"Theorizing the House of *Un*welcome: Re-reading Yū Miri's *Furu Hausu* and Jacques Derrida's *De L'Hospitalité*"
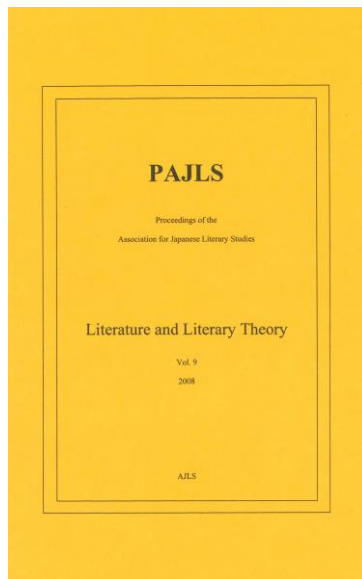
Catherine Ryu

Theorizing the House of *Un*welcome: Re-reading Yū Miri's *Furu Hausu* and Jacques Derrida's *De L'Hospitalité*

Catherine Ryu
Michigan State University

Introduction

This study is a preliminary theoretical rumination on how to read side by side two seemingly unrelated works, *Furu Hausu* (Full House, 1996) by a contemporary *zainichi* writer, Yū Miri, and *De L'Hospitalité* (Of Hospitality, 1997) by Jacques Derrida, who needs no introduction. The main objective of this study is not to undertake a comparative analysis of these cultural productions from two different geopolitical locations, privileging Derrida's philosophical conceptualization of "hospitality" as the guiding light for identifying in *Full House* a set of tropes and themes of hospitality—house, home, master, guest, host, and hostage, to name just a few—that Derrida himself utilizes and analyzes in *Of Hospitality*.

Rather, what I attempt to do is to open up new ways of articulating conceptual resonances and dissonances in these two authors' formulations of the relation between Self and Other refracted through the lens of hospitality, while treating Yū and Derrida as two absolute equals. If my resolute refusal to privilege the intellectual prowess and vision of Derrida over those of Yū, a Korean-Japanese female author who is relatively unknown outside Japan, seems arbitrary and untenable, that is indeed my intended effect. It is because this study is part of a larger project that aims to carry out a double goal: first, to employ my analysis of Yū's novelistic project as a means with which to intervene in the emergent discourse of cosmopolitanism heavily inflected with a Eurocentric conception of hospitality; and second, to un-ghettoize *zainichi* writing within the hegemonic constellation of Japanese national literature by reconceptualizing the existing category of minority literature to which the hermeneutic strategies of reading *zainichi* literature have been tied.

To that end, this study gestures toward recognizing and destabilizing the dominant conceptual barriers that divide the East and the West in the modern critical consciousness, as well as the Japanese Self and the non-Japanese Other within the Japanese cultural imagination.

Whose Hospitality for Whom and by Whom?

Broadly speaking, a number of scholars and critics who engage in the endeavor of dealing with the issues of humanity in universalizing terms—such as human rights, justice, and morality—have consistently drawn their sociopolitical inspiration, theoretical validation, and ethical justification from Derrida's formulation of hospitality, which is in turn based on the Kantian notion of hospitality, as well as on the Levinasian meditation on the relationship

between Self and Other as embedded within the idea of welcome or welcoming.[1] In my estimation, the Eurocentric inflection in Derrida's thinking is made most apparent by a parenthetical remark in *Of Hospitality*:

> Whatever the enigma of this name and the "thing" to which it refers, "Europe" perhaps designates the time and space propitious to this unique event: it was in Europe that the law of universal hospitality received its most radical and probably most formalized definition—for instance in Kant's text, *Perpetual Peace*, a constant point of reference for us and throughout the whole tradition that has carried on.[2]

Derrida's assertion that "it was in Europe that the law of universal hospitality received its most radical and probably most formalized definition" immediately brings up two questions that are pertinent to this study. First, what is the relationship between this law of universal hospitality to which Derrida alludes and his notion of hospitality? And second, what is the stance of Derrida the philosopher vis-à-vis the object of his inquiry that underpins the sense of the uniqueness, and superiority, of Europe implicit in his claim?

