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Enacting Rightful Presence:
Justice and relationality in *City of Sanctuary*

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This paper examines how historical and geographical relations of injustice are ‘made present’ through the activities of the *City of Sanctuary* network in Sheffield, the UK. In so doing, it exposes the limitations of conceptualising and enacting sanctuary through the frame of hospitality, and proposes an analytics of ‘rightful presence’ as an alternative frame by which to address contemporary sanctuary practices. In contrast to a body of scholarship and activism that has focused on hospitably as potentially extending the bounds of citizenship to ‘include’ those seeking refuge, we consider how the ‘minor’ politics of *City of Sanctuary* potentially trouble the assumptions on which such claims to inclusion rest. Specifically, we claim that an analysis that pays attention to the ‘minor’ politics of sanctuary raises questions about the statist relations of guest-host that such an approach takes as its starting point¹. The paper develops this argument by emphasising the importance of practices that ‘make present’ injustices. This is conceived of as important in bringing to bear an account of justice that is grounded in concrete political struggles, in contrast to the more abstract notion of a justice ‘to come’. To explore sanctuary practices through a relational account of justice, we thus conclude, brings to bear a politically-attuned account of rightful presence in terms that challenge pastoral relations of guest-host as well as the statist framing of sanctuary with which such relations are intimately bound.

Keywords: sanctuary, justice, relationality, mobility, citizenship

It does not seem to be an exaggeration to say that we are currently witnessing a ‘crisis’ of asylum across what might be called the global ‘North’, in which established mechanisms of providing refugee protection are subject to a range of challenges. Concerns regarding the impact of increased applications on asylum systems along with concerns regarding the impact of increased arrivals along land and sea borders between the global ‘North’ and the global ‘South’ have led to the questioning of asylum from various angles over recent years. This need not necessarily be seen as a regressive move, though it seems to us that a strong case could be made for interpreting it in this regard. Indeed, it would seem quite clear that there is a retraction – or an attempt to retract – asylum through the institution of measures that prevent access to asylum and that render refugee status temporary. The proliferation of impermanent protection status and developments such as the exportation of protection measures to third states in the European context might be understood as regressive measures in this regard. Yet from another angle the ‘crisis’ of asylum might potentially be understood as an opportunity for the ‘progressive’ expansion of refugee protection, as much as a challenge to its contemporary contours. The ‘crisis’ of asylum in this regard would seem to be a highly contested issue, and one that thus demands further critical investigation.

The aim of this article is not to take one or other side in the argument as to whether or not the ‘crisis’ of asylum serves as an opportunity for a more progressive articulation of refugee protection, since we conceive this as a subject of struggle rather than a question that has any fixed or predetermined answers. Moreover, we do not necessarily accept or seek to defend the international refugee regime as an ideal to maintain or develop, since we conceive this to be limited in its historical design and

development, even if it does remain important as an international institution that incorporates certain rights that might be deemed worth promoting or defending. What we want to do more specifically in this article is to consider from a political and analytical angle, rather than simply from a normative one, the potential and limitations of what might be described as ‘progressive’ enactments of sanctuary that have emerged in the context of the asylum ‘crisis’. In particular, we want to consider the potential and limitations of the activities of the *City of Sanctuary* movement in the UK city of Sheffield, specifically to consider how this opens up our understanding and enactment of sanctuary beyond the limits of its current international institution and national implementation.

City of Sanctuary describes itself as a movement “to build a culture of hospitality for people seeking sanctuary in the UK”, and has gained significant support in the UK over recent years. The movement has escalated from the ‘brainchild’ of two people in Sheffield during 2005 to its current status as a well-established national network across eighteen towns and cities throughout the UK². If we compare it to groups such as the New Sanctuary Movement in the US, we find a similar movement of primarily religious groups that struggle to enact sanctuary in a context whereby the exclusion of some migrants and refugees has become increasingly intense over recent years. In the UK movement, however, the practice of sanctuary is not so much congregation-based as it is city based, and thus includes a wider range of groups and organisations that are secular as well as religious. Moreover, the emphasis on sanctuary is specifically developed as an alternative to the language of asylum in the UK context, with activists claiming that asylum is no longer a helpful term given its increasingly derogatory use both in the media and more widely. The *City of Sanctuary* movement

in this regard is thus a particularly interesting case for an analysis that is concerned to explore the potential and limitations of ‘progressive’ responses to the asylum ‘crisis’

While *City of Sanctuary* in its ‘major’ articulation can be defined as a hospitality movement, we want to argue here that the political significance of its activities and engagements may be understood in terms of what we call its ‘minor’ politics of ‘rightful presence’. In developing this intervention, the article proceeds in three parts. First, we introduce *City of Sanctuary* not simply as a movement building a ‘culture of hospitality’, but also as a network formed through a range of localised activities and informal encounters that potentially facilitate the assumption of rightful presence. Second, we draw attention to the critical importance of introducing the analytical frame of rightful presence by highlighting the limitations embedded within a hospitality perspective. Third, we develop the notion of rightful presence by exploring the ways in which assertions or assumptions of presence as legitimate are enacted through the minor politics of *City of Sanctuary*. In so doing, we argue that rightful presence entails a disruptive dimension that *exceeds* the statist limits of the hospitable, rather than simply extending the bounds of hospitality. It is this disruptive dimension that allows us to develop an account of sanctuary that is wedded neither to an ideal of hospitable welcome and inclusion nor to an abstract form of justice ‘to come’. Rather, our account of sanctuary emphasises the ‘making present’ of concrete injustices both past and present, both near and far. While *City of Sanctuary* is primarily articulated as a movement of hospitality rather than in terms of a politics of enacting rightful presence, our analysis indicates that its practices are not reducible to this ‘major’ rendition alone. So also, we argue does the network bring to bear a series of more

disruptive enactments of justice that trouble the very categories of ‘host’ and ‘guest’ on which the statist framing of politics and sanctuary relies.

