

Rethinking the Notion of Hospitality in Migration Cinema

La faute à Voltaire (Abdellatif Kechiche, 2000)

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Repensar la noción de hospitalidad en el cine de migración. *Poetical Refugee* (Abdellatif Kechiche, 2000)

Repenser la notion d'hospitalité dans le cinéma d'immigration. *La faute à Voltaire* (Abdellatif Kechiche, 2000)

Ripensare la nozione d'ospitalità nel cinema dell'immigrazione. *Colpa di Voltaire* (Abdellatif Kechiche, 2000)

Abstract / Resumen / Résumé / Sommario

The crisis of Syrian refugees, the questioning of the Schengen treaty or the impending referendum in the UK, called for within the horizon of increasingly closing off the European borders to immigrants, force us to reconsider the notion of hospitality. Derrida establishes two types of hospitality, an unconditional one, located above the law, and one subjected to the law of hospitality itself, according to which not everybody is welcome or invited into the host country. Mireille Rosello warns us about the danger of using the terms «invited» or «host country», which have been fully internalized. To be invited means that one can be «uninvited», or «expelled», at any time, since to invite someone implies a unilateral act on the part of the one making the invitation. Many immigrants, however, are not «invited» to the host countries, they work in them and hence contribute to the bulding of the countries they live in. *Poetical Refugee* (Abdellatif Kechiche, 2000) provides a perfect setting to think about the feasibility of unconditional hospitality in the 21st century.

La crisis de los refugiados sirios, el cuestionamiento del tratado de Schengen o incluso el referéndum del Reino Unido buscando una Europa cada vez más cerrada a los inmigrantes nos obligan a plantearnos conceptos como el de la hospitalidad. Derrida establece dos tipos de hospitalidad, una hospitalidad incondicional que se encontraría por encima de la ley, y otra hospitalidad sometida a las leyes de la hospitalidad en la que no todo el mundo es bienvenido, ni invitado al país de acogida. Por su parte, Mireille Rosello advierte de lo peligroso que es el uso de términos como invitado o país de acogida, conceptos que, a su vez, tenemos completamente interiorizados. No obstante, una persona cuando es invitada puede en cualquier momento ser expulsada, ya que la invitación supone un acto unilateral por parte del que invita. Muchos inmigrantes no son invitados en los países receptores sino que son trabajadores y, por lo tanto, contribuyen a la construcción del país de acogida. *La faute à Voltaire* (Abdellatif Kechiche, 2000) nos proporciona un escenario perfecto para poder plantearnos si la hospitalidad incondicional es posible en el siglo XXI.

La crise des réfugiés syriens, remettant en question le traité de Schengen ou même un référendum au Royaume-Uni à la recherche de plus en plus d'immigrants européens fermés, nous forçant à envisager des concepts tels que l'hospitalité. Derrida établit deux types de divertissement, l'hospitalité inconditionnelle qu'il serait au-dessus de la loi, et autres divertissements, sous réserve des lois de l'hospitalité dans laquelle tout le monde est le bienvenu, et a invité le pays d'accueil. Pour sa part, Mireille Rosello avertit du danger est l'utilisation de termes tels que des clients ou de l'hôte, les concepts qui, à leur tour, ont entièrement internalisés. Cependant, quand une personne est invitée, il peut à tout moment être expulsé parce que l'invitation est un acte unilatéral de la part de l'invitation. Beaucoup d'immigrants ne sont pas invités dans les pays bénéficiaires si elles sont des travailleurs et, par conséquent, contribuer à la construction du pays d'accueil. *La faute à Voltaire* (Abdellatif Kechiche, 2000) offre un cadre idéal pour penser la possibilité d'une hospitalité sans conditions au XXIème siècle.

