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How to cite:

Czajka, Agnes (2020). Hospitable Democracy: Democracy and Hospitality in Times of Crisis. In: Salomonsen, Jone; Houseman, Michael; Pike, Sarah M and Harvey, Graham eds. Reassembling Democracy: Ritual as Cultural Resource. Bloomsbury Academic.

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Version: Accepted Manuscript

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Hospitable Democracy: Democracy and Hospitality in Times of Crisis
Agnes Czajka

For at least the past three decades social, political and cultural theorists have been diagnosing multiple crises in European societies. The cultural and political crisis generated by the reunification and eastward expansion of Europe (and gradually also the European Union); the financial crisis; the refugee crisis; the rise of populism and the extreme right; and now the fracturing of the European Union have all been invoked and scrutinized as illustrative of a crisis-ridden 21st century, or indeed, a single, polytypic crisis (Czajka and Isyar 2013). This is not to say that 21st century Europe is especially crisis ridden. With the destruction sown by the wars and famines of the 19th and 20th centuries, the 21st seems relatively stable and prosperous, at least in Europe. It is to say that crisis is back on the European agenda, and might seem (at least to us contemporaries, who have not lived through the previous crises) to be of existential proportions.

To the sundry of aforementioned crises many have added the crisis of democracy – either as a cause, consequence, or both. The chapter focuses on this crisis, the contribution that the work of Jacques Derrida can make to its analysis, and the possibilities such analysis opens up for thinking and acting democratically in times of crisis. A considerable number of philosophers, theorists, politicians and policy makers have been diagnosing the hollowing out of democracy or the 'democratic deficit', offering an assortment of solutions (see Ercan and Gagnon 2014; Chou 2015). Others, perhaps less optimistically, have identified a post-democratic or even post-political condition (Crouch 2004). Derrida did none of these, at least not straightforwardly. So why focus on Derrida?

Derrida was not a theorist of democratic crisis, at least not in a way one might expect. His work on democracy has also remained peripheral to the fields of democratic theory and democracy studies, at least in part because he has paid relatively little attention to the rituals traditionally associated with democracy, including constitutions, elections and party politics. Yet democracy and crisis were among Derrida's fundamental concerns, and if he did not say much about a 21st century crisis of democracy it is because, for Derrida, democracy is always and intrinsically in crisis. What is more, it is in crisis not because it is under attack from forces external or foreign to itself, but because it is inherently aporetic and autoimmune, and thus prone to immanent crises and self-destruction. For Derrida, then, the crisis of democracy is fundamentally unresolvable, if by resolvability one means the permanent eradication of crisis.

Yet if this is the case, what are we to do? And is Derrida's contribution all that useful if one considers democracy worth salvaging? Can Derrida's work tell us anything about how to be democratic in times of (permanent) crisis? The aim of this chapter is to suggest that it can, and to illustrate how. Since its point of departure is the crisis of democracy in Europe, the chapter will first attend to Derrida's understanding of Europe, drawing links between his conceptions of Europe, democracy and crisis. The chapter will then offer a more systematic account of Derrida's understanding of democracy, focussing on its aporetic and autoimmune properties. It will conclude by suggesting that the intersection between Derrida's conceptualisations of democracy and hospitality can serve as a resource for thinking and acting through crisis, reflecting specifically on the potential of 'hospitable democracy'.

Europe, Democracy, Crisis

The chapter takes as its point of departure the crisis of democracy in Europe. This is not meant to suggest an intrinsic relationship between Europe and democracy or Europe and crisis, even though Derrida and some of his interlocutors do imply that at times. It is also not to suggest that the crisis of democracy is more acute in Europe than it is elsewhere. It is, however, the context with which I am most familiar, by which I am most directly affected, and thus, which seems to me most urgent at this moment. It is not one that directly preoccupied Derrida, though he did have some to say about Europe and crisis. Almost a quarter of a century ago and occasioned by the 'reunification' or eastward 'expansion' of Europe, Derrida discerned a fundamental crisis in Europe (1992). Perhaps not unexpectedly, he diagnosed the crisis as a crisis of European identity. His understanding of what caused and characterised the crisis, however, was rather more unexpected.