City of Sanctuary Sheffield

In 2007 Sheffield became the first official *City of Sanctuary* in the UK with the support of the City Council and over seventy local organisations. The primary aim of the movement is to ‘influence policy-makers and public attitudes throughout the country’ in order ‘to build a culture of hospitality for people seeking sanctuary’³. In this regard *City of Sanctuary* positions itself as distinct from, though not as working in separation of, other groups in existence that intervene in the field of asylum politics. While many groups can be defined as overtly political or definitively practical in terms of their intervention, *City of Sanctuary* is explicitly set up in terms that avoid political lobbying or campaigning in favour of a more subtle process of ‘transforming culture’. This effectively consists of a grassroots approach to political change, which is based on creating a culture of hospitality at a local level through coalition building and the development of opportunities for building personal relationships between local people and those taking sanctuary in the city (see Barnett and Bhogal 2009).

Despite this emphasis on creating a culture of hospitality, however, the activities and encounters around which *City of Sanctuary* groups are constituted are much more varied in nature than such a description would imply. Indeed, the aim has been to develop a localised approach to mobilising around sanctuary through which each group’s activities are embedded in the specificities of the particular urban context (see Darling 2010). For example, in Sheffield there has been an emphasis on developing a ‘University of Sanctuary’ in order to capitalise on what is a large institution within the

city as well as an active student support group, Student Action for Refugees (STAR) that has emerged over recent years (Interview with Craig Barnett 2010). Although there are family resemblances in the activities of *City of Sanctuary* across the UK, intervening in a wider politics of asylum occurs in relatively flexible and context-specific terms, and often draws upon local issues, concerns, infrastructures and histories.

Cultural and educational events are key activities for *City of Sanctuary*. For example, community gardening and social evenings have been organised by groups across various cities and towns in order to encourage the development of personal relationships between those taking sanctuary and other people who are present in the city. In Sheffield such events have been further developed as part of a ‘summer of sanctuary’ (Sheffield City Council 2010). Given the emphasis of the *City of Sanctuary* movement on changing mainstream opinions, significant emphasis has been placed on educating local residents about the challenges facing those taking sanctuary in the city. This has occurred through the facilitation of school visits by refugees and asylum seekers (Interview with Andrew 2010; Interview with Rodrigo 2010). It has also occurred through the provision of opportunities for those taking sanctuary to provide testimonies regarding their experiences prior to, and on arrival in, the UK. As we will see, such an emphasis on educating the public has also been developed in Sheffield through the involvement of *City of Sanctuary* in the development of a display at a local museum.

In addition to such cultural and educational activities, there is a strong emphasis in *City of Sanctuary* on the creation of volunteering opportunities for those who are

denied the right to work under national asylum legislation. In this regard we might interpret the activities of the network as challenging the limitations of exclusionary asylum policies by enacting the right to equal participation within the life of the city for those taking sanctuary (see Squire 2009a). Indeed, this article explores how a broader range of activities with which *City of Sanctuary* is involved potentially entails an assumption that the presence of those taking sanctuary in the city is rightful or legitimate beyond the bounds of the sedimented norms of hospitality and protection⁴. This assumption of rightful presence might thus be understood as emerging out of a series of everyday encounters that open to question *statist* distinctions such as ‘guest’ and ‘host’ or ‘citizen’ and ‘noncitizen’ (Squire 2009b)⁵. On our reading, the political significance of *City of Sanctuary* in this regard lies less in its ‘major’ emphasis on ‘mainstreaming’ hospitality than in the ‘minor’ challenges it poses to the categories that so often work to render the subjects of sanctuary beyond recourse to the political register (Squire 2011b).

From Hospitality to Rightful Presence

So how does an emphasis on rightful presence lend itself to a different form of analysis of *City of Sanctuary* than a frame of hospitality would invoke? It is perhaps helpful at this point to explore some of the more critical work on hospitality in order to make clearer our intervention. Against a dominant rendering of sanctuary that invokes a clear delineation between guest and host, an anti-essentialist approach problematises the provider/recipient or guest/host divide in ethical terms through an emphasis on the moment of unconditional hospitality in which the alterity of the Other is transcended (Doty 2006; Dikeç 2002; Rosello 2001). In Derrida’s (2000) discussion of hospitality he describes how the power to host not only brings with it

control over those who are hosted through the assertion of a territorial claim over the space of such hospitality, but so also does it entail an element of non-mastery since the act of visitation may overwhelm the self-possession of the subject while bringing to bear the possibility that the host may not be able to host any longer (see Barnett 2005)⁶. It is precisely this ‘risk’ and uncertainty, Derrida (2000) asserts, which makes hospitality an ethical proposition, and it is from this critical perspective of placing in question the relation between guest and host that Derrida (1999) suggests hospitality might offer an ethical orientation for political action (see Critchley 2007; Darling 2009a). This emphasis on the unconditional opens hospitality in ways that problematise any simplistic relation between guest and host, and in doing so may offer an ethical orientation to political decision making (Critchley 2000).

