

Hospitality; or, the Lineage of Strangers

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Both the papers in this first session concern scenes set beyond the Europe that has been the traditional home of eighteenth-century studies and both read encounters between Europeans and indigenous peoples in relation to hospitality. This is hospitality in diplomacy and towards strangers. Both papers also tackle problems of textual interpretation, albeit with different disciplinary commitments and to different ends: one to interpret a native American history and the other to interpret a central text of the French Enlightenment. Both, perhaps surprisingly, raise what we might call the issue of lineage: one in the form of indigenous notions of race and the other in terms of a *philosophe*'s notions of indigenous desire for seed, or what Megan Gallagher puts in more contemporary vocabulary as the "genetic" problem. In short, these very different papers nonetheless have multiple points of contact. In the absence of Megan, however, I am going to allow Evan's paper to focus and structure my remarks.¹

Who'd be a Delaware? Evan tells us that this native American group was caught between some of the grandest conflicts of the eighteenth century: between the Cherokees and the Iroquois, between the British and the French empires. This is the scene set for his analysis of gender, hospitality, and power—an analysis which both raises some of the key ideas to which this workshop will doubtless return and accounts for hospitality at a specific historical juncture.

Evan offers us a history of the Delawares as women, and of women as hospitable and accommodating, which starts at a particular time and place. Not at a treaty council of 1742, say, but rather in the 1660s and 1670s, during a series of wars between the Iroquois and the coastal Algonquian peoples. This moment, he reminds us, comes after the point at which Europeans started colonizing the Delaware Valley, but well before that in which Pennsylvania was created. The coastal Algonquians were on the losing end of intra-indigenous warfare, and during the subsequent negotiations, their male leaders donned women's skirts and took part in ceremonies positioning them as nieces to Iroquois uncles. Some version of this diplomatic history continues into our present: a sense of the special role of Delaware as peacemakers and negotiators persisted through the twentieth century.

Evan here wants to draw our attention to an interpretive uncertainty: what exactly did it mean to be a "niece" to an "uncle"? The position suggests kinship, it suggests Iroquois military aggression and River People submission, but it also allows for what we might think of as the indiscretions of youth or the disinclinations of the younger generations: nieces are unsteady, they get drunk, they forget to bring the wampum. They are yesterday's pouting teenagers, who don't clear the table, drive under the influence, and are apparently indulged in these misdemeanors by avuncular adults. I don't have any answers here, except to invite some traction by asking first, about the rejected alternative figures and second, about generation: A niece is not a daughter, a niece is possibly not a child, a niece is not – or is she? – a potential marriage partner, a niece is not a sister; an uncle is not likely to be neither parent nor husband nor brother. So how do the rejected alternative figures help us see what a niece might be? And secondly, does generation matter? A

¹ [Editor's Note] Megan Gallagher was not able to attend the Workshop because of illness.

niece is the member of a generation, a younger generation to an uncle. Does this help us see why wampum tribute stops being paid after twenty or forty years, as generation passes? Does being a niece predict such cessation? Or is that stoppage rather the effect of war as a temporary condition, as Evan reminds us through Brant's poignant story of the dying captive?

If we are interested in hospitality, it may also be worth pausing longer over those scenes of diplomacy. For these postwar negotiations between River Peoples and Mohawks (between future Delawares and one of the dominant Iroquois nations) noticeably took place in Mohawk communities. "The River Indians came to the Mohawk Village and made peace" tells Joseph Brant. If the Delawares were women, they had to have been at the same time on the receiving end of Mohawk hospitality. If so, hospitality attaches not just to the Delawares but also to the successful Mohawks. In these central scenes of diplomacy and obligation, Delawares bring wampum but they also receive the hospitality of their more militarily powerful hosts. Yet this hospitality seems disappeared from view. How so? Why so? Is a history of female hospitality on the ground continuous, was it always mutually recognizable?

Having prised open this indigenous history, Evan also explores hospitality in relation to the relations we know better, between indigenous peoples and arriving Europeans. In a second set of readings—based in the documentary record of Henry Hudson's voyage up the Hudson river in the first decade of the seventeenth century, and a Delaware tradition told to a Moravian missionary in the early nineteenth century—he shows an encounter framed by Lenape traditions of offering hospitality to a visiting god, of gift-giving, of the presence of women and children, as well as by European notions of commerce. This rather different history of indigenous encounter with explorers and then with settlers (told quite quickly in the paper here) had different consequences, most noticeably what he terms a racist and anticolonial form of resistance that imagined god making, and I quote, "the indians, the negro, and the white man" (with the Indians made first), what historian Gregory Dowd calls a "theology of separation."² Delawares aimed to refuse contact, whether in the form of Lenape men hunting for a settler-oriented fur trade, or Lenape women serving as intermediaries. Hospitality was betrayed or, we might say, hospitality had betrayed them. The problem was not women, or femaleness, but rather the political role of hospitality attached to women.