La crisi dei rifugiati siriani, la messa in discussione del trattato di Schengen o il referendum nel Regno Unito che ha come obiettivo la chiusura delle frontiere europee all'arrivo degli immigrati, ci forzano a ripensare il concetto di ospitalità. Derrida definisce due tipologie di ospitalità, una ospitalità incondizionata, al di sopra della legge, e una ospitalità soggetta alle leggi dell'ospitalità stessa, secondo le quali non tutti sono benvenuti né invitati nel paese ospitante. Mireille Rosello mette in guardia rispetto al pericolo implicito nell'uso di termini come «ospite» o «paese ospitate», concetti che sono stati pienamente naturalizzati e interiorizzati. Tuttavia, quando una persona è invitata, può essere espulsa in qualunque momento, in quanto l'invito è un atto unilaterale compiuto da chi invita. Molti immigrati non sono semplicemente degli invitati nei paesi ospitanti, sono dei lavoratori, il che vuol dire che contribuiscono alla costruzione del paese che li ha «accolti». *Colpa di Voltaire* (Abdellatif Kechiche, 2000) fornisce un'eccellente opportunità per chiederci e capire se l'ospitalità incondizionata è possibile nel secolo XXI.

Keywords / Palabras clave / Mots-clé / Parole chiave

Derrida, Kechiche, *Poetical Refugee*, hospitality, migration cinema

Derrida, Kechiche, *La faute à Voltaire*, hospitalidad, cine de inmigración

Derrida, Kechiche, *La faute à Voltaire*, hospitalidad, cinéma d'immigration

Derrida, Kechiche, *La faute à Voltaire*, ospitalità, cinema dell'immigrazione

Every year, the number of migrants attempting to reach Europe increases. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), more than one million irregular migrants and refugees are estimated to have arrived by land and sea in 2015; however, these numbers are not completely accurate, as there are people who crossed the borders undetected¹. This represents a fivefold rise on the total numbers of last year. As reported by the same source, most of the migrants came from Syria, Africa and South Asia. EU leaders have increased the protection and surveillance of the Union borders, including installing more fences to stop the massive entrance of immigrants. Amnesty International has described this situation as a «humanitarian emergency», arguing that «EU governments are already spending billions on fences, high-tech surveillance and border guards». As Amnesty's new research shows, this strategy simply doesn't work. «This action's only achievement is that «[t]housands (of migrants) are getting trapped along Fortress Europe's fences, forced to walk for weeks and months, sleeping outside in the cold»².

Given this scenario, it now appears necessary to rethink terms such as host/hostage, hospitality, Fortress Europe and immigrant's identity—a hybrid identity or to use Thomas Elsaesser's «double occupancy» terminology; a double occupy identity. Taking the ethics and the politics of hospitality of Jacques Derrida and the approaches to it of Mireille Rosello and Judith Still as a starting point, this essay questions if hospitality is possible in the twenty-first century and where it can be found. We will argue that the term of hospitality is in constant redefinition, leading the diverse authors to complementary visions. Abdellatif Kechiche's film *La faute à Voltaire* (2000) embodies the perfect setting for this debate.

La faute à Voltaire is the first film of Franco-Tunisian filmmaker Abdellatif Kechiche, who has been gathering increasing interest after his second film *L'esquive* (2003) won four César awards—the French equivalent of the

American Academy Awards. Usually inscribed in the Beur cinema tradition, he is also considered a French auteur who is away from commercial Beur cinema and from commercial filmmakers like Rachid Bouchared (Norindr, 2012: 56). By representing everyday life—especially remarkable in his third feature *La graine et le mulet* (2007)—he reflects on the contemporary issues affecting France in the twentieth first century, particularly illegal immigration and the integration issues of second-third-generation immigrant population. In *La faute à Voltaire*, the main characters are constantly in and outside the system and, in and outside the law. They sell fruit on the metro while sleeping in a charity home. This in-between position creates a framework where both the ethics and politics of hospitality, as defined by Jacques Derrida, are constantly interacting with and superimposing each other.