By way of answering the first question, I turn to the architectonics of Derrida's conception of hospitality, which is, as he acknowledges himself, derived from the Kantian idea of the law of universal hospitality. In *Perpetual Peace*, written in 1795, Kant advanced an argument for a "cosmopolitan right" by proclaiming the politically and legalistically motivated notion of hospitality as follows:

> Hospitality means the right of a stranger not to be treated as an enemy when he arrives in the land of another. One may refuse to receive him when this can be done without causing his destruction: but, so long as he peacefully occupies his place, one may not treat him with hostility. It is not the right to be a permanent visitor that one may demand. A special beneficent agreement would be needed in order to give an outsider a right to become a fellow inhabitant for a certain length of time. It is only a right of temporary sojourn, a right to associate, which all men have.[3]

Kant's seemingly logical, humanitarian, and utopian vision of cosmopolitanism expressed in this often quoted passage conceals more than it reveals. For example, who is the enunciating subject that can conceptualize and define "the Law of World Citizenship" in such terms? What is this subject's relation to the Other located "in the land of another"? Did colonizing nation-states of eighteenth-century Europe and the colonized non-European peoples draw an equal benefit from this law? For whom, then, was this law of universal hospitality formulated? How would this

---

[1] For Derrida's articulation of his indebtedness to Emmanuel Lévinas in developing his formulation of hospitality, refer to Jacques Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, Pascale-Anne Brandt and Michael Nass trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

[2] Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantell invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, Rachel Bowly trans. (Stanford: Stanford University, 2000), 14.

[3] Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, Lewis White Beck, ed. and trans. (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1957), 20.

law have been articulated differently in a location other than what Derrida identifies as "Europe" in his conceptual geography?

Significantly, in Derrida's *Of Hospitality*, the Kantian idea of universal hospitality is transformed into a meta-theory of hospitality. In the process of this transformation, the Eurocentric perspective that was already apparent in *Perpetual Peace*, a work written in response to the contentious political context of eighteenth-century Europe and its problematic relationships with the rest of the world as the sole colonizing power, has been given further validation in Derrida's highly theoretical, and thus abstract and seemingly universal, discourse.

Specifically, Derrida's formulation of hospitality is comprised of two conceptual pillars—conditional hospitality (i.e., Laws of hospitality, plural) and unconditional hospitality (i.e., the Law of hospitality, singular). Just as the terms themselves suggest, conditional hospitality refers to a hospitable act or gesture proffered to a guest or a visitor who has the right to hospitality because of his or her connection or contract with the host with regard to mutual obligations for past, present, or future interests.

Unconditional hospitality, in contrast, is offered to an absolute Other without any regard to the host's self-interest in the act. This absolute Other can be a person, a creature, or any thing. What renders Derrida's formulation of hospitality unique in the Western intellectual tradition is precisely how he articulates what he identifies as the "perverse" nature of hospitality. According to Derrida, the instant the host becomes aware of the fact that he is offering hospitality to a guest, his awareness undermines the purity of his act as that of unconditional hospitality. At the same time, it is through the tension thus conceived between conditional and unconditional hospitality that Derrida articulates the unique dynamics of hospitality, that is to say, its inherent paradox that manifests itself in the interchangeability between the host and the guest, between the host and the hostage, between hospitality and hostility, and between the foreigner and the non-foreigner, etc.

Since the object of my analysis is the implicit claim of universality in Derrida's theory of hospitality, I will simply bypass the significance of what he himself has presented, and others have recognized, as the crux of his theoretical formulation of hospitality, i.e., the intrinsically "perverse" nature of hospitality itself. I will instead focus on the system of logic through which Derrida generates the relationship between conditional and unconditional hospitality as the manifest effect of the intrinsically paradoxical nature of hospitality. As will be seen, the very source of Derrida's Eurocentricism can be ultimately and specifically located in his own unproblematic relationship to the system of logic that has long buttressed the Western intellectual tradition.

