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INTRODUCTION

Where ask is have, where seek is find,
Where knock is open wide.
—Christopher Smart

Hospitality happens, even in English courses. But take care. Hospitality here is not necessarily the same as hospitality there.

In March 2013, Rich signed up for a massive open online course (MOOC), mildly hyped by Duke University as English Composition I: Achieving Expertise. The first assignment was to write a 300-word essay called "I Am a Writer." Two days later, before Rich had started that oddly redundant task, he received an even odder e-mail from Denise Comer, the coordinator of the course. It begins,

> Dear Richard H. Haswell,
> I am so very much enjoying reading through the "I am a Writer" posts, and I am learning so much about you as writers and about writing around the world. Thank you for sharing your experiences with writing and for helping to establish a productive class atmosphere by being so supportive and encouraging with your classmates.

This was odd because of the thanks extended to Rich for "sharing" and "helping" and "being so supportive and encouraging"—when he had done none of those things. Odd because of the unexplained switches in referring to the reader: from the singular "Richard H. Haswell," to all the enrollees in the course, then back to the singular. So when Rich first read "you as writers," he had the startling thought that his brand-new teacher was diagnosing him with multiple personalities. Most odd because the teacher claims to be "so very much enjoying reading through" the essays submitted for a course that, at this point, had an enrollment of 67,530.

These rhetorical curiosities can be dissected with tools supplied by current discourse analysis, which has a long history, though a much more modest scholarly enrollment. This book offers a new tool: the practice, history, and theory of hospitality.

What kind of light does hospitality throw on Comer's letter? Obviously, the letter sends familiar signals of welcome. With express warmth and friendliness, it helps two strangers connect, ushering a new guest (Rich) into a sheltering house (the course). It even offers a gift exchange, of sorts, common in traditional hospitality, with the guest "sharing" experiences and the host reciprocating with her expression of enjoyment in receiving them. An understanding of the history of hospitality, however, quickly sees through these rhetorical gestures, which are just trappings of hospitality.

In acts of genuine, traditional hospitality, host and guest—strangers to each other—meet in the flesh, one on one, weaponless hands clasping. Here the meeting is digitized and Comer and Rich have never met and do not know how far apart, in real miles, they are. Comer does not even know they are meeting. The personal hello is a pose. How can you personally greet 67,530 people in a week, much less read through their essays? Also in traditional hospitality, the empathy of the host for the houseless guest is heartfelt. Here Comer knows nothing and therefore feels nothing about Rich or her other enrollees. Rhetorically, she has no recourse but to switch immediately to a mass "you."

Perhaps most telling, in the deep and private exchange that constitutes traditional hospitality, the host never asks the guest for personal information, not even the guest's name. Here, with her first words ("Dear Richard H. Haswell"), Comer reveals that the real host is not her but a computerized program that has remembered Rich's name, including the middle initial, from the instant he signed up. Later, but not much later, the computer will encourage Rich to join the "Signature" track, at a reduced "introductory" price of $39, and to fill out a personal "profile." It is no surprise that Google.com, which survives on personal information for advertising purposes, helped underwrite this Duke MOOC.

Duke's English Composition I: Achieving Expertise betrays other parallels with the ways of traditional hospitality, most of them diabolical inversions. The MOOC allies not with the eighteenth-century code of "knock is open wide" but with the twentieth-century code of what we will call colonial, entertainment, or entrepreneurial hospitality. This is given away by the advertisement tone of Comer's letter, the distinctive mix of fake and effusive ("so very much enjoying reading through"). Historical hospitality has degenerated into "the hospitality trade," where knock is just a prospect to make money. The point is that discursive traditions of hospitality are still alive, occasionally in their age-old form but usually so altered that most people do not recognize the connections. Like

prestidigitation, meaning is conveyed by conventional expectations and then by the absence of them. Sleight of hand turns into slight of hand.

AUTHORING

This book, however, does not explore hospitality just to further discourse analysis. We take up hospitality in its full-bodied sense: as a physical, cultural, ethical act with personal, social, and educational consequences. We open the door to hospitality because, among other functions, it serves as the foundation for the act and activity of authoring and for the teaching of authoring. This is hospitality's major importance for the English profession.