1. The Host and the Guest

In his seminal book *Postcolonial Hospitality: the Immigrant as Guest*, Mireille Rosello points out that «the link between immigration and hospitality seems to need no explanation» (2001: 3), as terms such as «host nation» are widely accepted and understandable. However, he reminds the reader that the definition of the immigrant as a guest is a metaphor, and its repeated use has consequences on the relationship between the immigrants and the nationals of the receiving country, as in the laws regulating the status of the immigrants in their new destination. Rosello argues that, after World War II, the spate of non-European immigrants arriving in Europe was of unskilled workers hired for reconstructing a destroyed Europe. He points out that a worker is not a guest and, by avoiding the distinction between being hired and being invited, the states create a «confusion [that] sometimes leads to a cynical redefinition of servitude as a gift» (Rosello, *id.*: 9). By doing so, Mireille Rosello invites the reader to think about the implications of these metaphors and about the own roots of the meaning of hospitality, which, in his opinion, «is in the process of being redefined» (*id.*: 8). As a result, it seems imperative

¹ See <<https://www.iom.int/news/eu-migrant-refugee-arrivals-land-and-sea-approach-one-million-2015>>

² See <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2015/09/world-refugee-crisis-needs-eu-solutions/>>

to sketch different approaches to the meaning of hospitality.

In a recent article, Tom W. Robin pinpoints the etymology of the term hospitality in other languages. In French, for example, *l'hôte* is the one who receives and who is received. «The word for guest in Greek, *xenos*, also means 'stranger'. In Latin one finds the source of the concept's complexities, for *hospes* means both guest and host and, early on, it also appropriated the sense of *hostis* as enemy.» Judith Still (2013: 11) notes that «hospitality is, by definition, a structure that regulates relations between inside and outside, and, in that sense, between private and public» (Tobin, 2015: 145). Focussing on the outside, Jacques Derrida (1997b: 533) identifies two categories—«l'étranger», who had rights in Athens, and «l'autre absolu, le barbare, le sauvage absolument exclu et hétérogène». By establishing this difference, he distinguishes between a conditional hospitality—the one regulated by the law—and an unconditional hospitality. The latter, as Derrida puts it (*id.*: 559):

[L]'hospitalité absolue romp[t] avec la loi de l'hospitalité comme droit ou devoir, avec le 'pacte' d'hospitalité. Pour le dire en d'autres termes, l'hospitalité absolue exige que j'ouvre mon chez moi et que je donne non seulement à l'étranger (pourvu d'un nom de famille, d'un statut social de d'étranger, etc.) mais à l'autre absolu, inconnu, anonyme, et que je lui *donne lieu*, que je le laisse venir, que je le laisse arriver, et avoir lieu dans le lieu que je lui offre, sans lui demander ni réciprocité (l'entrée dans un pacte) ni même son nom.

Thus, the French author suggests two forms of hospitality. On the one hand, a legal hospitality, subjected to national law and which takes place in the public. On the other, a private hospitality between individuals that has its own rules and could be unconditional. In this way, hospitality can take place both in the public and private spaces; the latter could be the sphere where unconditional hospitality can arise. However, an excess of hospitality could be dangerous for the public sphere. Mireille Rosello describes the potlatch tradition³ as «a

³ The Potlatch is a tradition practiced by indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast of Canada and the United States consisting in offering gifts and property to maintain a social status.

ceremony during which a host gives away as much as he can to establish or increase his social status» (Rosello, *id.*: 169). This custom was banned by the Canadian Parliament as they perceived the excess of generosity as a disease, a sort of insanity. The public law saw in the potlatch a kind of transgression and a danger to its status quo, so they outlawed it. Something similar occurred with the Deltombe affair. As Rosello narrates (*id.*: 36-37), Jaqueline Deltombe, a French citizen, was arrested for hosting an illegal immigrant in her apartment. Although she was exercising her right to hospitality, she was, in a way, interfering with the public one, and so she was punished and treated as a criminal. Both examples lead to an aporia, as unconditional hospitality is limited its public counterpart; hence, unconditional hospitality does not exist.

In the essay *Pas d'hospitalité*, Derrida refers to this aporia as «une antinomie insoluble,» both hospitalities—conditional and unconditional—need each other. However, he argues:

[L]es deux termes de cette antinomie ne sont pas symétriques. Il y a là une étrange hiérarchie. La loi est au-dessus des lois. Elle est donc illégale, transgressive, hors de loi, comme une loi anomique, *nomos anomos*, loi au-dessus des lois et loi hors de la loi (...), mais tout en se tenant au-dessus des lois de l'hospitalité, la loi inconditionnelle de l'hospitalité a besoin des lois, elle les requiert. Cette exigence est constitutive. Elle ne serait pas effectivement inconditionnelle, la loi, si elle ne devait pas devenir effective, concrète, déterminée, si tel n'était pas son être comme devoir être (Derrida, *id.*: 932).