In my reading of his theory, the seeming complexity of Derrida's theory of hospitality is built on the already-agreed upon infallibility of two logical premises, which I would refer to as "the law of exclusion" and "the law of the denial of simultaneity." The law of exclusion concerns an axiomatic truth: "If A is to be true, it must be always true." This axiomatic truth is readily recognizable in Derrida's theoretical language. According to him, if one offers unconditional hospitality, it has to be always one hundred percent unconditional. Otherwise, it is not unconditional hospitality. Since any trace of self-interest or even self-awareness involved in one's offering of hospitality would automatically make it not unconditional, there can be in effect no unconditional hospitality that would be predicated on the existence of the host as the host *per se*, even though it is possible to speak, in theory, of the notion of unconditional hospitality and its impossibility in practice.

The law of the denial of simultaneity pertains to another axiomatic truth: "If A is true, then A- cannot be also true." Accordingly, Derrida theorizes that if one offers conditional

hospitality, one cannot simultaneously offer unconditional hospitality or vice versa. Since all that one can consciously offer is conditional hospitality, and since conditional hospitality cannot be unconditional, it is impossible to offer unconditional hospitality. And yet, it is necessary to posit the possibility of unconditional hospitality, since, without it, it is not possible to speak of conditional hospitality either, for it is defined in relation to unconditional hospitality.

In other words, the difference between the two is not necessarily oppositional or intrinsic to the idea of hospitality itself. The tension Derrida speaks of as being unique to hospitality is in the final analysis already embedded within the structure of logic that he employs to generate the theory of hospitality. The idea of conditionality and unconditionality can be similarly applied to such other notions as love (i.e., conditional and unconditional love) or friendship (i.e., conditional and unconditional friendship). What is, however, crucial to recognize here is that his critical gesture of pairing unconditional and conditional hospitality creates an illusion that he is addressing hospitality in its totality. He offers his theory of hospitality as a complete and exhaustive conceptual picture of the notion, hence its attendant implicit universality.

The epistemological impetus behind Derrida's philosophical enterprise can be seen as the desire for the one absolute truth in the name of rationality and objectivity. His use of logic in this fashion is a manifest effect of what I would term "epistemological anxiety" in the Western intellectual tradition, an anxiety that is palpable in the persistent desire to know all that there is to know with absolute certainty, or, to put it differently, the persistent desire to think that one knows all that there is to be known to the point of generating, and believing in, the illusion of the infallibility and universality of logic.

Put differently, the image of the author emerging from the text *Of Hospitality* is that of Derrida the philosopher, who desires to occupy the position of the all-knowing subject. Even though Derrida the enunciating subject is situated within the Western intellectual system, what he has to say about hospitality bears universal significance from his perspective precisely because he views it as the logical outcome of conceptual deliberation on the notion—a deliberation fueled by the power of rationality. It is therefore his belief in the power of logic that generates a false sense of certainty, giving him a sense of control and authority that he does not in reality possess over how peoples interact individually and collectively in accordance with their respective notions of hospitality, which are actually culturally determined, rather than by what Derrida seems to consider the rationality and universality of his logic.

Despite the seemingly exhaustive consideration of hospitality that Derrida puts forward from all logically possible angles, it is quite telling that his articulation of hospitality is based on a set of limited tropes such as the master, the guest, and the threshold, which are configured in his explanation of unconditional hospitality as follows:

> Absolute hospitality requires that I open my home and that I give not only to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner, etc.) but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I give place to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names.[4]

What is striking about this passage is the repeated emphasis on the "I" as the master of the house. That is to say, even when Derrida speaks of unconditional hospitality as an act of absolute

---

[4] Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 25.

surrender to the unknown Other, it is still based on the unshakeable notion of the "I" who is in complete control over the absolute Other. It is thus the "I" who determines to let the foreigner arrive. It is the "I" who decides to open "my home" to the Other, and it is again the "I" who chooses to give "my place" to the needy.