Counterintuitively, Derrida suggested that the crisis was not occasioned by the dilution or absence of a fixed, unified and unifying European identity, but precisely by the search for one. For Derrida, the search for a European 'self' – distinct from and set against, or in relation to a non-European other or others – was the source of the problem, and not its solution. Europe and European identity, Derrida argued, were structured through interminable encounters with others. The interminability of these encounters produced an inherently unfixed and volatile identity, or perhaps more appropriately, a non-identity for Europe. What is more, and perhaps more importantly, Europe did not exist as an object separate from, and standing in relation to the others through, and in opposition to which, it was continually reinventing itself. The 'others' were always already within it. It was 'non-identity to itself, or…the difference within itself' that constituted Europe, perpetually unhinging and reinventing it, and it was this non-identity that Europe had to embrace (Derrida 1992: 9).

For Derrida, Europe's identity, or non-identity, is thus not constituted dialectically or relationally. It is not constituted through a synthesis of antithetical elements into a unified whole, nor in relation to or against external others. Europe (as occident) is not, for instance, simply constituted against or in relation to its oriental 'other'. Like most of Derrida's other concepts or structures, Europe perpetually (re)constitutes itself through itself – with the 'self' in 'itself' always already and interminably an other; a culture of itself as a culture of the other; 'a culture of the double genitive', of difference to itself (Derrida 1992: 10). Derrida's Europe is thus characterised by precarious non-identity: if we continue with the occident-orient example, by the immanent presence of the oriental 'other' in its occidental 'self'. Its unity and identity is thus perpetually deferred through interminable becoming (of something other than 'itself'), through the difference-to-itself that is the constitutive element of this non-identity. '*What is proper to a culture*', writes Derrida of Europe, '*is not to be identical to itself*. Not to not have an identity, but not to be able to identify itself, to be able to say "me" or "we",' at least not with any sense of finality or conviction (Derrida 1992: 9)

Whilst he does not explicitly reference Derrida's treatment of Europe, philosopher Mathias Fritsch points out that, 'the conclusions Derrida reaches in his treatment of diverse moral and political concepts turn out to be rather similar to one another: The concepts are said to be aporetic, that is, beset by inherent, conceptual contradictions' (2011: 440). Derrida's treatment of law and justice, and the rituals of gift-giving, friendship, democracy, sovereignty, forgiveness and hospitality involves the revealing of the 'aproetic structure besetting the concept in question' (Fritch 2011: 441). As Fritsch points out in relation to democracy, and as I explore more systematically elsewhere (Czajka 2017), 'to maintain its

sovereignty, a democratic state must define (that is, circumscribe and limit) its membership and territory, but it must also claim hospitality to singular others, including the members who are declared enemies of democracy' (2011: 442).

A homologous aporia structures both hospitality and its attendant rituals, which Derrida explicitly addresses through the concept of hostipitality (2000). Fritsch summarises the aporia of hospitality as the demand for an unconditional openness to alterity that is inherently and irresolvably in conflict, 'with the need of the host to place conditions on the stranger in order to remain master of the premises and sovereign with regard to its borders, without which there would be no host and hence no hospitality' (2011: 441). Europe, democracy, and indeed, hospitality are thus perpetually and irrevocably in crisis precisely because of their aporetic structure, because of their inherent incongruity with themselves.

Democracy in Crisis

Yet if this is indeed the case, if Europe, democracy and hospitality are inherently aporetic, necessarily and intrinsically embodying their undemocratic and inhospitable 'others', how are we to conceive of, let alone salvage European democracy (or hospitality) in times of crisis? Aren't democracy, hospitality and Europe themselves just ciphers for crisis? What are the implications of this for the concept of hospitable democracy, to which I alluded to in the introduction, and posited as a way through this overdetermined crisis? In characteristic Derrida fashion, but also for good philosophical reasons, Derrida's work does not offer unequivocal answers or straightforward solutions. But it can, I think, be inherited in ways that offer a resource for thinking and acting in and through crisis, democratically and hospitably, without sacrificing democracy and hospitality to their immanent, non-democratic or inhospitable 'others'.