As the central human act that underlies all major components of English studies—composition, literature, linguistics, and creative writing—authoring would seem in no need of explanation. But in fact authoring has plenty of the mysterious about it. In ways similar to hospitality, authoring is an act of legerdemain. Humans pull words, paragraphs, whole essays, hard-nosed speeches, soft-spoken poems, condensed reports, three-volume novels, plagiarized patches, verbalized dreams, all out of a mental hat. Or out of some material cultural semiosphere; the difference doesn't matter. Magical or not, mental or not, social or not, authoring is an act that has to have happened. Suddenly the words are before us, real doves, fluttering around the screen or perched on the page. Automatically, we try to grasp them. Their presence has been begot, godlike, by authoring. How was that trick done?

In a previous book, we invited the English profession to consider authoring as paid authors and student authors actually experience it (Haswell and Haswell 2010). The consideration asked for some rethinking. We argued that two necessary energies of authoring, potentiality and singularity, have been neglected by the field. In the present book we hazard a third energy of authoring, hospitality. Hospitality is a social and ethical relationship not only between host and guest but also between writer and reader or teacher and student. Hospitality initiates acts of authoring, although how well it maintains and completes them is moot (see chapter 9). As an ageless social custom that eases two strangers into deep conversation, hospitality is the necessary companionable gesture to every genuine act of literacy.

So hospitality stands as a beginning point for a serious look at English classroom practice. Alongside the sanctioned trinity of vectors that make up text—context, writer, and audience—we propose a second trinity: potentiality, singularity, and hospitality. Maybe without them the

author's fingers can still gesture, but the dove of discourse will be papier-mâché, without a beating heart.

POTENTIALITY AND SINGULARITY

For readers unfamiliar with our previous book, and there are many, here is a sketch of our take on potentiality and singularity.

Potentiality feeds much of authoring, from motivation to creativity to language itself. Working authors want to keep their potential to keep on writing. They want to wake up tomorrow with their drive to generate original and worthy text still healthy. A writer's potential is not a trick that, once learned, is guaranteed to work in the future. It must be nurtured, sustained, and guarded. It can atrophy and it can disappear forever.

In a word, potentiality is mathemagenic, an activity that serves for future learning. It is a capacity of human language itself, one that allows the continued production and reception of new utterances. It is also a capacity of the human brain to process new information and of human social groups to handle new situations. In English courses, student potential includes, for instance, the desire to keep on reading serious literature after the course is over, or the capability to transfer and adjust writing skills to later writing tasks. Teachers hope and even expect this kind of future for their students, but little in their syllabus is designed to foster or maintain potentiality and some of it, such as assigning pieces of literature beyond the knack or disposition of students to like, works actively against that future. Instruction can be anathemagenic. Technically, potentiality is theoretical because it always depends on the future. You can stop keeping a journal, but your potential for journal keeping may or may not have stopped.

Singularity, by contrast, is a physical fact. Singularity may be the one given that is accepted by the most fields of thought. That each person is unique with a unique personal history, that each moment a person spends at any spot in the world is unique and has never happened before and will never happen again, these are axioms in history, philosophy, brain studies, psychotherapy, physical sciences, political sciences, life-course studies, linguistics, and discourse analysis, among other fields of thought. In matters of language, singularity is a fact that helps nurture potentiality. Authors and readers are kept going by the knowledge that nearly every sentence they write and read is new. Even rereading a piece of discourse is new, because everything has changed since the previous reading—world, reader, purpose for reading, knowledge of the text.

English teachers don't really disbelieve the fact of singularity, but the last forty years have seen them shelve it in favor of nonsingular notions such as linguistic structure, literary period, discourse community, cultural trend, and mass communication. English classes dwell, for instance, on group interpretation, collaborative authorship, and historical, cultural, and ideological suasion. Instructional focus is on the collective and the normative, not on the individual and unique. Over these years, the one most crucial and far-reaching fact of English studies has been neglected, that the huge majority of sentences people write every day—and therefore the huge majority of sentences people read every day—are singular, have never seen light before. And "people" here includes students.

In gist this book starts with the universal fact—call it normative, if you wish—that at any moment any writer has the potential to produce singular text. As the singular reader receives the singular text offered by the singular writer, potentiality will actualize, the dove will appear.