Moreover, in Derrida's theoretical imagination, the threshold of the house looms large as the sole site of the initial encounter between the host and the guest/foreigner. It is so, because the master has designated the threshold as the only (legal) entry point through which the guest may be allowed to enter. Hence the master guards it most vigilantly, since only through the act of controlling the access point can he gain and exercise his absolute authority over the guest who, from the master's point of view, must wish to enter into his house. Significantly, Derrida does not theorize the possibility that the foreigner/guest may be able to locate different points of entry into the house and enter it without the master's permission. In fact, Derrida's theory of unconditional hospitality, despite its radical gesture of addressing the absolute Other (including anyone, any creature, or even any thing), is not radical enough. He does not even take into consideration a likely scenario in which the master of the house finds himself to have been put into the role of the host unknowingly and unwittingly by uninvited quests (mice that steal into the house would be a plebeian paradigm for this alternative) whose stay in the house has gone undetected, which would only further undermine the master's sense of authority and infuriate him when he belatedly recognized the remainder/reminder (for example, "droppings" in the case of mice) of the unauthorized entry into the house. Put differently, Derrida's theoretical imagination is narrowly confined to the self-deluding desire of the host who wants to maintain his image as the unchallenged master. Other variables—for example, the guest's decision not to enter the house, the visitor's perception of the master, or the foreigner's access to multiple entry points into the place—that could in any way undermine the master's authority are not welcomed in Derrida's house of theory on hospitality.

Not surprisingly then, there is a conceptual parallel between this image of the master of the house who is in complete charge of administering hospitality to the Other and that of Derrida the philosopher who desires to think that he possesses complete control over his own thought process and who assumes the logic he employs to be universal. Thus, the notion of unconditional hospitality with its seeming radicality and unpredictability becomes fully domesticated and safe for the host in Derrida's conception of hospitality. His unquestioned faith in the rational and universal power of Western logic is what facilitates his epistemological enterprise, and it is ultimately this that renders his philosophical meditation on hospitality patently European, rather than his lack of direct access to non-European systems of thought.

Beyond the Essentialized Notion of *Zainichi* Literature

What, if anything, does this discussion of cosmopolitanism and Eurocentricism have to do with the *zainichi* author Yū Miri and her work? In my estimation, critical study of *zainichi* literature can potentially offer models of how to think beyond the Eurocentric perspectives that have dominated and are still dominant in the modern critical imaginary, both in the West and in Japan. What has been termed *zainichi* literature is indeed a fruitful site of theoretical engagement for rethinking the epistemological framework that has engendered the very genre of *zainichi* literature. In particular, the figure of the *zainichi* female author, shaped by its doubly marginalized position due to gender and ethnicity, marks a theoretical nodal point through which to reassess and challenge the received notions of subjectivity, nation-state, national identity, and

language in hegemonic critical discourses. Such endeavors, when taken to the fullest extent, can lead to problematizing the Japanese critical and epistemological apparatuses that have been derived from European perspectives to address the issues pertaining to the nation state and nation-building.

A new approach to *zainichi* literature needs to begin with a reassessment of *the raison d'être* of the genre itself. As long as *zainichi* literature is defined solely by its relation to Japanese national literature, that is to say, in terms of a relation between a minor literature and a major literature, the existing hierarchical relationship remains unaltered, even when *zainichi* writers are periodically selected as the recipients of coveted literary awards, as in the case of Yū Miri, the recipient of numerous prestigious awards, and even when their writings are widely read by the Japanese public beyond the confines of the *zainichi* community. When a work or author is identified specifically as *zainichi*, the label *zainichi* delimits the conceptual parameters for interpreting the work and the author under consideration, even though the author may consciously write against or beyond the received notion of *zainichi*-ness.

In conceptualizing a way out of this critical impasse, I find productive the emergent notion of the "Literature of Migrants" in the context of Global Studies—a new critical orientation that is related, but not identical to, the discourse of cosmopolitanism or of globalization. In my view, the global opens up a new critical space for generating counter-discourses against Western hegemony in all aspects of the modern and contemporary world, unlike the discourse of cosmopolitanism that veils its Eurocentric perspectives in its universalist claims.