This conception of hospitality is developed in the work of critical scholars such as Roxanne Lynn Doty in terms that speak directly to the questions of justice that interest us. Hospitality is defined by Doty as a ‘poetic’ experience of the impossible (Doty 2006: 66-7), and in this sense might be interpreted as a moment when a statist politics is open to question. Yet even in Doty’s excellent work we find a slippage that suggests an anti-essentialist ethics of hospitality ultimately fails to challenge the pastoral distinctions between ‘host’ and ‘guest’ that are bound up with a statist politics. Indeed, this is a concession that Doty makes in her acknowledgment that hospitality occurs in the ‘shadow’ of the state (Ibid: 71). Describing the Southwestern desert that borders Mexico and the US as a place whereby ‘a demand, a plea for hospitality rises in the silence’ (Ibid: 64), Doty not only highlights the ambiguities of a politics of hospitality, but also implicitly points to the limitations of hospitality as a frame of analysis. On the one hand, she interprets hospitality in political terms as a

demand, thus bringing to bear questions of justice and injustice in a similar way as we seek to do here. On the other hand, she interprets hospitality in terms of the *plea*, which brings to bear the limitations of such an analytical frame by addressing hosts as those privileged enough to be able to choose whether or not to provide the hospitality that appears as so needed. Silence is thus deathening on the US-Mexico border, with absent or uncaring 'hosts' haunting Doty's critical rendition of the border politics across this region.

While Doty's analysis is critically insightful in addressing border politics across the Sonoran borderzone (see also Doty 2009), we nevertheless want to highlight some of the limitations of a hospitality framework even in this more critical formulation. For critical analysts, hospitality is primarily conceived as an ethical enactment of the recognition of one's 'originary responsibility' to the Other (see Critchley 2007). Doty describes this in terms of the injunction to act based on the assertion of the right to be (2006: 67). Yet if this originary responsibility entails a politics of justice, it is one with an eye to a future 'to come' more than a conception of justice that is sensitive to historical and geographical relationalities in a more concrete sense. This is evident in Doty's description of justice as emerging 'in a moment', which she develops through a Derridean reading of the experience of the impossible (Ibid: 70). While Doty occasionally gestures toward the geographical disparities against which acts of hospitality can be understood in terms of this momentary politics of justice (Ibid:72-3), the political force of the ethical act of hospitality would seem to be lost where the fraught histories and geographical disparities under which these critical demands to the 'right to be' are written out of the analysis⁷. The relatively abstract notion of a justice 'to come' would in this regard seem to be decontextualised by its lack of

temporal and spatial specificity, and as such lacks the political edge that we conceive as crucial⁸.

The lack of historical specificity noted here is addressed in part in Heidrun Friese's examination of the ways in which practices of hospitality may become 'sites of contestation' within '*specific historical contexts*' of differently positioned actors and authorities around issues of forced migration (2010, p.335, original emphasis). This analysis indicates the need to explore the historical context and content of hospitality movements in practice, and to unpack the modes of power and authority they both reproduce and open to question. However, whilst such an account of the historically specific contestations of hospitality is more politically attuned than ethically-orientated accounts of hospitality would seem to be, it nevertheless risks reaffirming a statist account of politics in taking as its point of entry the distinction between 'host' and 'guest'. By contrast, the alternative rendition of relational justice that this paper seeks to engage brings to bear the fraught histories and geographical disparities around which current struggles of sanctuary are played out as means to articulate an account of justice which is both disruptive of a statist politics and grounded in concrete contexts⁹.

In this article we by no means profess to undertake a detailed historical and geographical study of the injustices that inform contemporary struggles around sanctuary. Such a task would be colossal, and would likely detract from our focus on exploring the political significance of localised informal sanctuary practices. Our more modest aim is to point to the need for a historically-informed and geographically-sensitive analysis of the activities and encounters of *City of Sanctuary*

as a means by which to uncover the ways in which claims to rightful presence emerge through its practices. We do this by exploring how historical and geographical relations of in/justice inform the assertions and/or assumptions of rightfulness that are enacted through the activities and encounters of the network. This emphasis on rightful presence gestures toward a politics of sanctuary that remains open to the politicality of those whose qualification as political beings is often refused, reduced or questioned. This leads us away from an approach that interrogates the categories of guest and host only to show their reconfiguration in practice, and opens up questions regarding how the claims to justice of (and for) those taking sanctuary bring to bear fraught histories and geographic disparities in terms that recreate the politics of the present. Such an emphasis is important because it shifts attention from more abstract ethical practices of hospitality that reconfigure existing relations toward a range of concrete political practices of sanctuary that *exceed* the uneven relations of guest and host that statism inscribes.