At this point we ask a simple question: What social situations encourage the making and taking of singular texts? A moment's thought reveals that the answer is not simple. Inside the walls of the academy, many instructional situations actively discourage singularity in texts. In reading student essays, literature teachers may be looking for opinions and terminology repeated from their lectures or from the assigned texts, and may be reading so fast that they register a novel opinion as inappropriate. Machine scoring of essay examinations rewards students who use high-frequency topic-relevant words and therefore punish the student who uses singularly chosen words, even if they are relevant to the topic.

Outside the walls of the academy, the degree to which rhetorical situations entertain singular texts varies widely. A "few words" spoken at a wedding reception or a "rousing speech" at a political gathering may be badly received unless packed with common-stock ideas and delivered in a familiar, even hackneyed, style. On the other hand, research articles submitted to professional journals are expected to be sui generis and even multiple submissions are forbidden. It may be that a survey of standard genres would find that in the vast majority of formal discourse contexts, within and outside the academy, singular discourse is expected, from the daily journalistic need for new news items to the instructional need of unplagiarized student papers in English courses. Otherwise the ongoing potentiality of the genres themselves would die.

Still, is there one social situation most hospitable for singularity and potentiality in language use? What other than hospitality itself?

THE USES OF HOSPITALITY

Although *hospitality* is a word that has appeared rarely in English studies during the last forty years, in other fields scores of books have been devoted to it.[1] Devoted to hospitality's traditional practice, that is, which is distinct from offering friends nibbles and drinks before dinner or from selling motorists a room with a king-size bed and wireless Internet access. In the most minimal expression of its time-honored way, hospitality takes place when two strangers, one host and one guest, sit down privately together and, in mutual respect, freely and peacefully exchange gifts for each other's comfort, benefit, or entertainment. Gifts might consist, it is important to note, of information, wit, jokes, poems, or other language offerings. And the act of sitting down together, it is also important to note, may be literal, fictional, or symbolic. Hospitality can start taking place where hand is shaken, greeting exchanged, book opened, syllabus handed out, tutor space broached—any place or time where knock is open wide.

It is important to repeat that we mean hospitality as it is exercised in the traditional way, at sites where a host privately offers shelter, food, entertainment, and information to a stranger, not hospitality in the current sense of lodging travelers for money, wining and dining friends, or missionizing in foreign lands. The attributes of traditional hospitality are not balancing the ledger, evening the social score, or harvesting souls. They are goodwill, generosity, welcome, opening to the other, trust, mutual respect, privacy, talk, ease, gift exchange, elbow room, risk, marginality, social retreat, and embrace of change. Traditional hospitality is the opposite of Goody Two-shoes.

Most people today have stopped inviting total strangers into their house not because they dislike the old ways but because they are afraid. An act of generosity and charity, yes, but traditional hospitality is also an act of courage, transgression, disruption, resistance, or rebellion. And it is always a site for learning. One essential motivation for genuine hospitality—this also will bear repeating—is gaining new experience and new knowledge.

OUR ARGUMENT

We assume that when student and teacher meet—strangers to each other—two singular people of potential meet in some sort of socialized venue. The exchange can take any number of forms—superficial, formal, etiquette centered, business focused. But it can also be hospitable, in the deep traditional sense. Only from this last is learning and literacy

likely to ensue. English teaching can be improved, this book argues, if it occupies various hospitable sites wherein teacher and student enter into complex, interactional, mutually enriching relationships such as reader and writer, student and teacher, host and guest. A reasonable, even self-evident argument, it would seem. Yet despite the fact that many modern thinkers—philosophers, theologians, historians, psychologists, sociologists, educationalists—have explored hospitality as central to human learning, this book's argument runs counter-field and will not be easy. We have taken some care with it.

First, the long history of hospitality needs to be traced (chapter 1, "Modes of Hospitality in History"). In part this is because there are at least three traditions still viable: Homeric, or warrior, hospitality; Judeo-Christian, or biblical, hospitality; and Central and Eastern Asian, or nomadic, hospitality. There are others, but we will focus on these three. The traditions are easily confused because all have undergone severe change with the spread of middle-class values, capitalistic venture, material wealth, military conflict, human population, and transportation technology. Their historical change can be called a debasement since it has largely erased the moral hazards and rewards entailed in the praxis of traditional hospitality. There, when host and guest are unknown to each other, even a passing encounter runs a risk. Yet both are needy: the guest lacking shelter, food, or guidance, the host limited perhaps by ignorance, entrenchment, authority, narrow view, or unfulfilled restlessness.