Megan Gallagher's paper on Diderot's *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville* takes up what we might call the French *philosophe's* "Hudson River" moment, his armchair account of a first encounter between Europeans and indigenous peoples, in this case the Tahitians of the Pacific. In these emotionally charged scenes of the *Supplément*, she suggests, Diderot portrays two parties, the Tahitians and the French, as making excess demands on each other. The French demand submission. The Tahitians demand sex and offspring. For Gallagher, Diderot's account is that of fear and of an encounter that is strikingly *inhospitable*. She places the scenes within a European history of ideas of despotism, in which the French are despotic and the Tahitians are perhaps nearly so.

Given Megan's absence, I will confine my comments here to our shared concern with hospitality. Megan's reading shows hospitality's failings. This is not the spiritual problem

² See Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992) and *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, and the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

of mis-identification we find among the coastal Algonquians: the French are not Manitou-like, to be welcomed in the manner of spiritual beings, but are welcomed as friends, as Diderot's Veillard puts it. The problem, as for the Delawares, is that of conquest and settlement. For Megan (following Diderot), the stage is that of the collision of economies of conquest and of hospitality. For Diderot (and here she draws on Jimmy Casas Klausen), hospitality ends when permanence begins. You can only be hospitable to a temporary guest, but the French, like the white settlers of Pennsylvania, come to stay. They are permanent interlopers whose logic of conquest refuses them any right to hospitality. Diderot's judgment is swift and keen: this is not just imperialism but tyranny, this is refutation not just of indigenous hospitality but of a Western tradition in which hospitality is a position of humility assumed by a traveler. Reading Megan's paper next to Evan's, here it seems that Diderot and the Delawares are fellow travelers. They share the same insights.

There are also contrasts between Diderot's Tahitians and Evan's Delawares. First, at least in Megan's account of Diderot, the Tahitians have little previous encounter with the diplomatic workings of hospitality. There is no prior history of intra-indigenous negotiation. Perhaps this is the innocence Diderot's Viellard claims, an effect of what we might think of as island versus continental hospitality. Diderot's Tahitians are island-bound, with no wariness of foreign travelers. Hospitality is about friendship. Evan's Delawares are continental: they have clashed with other mainland North American nations. Hospitality for them is about diplomacy. Second, Diderot's Tahitians tell a different story about lineage. Where Evan's Delawares come to race as a solution to hospitality's failings, Diderot's Tahitians seek out shared lineage in their difficult initial encounters. They demand, as Megan puts it in more modern vocabulary, a genetic offspring apparently different and better to themselves. Where hospitality is about mediating relations between strangers, and where hospitality is always on the verge of failing, it seems as if racialized notions are never very far away.

Megan's paper holds fast to French ground, of course. This is an interpretation of an important Enlightenment text, produced by a man whose circles were in Paris and Saint Petersburg not in the Pacific. But her commitments to Western thought made me want to return to Evan and ask not just about nieces but also, a little differently, about place and about the European dimension of the Euro-American encounter. We know that hospitality is tangible, it is always located in a place. Evan shows us indigenous hospitality before Europeans. Can he also tell how Delaware and Iroquois notions of hospitality shift through displacement, through moving from one kind of land to another in their negotiations with each other and with European empires? Just how close to native American hospitality on the ground can we get?

And second, what we are to make of the Europeans in this story, and their notions of hospitality? Samuel Miller, to whom Joseph Brant penned his account of Iroquois and Algonquian history, was typical of his times in thinking of hospitality as something both local and international, both gendered and social. His mother was celebrated for loving indulgence to her children; kindness to her servants; benevolence to her neighbors; and hospitality to strangers at her house.³ In his *A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century*, meanwhile, the son celebrated hospitality as an exchange between nations: Medical sci-

³ Samuel Miller, *The Life of Samuel Miller, D.D., LL.D., Second Professor in the Theological Seminary* (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen, and Haffelfinger, 1869), 46 (letter of Dec. 10, 1789).

ence in America, Miller bragged, has improved on Old World medicine in part by a better set of principles for quarantine, “which might diminish the restrictions and burdens of commerce, and render the intercourse of nations more hospitable and humane.”⁴ Evan tells us that, back at the beginning of the Delawares as women, in the 1660s and 1670s, Iroquois-Delaware negotiations occurred with the help of the governors of New York and Connecticut. Now that Evan has prised a properly indigenous story from the archives, can European notions of hospitality be woven back in? Ultimately, both these papers tell of hospitality’s terrible failure, its betrayal, but along the way, what did Europeans in North America “get” about hospitality? And did their own notions of hospitality—writ local, not abstract—change, at all, along the way?

⁴ Samuel Miller, *A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: T. and J. Swords, 1803), 530.