means to pierce the planet, to embed in it another atmosphere, another light, another temperature, but also to install in it other moods, other gestures, other rhythms, to set up a bounded space existing to keep the outdoors out, while guarding humanity within its interior.

This distinction is perhaps the architecture's gesture par excellence: since the dome of the Pantheon, the concept of architectural space is "almost indistinguishable from the concept of hollowed-out interior space,"[4] thus

1   In Ancient Greece, *xenia* was the moral principle of giving gifts to foreign acquaintances, later absorbed by the ethical precept of hospitality.

2   Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. Morris Hicky Morgan (Toronto: Harvard University Press, 1980), 15.

3   Emanuele Coccia, *Filosofia della casa: Lo spazio domestico e la felicità* (Milano: Giulio Einaudi editore, 2021), loc. 896.

4   Christian Norberg-Schultz, *Existence, Space and Architecture* (London: Praeger Editorial, 1971), 12.

creating, "in a way no other art can, enclosures for us in which the vertical middle axis is not physically present but remains empty."[5] The home is thus traditionally read as a place constructed of literal and symbolic walls.[6] It is certainly a physical device installing boundaries between interior and exterior, but it is also a conceptual apparatus implicitly overlapping onto the latter's formal distinction, a more or less neat differentiation between safeness and peril, *civitas* and *barbarie,* order and chaos, culture and nature. However, reducing the home to a hermetically sealed spaceship with an interior and an exterior risks ignoring an obvious fact: The home is embedded in, exposed to, and even composed of the very same ingredients as the planet, and thus it necessarily acts, interacts and even "intra-acts" with the latter. For it is precisely at home where the more diverse beings and flesh of the Earth come together, and it is certainly there where our bodies softly extend into places whose materiality is necessarily always already traversed by the planet's telluric forces. The home is thus an amphibian being: It is a geyser erupting a spatio-temporal regime independent of its surroundings, but it is also the locus and site of all sorts of planetarian miscegenations, a platform accommodating multiple forms of biospheric connectivity.

Frequently defined as "the historical moment when the Human has become a geological force capable of affecting all life on this planet,"[7] the Anthropocene has

5   August Schmarsow, "The Essence of Architectural Creation," in *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873–1893* (Los Angeles: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities Editorial, 1993), 288–289.

6   Stacy Alaimo, *Exposed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), loc. 430.

7   Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (London: Polity Press, 2013), 5.

reinforced this domestic ambivalence. By dissolving
Linnean epistemic taxonomies, the Anthropocene
amalgamates beings and flesh commonly indexed to
the cultural or natural categories that typically propel
the architectural distinctions between interior and ex-
terior. Although the geological reference and the generic
"anthro" seem to delimit the Anthropocene's semantic
field to a simple equation composed of "man" and "rock,"
I would like to consider this equation as a particular case
of a more general logic, one that expands the etymolog-
ical boundaries of the term "Anthropocene" in order to
encompass the various zoe/geo/techno hybridizations
characteristic of our times. Traditionally disqualified
due to their situation between Linnaean categories, the
epistemic filthiness evoked by this intense transversality
might become affirmative and inventive once we foliate
the semantic field of the term *immunditia*, the Latin for
"filth." The Anthropocene might certainly be defined as
inmundus since its zoe/geo/techno miscegenations no
longer fit within the pre-established and classificatory
order of the modern *mundus*—a *mundus* that delimits
and controls according to fixed categories, a *mundus*
that is identified as an absolute ground for foundation.
However, this *immunditia*, this misfit, is not a negative
force simply sedimenting as the specular opposite of
the notion of *mundus*. It is certainly in exodus and exile
regarding the hierarchical and absolute character of the
latter, but this retreat is not in pursuit of passively rest-
ing within the latter's mirrored absolute—that is, the
relativism of a *tabula rasa*. In its production of unfamiliar
forms of transversality, the Anthropocene's filthiness
opens up space for conjuring the notion of *immunditia*
as an engendering force, which, precisely by resisting as-
cription to a delineating and pre-established *mundus*, is

perhaps capable of reconceiving the latter's overarching systematics as forms of *kosmetikhe* (cosmetics): A set of techniques (*techne*) concerned not so much with reproducing a given *mundus*, but with engendering conductive forms of order and decorum seeking to collect all what can be considered (*cosmos*) and capable thus of hosting various and unexpected forms of living well together.

Hosting various and unexpected forms of living well together: Hospitality, the Greek *xenia*, which is a pact, a contract, a "tract or trait or draft that tightens and pulls."[8] The welcoming accommodation of the other within one's domestic space is certainly a revealing episode with regard to the notion of home. Hospitality's tense and, at times, the uneasy intertwining of intimacy and remoteness is perhaps the most exact manifestation of the aforementioned home's ambivalence since the interplay between hosts and guests is nothing but a domestic dance in which the alleged alterity of the home with respect to the planet is confronted with the latter's inevitable pervasiveness. Hosts and guests play thus *hide and seek*. Although despite their belonging to the outer planet, guests might be warmly and even lovingly accommodated within the host's home, the latter's alterity is rarely fully assimilated by the guests since this would cancel out the home's singularity with respect to the planet. Within this context, hosts and guests do not aim at representation but at resonance — that is, they do not aim at grasping each other but at practicing with each other, at complicity, at care and generosity, at experimenting with intimate forms of remoteness leading to a pleasurable accommodation void of epis-

8   Michel Serres, *The Natural Contract*, trans. Elizabeth MacArthur and William Paulson (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995), 103.

temic colonization. However, hosts and guests do not dance in isolation. Although as a contract of hospitality, the Greek *xenia* was certainly forged between two present individuals, its pacts were a genealogical entente: Various familial ramifications, including past, present, and future actors, were involved, thus shaping a collective endeavor granting equal importance both to presence and absence. This was not a case, however, of the straightforward extension of a solitary right, opening out to the family and subsequent generations a right initially granted to the individual.[9] Rather, from the beginning, the *xenia* implicated two households, two lines of descent, and two ethnic groups; it was a collective endeavor invoking both a synchronic and a diachronic form of human togetherness. Reciprocity, permutability of roles, absence and presence, the figure of the unknown, a synchronic and diachronic "we;" ingredients coming from the ritualized hospitality of the Ancient World and that today intertwine with other lines of flight since, within the Anthropocene, it seems reasonable to speculate on forms of hospitality transcending the folkloric human scene of a remote foreigner being candidly lodged in the warmth of a welcoming home. Thus, rather than a social contract, the *xenia* today would be closer to Michel Serres's natural contract: A commitment of human and non-human affiliation deployed through a "system of cords or traits, of exchanges of power and information, which goes from the local to the global, and the Earth answers us, from the global to the local."[10] Within this context, the Greek *xenia* and its interplay of remoteness and intimacy would also involve dynamic and flicker-

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9   Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 55.