In her study of Derrida's work about hospitality, Judith Still remarks that, strictly speaking, the Law of Hospitality in a pure form—that is to say, with no restrictions, «with absolutely no conditions attached»—is impossible (Still, *id.*: 14). However, it might be inferred from Derrida's words that this impossibility lies on its connection to the laws of hospitality. But in a space where the latter don't operate, in a space «hors de loi», unconditional hospitality could be possible. We will argue that *La faute à Voltaire* creates a private sphere within the public spaces in which the Law of hospitality rules.

2. The Subversion of the Laws

A wider definition of both the Law and the laws of hospitality is important at this point, as it paves the path for our analysis. In *Adieu à Emmanuel Lévinas*, Derrida (1997a: 45) distinguishes between «une éthique de l'hospitalité» and «une politique de l'hospitalité». In this respect, Judit Still makes two types of distinctions between politics and ethics. On the one hand, she places ethics «in the relations between individuals», while «politics is the domain of the relations between States or between the individual and the states.» Still delimits, in such a way, the space where the ethics of hospitality are possible—a private space, as ethics can only exist amongst human beings. On the other hand, as Still (*id.*: 8) puts it, «ethics can be seen as the realm of metaphysical absolutes (transcendentals, or, in the case of Derrida and perhaps Lévinas, 'quasi-transcendental') while politics is the realm of pragmatic compromise and of negotiated rules». As a consequence, the laws of hospitality are the result of a consensus, while the Law of hospitality would be beyond any human law. For his part, Rosello also points out the transcendental trait of ethics, arguing that the hosts who take care of absolute strangers are like heroes, so it's a hospitality with no limits, whereas a politics of hospitality «involves limits and borders: calculations and the management of infinite resources, finite numbers of people, national borders and state sovereignty». All these limits—the meaning of a politics of hospitality—are portrayed in *La faute à Voltaire's* opening scene.

The film opens in an immigration office. Jallel, a Tunisian immigrant, is sitting in the waiting room with two compatriots who are helping with the paperwork. They warn him that the only way for getting a visa is to claim that he is both a political refugee and Algerian in the interview with the immigration officer. By doing so, he will appeal to the French sense of guilt from their colonial past. It is unlikely that Jallel will get a visa—«Déjà les vrais réfugiés, c'est rare qu'ils les acceptent, alors toi!» states one of his friends. However, he manages to get a three-month bridging visa, although it is based on

a lie. The state offers a restricted hospitality, available only to those under specific conditions. The subversion of the laws of hospitality frames the story from the beginning, and this subversion is, ironically, what allows the main character to receive the hospitality of the state. As the plot continues, the protagonist attempts to become a national through an arranged marriage; however, it fails, as the bride changes her mind at the last minute. Jallel has been working very hard, selling avocados in the metro, and has stopped sending money to his family in Tunisia so he can afford the marriage. After its failure and the loss of all the money, he plunges into a deep depression that will see him into a psychiatric institution. Nevertheless, as he is an illegal immigrant, he has to borrow the identity of Frank—one of his mates at the charity home—to be admitted into the clinic. Again, a lie allows him to receive the hospitality of the public institution. When he recovers, he returns to the charity home where one of his friends, a Frenchman, lends him his identity card, so that Jallel can falsify it swapping the photos. Once again, by breaking the law with a false identity, the Tunisian manages to stay in the country. However, as Judit Still (*id.*: 14) reminds us, hospitality «is a particular form of gift that involves temporary sharing of space, and sometimes also time, bodies, food and other consumables». As a result, the film ends with Jallel's deportation.

During the entire film, Kechiche is questioning the validity of the laws of hospitality—this 'politic' hospitality provided by the state. By focusing on the illegal behaviour of Jallel as the only way to stay in the country, he highlights the government's anti-immigration attitude, which leads to an (in)hospitality, more than to the proclaimed values that used to define the French state: liberty, equality and fraternity. By doing so, Kechiche not only underscores the hypocrisy of the state—which identifies itself as the cradle of liberties—but also brings to light its ineffectiveness and subsequent decadence.