The notion of *rightful presence* that we discuss here draws inspiration from Hannah Arendt's (1951) notion of the 'right to have rights', and serves as an alternative analytical frame by which we might interpret the practices of *City of Sanctuary*. Despite our interest in justice we do not use this concept of the right to have rights in a legalistic or normative sense as some scholars have done (see Benhabib 2004), but rather we develop it in line with a body of work that explores the 'misplaced' or 'unexpected' claiming of justice and rights as *politically* significant (see Isin 2008, 2009; Nyers 2008; Isin, Nyers and Turner 2009; Aradau, Huysmans and Squire 2010). Rather than calling for the extension of rights, we thus point to the practices that call into question the limitations of existing rights regimes. Specifically, we conceive

Arendt's notion of the right to have rights as potentially allowing for an analysis of political claims to justice that emerge at the *limits* of citizenship as a regime, and thus that contest the institutionalised exclusions and injustices that such a regime entails. This emphasis on the claiming or assuming of a *right* to have rights might be interpreted as bringing to bear an element of infinitude or asymmetry that not only plays a constitutive role in the formation of such a regime (see Honig 2009), but that also *exceeds* this regime and thus disrupts established understandings of what it means to be political (see Rancière 1999). In this regard, we engage those taking sanctuary as political beings who claim rights in terms that are 'illegitimate' or 'misplaced' from a statist perspective (see also McNevin 2006; Nyers 2008). What interests us in this article is the ways in which this enacting of a 'right to have rights' or a 'right to claim rights' (Isin 2009: 371) is articulated in terms of temporal and spatial relationalities of injustice that a frame of hospitality risks rendering invisible.

So how does an emphasis on justice and relationality differ when viewed through the lens of rightful presence rather than hospitality? It is certainly clear that an emphasis on justice and relationality is important in the hospitality literature. As Doty's work indicates, the moment of the 'plea' entails both a reaching out to others (the creation of relations) on the part of the guest or visitor, as well as a call for justice 'to come'. Yet also haunting this rendition of justice and relationality is the problem of injustice and disconnection, which in Doty's discussion is reflected in the 'silence' meeting the plea. Indeed, it seems to us that this silence is amplified because of the way in which justice and relationality are articulated through the analytical frame of hospitality. An abstract notion of justice 'to come' does not allow for a consideration of migrant movements and resettlements as claims to or demands for justice, while an emphasis

on relationality as hospitality or welcome (and its opposite of disconnection as abandonment) invokes relations that are saturated with power and inequalities. To focus on justice and relationality from the perspective of rightful presence, in contrast, brings to bear concrete histories and geographies of injustice. Our emphasis on rightful presence over hospitality, in other words, allows for an analysis that opens up these relations to question and points to important moments where such relations are challenged and disrupted.

An analytics of hospitality risks either *reaffirming* the distinction between guest and host, or *circumscribing* the politics of sanctuary to those practices through which established relations of host and guest are simply reconfigured in some way. Hospitality, we thus contend, does not refuse the power relations embedded in the categories of host and guest, even if it renders the categories themselves more complex through highlighting the play of conditionality and unconditionality that is central to their constitution¹⁰. To address *City of Sanctuary* through the lens of hospitality in this regard is to risk re-inscribing the unequal statist relation of guest and host, which we conceive as both problematic and, in significant ways, misplaced. Indeed, such a move would seem to inadvertently lead us away from understanding the disruptive political potential of *City of Sanctuary* by re-inserting its practices into an uneven topology of the international through which who stands as host and who features as guest is taken for granted. In contrast, we question how far the distinction between ‘guest’ and ‘host’ holds in the localised activities and encounters of *City of Sanctuary* and we express concern regarding the replication of the categories of host and guest, even in their most critical deconstructive intonation. To address *City of*

Sanctuary through the frame of hospitality is, we thus argue, questionable both in terms of empirical precision and political expediency.

Recreating the Politics of the Present

While hospitality features as central to the ‘major’ framing of the activities of *City of Sanctuary*, we want to suggest that a more complex set of activities and encounters are central to its practices; activities and encounters which suggest that those taking sanctuary in Sheffield cannot in any simple way be reduced to the category of ‘guest’ (see Squire 2011b; Squire and Bagelman forthcoming). Indeed, those taking sanctuary in Sheffield have played a central role in shaping the practices of *City of Sanctuary* and the urban environment within which its activities are located, both directly through their involvement with the network as well as indirectly through their presence within a range of urban sites. In order to further explore the political significance of these activities and encounters, we want to consider how those enacting sanctuary through Sheffield’s *City of Sanctuary* network bring to bear histories and geographies of injustice that disrupt the categories of host and guest on which the ‘major’ articulation of the movement as building a ‘culture of hospitality’ rests. What should, we hope, become evident from our analysis is that *City of Sanctuary* does not in any unambiguous way enact a politics of rightful presence, but rather it enacts a politics that pulls between hospitality and rightful presence in terms that we want to prise open in order to highlight the political significance of the latter.

Interconnected Histories and Geographies

Let us first consider how the activities and encounters of *City of Sanctuary* bind time and space together in ways that trouble the ‘hospitable’ framing of relationality and

justice. Specifically, we want to focus here on a museum display in Sheffield's Western Park Museum, which highlights a range of relations between times and places in a way that refuses the bounds of the territorial state and that troubles the categories of 'guest' and 'host'. That Sheffield is not an isolated place is evident in the emphasis of the display on the city's spatial relations and entanglements with a series of other sites. Entitled *Fight for your rights: City of Sanctuary* in the *Sheffield Life and Times* gallery, the display was put together in collaboration with refugees and asylum seekers involved with *City of Sanctuary*, and is described as important in recognising those seeking sanctuary not as 'distinct' but as integral to the formation of Sheffield and its history (telephone interview with curator Clara Morgan 2010). The display included a banner from an anti-deportation campaign in the city, a t-shirt worn on a march against the detention of asylum seekers and an award won by a Burmese refugee for their achievements in a local school. Also among the objects on display was a bracelet, a catapult and a series of necklaces produced in a Karen refugee camp in Thailand as a group of Burmese refugees awaited relocation to the UK.