10   Serres, *The Natural Contract*, 109.

ing constellations of zoe/geo/techno compounds, thus invoking pacts in which the human being is not always the sole ingredient: Pacts nested at multiple spatio-temporal scales; pacts articulating permutable complicities with the unfamiliar, the strange, and the figure of the unknown; pacts overcoming restrictive alliances with neighbors, alikes, and the figure of the compatriot; pacts involving non-contiguous or even remote beings and flesh; pacts, thus, concerned with a basic question: Which forms of hospitality could be engendered by, yet not limited to, the zoe/geo/techno confederations of the Anthropocene? How to provide them, to provide us, with spaces of inhabitation that are hospitable enough to accommodate a pleasant coexistence? In brief: How do we set in motion *cosmetics of hospitality* in order to live together well?

In its ambivalent interplay of intimacy and remoteness, the question of hospitality is, above all, a *question of limits*. "The question," writes Blanchot, "is the desire of thought."[11] And limits might certainly be the desire of architectural thinking: Characterized by the Barcelonian philosopher Eugenio Trías with the expression "differential sameness and autoreferential difference,"[12] the limit invokes an ambivalent yet not ambiguous formulation in which the home's amphibious nature might find accommodation; since the limit is in itself and by itself internal differentiation, it necessarily joins and disjoins, or, more accurately, it joins what it disjoins: At the very moment where the limit marks the frontier of what it limits, it necessarily certifies the existence of the

11   Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 12.

12   Eugenio Trías Sager, *Los límites del mundo* (Barcelona: Ariel Filosofía, 1985), 382.

beyond to which it refers. And it is precisely by codifying
this ambivalence as a contour that traditionally limits
that "big gesture" of architecture: The demarcation be-
tween an inside and an outside, which frequently goes
hand in hand with the demarcation between safeness
and peril, *civitas* and *barbarie*, culture and nature. Within
this delineating approach and as typically represented
by the pacts of the Greek *xenia*, hospitality inevitably
implies a crossing: someone traverses a limit. *Il se passe
quelque chose*; something happens because something
trespasses, a crossing intertwining distant beings while
distancing undesired intertwinings. The primary meth-
odological trait of this limit's codification consists thus
in installing a classificatory dispositive that is exterior
to what it (dis)joins and that assumes the ambivalence
characterizing the notion of home by adjusting its per-
meability between interior and exterior. That adjust-
ment, today, in light of the Anthropocene's miscegena-
tions, might certainly result in a limit whose contours
are more porous, a limit whose implementation in the
world is airier and more buoyant, lighter, a limit whose
sponginess definitely favors new and intense forms of
traversability within domestic contexts. A profound per-
meabilization that, nevertheless, leaves the limit code
intact; despite being deployed under different criteria
and rhythms, the limit retains here an exterior position
regarding what it joins and disjoins, and thus its primary
concern is still the same: classification. And given that
the oscillation that it prompts between traversability
and non-traversability is necessarily present in any form
of hospitality, it would be extremely difficult — if not
impossible — to approach hospitality, excluding this cod-
ification. However, Trias's understanding of the limit as
differential sameness and autoreferential difference can

potentially host various manners of codifying the limit, leaving room for codifications that differ from the one described here. And if, in its ambivalence, hospitality is, indeed, a question of limits, the introduction of these codifications within the context of the home could certainly be fruitful; it might help us to offer, conduct and celebrate more manners of thinking about pleasurable forms of accommodation, new variations and unknown resonances capable of carrying out unforeseen cut-outs of unquestioned continuities while giving rise to novel figures of hospitality.

It is thus within this context that I would like to introduce two more codifications for the limit: In addition to a limit-contour (Where does something end?), I propose to conjure up a limit-action (How far does the power of something go?) and a limit-milieu (What might be opened within the limit itself?) By no means are the numerous turns, angles, clusters, jumps, pressures, collisions, and penetrations between these three codifications meant to serve design in any direct manner since they don't establish or even suspect what specific spatio-temporal configurations might come to trigger. However, they are not devised as a means of reading, representing, or interpreting space: Rather, they are a means of living in space, thus conceiving the hide-and-seek of hospitality as a practice *in* space and *of* space rather than *on* space. Consequently, the cosmetics of hospitality proposed through the interplay between these three codifications do not compose a guideline whose application would aim at representing or even stimulating possible practices of hospitality. They are, in themselves and by themselves, already a form of hospitality. Although these three codifications are considered as limits due to their common commitment to Trías's

"differential sameness and autoreferential difference," each one offers a different spatial code, which is, in turn, correlated with what Henri Lefebvre defines as a system of knowledge: "an alphabet, a lexicon and a grammar together within an overall framework."[13] Thus, they should be read more as hosting what they conceive rather than as revealing what belongs to what since they do not aim at capturing but at offering. In other words, they do not aim at revealing an original "archi-hospitality" but at proposing more conductive forms of order and decorum concerning hospitality.