The first shot of the film is a statue of a naked woman offering a rose (figure 1). The naked woman represents the peace and it is from Jules Dalou's *Le triomphe de la République*. As Janice Best explains (2006: 313), the

statue was rejected in a competition won by Léopold Morice's Monument a la République, because Dalou's statue praised the revolutionary values of la commune de Paris. She states that:

La statue «officielle» raconte l'histoire de diverses luttes de la France pour la démocratie, et passe sous silence les périodes de violence reliées aux phases plus radicales de la Révolution et de la Commune. La statue «non officielle» raconte l'histoire d'une République de l'avenir, celle toujours recherché par la classe ouvrière, et symbolise une aspiration plus globale.

By choosing *Le triomphe de la République*, Kechiche emphasises the socialist values embodied in the French revolution. Just after Jallel's deportation, the film closes with the statue again, but this time she has her back turned (figure 2). With its anti-immigration policies, the French government in putting at stake not only its laws of hospitality, but also its foundational pillars.



Figure 1



Figure 2

To sum up, 21st century France—and the successive governments that approved restrictive immigration laws—has transformed its hospitality laws into (in) hospitality ones. The solution cannot be found in the system, not even in French bedrock values—such as Peace, which has turned her back. However, the plot also dwells on all the people Jallel met during his stay in Paris; people that are out of the system but who grant him a certain kind of unconditional hospitality.

3. The Abject Heroes and the Friendship Hospitality

In *Double Occupancy: Space, Place and Identity in European Cinema of the 1990s*, Thomas Elsaesser notices that in the European films of the 1980s and, especially, of the 1990s, there is a singular subjectivity that has been represented, which he names «the abject heroes». Those characters are «human beings who have, for one reason or another, lost the ability to enter into any kind of exchange, sometimes not even one where they can trade their bodies.» The author adds «that they are not victims, or at least do not consider themselves as such,» and that this situation «removes them from yet another circuit of exchange and interaction— that made up the victim and the perpetrator, but also the victim and the donor» (Elsaesser, 2006: 655). Almost all the characters represented in the film can be considered abject heroes. However, we will focus on the residents of the charity home as they operate as hosts when Jallel arrives in their house. Even if it is technically not their home—it is, on the contrary, a public space— they create a microcosm governed by their all rules.

These individuals can be considered abject heroes because, as noted by Elsaesser, they are outside of what can be considered common life. However, the filmmaker adds a new trait to them. Not only do they not consider themselves as victims, but they project the victim status onto others. So, ironically, it is them who have compassion for common people and their alienated lives, normally attached to a job under dire conditions. Some situations are described in the film to this regard.

For example, a few days after Jallel's arrival to the charity home, he is having a chat with his mates who are giving him advice and some tricks to improve his street sales. One of the suggestions is to play the victim, so the pedestrian will feel guilty because he considers that he is in a privileged position, and so he'll give them greater charity. However, for Jallel's friends it is just a game, as they are representing what others expect them to be. They don't think themselves as victims; rather, they consider that they are lucky compared to those common people.

Both the hospitality in the charity home and the distinction between guest and host—which characterises Jallel's arrival into the charity home—get blurred as the story goes on, as the guest becomes a host and the relationship between the characters evolves to a friendship. This friendship can be situated next to an unconditional hospitality. As we have seen, Derrida argues that unconditional hospitality is the one in which the guest is accepted without being asked his name, and is given a place without expecting reciprocity. When Jallel is introduced to Frank and his room-mates, he presents himself as Algerian. Despite lying about his identity, this distortion of reality will not be relevant for their future friendship, as they will not feel betrayed when they learn the truth. The situation takes place when Jallel receives a letter from the immigration office notifying him that he has to leave the country. All his host/friends are concerned about the situation. One of them enters the room where all the others are and asks about their sad faces. Jallel tells him about the letter and confesses that he is neither a political refugee nor Algerian—he is Tunisian, to which his friend replies: «So what!» (figures 3-5).