Modern debasement of the praxis has led to a current age needing to be reminded that hospitality is more than an outmoded social formality, like curtseying or tipping the hat. Hospitality has lasting depth and seriousness—socially, ethically, philosophically, and spiritually (chapter 2, "The Totality of War, the Infinity of Hospitality"). No one knew this better than post–World War II philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (1969), who pointed out that the opposite of hospitality is not incivility but war. War runs on ruse, force, and spectacle, while hospitality requires honesty, free will, and privacy. War loves the ambush and the interrogation cell, absolute opposites to hospitality's open embrace and unforced sanctum. War blocks, demonizes, or destroys the Other, while hospitality spreads arms to the Other in a gesture of acceptance so basic, says Levinas, that it stands as the root of ethical understanding and behavior. Without hospitable openness to others, people are trapped in totality—assumed to be finite, therefore countable, therefore controllable, therefore exploitable, therefore recruitable. This is why war governments and war corporations hate private acts of hospitality and sometimes criminalize them

(see what happens to you if you invite a lonely foreign student to dinner who later is found to be acquainted with someone whom the government thinks might be a terrorist). Totalitarian organizations everywhere know the fundamental truth that people without hospitality are not boors but pawns.

Given the historical trends and philosophical grounds of hospitality, it perhaps comes as no surprise that the present system of higher education, for which students are counted and billed, is profoundly antihospitable. It is a system, however, that teachers can challenge in good faith because traditional hospitality is profoundly pro-learning (chapter 3, "Hospitality in the Classroom"). Generally, three acts of hospitality work in postsecondary classrooms. "Intellectual hospitality" welcomes and makes room for new ideas coming from any direction, including from students, and undercuts the fatal expectation that knowledge transfer is a one-way street from teacher to student. "Transformative hospitality" assumes that both student and teacher will be altered by their meeting, countering the image of teachers as books full of knowledge, available to be opened and read but fixed in time, not a word or comma open to change. "*Ubuntu* hospitality," applicable to student and teacher, reflects the receptive and compassionate state of mind that deep down knows the stranger shares our humanness (*ubuntu* is the native folk ethic that allowed the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission mandate to work). These hospitable acts signal a new set of classroom Rs: risk taking, restlessness, resistance, and retreat.

In sum, traditional hospitality, still with us in many forms, operates as an essential means of authoring, in the way people receive the world, the way writers receive readers, the way readers receive writers, and the way teachers receive students. It entails a wealth of models, enactments, and classrooms. Since it operates by trust rather than force, it can easily be forgotten or perverted. In chapter 4, "Inhospitable Reception: The Critic as Host," we examine a goal central to literature courses: training in literary criticism. Traditional hospitality encodes a reader who mirrors the open pages of the book with something like open arms. Professional literary critics, and sometimes the classrooms that produce them, often ignore that code. They are readers trained more in suspicion than in respect, welcoming new books with notable inhospitality. A fascinating example is the reception of Michael Ondaatje's (1982) *Running in the Family*, a history of his family roots in Sri Lanka. Initially some critics responded negatively. We identify their reception as scholarly colonization, illustrating an inversion well known in the history of contemporary hospitality. The guest-reader wrests control of the text from the

author and assumes the role of host-critic. Initially foreigner and guest, the critic cannibalizes the writer, once native and host. No reciprocal exchange ensues. Imitating a dynamic long familiar to students of first world dominance over third world states, academic scholarship pursues an intellectual imperialism that the knife-edge of ethical hospitality easily dissects. Literary scholarship, once the genteel art of explaining texts, is now a matter of deconstructing, transforming, and "rewriting" them. Can traditional hospitality offer a counter-model of reading that respects the autonomy of both author and critic? Should that counter-model be taught in college English courses?