Precisely because of this intermittent yet involved generality, the interplay between these three manners of encoding the limit is not well conveyed if presented as a user's guide — an idealized list of items, tempos, and steps to be later sedimented within a specific context. But it would also be misleading to corset them within the particularity of an image since this would betray their pervasive scope. What they contain cannot be depicted, but it needs to be sung and danced in order to be caught red-handed, in action, and in movement, not because this is the most adequate mode for capturing it, but simply because it does not exist anywhere else. In that sense, I would like to affirm and deploy the interplay between these three limit codifications not through the detachment characteristic of a manual of instructions or the concreteness associated with a case study but through the universal yet embodied vocation of a *cosmology*: An engendering articulation that, despite being located, seeks to address everything that can be considered. To this end, I propose to lodge ourselves into a stratum that is well known not only for intertwining beings and flesh

13   Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991), 65.

that are conventionally indexed to different worlds but also because it is kindred to the notions of hospitality, limit, and cosmology: the ceremonies of the *inauguratio*, the foundational rites of Roman cities.

A Cosmology of Limits

Although it might seem counterintuitive to address our times by pitching camp on a stratum that sedimented more than 2,000 years ago, the four rites of the *inauguratio*—limitation, divination, relic burial, and quartering—offer a propitious territory to disclose novel figures regarding today's hospitality; since "the performing of the rites actually fixed the physical shape of the city,"[14] they not only equip us with a vast inventory of spatial techniques connecting the notion of limit to the production of pleasurable forms of accommodation between different habitational arrangements, but they also pursue this enterprise in light of a cosmological framework, an embodied model that aims at addressing everything that can be considered. By overlapping Roman, celestial, and barbarian modes of existence, this cosmological disposition resonates with the tendency of today's habitational spaces to attend to the various zoe/geo/techno regimes traversing the Anthropocene's beings, regardless of their human or nonhuman form. It is thus within the cosmological temperament characterizing the *inauguratio* that I would like to find an advantageous site from which to deploy and experiment with the lines of flight, potential movements, and intersecting opportunities that a cosmetics of hospitality might offer us today through the notion of limit. By connecting

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14   Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011), loc. 844.

the Roman *inauguratio* to hospitality's hide and seek
and its labyrinthic interplay of presences and absences,
the notions of transmutation, triangularization, tuning,
and *matryoshka* are proposed as *figures of hospitality* ar-
ticulating the cosmetics of hospitality presented here.
They constitute accommodative devices whose presence
is neither mutually exclusive nor permanently oper-
ative, but intermittently deployed in the territory by
conjugating, in various manners and rhythms, the three
aforementioned limit codifications: the limit-contour,
the limit-action, and the limit-milieu.

Divination—An Alchemical Transmutation

Surveyors of the celestial vault and highest represent-
atives of the Roman priestly magistracy, the augurs ex-
celled in the colorful yet enigmatic ritual of the *divina-
tio*, the establishment of good *auspicium* initiating the
foundation of most Roman cities. Since the benefits of
a site "were usually revealed to the colonists as an arbi-
trary gift of the gods,"[15] the augur invoked the celestial
realm to unveil which location would be more hospita-
ble in accommodating the newcomers' settlement. This
supernatural communication finds its cornerstone in
the *cuntemplatio*, the demarcation, and observation of a
quadrangular area of the sky (*templum*) in order to un-
ravel the *auspicium* confirming the site's suitability for
hosting the new city. Since the classificatory borders of
this celestial delimitation were set remotely by the augur
from the ground and were thus exterior to the sky itself,
they were closely kindred with Plato's *peras*:[16] a limit cod-

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15   Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, loc. 932.

16   This association was not made by the Romans themselves, since
they were not familiar with Euclidean geometry.

ified as a perimeter and thus concerned with limitation, that is, a *limit-contour*, a *terminus* attending more to how something ends rather than what something is.

By dividing the sky into sectors, the augurs established the celestial meridians *cardo* and *decumanus*, then projecting the demarcated zone of the sky under observation onto the ground in order to trace the earthly *templum*, the germinal seed of the imminent settlement. Projection; from the Latin *proiectionem*, throwing forward. Architecture is certainly familiar with the term since its drawings "are projections, which means that organized arrays of imaginary straight lines pass through the drawing to corresponding parts of the thing represented by the drawing."[17] However, the augurs' projection of one realm over the other was alchemical rather than representational, for it was meant to reconstitute—rather than illustrate—the cosmos on Earth. Due to this alchemical character, the augurs' projection differed from the *proiectionem*, being more closely related to the *projeccioun*, an alchemical term referring to the act of transmutation carried out by casting a powder onto the molten metal. By overlapping celestial and terrestrial dimensions, this transmutative act is an act of reconstitution that recalls not only today's zoe/geo/techno regimes and their engendering miscegenations but also the aforementioned amphibian character of the home. Conceiving the Roman cities as cosmologies rather than as cosmograms implies understanding them as earthly enclaves differing from the celestial cosmos in which they are inscribed and as earthly transmutations of that cosmos. The rites of the *inauguratio* were thus pacts of hospitality: Through them, the newcomers found an

17   Robin Evans, "Architectural Projection," in *Architecture and its Image*, eds. Eve Blau and Edward Kaufman (London: MIT Press, 1989), 19.

accommodation enabling them to translate, in their own terrestrial terms, the cosmos in which they were hosted by the gods. This might lead us to interpret hospitality's hide and seek as an alchemical transmutation: Within this figure of hospitality, to offer the guests—whatever their form may be today—a pleasant stay means providing them with the conditions of possibility for reconstituting the environment in which they are hosted. An alchemical transmutation conceived as a common project by hosts and guests and which, within the ritual of the Roman *divinatio*, participates within the constitution of a cosmetics of hospitality through the interplay of limits emerging from the earthly *templum* —the diagram drawn on the ground by the augurs as a result of the vertical projection of the celestial *templum*.

Although the particular shape of the augur's diagram is still subject to debate, "it certainly had an outline."[18] Conceived as a direct projection of the celestial *templum* on the Earth, the classificatory tracing of this outline on the ground was conceived as exterior to the territory's materiality, thus codifying it as a limit-contour. However, the alchemical *projeccioun* was not solely entrusted to the earthly *templum*'s outline, but also to the *limit-action* emerging from the latter and horizontally deployed "by the words of incantation, by *verba concepta* which drew a magical net round the landmarks the augur named."[19] The limit-action thus appears as a limit expressing the power of the being it limits; it is a limit that touches and feels, a limit that sacralizes space by installing incantation, a limit that, despite being driven by the celestial

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18   "The insistence on a purifying enclosure of lands is characteristic of Roman religious thought," here cited in Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, loc. 1499.