The sequence opens with a medium shot framing all the characters. They are sitting in a kind of semicircle that emphasizes their proximity. Then, a medium close-up of the faces dramatizes the unease. Jallel is no longer a guest, but one of them, a friend. To this regard, Judith Still indicates that «[b]oth Lévinas and Derrida often refer to friendship (*amitié*) alongside hospitality, each mutually reinforcing the other». Jallel, who was first a guest, is now their friend, but the codes of hospitality remain still in their relationship.



Figures 3, 4 & 5

By comparing the expulsion order from the French State with the «Et alors!» from his friend, Kechiche draws an analogy, in turn, between the conditional hospitality embodied by the State—which, upon knowing the true identity of Jallel, throws him out—and the unconditional hospitality of his friends, who not only consider him one of them, but actually help him stay.

At the same time, he opposes the rigidity of the rules of the State with the lack thereof embodied by these ‘abject heroes’, who live outside the law. «Do you always do what you’re told?» asks one of them. Kechiche seems to find unconditional hospitality both in the abject heroes who live outside the system and in friendship.

4. The Female Body and Hospitality

The relationship between women and hospitality is a controversial issue. As Derrida argues, there is a problem with hospitality that is coextensive to ethics, which becomes especially noticeable when there is a woman as host or guest. To depict this issue, the French philosopher refers to the story of Lot and his daughters. Lot puts the laws of hospitality above ethics, offering the bodies of his daughters to the men of Sodom (Derrida, 1997b: 1.431). Judith Still sustains the same line of argument; she compares the friendship between men and the friendship between women. As she explains (*id.*: 188-120), the former has been described by some philosophers, like Montaigne or Cicero, as a perfect friendship—or they consider them, at least, as able to achieve this perfection—while friendship amongst women is based on moaning. Referring to hospitality, Still (*id.*: 122) points out that:

Women, more or less absent from the true friendship of twin souls as subjects in themselves, reappear as the object of a service done for a friend (as in Montaigne’s example of Eudamidas’ legacy) or, more often, the means by which one man can do his friend a service— they are intermediaries between male friends. [...] Women are also the material ground of hospitality (cooking and serving meals, cleaning houses and so on), and also provide entertainment.

Mireille Rosello adds domestic hospitality to the discussion, where gender specificities are more stereotyped. As a host, the woman is the servant of the guest, and she has to respond to her husband’s orders. In *Boudu sauvé des eaux* (Jean Renoir, 1932), «M. Lestingois still thinks of himself as the host (a prestigious symbolic identity), even if he does not do his share of the chores generated by the guest’s presence, extra labor that he demands from his wife and servant» (Rosello, *id.*: 125). Domestic

hospitality, thus, leans on the servitude of women. Conversely, when the woman acts as a guest, she is perceived as weak, needing the protection of men. Both as hosts or guests, women are subjugated to men (*id.*: 146).

Kechiche reverses the role of the female host. The film’s plot is structured around two females, Nassera and Lucie. Jallel meets the former when he arrives to Paris. They are starting a relationship when he receives the notice of deportation. As Nassera is a French citizen, she agrees to marry him for a lower price than the one he has been offered. At the last minute, she leaves and disappears from the plot. Jallel meets Lucie in the psychiatric institution where he is admitted after being abandoned by Nassera. Although Lucie is the central character of the narrative, it is Nassera who puts into question the traditional idiosyncratic values of the woman as host as described by Derrida and Rosello.

Essentially, three sequences underpin the relationship between Jallel and Nassera: their first encounter, the first invitation to her apartment and her running away. The first one takes place in Nassera’s working place, an Arab café. Jallel is welcomed by all the people at the bar—he is Muslim, he has the same family name of one of the waitresses, «on est tous des cousins!», Jallel exclaims. He is the guest arriving at an unknown place, but he becomes the host when, after being welcome, he offers everyone a drink. This incident sets up an axiom of the film: the roles of the guest and the host could easily be subverted. By doing so, Kechiche sends the spectator the message that stereotypes are not valid. This absence of truism is embodied in Nassera.