The dynamics of literary imperialism is perhaps most problematical when English teachers respond to the writings of their own students (chapter 5, "Hospitable Reception: Reading in Student Writing"). Is the "teacher-student relationship," long revered by the profession, compatible with the "writer-reader relationship," long analyzed by the profession? When the literature or composition teacher reads a student's essay, should the teacher function as host or guest? Answers to these questions require a new classification of hospitality, along synchronic rather than diachronic lines. We categorize hospitality as commercial, traditional, or radical. Teacher response to student writing may then be viewed as hospitable trade, hospitable sharing, or hospitable sacrifice. When we consider examples of student texts and possible responses to them, the range of options now available to teacher-readers has disturbing implications. Perhaps the most radical is a reversal of the orthodox pedagogical position that student writers must locate and then follow the demands of their readers. In contrast, hospitality suggests that student writers should write with the expectation that their audience, including their teacher, initially will trust, interpret, and respect what they have to say. Teacher readers, as well as student readers, might entertain as a model what we call "surrendered reading," an act that parallels Jacques Derrida's (2000) "unconditional hospitality." Since surrendered reading of student writing probably lies at the outer critical bourns of most English teachers, we analyze several actual cases of student writing. We conclude the chapter by recommending that literature and composition teachers try a radical—and traditionally hospitable—pedagogy: "risky response."

Radical enough, such instructional acts are perhaps not as disturbing as a classroom fact of which literature and composition teachers may be perfectly unaware. That is the authoring that their students are doing on their own (chapter 6, "Ten Students Reflect on Their Independent Authoring"). With the help of student researcher Rebecca Lyons, we conducted interviews with three graduate students and seven

undergraduates, who spoke about their extracurricular authoring life. At the end of the interviews, we asked three questions. While composing, do the authors envision someone else reading their work? Does that image of a reader affect what they are writing? And do they ever think of themselves as hosting a reader? The answers are unsettling. In their academic writing, these authors write to please the teacher and no one else. In self-sponsored writing, their conscious audience is hardly less narrow. They write for a parent or a friend or, most commonly, for themselves. But they virtually never think of their writing self as a "host" and their readers as "guests." Why not? Has a school-sponsored vision of audience shaped their self-sponsored writing from the beginning? On their "own," do student authors still operate in the academic world wherein the author (as teachers tell them) should write *for* an audience, a world where the writer must give the audience what it wants? With "independent" student authors we may be seeing another way that formal education has spread the debasement of traditional hospitality. But we also see into the opinions of a faction of English students (how large is it?) who are authoring on their own—independent, fractious, enthused with writing, and highly critical of English teachers and the way we teach.

What about authors who are even more independent of schooling—authors now making a living by their words? Are the connections between authoring and hospitality a matter of concern or application among working writers? Paul Scott (1986), author of the Raj Quartet and other novels, provides some remarkable insights into these questions from the writer's point of view (chapter 7, "The Novel as Moral Dialogue"). Most fundamentally, he illustrates how hospitality throws light on a debate that extends back to the classical Greek rhetoricians, the moral relationship between writer and reader. In pondering the colonial encounter between British guest and native host in India, Scott comments on the need for the author's "moral imagination" to ensure hospitable equality between writer and reader. The evidence for his striving to achieve that equality emerges from his arduous draft revisions and his voluminous body of letters.

We have mentioned the dark side of hospitality, the way its mode and morality can so easily be advantaged, compromised, and undermined—corrupted, we would say—into social practices little supportive of traditional hospitality and sometimes greatly harmful to it, practices such as private entertainment, colonialism, or the "hospitality" trade. But even uncorrupted hospitality has its limits. The boundaries are tested in the next two chapters. Where hospitality ends and something else begins is often a personal matter, an offbeat verge about which the coauthors

had better speak for themselves. In chapter 8 ("Outside Hospitality: The Desire to Not Write") Rich narrates a month in his life when the brute realities of his location did not welcome his desire to write. The place offered him a compelling topic to write on, yet in the end gave him a strong motive not to write about it. Perhaps illustrating Giorgio Agamben's insistence that potentiality cannot be true potentiality unless it retains the power "to not be" (1993, 34), Rich never did pursue the topic. The wretched poverty of the provincial town of Ayacucho, Peru, in 1970 may seem remote from the current U.S. English classroom, but the way the harsh conditions of the place overrode any reasonable efforts at hospitality is germane. In fact, the conditions could be called normal. Today traditional hospitality is a tenuous plant—perhaps it has always been—easily and usually trodden into the dirt when any will-o'-the-wisp material good or expedient goal beckons. The situation isn't that *much* lies outside hospitality and its link with authoring and instruction—it's that almost everything does.