Whilst this display represents just one activity undertaken by *City of Sanctuary*, it is important for us because of the relationalities that it traces (and non-relationalities that it questions) from today's Sheffield to other places and other times. It is in this sense that the display 'makes present' relationalities both spatially through the objects on display and temporally through the articulation of current struggles in relation to those of the past. In terms of the objects on display, these trace relationalities to other places, people and contexts. Thus the bracelets, necklaces and catapult of the Karen community actively produce a relationality between the presence of Karen refugees in Sheffield and the refugee camps of Thailand from which individuals migrated and

where such artefacts were produced. These objects carry with them particular stories through which practices of human mobility are made present (see Ramsay 2009). Through the placement of such objects alongside those of others produced in relation to Sheffield, the *City of Sanctuary* display highlights the entangled and complex nature of presence, of a drawing together of stories, trajectories and relationalities that can be seen as constitutive of the city itself (Massey 2005; Darling 2009b). In so doing these objects draw attention to the on-going resonance of such relations, and of the injustices that are associated with them. Thus for Ruby, a Karen refugee whose story is told through the display, these artefacts might be seen to trace a relation to those refugees left behind. In the display she states that; '[e]ven though Karen people live comfortably and safely in the UK they will never forget their people who suffer in Burma' (Ruby Zan display board, Western park Museum 2009). While on the one hand this statement reiterates a familiar narrative of the country of origin as 'inhospitable' in contrast to the receiving state, it also entails a politics of remembrance that exposes both the contingencies of sanctuary provision as well as the ongoing geographical inequalities that render its limitations a matter of political significance in the present.

The museum display does not only recreate a politics of the present through its spatial resonances, however, but so also does it do so through temporal resonances that relate injustices across times. This is evident in the way in which the objects on display are articulated in relation to a longer history of political struggles that define Sheffield as a city. In particular, the stories of two people taking sanctuary in Sheffield are told in the form of display board sections on *Sheffield Life and Times*. The notable characteristic of these two cases was that they do not fit the hospitable story of

‘welcome’ that *City of Sanctuary* formally aims to foster¹¹. Rather, both of these cases speak of periods in detention centres, the organisation of campaigns to stall or halt deportation and the presence of committed activists who struggle for the right to sanctuary. This aspect of the display speaks not only to those relationalities that bring together those fighting for Sheffield as a city of sanctuary (whether as those taking or those promoting sanctuary), but so also does it indicate the way in which sanctuary is constituted as a politically contentious presence. Sanctuary is thus made present here as a matter of political struggle. The placement of such presences alongside a history of activism in Sheffield thus implies the interrelational of multiple histories, and might be interpreted as rendering struggles to make presence legitimate equivalent to struggles for rights based on an already-legitimate presence.

The museum display is not the only site through which temporal and spatial relationalities and injustices are exposed in terms that trouble the assumptions of a statist framing of the politics of sanctuary. So also might we consider how injustices that cross time and space are highlighted through the testimonies of those taking sanctuary in Sheffield. An emphasis on testimony has been central to the work of *City of Sanctuary*, such as through the provision of awareness-raising talks to local schools, community groups and businesses. These activities have been articulated as providing a forum for those seeking sanctuary to voice their experiences, and allows those taking sanctuary in the city to make their past and distant struggles present. For example, Rodrigo, a Sudanese refugee living in Sheffield describes how he brings his experiences from Sudan, the Congo and Rwanda to Sheffield through the volunteering opportunities coordinated by *City of Sanctuary*. He states that;

...one of the reasons why I enjoyed volunteering is because I was able to transfer some of my past experience, share it and analyse it within the British community I have received lots of consultation from the organisation I've been volunteering [with]. They've been asking me about my past experience. For example, when I worked for Human Rights ... I have been a refugee in Sudan as a child so I really know what refugees situations are going through. I have been monitoring Sudanese refugees situations in the Congo, in Rwanda ... So I really understand what difficulties refugees in my country go through ... So I was able to transfer my own experience and share it with, with the people here (Interview with Rodrigo 2010).

Rodrigo here describes how he 'makes present' a series of relationalities between Sheffield, Sudan, the Congo and Rwanda through his work with asylum seekers in the city. His experience folds a concern with the particular content and context of refugee politics in Sheffield into a wider concern with refugee situations beyond the city. On the one hand, these experiences can be interpreted as rendering Rodrigo's presence within Sheffield as 'productive'. That is, his experience and skills allow him to contribute to what he describes as the 'British community'. In this sense his visitation might be understood as 'welcome' in terms of the contribution he makes. Nevertheless, to read his statement in this sense alone does not adequately challenge the statist politics of sanctuary to which hospitality is bound¹². Hence, we want to also stress that Rodrigo articulates his presence as rightful in relation to a wider set of entanglements of refugee politics and claims to justice that link Sheffield to distant places through the legitimisation of the movements and resettlements of those taking sanctuary in the city. The presence of those taking sanctuary in Sheffield might thus

be interpreted as linked to injustices that stretch to conflicts and inequalities across distant places on our reading of Rodrigo's statement. In that regard, the assumption of presence would seem to be enacted as rightful in the sense that it cannot be decoupled from injustices and inequalities that give rise to the presence of those taking sanctuary within the city itself.