An inheritance is never given, it is always a task. It is a task because it requires work: the work of selection, assemblage, exegesis and interpretation. 'If the readability of a legacy were given', argues Derrida, if it were natural, transparent, univocal, if it did not call for and at the same time defy interpretation, we would never have anything to inherit from it' (Derrida 1994: 67). In this and the subsequent section of the chapter I attempt to inherit Derrida's work on democracy in a way that enables us to posit and explore the concept of hospitable democracy as a way of thinking and acting through the contemporary crisis of democracy in Europe. My primary concern is to experiment with what Derrida has to offer, or what he can be made to offer to thinking democracy in (times of) crisis. In doing so, I hope to lay some of the conceptual groundwork for successive chapters, which explore the role of ritual in enacting what I would like to conceive of as a hospitable democracy.

Derrida explores democracy most directly in *The Politics of Friendship* (1997) and *Rogues* (2005), working from the assumption that democracy is marked by indeterminacy. Democracy, Derrida suggests, has always lacked a 'proper, stable, and unequivocal' meaning (2005: 9). This lack of 'proper meaning, the very meaning of the selfsame' (Derrida 2005: 37) has meant that democracy, more so than any other conceptual construct, marks an 'essence without essence…a concept without concept' (32). That almost every government can call itself a democracy, suggests Derrida, is not just hypocrisy, but a consequence of the structure of democracy itself – 'it has no one model, no one form, for it makes possible many' (Derrida in Haddad 2013: 53). By definition and in 'essence', democracy cannot 'gather itself around the presence of an axial and univocal meaning' (Derrida 2005: 39).

Democracy is thus grounded in, or more appropriately, unmoored by *différance*: by the inherent and permanent difference and deferral of meaning – and so not determined and delineated at all, but rather, indeterminable and uncircumscribable (Czajka 2017: 21).[1] Thus, like most of Derrida's other concepts, democracy is riven with irreparable spatial and temporal difference: it has no essential meaning, its meaning indefinitely deferred. Yet it is also distinct: more noticeably aporetic and volatile, with a fundamental proclivity for autoimmunity, a process Derrida first alludes to in 'Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of "Religion" at the Limit of Reason Alone' (2002: 80) and later revisits in *Rogues* (2005: 81).

The distinctiveness of democracy derives from the fact that 'democracy is the only system in which, in principle, one has or assumes the right to criticize everything publicly, including the idea of democracy, its concept, its history, and its name' (Derrida 2005: 86-7); it is 'the only one that welcomes the possibility of being contested, of contesting itself, of criticizing and indefinitely improving itself' (Derrida in Borradori 2003: 121). It thus demands, more than any other political system or comportment 'the exposure to an open-ended future' (Fritsch 2002: 577). It is this that makes democracy a cipher for crisis, a 'form of society in which men consent to live under the stress of uncertainty', dependent as it is on perpetual self-transgression (Bensaïd 2011: 32).

As Derrida's engagement with democracy suggests, and as Selen Ercan and Jean-Paul Gagnon (2014) write in their introduction to a special issue of *Democratic Theory*, 'there is nothing terribly new about the democratic crisis diagnosis' (Ercan and Gagnon in Chou 2015: 49). In a review of recent work on democratic crisis, which includes that of Ercan and Gagnon, Mark Chou submits that 'democracy is in a state of crisis' but 'that is neither a new nor a bad thing' (Chou 2015: 50). Democracy is a product of unfinished struggles, 'continually renewed, redefined and reinvented' (Chou 2015: 49) or, as Derrida had put it, inherently unstable and indeterminable. Hence, it is always already in crisis. But crisis is not synonymous with failure and democracies should not necessarily be considered 'in trouble' when they are met with, or perhaps more appropriately, 'produce crisis' (Chou 2015: 48). Whilst crises have the potential to hamper or destroy democracies, they also possess the capacity to reinvigorate them (Chou 2015: 48). As Michael Naas, one of Derrida's most important interlocutors has observed, crisis is simultaneously a threat and a chance for democracy (2006).