19   Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, loc. 1538.

power stemming from the augur's diagram, finds material accommodation within specific earthly beings. In augury words: "This tree, wherever it may be, which I name to myself exactly, let it mark the boundary of my *templum* and *tescum* to the left; that tree, wherever it may be, which I name to myself exactly, let it mark the boundary of my *templum* to the right."[20]

It may nevertheless be quite difficult today—if not impossible—to appreciate the power of such augurial words. They are the language of incantation, *verba concepta* taking the place where they are used out of the normal influences acting on it and inserting into it the divine power emanating from the earthly *templum*. But how far does this power reach? "You are walking in a dense forest, you're afraid. At last you succeed and little by little the forest thins out, you are pleased. You reach a spot and you say, "whew, here's the edge." The edge of the forest is a limit. Does this mean that the forest is defined by its outline? It's a limit to the action of the forest, that is to say that the forest that had so much power arrives at the limit of its power, it can no longer lie over the terrain, it thins out."[21] Deleuze's famous depiction of the Stoic's limit might be helpful to visualize today the affirmative vigor of the limit-action, an expansive liveliness departing from the ideal figuratively of contours and instead celebrating the power of incarnation—that is, the radical exposure to the territory across which it extends. That exposure, as occurs with today's intimate interconnections between the human and the nonhuman, nurtures forms of trans-corporeality within our

20   Marcus Terentius Varro, *De Lingua Latina*, Book VIII, section 8.

21   Gilles Deleuze, *Sur Spinoza*, Cours Vincennes, 1991, available online: https://www.webdeleuze.com/cours/spinoza (accessed July 24, 2023).

post-anthropocentric landscapes "in which bodies extend into places and places deeply affect bodies."[22] The limits of Patricia Johanson's pathways in the "Leonhardt Lagoon" (Dallas, United States, 1986) can certainly be depicted through the sinuous, reptilian contours of the thin bridges that capriciously dance through the swamp, but it is their limit-action that, by propelling the accommodation of animal and vegetal species together with human activity through the production of shadows, accesses and nutritive surfaces, fuels the reconstitution of the site by unexpected newcomers.

The question thus is not only where Johanson's art-project ends but how far its transmutative power arrives — that is, how far does it propel the capacity of the guest's species to reconstitute the host's territory (or vice versa), a spatial endeavor whose reach certainly differs from the geometric footprint of the bridges. Where the limit-contour is a spatial device concerned with limitation, the limit-action is a spatial device concerned with limitrophy,[23] a limit nurturing and nurtured by the labyrinthic pathways it limits, thus attending to desire itself rather than to the desire of traversing a boundary.[24] A question about power and action that, coming back to the context of Roman cities, only the augur could respond to. By renewing the archetypal gesture of some mythical ancestors, the augur was capable of deploying the sacred power of the earthly *templum* on the territory in order to install the religious boundaries of the urban area. It is to this end that, after projecting

22   Stacy Alaimo, *Exposed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), loc. 145.

23   From the Greek term *trepho*, meaning "nutrition."

24   Amanda Núñez, *Gilles Deleuze: Una estética del espacio para una ontología menor* (Madrid: Arena Libros, 2019), 162.

on earth the celestial *templum*'s outlines, previously cod-
ified as limit-contours, the augur recodified them as a
limit-action, a limit that is dynamic and affirmative, a
limit that is danced and sung, a limit "where heaven and
earth were united."[25] United, yet distinct. Differential
sameness, autoreferential difference. Ambivalence and
the amphibian nature of the home, hospitality and the
reconstitution of the host's environment by the guest;
the deployment of an alchemical transmutation that,
once the *divinatio* was concluded, sedimented into the
sulcus primigenius through the subsequent foundational
ritual: the *limitatio*.

Limitation — A Triangular Permutation

If the earthly *templum*'s power was deployed on the ter-
ritory by expanding the former's limit-contour as a lim-
it-action during the ritual of the *limitatio*, this "magical
net round the landmarks the augur named" was sed-
imented by recoding the limit-action back to various
limit-contours: the *sulcus primigenius*, the *pomoerium,*
and the defense wall. However, the border which was
sacrosanct was the *sulcus primigenius,* the initial furrow
flanked by the *pomoerium*, a narrow area located within
the inner side of the furrow's trajectory and containing
the defense wall. By instrumentalizing a bronze plow to
which a white ox and cow were yoked on the outer and
inner side of the boundary,[26] the *sulcus primigenius* was
dug to mediate between *civitas* and *barbarie*.

Since the location of this initial furrow was expanded
over the years, the *sulcus primigenius* remained in move-

25   Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, loc. 3853.

26   The positioning of a white ox and cow on different sides of the
furrow that was being ploughed symbolically incorporates the inte-
rior/exterior distinction within the tool itself.

ment and transit, but its trace was never entirely left; its fixedness and referentiality were never completely dissolved. However, whereas the earthly *templum*'s limit-action was desiring, affirmative, and incarnated in terrestrial elements such as trees or rocks, its sedimentation within the *sulcus primigenius* retained this sacred value while reanimating the classificatory vocation of the limit-contour. Rather than cutting the terrain as a butcher would cut meat—that is, conditioning the cut primarily to its bounds, fibers, and ligaments—material factors of the site, such as resources, economy, or hygiene, were always transmuted into mythical terms. By addressing parts and extensions through the production of divine, and thus ideal, ends and molds, the *sulcus primigenius* recoded the limit-action emerging from the earthly *templum* as a categorical cut that was independent of the territory's materiality since it presupposed homogeneity in the subdivision of space. As the Stoics argued regarding Plato's *peras*, the contour of something is where that something no longer is,[27] and thus, contrasting with the limit-action, the limit-contour measures and treats the being by way of the non-being, leaving us uninformed regarding the being of that entity itself. However, its exteriority regarding the two limited elements necessarily calls for a third parameter: the exterior location from where the limit is posited. The *sulcus primigenius* instrumentalized this triangularization by operating along two different axes: It invoked a horizontal axis mediating between civilized and barbarian populations, but it also conjured up a vertical axis mediating between the territory in which the furrow was dug and the celestial kingdom from where the gods determined its trajectory's coordinates.