Exceeding the limits of hospitality

The activities and encounters with which *City of Sanctuary* are involved might be seen as 'making present' a range of geographical disparities and injustices, while at the same time writing these injustices and inequalities into a longer history of political struggle within the city. This might be accounted for by a 'social connection' model of justice (Young 2006; Allen 2008), which offers a means through which to conceptualise presence as rightful by 'making present' and rendering legitimate those relations and claims that are rendered invisible or are conceived of as 'illegitimate' from a statist perspective. In this sense a relational account of justice is brought to bear which demands that the presence of those taking sanctuary in the city be engaged as an expression of interconnection and in/justice (Massey 2006). Nevertheless, the question remains as to how far we can say *City of Sanctuary* develops such an account of relationality and justice in terms that *exceed* the limits of the hospitable. If its practices are articulated through the frame of hospitality, *City of Sanctuary* can hardly be said to challenge a statist politics. It is thus a disruptive element that we detect in the 'minor' politics of *City of Sanctuary* that we want to emphasise as important here rather than the 'major' politics of *City of Sanctuary* as a movement for hospitality.

City of Sanctuary may formally call for an expansion of the remit of hospitality and it may accept the need to be responsive to intertwined histories of injustice, but this in itself does not disrupt a statist account of politics and sanctuary. One could perhaps say that such an intervention remains within the remits of hospitality, entailing an acceptance of related histories and geographies in terms that acknowledge presences that *are not* necessarily accommodated in a hospitable frame at present, but which *may come to be* accommodated once its remit has expanded. On this interpretation, *City of Sanctuary stretches* the limits of the hospitable, but does not exceed its limitations in any disruptive sense. Our analytics of rightful presence, by contrast, aims to focus on a more disruptive *political* dimension in which rightfulness is claimed, demanded or assumed through presence in terms that refuse the statist assumptions embedded within a frame of hospitality. This refusal is important politically, because it entails a contestation of the victimisation or subordination of those who are conventionally defined as ‘refugees’ and is fixed instead to an account of equality (see Rancière 1999; Dikeç 2005)..

In order to make clearer our claim that a hospitality frame is inadequate to our task of drawing out the significance of the ‘minor’ politics of *City of Sanctuary*, we want to now turn to one final example from Sheffield to give more sense of what this disruptive enactment of sanctuary entails. Whilst the speakers events, blogging workshops and school visits noted earlier in the work of *City of Sanctuary* provide an opportunity for those seeking sanctuary to share their experiences and knowledge, it is in the content and exposure of such testimonies as well as the act of giving testimony that we may see the disruptive articulation of rightful presence¹³. Such testimony is evident in the writing of a *City of Sanctuary* blogger named Kenzo, who states that:

The very economic reasons [of] greed and selfish quest of the Westerners which led Britain to support, spearhead and even implement bi-lateral regulations on the illicit, inhuman, malicious, barbaric, trade in humans termed slavery which has degraded, and disenchanting the black race image and her entire mentality [sic]. This race no longer ha[s] what it takes to get organized why? Because the westerners have made it so by labeling it [the] darkcontinent, and reap continuously further into the African soil and all [of] its potentials, imposing a view that Africa is a third World country underdeveloped. Yet the westerner preys on its soil to develop its own land (Kenzo *City of Sanctuary* blog 2009).

Kenzo's statement is interesting for us because it highlights the ways in which the politics of sanctuary invoke a range of interconnected histories and geographies that link directly to questions of justice and injustice. Making present the injustices of slavery, colonialism and exploitation as constitutive dimensions of contemporary Britain, Kenzo poses a strong challenge to those who address sanctuary in separation from the historical and geographical relationalities between the 'host' state and the country of origin. Indeed, he challenges the familiar assumption that the country of origin is 'inhospitable' in contrast to the 'receiving' state, instead pointing to the ways in which those taking sanctuary bring to light fraught histories and geographical disparities that are central to present configurations of sanctuary.

On one reading, the implication of Kenzo's claim that asylum seekers have a right to be here due to the colonisation of their lands would seem to be a reparations argument regarding the need to alleviate colonial injustice. The extent to which this challenges a

statist framing of citizenship is questionable, since it indicates a relation of land ownership and membership of a political community in terms that is intimately bound to statist articulations of citizenship. Indeed, as * and Nielsen (forthcoming: 19) suggest, borders remain hard and fixed from a reparations perspective, with a stable divide between the metropolis and the colony being drawn through claims such as “We are here because you were there”. So, is there another way to read the significance of Kenzo’s statement, one that brings to bear the historical and geographical disparities to which he points while redrawing justice “*on the border*” (* and Nielsen, forthcoming: 19, original emphasis)? From the perspective developed here, this would require an understanding of Kenzo’s statement as implicating struggles that challenge the very limitations of statism along with the different rationalities of power (sovereign and pastoral), that these entail (Squire and Bagelman forthcoming). Rightful presence in this regard speaks to questions of citizenship in a broader sense while at the same time paying attention to the different rationalities of power that constitute contemporary statism (Squire 2011c).