It could probably be said that much, if not all of Derrida's work is grounded in the exploration of crisis and the conclusion that it is simultaneously a threat and a chance. Fritch's (2011) previously cited work suggesting that autoimmunity functions as infrastructure in Derrida's oeuvre seems a version of this argument. Derrida demonstrates the coexistence of threat and chance through a variety of concepts, autoimmunity and *phármakon* (the Greek word that can imply both poison and cure) among them. As previously mentioned, Derrida first develops the notion of autoimmunity in the essay 'Faith and Knowledge', where he uses the concept to analyse the relationship between religion and science. There, in a

[1] As with most of his other neologisms, *différance*, Derrida suggests, was born of necessity, a response to the inadequacy of the verb *différer* (to differ), which connotes only spatial but not temporal difference. The 'a' in *différance* thus indicates a deferral, 'by means of delay, delegation, reprieve, referral, detour, postponement, reserving', positioning the neologism *différance* at the intersection of the spatial and temporal sense of the verb *différer*, that is, 'to differ' and to 'defer' (Kamuf in Derrida 1985: xii).

footnote to the analysis he offers, Derrida supplies a concise definition of the process of autoimmunity: 'the general logic of auto-immunization', Derrida offers, 'consists for a living organism, as is well known and in short, of protecting itself against its self-protection by destroying its own immune system' (Derrida 2002a: 80, fn. 27). Thus, as I have written elsewhere,

> the logic of autoimmunization outlines a process whereby an immune system, which protects a 'body' from what is foreign, alien and potentially fatal to it (or, in the case of some of the examples offered by Derrida, safeguards the integrity of the 'self' against potential incursions from the world outside), is actually compromised by the body, in a seemingly misguided and counterintuitive attempt to protect itself against its own protection. In an effort to preserve its immunity, it actually compromises it. In an effort to immunize it(self) against that which is alien and other to it, it actually breaches its defences, and allows it in (Czajka 2017: 35)

In exploring the process of autoimmunization, Derrida points to both the threat and the potential it generates. Whilst referring to it as 'terrifying' and 'fatal', he also points to the 'positive virtues of immune-depressants destined to limit the mechanisms of rejection and to facilitate the tolerance of certain organ transplants' (2002a: 80). Thus, whilst an autoimmune response can be threatening, self-destructive, and indeed, suicidal (Derrida 2005: 45), it can also constitute a chance for a body, community, or in our case, democracy, to 'open itself up to and accept something that is not properly its own, to the transplanted organ, the graft, something it might otherwise reject, but which is crucial to its survival' (Naas 2006: 25).

In the case of democracy, autoimmunization can lead to its expansion, to more democracy for more people. As Samir Haddad argues, the exclusion of different groups – women, slaves, non-propertied classes, racialized minorities – from the right to vote was an immunizing move designed to insulate and protect democratic society from those constituted as irrational and dangerous (2013: 60). A struggle for and eventual expansion of the franchise would thus be an iteration of the autoimmune logic of democracy that involves a threat to democracy, and a chance for its expansion and enrichment. It is thus crucial to remember that autoimmunity is not only a threat, but also a chance for democracy. Chance, Derrida argues, is always given as an autoimmune threat; but it is also a 'chance for the incommensurable; it is what gives access to it' (Derrida 2005: 35)

Indeed, if it is democracy that is in question, such openness, as previously suggested, is constitutive of its (non-essential) essence. It is what makes democracy more aporetic, more autoimmune, more prone to crisis than other political systems. In a further iteration of autoimmunization Derrida notes that it,

> consists not only in harming or ruining oneself, indeed in destroying one's own protections, and in doing so oneself, committing suicide or threatening to do so, but, more seriously still, and through this, in threatening the I [*moi*] or the self [*soi*], the ego or the autos, ipseity itself, compromising the immunity of the autos itself: it consists not only in compromising oneself [*s'auto-entamer*] but in compromising the self, the autos – and thus ipseity. It consists not only in committing suicide but in compromising sui- or self-referentiality, the self or sui- of suicide itself. Autoimmunity is more or less suicidal, but, more seriously still, it threatens always to rob suicide itself of its meaning and supposed integrity (Derrida 2005: 45)