In chapter 9 ("Beyond Hospitality: The Desire to Reread"), Jan considers another limit of hospitality and literacy. By its nature, the act of hospitality is fleeting. The singular and parlous engagement of stranger-host and stranger-guest soon wears off or wears away. The longer host and guest engage, the less they are strangers. Even in Near East and African cultures, where hospitality is such a given, the host can ask the guest to leave after a prescribed length of stay, often three days. And what is more ephemeral than a first draft or a first read? Yet, although both are never to be repeated, second drafts and second readings also happen. Chapter 9 asks what readers do after their initial yen to explore worlds, to encounter the Other, is satisfied. How does their desire to read turn into a desire to reread? Reading is, in the words of Peter Brooks (1984), a form of desire *for* meaning and *of* meaning, but Brooks does not consider how long that desire lasts. If that desire is a gift of the author-host to the reader-guest, the form of the gift is not just the text. Rather, the gift must involve the author's need to convey meaning that is dear to him or her—meaning discovered in the act of writing itself. It is true that authors such as Michael Ondaatje and J. R. R. Tolkien, while composing, discover the presence of the singular reader, the stranger-guest who will receive their singular gifts. But the potential of their texts is never fully actualized, and the meaning of their books cannot be found, with only one reading. The gift of desire changes as the relation between reader and writer changes from hospitality to friendship. Rereading outlasts hospitality because the desire of the reader for meaning outlasts it. Yet in the current classroom, "reading assignments" are

almost licenses to steal cheap gifts for someone else, an act of theft that happens only once. Student readers are expected to draw the meaning from the text only once, not to reenact the infinite desire of the author, where the essence of reading lies.

The last two chapters, however, reaffirm hospitality and its permanent effects on literacy. It could be contended that with all these writer-reader and teacher-student relationships, traditional hospitality, outmoded as it is today, functions only as a model or metaphor. This argument does not stand scrutiny, however (chapter 10, "Tropes of Learning Change"). Without doubt, most comparisons used to explain writing or English teaching, such as dancing or traveling, are purely metaphoric, since normally writers and readers, teachers and students, do not dance or travel in books or classrooms, not actually. But although the hospitable gesture—for instance, on the first day of class the teacher reading aloud an essay she wrote as a student—may serve any number of symbolic ends, it also *is* an act of hospitality. Current hospitality functions much like the old sunken paths in many rural areas of Britain appreciated by ecologist Richard Mabey (1990). Formed by centuries of use, and now a familiar metaphor for cultural practices long gone, such as cattle droving, they are still being used. "Because they are alive there is a continuity between what they were and what they are" (95). And their continued use means their continued social and material change. "Habit," says Mabey, "becomes habitat" (96). Or becomes "habitus" in Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) sense of an evolving social structure that "organizes practices as well as the perception of practices" (170).

Wherever it takes place, the hospitable gesture is not an outmoded or isolated act but a living moment in *history* with historical roots and historical ramifications, a material *site* with material allowances and effects, and a cultural *narrative* with expected plot lines. To the degree that hospitable acts of authoring and hospitable acts of teaching share *kairos*, place, and story with acts of traditional hospitality, they are, literally, hospitality in action. English teachers, for instance, hold in common a number of narratives of learning taking place over time. This book argues that these constructions might be improved by integration with narratives of learning assumed by traditional hospitality. The profession, for instance, speaks about growth of student learning and growth of scholarly knowledge in terms of clearing the hurdles, crossing the border, climbing the ladder, marking height on the door frame, or learning the ropes. These tropes all describe the student or scholar learner as winning or succeeding. Students and scholars think they are fulfilling prerequisites, passing tests, developing skills, mastering scholarship,

and getting published. But these narratives, constructed or not, imply that past learning alone counts, or that learning can be formulated and regimented, or that growth is by nature uniform, none of which is true. Hospitality tells stories with very different images of change. They speak of welcoming the stranger, for instance, sudden spiritual conversion, reversal of expertise, dumping of past knowledge. Which narratives are the more useful for the English profession? Which better fit the actual experience of active learners? Which better foster and maintain the singularity and potentiality of students and teachers?