27   Deleuze, *Sur Spinoza*.

Since, in light of this triangulation, the *sulcus primigenius* joined and disjoined the permutable positions between two terrestrial collectives under the influence of a celestial one, the adequate crossing of the furrow by one collective towards another in pursuit of a hospitable accommodation inevitably involved the gods. This could lead us to conceive of hospitality's hide and seek as a *triangular permutation*, a *ménage à trois*. Within this figure of hospitality, the act of offering the guests—whatever their form may be today—an agreeable stay within the hosts' environment demands consideration of a third instance in relation to which hospitality takes place. In its exteriority with respect to hosts and guests, this instance contextualizes the permutability of roles concerning their interaction within a third medium, thus assuming that hospitality does not occur *in a vacuum*. In the Roman context, this role is played by the gods, whose presence traverses all dimensions of the Roman settlement, including the crossing of the boundaries mediating between *civitas* and *barbarie*. That dichotomy is underpinned by a parallelism between the distinctions interior/exterior and nature/culture, which, today, by conceiving the home in a symbiotic relationship with the beings it houses and with the planet it tempers, might certainly be questioned. However, this intense connectivity does not eliminate our need to differentiate: In its amphibious vocation, the home is not only a reconfiguration of the same (in)organic substances conforming the planet, it is also an interruption of the latter's flows in order to install not only other hydrothermal environments but also other moods, tempos, and behaviors. Consequently, the home necessarily implies a distinction—that is, the idea that "two (or more) entities, whatever their similarities/forms of overlap may be, are

not the same in some epistemically relevant respect."[28] It is precisely because this distinction is not conceived as a hierarchical dualism that hospitality can conjure up a cosmological transmutation, a reconstitution that today overlaps various zoe/geo/techno beings and flesh and that necessarily starts with a crossing, an interpenetration among mediums occurring under the gravitational field of another.

Since the Roman colonizers were aware that their settlement would become a suffocating territory if it enthroned its order and did not give way to difference and novelty, they were inclined to be hospitable to foreign travelers and merchants. However, hospitality demanded an adequate crossing of the *sulcus primigenius* since the safety and the sacred, untouchable character of the latter symbolized the union of heaven and earth: "Anyone crossing over the place where [both] were united was an enemy of the life which that union had guaranteed."[29] The famous death penalty that Romulus imposed on Remus in order to punish the latter's jump over the former's furrow eloquently signals, in a rather categorical manner, that any hospitable co-existence between Romans and barbarians necessarily demands forms of traversability that are adequate to them by conjuring up a third instance: the Roman gods. In pursuit of this purpose, the continuity of the *sulcus primigenius* was broken at certain points in which the plow (*urbs*)[30] was taken out of the ground and carried (*portare*) over the span of the city's future gates (*porta*). Consequently, the whole wall

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28   Lena Gunnarsson, *The Contradictions of Love: Towards a Feminist-realist Ontology of Sociosexuality* (London: Routledge), 14.

29   Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, loc. 3855.

30   By invoking the act of plowing a border, the Latin term *urbs* associates the notions of limit and urbanization.

was holy except for the gates, which were subject to civil jurisdiction and, therefore, open to the bidirectional transit of people and merchandise.

Hospitality, thus, might certainly demand traversability, but not any form of traversability is effective. This is particularly palpable in today's post-anthropocentric landscapes since the accommodation on Earth of beings with different zoe/geo/techno valences often demands sophisticated and permutable forms of interpenetration between hosts and guests. The glassy limit-contours containing the air-filled underwater domes of the Ocean Reef Group's "Nemo Garden" (Noli, Italy, 2016) separate the hydroponic farming space from the outer sea environment while propelling a form of traversability whose selectiveness is crucial for this transmedium reconstitution: The transparent domes protect the inner space from the salty water while permitting the entrance of sunlight and the stabilization of temperatures provided by the sea. It also permits the evaporation of the sea's salt water (the bottom of the dome is open for human access) and its condensation into freshwater for the plants. Thus, although the act of entering through a "gate," whatever its form may be today, constitutes the very first pact of hospitality between multispecies hosts and guests, the "Nemo Garden" cannot be reduced to an affair between guests and hosts: The habitation of earthly beings like thyme, marjoram, basil, tomatoes, strawberries and lettuce within an underwater environment occurs through a classificatory limit-contour that is formally and materially exterior to hosts and guests, thus constituting hospitality as a triangular permutability that includes the human being and its need to cultivate in areas where land agriculture is impossible.

In its permutability of roles, the limit-contour's exteriority drives, in the context of a cosmetics of hospitality, a triangularization that, coming back to the Roman *limitatio*, converts the crossing of the *sulcus primigenius* not only into "an act of covenant with those inside the walls through which the gate leads,"[31] but also into an act involving the gods since it is by implicating them that the city's foundation could be conceived as the alchemical transmutation of the cosmos. However, the *sulcus primigenius* was plowed in synchronicity with the constitution of another codification of the limit that entailed a decisive part of the foundational rite: the relic-burial, the digging of a *mundus*.

Relic Burial—A Tuning of Voices

In parallel to the rituals of the *limitatio* and situated with respect to the *cardo* and the *decumanus*, a hole called a *mundus* and considered "the hearth of the town"[32] was dug in virgin soil. Due to its underground emplacement, its consecration to infernal gods, and its usual formalization as a vaulted chamber, it is safe to affirm that "the *mundus* was, among other things, the mouth of the underworld."[33] The metaphor of the mouth is particularly revealing here since it inevitably evokes the notion of limit. In fact, the *mundus* has often been identified[34] as another altar of *Terminus*, the Roman god protecting boundary markers. However, since the *mundus* was an inhabitable chamber encircled by a stony limit-contour

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31   Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, loc. 7482.