Thus, what is of greatest consequence in the autoimmune process is that it compromises the 'I' – the autos, ipseity, self-sameness, self-referentiality, immunity of the self. It is a suicide, or murder of the self (Czajka 2017: 38), which actually reveals the impossibility of self-

identity being 'proper to itself.' This, as I alluded to at the beginning of the chapter in relation to Europe, is not necessarily a problem or concern for Derrida. Rather, attempts at immunization, at fixing, gathering, unifying and stabilizing – in short, attempts to conceal that the self is always already adulterated, compromised, *différant* – are what constitute the more serious threat.

Hospitable Democracy

It would be foolish, not to mention rather un-Derridean, to say that openness is the 'chance' and closure the 'threat'. The nature of *phármakon* is that it is both one and the other. As Michael Naas puts it, 'the opportunity is the threat, and the threat the chance' (2006: 28). Derrida illustrates as much in one of the most commented on examples of autoimmunity he offers: the suspension of the Algerian elections in 1992. As Derrida describes it, and as I explored in greater detail elsewhere (Czajka 2017: 39-40) the 1992 election would have most certainly given power to a majority that described itself as 'essentially Islamic and Islamist', and to whom '[was] attributed the intention, no doubt with good reason, of wanting to change the constitution and abolish the normal functioning of democracy or the very democratization assumed to be in progress' (Derrida 2005: 31). Thus, through perfectly democratic means, Algeria risked ushering in a government intent on destroying democracy. Put differently, democratic elections, one of the quintessential rituals through which democracy attempts to immunize itself against its non-democratic other(s) – monarchy, oligarchy, totalitarianism, and so on – would have actually facilitated the others' arrival. In an attempt to protect itself from this other (that was actually already within 'itself'), democracy turned on itself, weakening its own immune system by suspending one of its core rituals, thus achieving precisely what it had feared, if by self-inflicted means.

Derrida describes the processes and outcome as follows:

> the suspension of the electoral process in Algeria would be, from almost every perspective, typical of all the assaults on democracy in the name of democracy. The Algerian government and a large part, although not a majority, of the Algerian people (as well as people outside Algeria) thought that the electoral process under way would lead democratically to the end of democracy. They thus preferred to put an end to it themselves. They decided in a sovereign fashion to suspend, at least provisionally, democracy for its own good, so as to take care of it, so as to immunize it against a much worse and very likely assault. By definition, the value of this strategy can never be either confirmed or confuted (Derrida 2005: 33)

In an attempt to immunize itself against its non-democratic 'other', Algerian democracy cast aside one of its fundamental and constitutive rituals. In doing so, and in an attempt to stave off its murder, it fell on its sword (Czajka 2017: 41).

Even if we have faithfully followed the twists and turns of Derrida's arguments until now, the above might be a bit difficult to swallow. For many, including Derrida, whilst 'voting is not indeed the whole of democracy...without it and without this form and this accounting of voices, there is no democracy' (Derrida 2002b: 305-6). This means that the ritual of voting must thus be protected, its results sacrosanct. Yet, as Derrida also argued, and many would likewise acknowledge, we must simultaneously,

> take a stand against whoever would not respect…democratic life, a legal state…free speech, the rights of the minority, of political transition, of the plurality of languages, mores and beliefs, etc. We are resolutely opposed – it is a stand we take clearly, with all of its

> consequences – to whoever would pretend to profit from democratic processes without respecting democracy (Derrida 2002b: 305-6).

Thus, with the Algerian election – as with other elections and referenda of the more recent past – we are nowhere if not in the eye of the storm, at the centre of the aporia of democracy, witnessing autoimmunity at work. Acknowledging this, however, does not bring us any closer to knowing how we might act in times of democratic crisis. Killing democracy (to save it) or letting it kill itself (to save it) both seem like bad options if salvaging democracy is what we are after. Suggesting, as Derrida does in *Rouges*, that the value of the strategy adopted in Algeria 'can never be either confirmed or confuted' (2005: 33) is likewise of limited use, if what we are after are resources for thinking and acting through such aporias.