Such a reading might begin by noting that, critically, Kenzo does not focus on contribution here and in this regard his statement can be contrasted to that of Rodrigo, who we quoted above. Kenzo’s presence is not articulated in any straightforward way in terms of the debt of the ‘guest’ or the obligation of the ‘host’, which serves as a feature of hospitality (Derrida 2000; Barnett 2005; Chan 2005). Rather, Kenzo’s assumption of presence might be understood as a political demand; a claim for, or assumption of, rightfulness which rejects a language of contribution in favour of the enactment of justice. Kenzo’s statement in this sense can be conceived of as disruptive in terms of the challenge that it poses to the framing of sanctuary as

hospitality, even if it does not *entirely* exceed a statist frame of reference¹⁴. His testimony assumes a presence, both in its content and through its enactment, which places in question the unequal relations that hospitality invokes. Unlike the ‘major’ articulation of *City of Sanctuary*’s aims, Kenzo’s assertion of rightful presence does not demand the modification or attunement of hospitality: it cannot be addressed as a claim to the expansion of the limits of the hospitable, as many have discussed (see Derrida 2005; Rosello 2001; Dikeç 2002; Darling 2009a). Rather, it may be conceived of as recreating the present in terms that indicate sanctuary as being integral to – yet not entirely exhausted by or reduced to – a statist politics. Enacting rightful presence in this regard entails a ‘minor’ politics of sanctuary that redraws justice at the border by working at the limits of statism.

Enacting Rightful Presence

The notion of rightful presence articulated here does not draw on the work of Hannah Arendt in order to develop a normative theory of justice or in order to address (or redress) failures to enact human rights. Rather, it aims to emphasise the open relation between the political and legal, specifically by drawing attention to the ways in which the enactment and institutionalisation of rights remain in tension with one another. Returning to the question of justice, this brings to bear what Sammadar (2007) calls a structural excess - which might also be conceived of as a constitutive excess - whereby the political subject is constituted through enacting justice against a ‘justice-giving machinery’ (* and Nielsen, forthcoming). Similarly to the account of justice provided by Derrida (2001) in *The Force of Law*, this entails a distinction between the legal or governmental institutionalisation of justice and the ‘excessive’ dimensions of justice that brings political struggle to the fore. Along similar lines, Engin Isin (2009)

also draws inspiration from Arendt's conception of the 'right to have rights' in his theorisation of the ways in which citizenship is both constituted as a regime of domination as well as through acts of emancipation. To speak of rightful presence in this regard might be understood as drawing attention to the tensions and struggles that emerge in the very relation between law and politics.

From the perspective that we develop here, then, rightful presence is not understood as extending a universal theory of liberal justice beyond its current limitations, but rather as pointing to the very limitations of such accounts of justice in their statist formations. Rather than assuming as a starting point for a theory of justice the liberal subject, one might understand our intervention as more attuned to exploring the ways in which such subjects are constituted as such *through* struggle. This reflects an approach that conceives 'the citizen', perhaps the quintessential liberal subject as well as the privileged subject of statist government, as undergoing continuous processes of enactment or re-enactment. Rather than focusing solely on the continuous reconstruction of citizenship, however, our interest is also in the ways in which such constructions are challenged and transformed over time through social and political struggles. It is here that we need a much more careful consideration of the ways in which rightful presence features in the contemporary politics of sanctuary. But what sort of challenge is posed by our findings with regard to *City of Sanctuary*? It is to this open question that we turn in concluding.

Our intervention is not intended as an argument that the activities of *City of Sanctuary* touched upon here bring to bear a radically new politics of sanctuary. Certainly, the analysis in this article indicates that rationalities of sovereign, governmental and

pastoral power re-emerge in newly intertwined ways through *City of Sanctuary*, and that categories of guest and host are frequently replayed in terms that do not entirely exceed the limits of a statist frame of reference. However, what we do want to suggest is that an analytics of rightful presence might provide a better frame than an analytics of hospitality for an analysis that is concerned with highlighting the significance of minor-acts that potentially challenge such categories¹⁵. As we conceive it, an analytics of rightful presence appreciates the significance of interconnected histories and geographies in engaging questions of and claims to justice, and allows us to focus attention on the struggles through which statist accounts of sanctuary and politics are in part constituted. To explore struggles over justice and the claiming or assuming of a ‘right to have rights’ in relation to these concrete histories and geographies, arguably allows us a means to consider how statist distinctions are opened up to question through the act of taking sanctuary. By developing an analysis of *City of Sanctuary* through the lens of rightful presence, our analysis thus suggests that the effectiveness of the movement or network in redressing the asylum ‘crisis’ is ambiguous, but not insignificant. In particular, it is in its facilitation of claims to rightful presence that are neither fully rightful nor entirely present (i.e. not properly sanctioned) that renders *City of Sanctuary* of most significance. Indeed, this perhaps points to the very limitations of rightful presence as an analytical frame, which remains in part bound to statism even as it attempts to expose that which exceeds it. It is thus with caution that we posit an analytics of rightful presence as an alternative to an analytics of hospitality here.

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¹ Our understanding of statism is inspired by the work of James Scott, who might be interpreted as understanding statism not simply in terms of the state as a political or organisational entity, but as a mode of seeing and enacting politics that entails processes of standardisation and categorisation that emerged in relation to the development of the state. This is developed in our wider work in relation to Foucauldian accounts of power, though there is not space to develop it fully here.