32   Ibid., loc. 3636.

33   Ibid., loc. 1739.

34   Eugen Täubler, *Terramare und Rom* (Heidelberg: Universitätsbibliothek 1932), 44–45.

and frequently lodging "first fruit, or unspecified and enigmatic good things, and or earth from the settlers' home country,"[35] its vocation was twofold: The *mundus* was, first, a border mediating between the world and the infraworld and, second, a medium populated by terrestrial beings such as soil, food, or objects coming from the various geographic origins of the newcomers. The *mundus* was thus a *limit-milieu*, a recodification of the limit in which the limit-contour takes on thickness and becomes a land in itself, a territory of (dis)encounters that is inhabitable, susceptible to colonization, cultivation, and worship.

However, the *mundus*'s limit-milieu was not conceived as a form of in-betweenness—that is, it was not located between the terrestrial and divine realms—rather, it *belonged* to the former while *referring* to the latter. In its belong/refer structure, the limit-milieu is thus a spatial device primarily concerned with liminality[36] (passage) rather than with limitation (circumscription) or limitrophy (nutrition). Instead of being codified as a symmetrical device in which both extremes, in their pure external negativity, are completely identical, it causes a reflection that is, in fact, a failed reflection, a reflection that it is not specular, an asymmetrical reflection. The limit-milieu thus does not produce terms that are completely identical in their own contradiction; rather, its liminality shows a fundamental asymmetry integrated within the limit itself; its space is always in

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35 Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, loc. 1726.

36 According to Victor Turner, during the rituals of passage, liminal individuals are neither here nor there, but in transit from here to there; they are "betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom convention, and ceremonial." Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), 95.

passage, unbalanced, and in tension. In its propensity towards something that is not itself, the limit-milieu is, in fact, not as fascinated with traversability as it is with inclination: By accommodating the gods within the *mundus* and the temple, the Roman limit-milieu appeared as a distorted space, a daemonic territory of (dis) encounters whose magnetized state stemmed from the fact that the presence of the hosted gods was, despite their intense resonance with the humans, always tangential and unstable, never fully revealed, never fully established on site.

An intimate yet remote accommodation that might lead us to conceive of hospitality's hide and seek as *a tuning of voices*, a syntonization of sounds and rhythms that does not capitalize on empathy and its insistence on epistemic occupation but on a subtle calibration of tones and behaviors. Within this figure of hospitality, the act of providing guests—whatever their form might be today—with an agreeable stay would not be tied in with what it means to be *as* the other (empathy) but to what it means to be *with* the other (tuning). As noted by Vinciane Despret, empathy nurtures a subject–object relation in which the subject feeling empathy is transformed, but in an extremely local manner,[37] since, as opposed to hospitality's transmutative vocation, it does not stimulate the permutation of the object's role in order to be activated as a subject. By putting themself in the other's position, the empathic hosts end up totalizing the guests (or vice versa) by claiming that they have been understood, that "what stands under them" has been grasped and revealed, that their *terra incognita* has been colonized. Within this context, the limit-milieu's

37   Vinciane Despret, "The Body We Care For: Figures for Anthropo-zoo-genesis," in *Body and Society 10*, nr. 2/3 (2004): 128.

liminality shifts the focus from empathy and its fantasy for cognitive conquest to tuning and its embrace of operative complicities—tuning as the momentary yet systemic concordance of voices, tuning as the transitory and subtle calibration of rhythms and sounds, tuning as a form of hospitality based on behavioral resonances among beings and flesh, whatever habitational patterns might they deploy today. The imbricate platforms and paths of the living root bridges located in the Shillong Plateau (India) emerge from these intense yet non-exhaustive tunings, accommodating the mobility needs of the Jaintia peoples in the north-eastern Indian jungle through the *Ficus elastica*'s aerial roots. There is no colonization, occupation, or totalization between these long-lasting multispecies consonances. The humans' transmutation of the forest in which they are hosted consists precisely in encouraging the growth of the trees' aerial roots while folding, twisting, and joining them to constitute liminal structures whose limit-action expands through the forest's paths that they join. However, these living bridges are in themselves a form of limit, a limit-milieu: By overlapping completely different habitational patterns, they engender passages and areas in tension and in transit since, in their common reverberations, the presences of host and guest are operative, but never fully comprehended by one another, never fully disclosed and revealed.

In its conjugation as a limit-milieu and within these cosmetics of hospitality, the limit is thus not codified as a boundary to be crossed but as a prairie to be inhabited, a territory in which hosts and guests search for a pleasurable coexistence that is not based in knowing, understanding, or grasping each other, but in tuning their voices, in looking for resonances and common re-

verberations, in finding shared rhythms and pulsations. Although this limit's codification is certainly more connected to liminality than to limitation or limitrophy, by no means does its deployment negate the latter two. Not "this or that," and not even "between this and that," but a multidimensional and mobile overlapping that becomes evident if we turn back to the Roman foundational rites since it is not rare "to find the making of the *mundus* confused or identified with the opening of the *sulcus primigenius*.[38] In fact, the limit-milieu of the *mundus* and the temple was frequently encircled by a limit-contour: While the temple had a fence that was broken at one point when conceived as a *templum minus* and thus permanently fixed, the *mundus*'s vaulted space was habitually separated from the soil in which it was buried by a thick stone wall.

However, the limit-action deployed by the *mundus*'s power was not meant to stop at its chamber's stone contour. Paradoxically, it is precisely in the filthy and thus *inmundus* intertwining of divine, gastronomic, geological, and ornamental flesh coming from different sections of the cosmos that the *mundus* found traction to become an engendering force aiming at transmuting, in urban terms, the same cosmos in which it was inscribed. By deploying a movement in systole and diastole, the *mundus* appeared as a motor working in cycles, an expansive force nurtured by what it engendered and deployed in two perpendicular dimensions. Observed from the vertical plane, the *mundus* was the intersection point between the *inferi*, the *tellus*, and the *caput*. This was most evident when the *mundus* was situated at the crossing of the *cardo* and the *decumanus*, which—like most of the boundaries populating the Roman city—were "never drawn without

38   Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, loc. 3629.

reference to the order of the universe."[39] However, at the ground level—that is, on the horizontal plane—the vaulted *mundus* was both a passage to the underworld and a spring of fertility, the source of the town's existence, a matrix constituted by the very same substance that it gave off. Within this context and through a process of quartering, the *mundus* established the axis from which the cadastral grid was drawn, radiating all the force of its ritual consecration towards the surrounding space to be immediately civilized.