All narratives are also situated, of course. Certain spaces on campus, other than the classroom itself, lend themselves especially well to enactments of hospitality. In English departments some are obvious, like the teacher's office or the tutor carrel in the writing center. But can the ordinary English classroom enact hospitality? Chapter 11 ("The Multiple Common Space Classroom") argues that reconceptualizing institutional space in terms of hospitality is aided by Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben's (1993) notion of *agio* ("ease"), or the space members of a hospitable community provide one another to allow change according to singular personal inclinations. Community elbow room is created and legitimized by hospitality as it has been practiced in most cultures, and is easily adapted to academic spaces. No doubt much of the academic community would look with suspicion on the creation of such spaces, although they involve simple steps toward maintaining and developing the singular potential of everyone involved. But where hospitable multiple common spaces have been constructed, both the physical space and its effect on users have lasted.

ROOM TO LEARN

The chapters in this long essay are founded upon the premise that the book, the text, is a hospitable site where the potential and the singular fuse. The writer begins as host, the reader as guest, the book as the abode where potentiality actuates yet never is used up. "Incommensurable," says Edmond Jabès (1991) in his usual gnomic way, "is the book's hospitality" (100).

In her essay "Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown," thinking of the need of the writer to establish connections with the reader, Virginia Woolf (1988) says, "Both in life and in literature it is necessary to have some means of bridging the gulf between the hostess and her unknown guest on one hand, the writer and his unknown reader on the other." If we take it seriously, that gulf can be daunting. But a good host-writer, Woolf

continues, solves how to get into touch with a guest-reader by "putting before him something which he recognizes, which therefore stimulates his imagination, and makes him willing to co-operate in the far more difficult business of intimacy" (34). The writer finds welcoming ways to pave the reader's entrance into the writer's world.

"It is of the highest importance that this common meeting-place should be reached easily," Woolf (1988, 34) rightfully observes. Most destructive to such a meeting place is the assumption of superiority, whether granted on the part of the reader or demanded on the part of the writer. For the writer-reader hospitality to work, there must be "a close and equal alliance between us" (38).

The hospitality entailed in the "common meeting-place" of author and reader brings us to the doorstep of the English classroom, where exercising hospitality, creating a "multiple common space," will obviously be more than presenting a smiley face and letting students introduce themselves, more than erecting an anteroom to the institution or a halfway house leading to legitimated society. In some ways the hospitable classroom will be unfamiliar and unsettling. It will be opposite and oppositional. It will be a place where teachers and students are less concerned with identification of themselves to each other than with dis-identification, with looking through social identities to the singular Other. Agamben put this transgressive blend of potentiality, singularity, and hospitality as concisely as possible: "What the state cannot tolerate in any way is that the singularities form a community without affirming an identity" (1993, 86). Or in the terms of Levinas (1969), the infinity formed when singular Self meets singular Other in hospitality, thereby forming an ongoing community, challenges the totality imposed when established orthodoxies regulate behavior, thereby affirming a permanent identity.

Travelers with only one horse no longer ride-and-tie the sunken lanes of England and no longer, night befallen, knock at the door of a squatter's house on the common expecting that the owner will freely offer them a place to sleep out of the weather. But some of the habitus of that old hospitality remains and can be used in English courses today. Today giant MOOCs with their pseudo-hospitality have not yet swallowed the traditional English classroom, which remains open to change in an opposite, resistant direction. This extended essay explores some ways that a true hospitable classroom community can be transformed (without resort to magic) through sites such as assigned reading, one-on-one conferencing, interpretation, syllabus, reading journal, topic choice, literacy narrative, writing center, program administration, teacher

training, and many other passing habitations. There are no hotel guar-antees framed on the inside of the doors to these chapters. They merely offer a few potentials, possibilities of change that might make college more of an institution where singular students and singular teachers cre-ate a room to learn with room to learn.

Note
1. In composition studies, for instance, we can locate only four articles: Davis 2001; Heard 2010; Jacobs 2008; Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock 2009. There are a few more if we add the remarkable situated discourse studies of Rosemary Winslow (1996, 1999, 2004). No monograph-length study of hospitality exists in language, literacy, literature, or writing studies.