Derrida's work, one might argue, is not the best place to look for such resources. Derrida's work cannot provide us with a programme or even guidance on what decisions and judgements one should make in times of democratic crisis. Aporias are, by definition, unresolvable. What is more, Derrida's oeuvre is premised on the assumption that for a decision to be made, for it to be a decision at all, it must be a product of a moment of undecidability. In that moment everything must remain possible, including 'for the decision to have been otherwise' (Hill 2007: 61). A decision is only possible, 'when it is not possible to know what must be done, when knowledge is not and cannot be determining'. (Derrida 1992: 149) Otherwise, the 'decision' is not, in fact, a decision at all; it is, rather, a mechanical application of a rule, a perfunctory observance of law, a deferral to a programme – 'one knows what has to be done, it's clear, there is no more decision possible; what one has is...an application, a programming' (Derrida 1992: 148).

What I would like to propose, however, is that whilst Derrida's work cannot provide us with a blueprint for how to salvage democracy in times of crisis – nor should we want one, as that itself would sound the death knell of democracy – his work can still provide us with some resources for thinking and acting in times of crisis. Particularly useful, I think, is the intersection between Derrida's work on democracy and hospitality. As I have previously noted, hospitality is among Derrida's aporetic concepts, beset by inherent and unresolvable contradictions. The contradiction at the heart of hospitality is that between its conditional (or limited) and unconditional (or absolute) variety.

Conditional hospitality, as Derrida's concept of hostipitality implies, is always already tinged with a kind of hostility, an imbalance of power between a host and a guest. The host admits the guest into *his* home, where he is, 'master of the household, master of the city, master of the nation, the language or the state', and from where he permits the guest to cross its threshold (Derrida 2000: 6). Opening a door and stepping aside so as to *allow* the guest to enter is always already an illustration of power. Power impregnates all rituals of welcome and gestures of hospitality as they are all liable to withdrawal.

Unconditional or absolute hospitality might likewise be tinged with hostility, though of a different kind. Political theorist Dan Bulley suggests that unconditional hospitality generates an 'even more extreme' hostility, demanding, as it does, that we allow our selves, homes, and indeed, democracies, to be 'persecuted, questioned and occupied' by an other (Bulley 2006: 660). 'How could we not,' Bulley continues, 'feels hostility to, and from, that which has made…our "at-homes" tremble?' (Bulley 2006: 660). Yet absolute hospitality is also an impossibility (welcoming is conditional on the existence of a threshold across which to welcome), though one that must nevertheless remain our ethical horizon.

Hospitality, thus, requires a decision – which, as previously noted, is possible only if it emerges from a moment of undecidability, ceasing to exist if it is pre-scripted in advance – and a negotiation. If, as Derrida argues, 'the two meanings of hospitality remain mutually irreducible,' then, 'it is always in the name of pure and hyperbolic hospitality that it is necessary, in order to render it as effective as possible, to invent the best arrangements [*dispositions*], the least bad conditions, the most just legislation' (Derrida 2005b: 6). A negotiated hospitality must thus consist of 'doing everything to address the other, to accord him, even to ask him his name, while keeping this question from becoming a "condition", a police inquisition, a blacklist or a simple border control. This difference is at once subtle and fundamental' (Derrida 2005b: 7).

Yet what is also crucial is that a negotiated hospitality must remain open to the other, 'only to the point of not destroying [the] host…Once the host's generosity reaches a point where she stands to lose ownership over those premises that permitted her to serve as host in the first place, or otherwise surrender her ability to act as a moral agent, it would no longer be mandated by the idea of hospitality' (Fritsch 2011: 448). What is more, as negotiation is permanent – it means 'no thesis, no position, no theme, no station, no substance, no stability, a perpetual suspension, suspension without rest'(Derrida 2002c: 16) – singular decisions about the lengths and depths of hospitality will have to be made and remade at every instance, in response to every new arrival, every other guest.