Quartering—A Matryoshka Working in Cycles

When the rituals of the digging of the *mundus* were finished or about to finish, the surveyors took over the site and traced the streets and the building plots as though they were emanating from the expansive power of the *mundus*. The deployment of the latter's limit-action across the terrestrial realm was thus carried out by measuring and gridding the land according to the quadripartite division established by the *cardo* and *decumanus*, marking with stones or low walls the resulting plots and distributing them by lottery (*sortitio*) among the newcomers.[40] The deliberate arbitrariness mediating between the bounded spaces of the cadastral grid and its future occupants again invokes the exteriority characteristic of the limit-contour, while the *sulcus primigenius* was independent of the site due to the exteriority of the celestial realm from where its location was decided, the boundaries of the Roman dwellings were exterior to their inhabitants due to the randomness guiding the

39 Hyginus Gromaticus, *Constitutio Limitum*, (London: Thulin, 1913), 123.

40 Angelo Brelich, *Die Geheime Schutzgottheit von Rom* (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1947), 49-56.

association between the former and the latter. Since the purpose of these divisions was to register and fiscalize possessions, what mattered to the surveyors was neither the materiality of those lots nor their potentialities, but their *extensio* and their belonging.[41]

Coding the limit according to Plato's *peras* was thus certainly useful: It enabled the surveyors to treat space as an inert expanse empty of tensions, ready to be framed within ideal molds in order to be counted, compared, and distributed. The limit-action of the *mundus*'s limit-milieu thus expanded across the new-born city by deploying on the land a constellation of limit-contours articulated through the quadripartite division established by the *cardo* and *decumanus*. The three codifications of the limit presented here were thus instrumentalized at the same time, superimposing on the territory a polyphony of habitational arrangements in which the urban area was both sacralized by the *mundus*'s irradiation of the gods' powers and neutralized by the surveyors' treatment of the territory as a *tabula rasa*. This spatial simultaneity and its consequent defiance of stable hierarchies and univocal cartographies were connected to the fact that the *mundus* was not a unidirectional source of power but a motor working in cycles—a pendular movement of systole and diastole mixing and re-boosting Roman, barbarian, and divine substances.

Within this ambivalent context, gods and Romans grafted their accommodation onto one another by conforming a reciprocal *matryoshka*: While the Roman settlement was accommodated by the gods through the

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41   "Jupiter, knowing the avarice of men, ordered, when taking over the land of Etruria, that camps and fields should be set out with visible boundary stones and publicly acknowledged," in Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, loc. 3346.

terrestrial reconstitution of the cosmos in which the city was hosted, the city hosted the gods in return within the *mundus* and the temples devoted to them. This reciprocal and multi-scalar interplay of hosts and guests conceives hospitality as a trans-local model of cohabitation — that is, a form of coexistence in which the Roman, barbarian and divine inhabitants are identified with more than one location at the same time. This might lead us to conceive hospitality's hide and seek as a *matryoshka working in cycles*; within this figure of hospitality, to provide the guests — whatever their form might be today — with an agreeable stay would mean to foster mutual forms of accommodation in which hosts and guests are not only mutually grafted onto each other but also hosting and hosted by other beings and flesh operating on different spatio-temporal scales.

This suggests that hospitality can hardly be systematized under one single province, demanding instead to jump and take turns, to deviate and run at angles, to traverse and slide through various habitational patterns and their overlapping zoe/geo/techno regimes. Despite the solitary look of the dunes emerging through the zig-zagging concrete slabs of Pierre Huyghe's "After A Life Ahead" (2017, Münster), its space accommodates and is accommodated by an intense yet evanescent carousel of overlapping habitational arrangements. Colonies of bees hosted within globular towers of packed clay, clusters of patterned-shelled snails, incubated cancer cells, algae formations in puddles of water, augmented reality arrangements, or wandering peacocks are not merely contained within the limit-contours of this old ice rink; their various habitational regimes are grafted ones inside the others, converting the ice rink into one more of the layers constituting this habitational *matryoshka*.

The soil emerging through the cuts in the concrete floor, the sunrays coming through the façade's large windows, and the rain intermittently passing through the ceiling panels of the old infrastructure nurture habitational patterns characterized by hosting and being hosted on different spatio-temporal scales. In Huyghe's words: "Each pattern has its own capacity and potential for change, its own unintentional variations. Because there are so many in proximity, they affect each other; they deregulate or re-regulate. They synchronize as well as engage in conflicts or dilemmas."[42] While Huyghe's reference to the term "synchronization" recalls the aforementioned tuning of voices, the notion of proximity summons the limit-action and its attention to power and desire. This question brings us back to the Roman *mundus* and the irradiation of its civilizing power since its deployment of the cadastral grid along the *cardo* and *decumanus* did not stop within the threefold interplay of limit-contours established during the ritual of the *limitatio*.

Although the defense wall, the *sulcus primigenius,* and the *pomoerium* were conceived as the legal and religious contours of the city, one might be tempted to approach the *pomoerium* as a limit-milieu since it appeared as a territory rather than as a dug or walled line. However, in contrast with the limit-milieu of the temple and the *mundus*, the *pomoerium* was not conceived as a space of coexistence: Since it was frequently forbidden to build in that area, the main concern of the *pomoerium* kept being traversability, making it closer to a territorial contour than to a limit-milieu. All three limit-contours were thus

42   Pierre Huyghe, "Interview with Emily McDermott," 20 December 2018, https://elephant.art/pierre-huyghe-indiscernible-unpredictable-irrational (accessed July 24, 2023).

traversed by the *mundus*'s civilizational power since the surrounding agricultural lands were also usually quartered according to the *cardo* and *decumanus*.