The Literature of Migrants marks a radical departure from the conventional paradigm of national literature, which includes as its corollary a category of minority literature to accommodate a body of works created by a minority group within a certain nation-state. As Rebecca L. Walkowits points out, the differentiation between a minor literature and a major literature is based on the movement of the author under consideration.[5] If a Korean settles in Japan and writes a book, for example, it is by default relegated to the realm of a minor literature. Migrant Literature, in contrast, focuses on the movement of publications. In today's global context, a novel, for instance, can be simultaneously produced and circulated in different regions of the world, or in different literary systems. The Literature of Migrants thus privileges the final site of consumption rather than the original site of production. This shift from author to publication also generates a new understanding that the import of a particular work is not necessarily tied to the original site of production. Rather, it is thought to vary depending on the cultural environment of its consumption site. Moreover, a literary product, whether consumed in its original language or in translation, is expected to alter the literary system in which it is circulated. Furthermore, such movements and consumption of publications not only transform the hosting literary system, but also the ways in which different literary systems interact with one another on a global scale.

This newly conceived notion of Migrant Literature enables me to conceptualize a paradigm that can effectively address the historical and cultural situatedness of *zainichi* literature without binding the import of *zainichi* literature solely to its particular historical and geopolitical location of origin. For example, a *zainichi* author's writing does not always have to be interpreted against the problematic relationship between Korea and Japan, or as an expression of the oscillations between Korean and Japanese identities that *zainichi* people are assumed to

---

[5] Rebecca Walkowitz, "The Location of Literature: The Transnational Book and the Migrant Writer," *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 47, no. 4 (2006), 527-35.

experience, or as a minor literature that functions as the necessary Other to define what Japanese national literature is. Similarly, even a novel written by a Japanese author can be regarded as an example of Migrant Literature when it is circulated and read in a different literary system. In fact, if we were to extend the definition of the Literature of Migrants to include theoretical writings as well, even Derrida's *Of Hospitality* may be viewed as an instance of Migrant Literature when it is translated and consumed in a different literary system, as is the case in this study.

The main objective of this study is then to read Yū Miri's *Full House* side by side with *Of Hospitality* so as to delineate and articulate what kind of intellectual alchemy can potentially occur in the global discourse when products from different literary systems are circulated and consumed in unexpected ways, detached as they are from their original sites of production and from their original languages. This kind of critical endeavor is needed, I posit, to begin to imagine and to construct a new conceptual path that will allow a richer circulation of ideas from multiple centers of knowledge, thereby relativizing the import of the European system of thought simply as one of the many intellectual traditions that have been developed throughout the history of human civilization and across the globe.

A Taste of Yū Miri's *Full House*

Under the current interpretive regime, Yū Miri's *zainichi* identity effects a set of limited interpretative possibilities for her literary productions such as *Full House*. In this novel, the father of the narrator has built a luxury mansion as bait to lure back scattered family members—his estranged wife, two daughters, and a son—to live together once again under the same roof. To his chagrin, however, he utterly fails to achieve his goal. At the end of the novel, the family remains fragmented, and the house itself burns down due to a fire caused by the daughter of the father's surrogate family, complete strangers whom he found living at a train station and subsequently invited to live in his house when bereft of his own family members.

On the one hand, even though the ethnic identity of this family is never directly mentioned within the novel, the father's profession as the manager of a pachinko parlor, which is often understood as a business managed largely by Koreans, and the close resemblance between this fictional family and Yū Miri's well-publicized family stories, render the saga of this dysfunctional family an expression of *zainichi* Koreans' stunted subjectivity due to Japanese society's legal discrimination against and social marginalization of this ethnic minority.

On the other hand, since no direct allusions are made to the ethnic origin of the family or to conflicts stemming from it, this omission can be interpreted as an index of the family's successful assimilation into Japanese society. They do not exhibit any readily recognizable markers of Korean-ness or *zainichi*-ness in terms of their culinary, linguistic, or sartorial habits. In fact, *Full House* is widely appreciated as this second-generation *zainichi* woman writer's portrayal of a dysfunctional family in contemporary Japanese society in general. In other words, both the absence and the presence of readily identifiable *zainichi* markers within the novel serve as keys to the interpretation of this work. Once the novel is fully explored from these two predetermined angles, nothing more can be said in a meaningful way about the novel specifically as a piece of *zainichi* writing.