² At the time of writing these were Sheffield, Swansea, Oxford, Bristol, Coventry, Leicester, Hull, Huddersfield, Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, Glasgow, Ipswich, Nottingham, Hackney, York, Derby and Lincoln. Plans to establish groups in Manchester and Liverpool were also being discussed.

³ Information accessed at www.cityofsanctuary.org on 1 August 2009.

⁴ This article does not go into detail about the differences between a politics of protection and a politics of hospitality, which are distinct in various ways. Our primary point of critique here is the hospitality literature, since the issue of protection has been engaged critically elsewhere (e.g. Nyers 2006a, 2006b)

⁵ Statism is conceived of here in relation to sovereign power and the territorial state, as a mode of thinking and enacting politics that reflects a struggle to divide people into the categories of 'citizen' and 'noncitizen' and to render 'the state' as a unified territorial space through the containment and/or expulsion of its 'excessive' elements. However, this mode of statism might be understood as reconfigured where sovereign power is intertwined with governmental and pastoral rationalities of power, since the latter bring to bear a series of distinctions along the lines of productivity and care that lie in tension with those associated with sovereign power and the territorial state (even as they become intertwined with them) (Squire 2011c).

⁶ Here the 'risk' of hospitality is that in offering welcome, a host opens a space which may be appropriated by the guest, and this unconditional gesture of welcome is inscribed in the loss of one's space of hosting itself to the demands and desires of one's guest. It is the symbolic resonances of such a risk, Dikeç (2002) argues, that orientates images of asylum as a 'threat' to the nation-state.

⁷ Indeed, a consideration of the history of struggles over the Mexican-US border would seem to be critical for any political analysis of the injustices to which demands for hospitality disruptively speak, yet this aspect is largely lacking from Doty's analysis.

⁸ It seems to us that this approach does not allow for a consideration of how sanctuary practices might be engaged in terms that *exceed* positions of guest and host. Hospitality may open space for the redirection of existing processes of political decision making along different paths (Darling 2009a), but it does little to actively contest the positions and distinctions which lie at the heart of statist politics. With this in mind, we want to pursue an alternative line of thinking by raising the question of whether or not hospitality serves as the most helpful starting point for an analysis of the encounters and activities of *City of Sanctuary*.

⁹ Indeed, the account of rightful presence we propose is centred upon the intersection of those ‘specific historical contexts’ of enactment noted by Friese (2010), with the historical and geographical inequities which bring such contexts into being and the embodied presence of those taking sanctuary within such specific moments of interconnection. Thus, whilst the historicisation of Friese’s analysis may serve as an important extension of discussions on the nature of hospitality, we want to consider how the tensions and struggles that emerge through what we call a relational account of justice challenge the very assumptions on which a hospitable account of sanctuary rest.

¹⁰ An ethic of hospitality might offer a means to push at the boundaries of such categories, to ‘invent the best arrangements’ as Derrida (2005:6) suggests, but such a move lacks a wider *political* resonance in contesting the very terrain on which such ‘arrangements’ are reproduced. Indeed, Friese (2010:335) demonstrates how multiple practices of hospitality may become ‘sites of contestation’ and sites through which ‘various disjunctures become apparent’ in terms of tensions over sovereignty, belonging and rights of democratic participation. The importance attached to hospitality here is in its ability to articulate such contradictions in ‘*specific historical contexts* in which local, national and supranational actors are intertwined’ (Friese 2010:335, original emphasis), as mobility itself is seen to produce the ‘ambiguities of hospitality’. Whilst we agree with Friese that the limits of hospitality might present a historically specific site of antagonism, we also suggest that such a contingent site, when thought from a position of the hospitable, remains wedded to a statist politics.

¹¹ *City of Sanctuary* formally and explicitly distances itself from campaigns such as these, but what this discussion indicates is that its practices are tied in with a broader range of interventions that continuously exceed the ‘major’ or official articulation of the movement.

¹² Statism at the contemporary juncture might be understood in terms of the intertwining of sovereign, governmental and pastoral powers, and in this regard we conceive *City of Sanctuary* to both play into these different rationalities of power as well as providing the conditions for their disruption (Squire 2011c)

¹³ If we view the movement through a governmental lens, as devolving authority to ‘responsible’ communities, however, then it is not difficult to see how we might interpret the activities of *City of Sanctuary* as invoking a governmental rationality, since there exists a strong discourse of ‘good citizenship’ in the emphasis on providing opportunities such as volunteering to those taking sanctuary in the city. Indeed, the way in which this links up to the facilitation of personal testimonies, moreover, potentially brings to bear a mode of governmentality that is less obviously inclusive than it may initially appear. Indeed, there is always a risk that such testimonies invoke governmental-pastoral rationalities in which those seeking sanctuary are divided between responsible and irresponsible subjects or between ‘worthy’ and ‘unworthy’ claimants of care and protection. Our analysis does not question these tendencies and limitations, but rather seeks to do something different in drawing out the more critical potentialities of such practices

¹⁴ We would like to thank Claudia Aradau in particular for pushing us to address this point more explicitly.

¹⁵ There are a range of minor-acts that might be read in such terms, as has been suggested elsewhere (Squire 2011a). Our aim is not to overstate the importance of these ‘minor-acts’, but rather to point to the ways that these might be understood as opening up different ways of thinking and enacting politics, sanctuary and citizenship.