It might not seem that all of this has brought us any closer to resolving the dilemma that killing democracy or letting it kill itself seem two equally bad options. But I think we have actually inched closer, not to a resolution, but to a resource for thinking and acting through the permanent crisis of democracy, namely, the kind of negotiated hospitality that Derrida puts forth. Thinking and acting democratically in times of (permanent) crisis requires a (permanently) negotiated and renegotiated hospitality: we must, in every situation, strive for the horizon of unconditional hospitality, whilst ensuring that we do not destroy our (non-ipseic) selves in the process.

Elsewhere, I have suggested that the concept of a 'just democracy' might capture the (everlasting) negotiations and (provisional) decisions that underpin openness to unforeseen others – and thus make us democratic – without sacrificing democracy to non-democratic others (Czajka 2017). I had suggested it because, for Derrida, like absolute hospitality, justice is the (impossible) ethical horizon towards which we must nevertheless orient ourselves. Like hospitality, justice obliges us not only towards our 'fellows' or those who are most 'like us', but us also towards those 'others', those who are least 'like us' – the furthest away, and most unrecognizable (Czajka 2017: 110). Like hospitality, acts of justice must also be singular, both in their comportment and their content, 'must always concern singularity, individuals, irreplaceable groups and lives, unique situations' (Derrida 2002d: 245).

It is for these reasons that I have previously argued that the intersection of justice and democracy (or the construct of 'just democracy') offers a useful resource for working, thinking and acting through one of the fundamental aporias of democracy: the aporia occasioned by democracy's constitutive need for openness to its absolute others. But it might be that the conceptual construct of 'hospitable democracy' is better suited. Hospitality and justice are parasynonymous for Derrida, so in some ways, the distinction between just and hospitable democracy is semantic. But the reflections Derrida and his interlocutors offer on hospitality serve, I think, as clearer resources for acting democratically in times of crisis.

Hospitable democracy, on my reading, enables us to walk the tightrope of openness and closure precisely because it is inherently subject to negotiation. It enables us to acknowledge that among democracy's intrinsic features is its openness (and just comportment) to its others, and to those who are least 'like us'. It compels us to ensure that such openness be preserved, even in times of crisis, and even if such openness presents a threat. In Derrida's reflections on the Algerian election, such threat was palpable: the openness of democracy, and of the democratic process to a non-democratic other is what threatened to destroy Algerian democracy. Yet to paraphrase what Fritsch and Derrida suggested in relation to hospitality and graft it onto the construct of hospitable democracy, hospitable democracy must remain hospitable to the other only to the point of not destroying itself (Fritsch 2011: 448). Thus, it need not be unbounded, nor extended to those whose institutions and programmes fail, in turn, to be hospitable to, and preserve singularity, and instead, presuppose its annihilation. Totalitarianism, fascism, and authoritarianism – the non-democratic others – erase difference, fix meaning, and thus, annihilate singularity. As such, they cannot demand a hospitable response. Hospitable democracy must thus, 'avoid the perverse effects' of an unlimited hospitality and democracy by 'calculat[ing] the risks…but without closing the door on the incalculable, that is, on the future and the foreigner' (Derrida 2005: 6).

Conclusion

That we are living in times of crisis has been the adage of the 21st century. The chapter focussed on the crisis of democracy, and the contribution that Jacques Derrida's work on democracy and hospitality can make to thinking and acting democratically in times of crisis. The chapter took as its point of departure the crisis of democracy is Europe, exploring the relationship between democracy and crisis by attending to Derrida's work on the crisis of Europe. Working through some of Derrida's cardinal concepts – aporia, autoimmunity, non-identity and *différance* – the chapter proceeded to explore Derrida's conceptualisations of democracy and hospitality, and what they might offer to an understanding of the contemporary crisis of democracy. It concluded by suggesting that a conceptual construct of hospitable democracy might offer a useful resource for imagining (and rescuing) democracy in times of crisis.

Given that ritual performances are especially well-suited to disclosing and preserving the aporetic nature of existence, they might well be pivotal to advancing the kind of hospitable democracy I have imagined. To be sure, neither the construct of hospitable democracy nor ritual can offer a cure for democracy's aporetic or autoimmune tendencies, nor for its intrinsic propensity for crisis. They might, however, offer a way through the crisis, empowering us to think, judge and act from within it.

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