But when we read this novel alongside Jacques Derrida's *Of Hospitality*, the horizon of interpretation widens and in an unexpected direction. In this new context, such tropes and themes as house, home, master, guest, host, hostage, family, violence, incest, destruction, death,

memory, deception, and truth—the very ingredients and manifestations of the fictional family's dysfunctionality—gain a new symbolic valence as the constituents of the author's novelistic meditation on the relation between Self and Other, similar to the way in which the same tropes and themes are used as the building blocks of Derrida's philosophical construction of the relation between Self and Other in *Of Hospitality*.

Yet the starting points of Derrida's and Yū's reflections on Self and Other differ dramatically. Derrida probes into the nature of hospitality with "the question of the foreigner,"[6] hence from the perspective of the host as it pertains to the existing discourse on politics, laws, and ethics. The critical space of *Of Hospitality* is thus inhabited by the figure of the host burdened with issues including legality, obligations, territoriality, asylum, refuge, violence, identity, hostage, war, migrants, and so forth. In other words, Derrida's theoretical inquiry starts not only from the perspective of the host but with practices of hospitality that are already fraught with controversy and contention. Then, by complicating the notion of hospitality itself through his theoretical elaboration of conditionality and unconditionality, Derrida renders (unconditional) hospitality an untenable gesture, which would carry serious moral and political implications when translated into the practices of hospitality in the contemporary world. Ultimately, his philosophical meditation on the relation between Self and Other remains pertinent only to the narcissistic perception of the Self/host, because the Other/guest does not enter into his theoretical rumination as an equally valid component of the equation.

Yū Miri's novelistic meditation on the relation between Self and Other, too, employs the host-guest paradigm, but her inquiry is located in an entirely different arena—the family. By superimposing the host-guest paradigm on the most elemental human relationship, that is that between parent and child, which has long been sanctified and thus remains outside the very distinction of host and guest, Yū depicts in *Full House* more than the family's failure to function as a well-integrated social and psychological entity. By taking a family whose dysfunctionality is already far beyond repair as the very object of her novelistic study, Yū probes into the nature of the elemental human desire that sustains the relation between Self and Other even beyond its seeming disintegration and failure.

The opening passages of Yū Miri's *Full House* capture what I would term "the threshold moment" on various levels. It is the moment when Father physically stands at the door and formally welcomes his two reluctant daughters/guests into the mansion that he has newly built but does not yet own (the bank has not given him the master key to the main entrance). This is also the initial moment when the reader is ushered into this family's troubled history. Moreover, it is the first moment when the reader steps into the author's house of meditation on the relation between Self and Other, experiencing its unique make-up and ambience:

> The door opened with what sounded like a groan.
> "Well now. Come in." Father's smile, harboring a secret, floated up from the darkness of the house.
> Behind him stood a shoe cabinet, and on top of it I could see an Ainu woodcarving in the shape of a man, nearly three feet tall. Right next to it was another piece, a bear clenching a salmon in its teeth. Between the cabinet and the wall a brand new bamboo sword was propped up.

---

[6] The first chapter of *Of Hospitality* is in fact entitled "Foreigner Question: Coming from Abroad/ From the Foreigner." Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 3.

My younger sister Yoko and I stepped into the entrance. The smell of new paint hung heavily in the air and I gasped for breath. Before I knew it, the stench had invaded my mouth, quickly spreading itself over my teeth and tongue. It seemed that no one had opened the shutters, not even once, since the house was completed. I coughed violently, and Yoko took a handkerchief out of her pocket and covered her nose.

Why had Father made us wait out front while he went in the back door? Did he want to play Master of the House, giving his family a formal welcome to this brand new home he had built? Twenty years ago, immediately after we had moved to the Nishi district in Yokohama, he ended up purchasing this 10,000 square foot plot. He had fallen victim to Mother's sly plans. Ever since then, "I'll build a house on the lot" had become his mantra. After she left the house, abandoning the family, (it was sixteen years ago,) my sister and I found ourselves having to hear day in and day out his plan to build a house. But then, after last spring his clumsily penciled plans began to take on something of an air of reality. Even so, we didn't take him all that seriously. However, recently, about a month ago, to our utter astonishment, he had finished the house. I suddenly felt a kind of vague sympathy for him as I imagined the lone figure he must have cut as he stood by himself at the building ceremony with his face lowered in prayer.[7]

This passage is rich in many ways, but what makes it most relevant to this study is how Yū Miri's conceptualization of the relation between Self and Other differs greatly from that of Derrida. Yū's employment of the self-reflective and empathic eldest daughter of the family as the first-person narrator-cum-unwilling-guest in her father's house transforms the very nature of the relationship between host and guest, and, by extension, the relationship between Self and Other as imagined by Derrida.