Nassera is introduced as an independent woman whose boyfriend cheated on her and got married to another woman. However, she had her son and managed to find a job and an apartment. From the first time she appears on screen, her sexuality is overexposed; several close-ups of her décolleté (figure 6) and her face—while she is dancing surrounded by men (figure 7)—stress on her sensuality. Nevertheless, the filmmaker is unambiguous—she owns her sexuality and she would not share it with anyone, as is clear in the second sequence: the apartment encounter. Jallel arrives to Nassera’s place,

where she receives him wearing a nightdress. After having a glass of whisky, they kiss passionately. However, Nassera stops Jallel before things go further and they don't consummate their relationship by having intercourse. Apparently, this scene is repeated hereafter, considering that Jallel, at a later point in time, confesses to Frank that they have not yet had complete sexual intercourse. At all times, Nassera has total control of her sexuality and her life. On the contrary, Jallel loses it from the outset. On the first day, he gets drunk and forgets everything that happens that night—he loses a piece of his mind, in a way—until, he ultimately breaks down on the wedding day. In other words, Kechiche portrays a host woman who, on the one hand, never shows the attitude of a servant, even though, ironically, she is a waitress. On the other hand, the protection of the man is also removed from this depiction, where the woman actually prefers a new beginning alone with her child.



Figures 6 & 7



Conclusion

Along the essay, we have analysed several aspects of the subject of hospitality. We've discussed, in the first place, the question of the host and the guest. In this regard, Mireille Rosello alerted us to the danger of the use of this term. She remarked that the consideration of someone who is working as a guest leads to a «cynical redefinition of the servitude as a gift.» For his part, Jacques Derrida added the distinction between an unconditional hospitality, or the ethics of hospitality, and a conditional hospitality, or the politics of hospitality. He noted that, albeit the fact that each was dependent on the other, they were also mutually exclusive. The debate was then opened to the research of unconditional hospitality found in those people who were outside of the system and who could not, therefore, observe the rules. This led us to the «abject heroes», as Thomas Elsaesser puts it. In this section, we approached another important issue referring to hospitality: temporality. Both Judith Still and Mireille Rosello warned us about its importance. The latter notes that «if the guest is always the guest, if the host is always the host, something has probably gone very wrong: hospitality has somehow been replaced by parasitism or charity» (Rosello, *id.*: 167). Roles must be exchanged, the guest cannot be always the guest and vice versa. It is through the reciprocity that hospitality evolves to a friendship⁴. Finally, we examined the connection between woman and hospitality. Regarding this, it was explained that the woman was normally depicted as dependent of men, both as a guest and as a host.

It could be argued, concerning hospitality, that all the authors' studies are complementary and that they complete each other. Their points of view are not contradictory, but represent rather an endeavour to define a term that it is constantly developing. Besides, hospitality is more often linked to the culture of the countries at different stages, not explained through a global and static definition. Derrida himself alludes to Socrates as a trigger point to his study in *De l'hospitalité*. This is the

⁴ On this object agree Derrida, Rosello and Still.

way in which Kechiche's film ought to be understood—as an attempt to shed light on such an ambiguous notion by focusing on a particular place and time: Paris at the turn of the twenty-first century.

His contribution leans on two main aspects—friendship/hospitality and women/hospitality—that can merge into one: the reversal role. Through Jallel's deportation, Kechiche emphasizes the danger of a stagnant gaze, as this causes stereotypes and a misunderstanding of others. Discriminatory and xenophobic behaviours hinge on these kinds of visions. The French anti-immigration policies, as well as the increase on protection at the borders of the European Union, are the result. Kechiche zooms on our look to the outsiders who create a caring environment, providing shelter for each other. In this realm, there is a constant role switching, the position of guest and host becomes a blur and an unconditional hospitality grows, eventually evolving to friendship. Conversely, in the absence of this role exchange, the guest becomes a «parasite» (Rosello, *id.*: 98-108, Still, *id.*: 26-27). Kechiche's portrait of the woman also escapes conventional female images. Far from representing an unprotected female who needs protection or an object of desire available to men's impulses, the French filmmaker pictures an independent character, who owns her sexuality and her destiny.

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