A question thus inevitably arises: How far does the *mundus*'s limit-action extend? The answer is, in fact, surprisingly predictable: "the *mundus* irradiated all its power to the whole *orbe* by will of Jupiter and the god Terminus, [...] aiming at arriving at the whole *oecumene*."[43] In its cosmological vocation, the civilizing power of Roman cities could neither dissolve at their own contours nor in the centuriated fields around them. It aimed to encompass the whole *oecumene*, that is, *everything* that could be considered. Its radiation thus expanded until the very borders of the Roman Empire, installing in those confines another interplay of limits: The *limes*, an enigmatic territory flourishing between the Roman Empire and inhabited by the *limitanei*. Rather than a clinical edge or a border wall, the Roman *limes* was, like the *mundus* or the temple, a limit-milieu, although in this case, it was also traversable. It was thus an inhabitable land, a narrow and oscillating territory that, as a *matryoshka* of sorts, repeated and scaled up the city's *pomoerium* by configuring an isthmus of conflict and alliance whose bustling diversity of agencies by no means could take place within the infinitesimal nature of the Euclidean line. Situated at the intersection between law and anarchy, and fluctuating between world and mystery, the *limes* constituted a spatial oxymoron and a territory of friction: a land whose horizon was always threatened by the otherness of the barbarian armies, whose incursions insistently wove and re-wove the *limes*'s limit-action by foliating it into a plethora of limit-contours such as

43   Florencio Hubeñak, *Roma—El Mito Político* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Ciudad Argentina, 1997), 132.

low walls or palisades. Thus, under the *limes*'s uncertain jurisdiction, the *limitanei* culminated the expansion engendered by the *mundus*'s limit-milieu by, paradoxically, inhabiting another limit-milieu. However, *mundus* and *limes,* respective mediators between humans and gods and between *civitas* and *barbarie*, had something else in common: They constituted, in two different planes, the very last confines of *all that could be considered*.

Conclusion: Homemaking as a Motionless Journey

If the figures of hospitality introduced here can be defined as "cosmetic" (*kosmetikhe*), it is because their various articulations (*techne*) offer forms of order and decorum seeking to collect everything that can be addressed yet without exhausting it all (*cosmos*). Although a different motor powers each figure, and thus it might certainly deploy its own colors, rhythms, and shades, they intersect in at least one point: the understanding of hospitality as a play of hide and seek, a labyrinth of presences and absences connected to the home's amphibian vocation. However, by spatializing this approach through the notion of limit, the cosmetics of hospitality presented here fuel another conjugation of the home's ambivalence: Thinking of hospitality as an *alchemical transmutation* (the guests' reconstitution of the environment in which they are hosted), *a triangular permutation* (the consideration of a third instance in relation to which hospitality's permutability takes place), a *tuning of voices* (the resonant and non-empathetic interaction between hosts and guests) and a *matryoshka working in cycles* (the grafting of guests and hosts onto each other on various spatio-temporal scales) could lead us to conceive homemaking as a *motionless journey*.

This conception is, in fact, inscribed within the Roman *inauguratio* itself. Since the latter's cosmological purpose "was to set the general order of the sky in a particular place,"[44] the homemaking led by the Roman newcomers became "an intergalactic cruise heading to another atmosphere, another ecosystem, towards another population, another time,"[45] a trip in which the colonizers became cosmological migrants. However, since "the great temple of the sky was first condensed into the ideal form of the augur's diagram and then projected onto the tract of land,"[46] the spatial coordinates designating the departing and arriving point of this "intergalactic cruise" were the same, orchestrating thus a journey without geographical displacement, a journey void of movement, a motionless journey. The cosmetics of hospitality deployed in this essay conduct the ambivalence of this "dynamic immobility" by spatializing it through another ambivalence: The limit's differential sameness and autoreferential difference, a conceptualization imbuing all the limit codifications.

Within this context, the limit-contour, the limit-action, and the limit-milieu appear neither as firm positions nor as perspective views but as complementary characters: Embodied codifications which, as in any novel or theatre play, set the plot in motion through their exchanges. Both in the Roman *inauguratio* and in the architectural excursus presented here, these codifications deploy numerous spatial interactions in which they embrace, thicken, project, expand, replicate, scale up, sediment, interrupt, or even cancel each other. The ambivalence of these overlaps defies hierarchies

44   Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, loc. 1533.

45   Coccia, *Filosofia della casa*, loc. 1604.

46   Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, loc. 1545.

and historical privileges by practicing the confusion
of simultaneity, but they also stand up in order to offer
novel vectors of thought. By expanding the limit's usu-
al architectural role of enclosure through three codi-
fications conceived as cosmological characters rather
than as hardened milestones or volatile perspectives,
the cosmetics of hospitality proposed here might offer
and conduct further motionless journeys within other
times and geographies: They might drop their anchors
in other docks and harbors in order to reactivate lost
paths or uncover unknown resonances regarding the
cosmological art of setting in tune pleasurable manners
of accommodation.

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"Anyone who displays bad habits publicly irritates all." "Disgust over filth and smut." "Disgust with human nature and people." These responses reflect trends mentioned previously: moral punitiveness, cynicism, the tendency to seek out, and to find, immorality in the world (especially in out groups) rather than in oneself. Finally, we find responses in which hostility toward friends and morality figures (parents, relatives, social authority, and the like) is implied though not explicitly stated or recognized.
— Theodor W. Adorno, *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950)

De conversione's graphic image of digestive troubles is not passed over lightly; if somebody saw his clothes, Bernard continues, smeared with repulsive spew and the filthiest of filth, would he not rip them off vehemently? But the soul cannot pull itself off, however smudged the memory. The clogged and defiled memory is then left

cliff hanging while Bernard proceeds to the body, the will, and a range of other significant topics. But it is not allowed to slip into oblivion. In the passage about the soul's consideration of itself, a tableau is presented of memoria viewed through the eyes of reason. Memoria is here presented as completely soiled, with an abundance of filth flowing into it from all sides, with the windows to death gaping and unable to close.
— Mette B. Bruun, *Parables: Bernard of Clairvaux's Mapping of Spiritual Topography* (2006)

For the overflowing of Rivers and Rains generally leaves mud upon level Grounds, which by degrees raises the Earth higher and higher, which still increases, if through Negligence the Rubbish and Dirt, which gathers every Day be not removed. Frontinus the Architect used to say, that several Hills were risen in Rome in his Time by the continual Fires. But we in our Days see