The point here, however, is not merely that Yū's formulation of the host-guest paradigm is an inversion of Derrida's, thereby privileging the guest over the host. That would not alter the core of Derrida's conception of hospitality as a hierarchically determined relation. The most crucial difference here is that all of the characters in Yū's novel are depicted with some form of limitation. For example, no matter how empathic this daughter is, her perception of the Other (be it her father or her other family members), is limited by the nature of her role as the first-person narrator who has no direct access to the interiority of others, even though her perception is by definition most privileged. Similarly, Father does not possess full authority to control the terms of negotiation with his grown-up and wage-earning children, who have dwellings of their own. His role as the patriarch/host is further undermined not only by his personal vices and weaknesses (e.g., his addiction to gambling, his passion for collecting used goods, his emasculation vis-à-vis his wife's lover, etc.), but also by the rest of the family's keen awareness of them. Moreover, Father's lack of power is symbolically mirrored and reinforced by his lack both of direct narratorial voice and of control over his textual representation, the latter of which is determined by his daughter, the narrator.

In fact, by employing Father's newly built mansion not only as a fresh physical site of forced interactions between the family members but also as a new target of their emotional discharge and an unexpected medium of the family's exorcism, Yū forges a creative way of

---

[7] Yū Miri, *Furu Hausu* (Tokyo: Bungei shunjū, 1996), 7. Translated by Melissa Wender with modifications by Catherine Ryu.

sustaining a relationship between family members who are deficient, fragile, insecure, and stunted in one way or another. This in turn renders the negotiations that take place between them all the more powerful, stunning, and poignant. Although Father does not succeed in bringing the family together as he has wished, his desire is clearly conveyed to and understood by his children and is, to a limited extent, fulfilled. Similarly, the narrator is able to find, through her reluctant participation in the father's ritual of "performing a family" (which includes even surrogate family members literally taken in from the street), a way to integrate her former self (a victim of her father's crime of incest) into her own sense of who she is now, as well as to relate, to a limited degree, to her father, whom she could now as an adult have easily ignored and completely rejected.

In short, when we read *Full House* and *Of Hospitality* side by side, the former emerges not merely as a portrayal of a dysfunctional family but as an emblem of human relatedness, that is, a relation between Self and Other. Unlike Derrida, Yū explores the intrinsic nature of this relation not through the abstract theory of unconditional and conditional hospitality from the position of the omniscient narrator and all-seeing philosopher, but through the family's dysfuctionality as an embodiment of the intrinsic human condition, complete with imperfections, blindness, fragility, and failures, as well as with desires, aspirations, and achievements, both big and small. As such, *Full House* makes a meaningful contribution to the ongoing critical and creative effort to newly conceptualize and represent the relation between Self and Other.

Conclusion

As I have only begun to suggest in this study, Yū's novelistic meditation on the relationship between Self and Other through her construction of a fictional family in twentieth-century Japan potentially opens a window onto a new conceptual vista wholly unexplored by Jacques Derrida in his writing of *Of Hospitality*. By analyzing Derrida's *Of Hospitality* and Yū's *Full House* as cultural narratives on the relationship between Self and Other that are articulated not only in two different geopolitical locations but also each with a different kind of epistemological and philosophical orientation, it is possible, I argue, to formulate a new critical approach that can address such issues as how to traverse the conceptual boundaries that characterize the maintenance of the hierarchy between West and East, even in increasingly globalized scholarship, and between national literature and *zainichi* literature in the field of Japanese literary scholarship. This kind of critical endeavor is in effect another important way of attempting to imagine and construct a new way of conceptualizing the relation between Self and Other.