

Abstract: The article focuses on Derrida's revision of Kant's concept of perpetual peace with intention is to elaborate on the way deconstruction subversively bridges binary oppositions. When deconstructed, Kantian duty obliges all people to peace, hospitality and friendship but, simultaneously, contains and displaces traces of past wars, hostility and enmity. I propose to follow Derrida's work to reframe and interconnect these binary oppositions by the promise of forgiveness. I argue that, in the ethics deconstruction, it is not the universal moral maxim, but the ongoing effort to forgive the unforgettable wrongdoings of the past that should be considered "perpetual". I conclude by demonstrating that it is the ongoing performing of rituals of hospitality and forgiveness that defers war and maintains peaceful relations.

Keywords: Forgiveness, Hospitality, Immanuel Kant, Jacques Derrida, Ornament, Peace

I. Introduction: Two Ornaments of Peace

Kant's concept of perpetual peace formulates the transcendently conditioned moral maxim of human behavior. His vision of peace, which introduces the rule of hospitality in the cosmopolite world, is based on the universal duty to forgive the injustices committed in the past. But, can such a duty be fulfilled? Is human behavior capable to fulfill this duty of forgiveness?

I propose to answer these questions through my revision¹ of Jacques Derrida's works dedicated to Kant's conception of perpetual peace as

¹ As Peter Kyslan briefly notes, Derrida operates a shift from Kant's account of peace because he finds Kant's hospitality „unhospitable“. While Kyslan does not explain Derrida's reasons, my present work continues this investigation with intention to bring a more detailed insight in the given topic. See Kyslan, P., 2022. *Od kultúry I. Kanta ku kultúram J. G. Herdera*. Bratislava: SFZ pri SAV, p. 199. Personal translation.

the opposite of war. While Kant's concept of peace is justified as a universal right and *duty* of humanity, Derrida suggests reconsidering this concept in terms of a precarious *promise*. To explain this shift in the bias of his ethical thinking, I will elaborate on the way deconstruction subversively bridges binary oppositions. When deconstructed, Kantian duty obliges all people to peace, hospitality and friendship but, simultaneously, contains and displaces traces of past wars, hostility and enmity. In Derrida's view, Kantian peace is an imaginary peace-to-come, a promise of a possible improvement of human coexistence in universal openness to otherness. As a promise, peace does not actually exist anywhere and cannot be simply implemented in the real world. As a moral maxim, it cannot be totally present in human behavior. However, precisely because of its expected potential presence, it is necessary opting for peace, tending to it, searching for it. Any declaration of total presence of peace on Earth would be totalitarian as it would abandon the promise to improve human sense of hospitality.

I will follow Derrida's work to interconnect these binary oppositions by the promise of forgiveness, which defers war and maintains peaceful relations by their constant renewal. I argue that, in ethics inspired by deconstruction, it is not the universal moral maxim that should be considered "perpetual", it is the ongoing effort to forgive the unforgettable wrongdoings of the past that should be considered.

To elaborate on this problem, I suggest to grasp the repetitive practices encouraging a specific arrangement of ritual behaviour by the concept of *ornament*. More specifically, I propose to name *ethical ornament of peace* a specific peace-making ritual behaviour framed by an ethically justified order of repetition. The ethical ornament of perpetual peace, inspired by Kant, is framed by the moral duty to repeat peace-making acts of forgiveness and hospitality according to the rational morality of law. By contrast, the ethical ornament of ongoing peace, inspired by Derrida, is framed by a "quasi-ethical"² promise to iterate peace-making performative acts of forgiveness and hospitality, while accepting their eventually failing, uncertain outcomes.

The goal of my reflexion is to explain and justify Derrida's move from Kant's transcendental order of peace to his deconstructive order

² Derrida explains the ethical position of deconstruction as quasi-ethical in the sense of an "ethics beyond ethics" that invites to accept the different without condition, without law, without economy, and without calculation. See Derrida, J., 2000 *Le siècle et le pardon*. Entretien avec Michel Wieviorka. In: Derrida, J. *Voit et savoir*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, pp. 110 – 111. Personal translation.

of peace. In both cases, the ethical ornament of peace is framed by an ethico-political conceptual bias. Comparison of their different philosophical framings of ethical ornaments of peace will reveal the difference in Kant's and in Derrida's theoretical goals. And yet, as I aim to demonstrate, they partially intertwine.

II. Kant's Duty of Peace

In his essay *Toward Perpetual Peace*,³ Immanuel Kant designs the “perpetual peace” as an ideal state of possible cosmopolitan cohabitation of human beings on Earth. Justified by the emancipation of human reason that comes to maturity in the era of the Enlightenment,⁴ Kant's moral conception of humanity obliges all people living on Earth to offer and share their hospitality and friendship. This moral understanding of human identity allows Kant to see every human being as a rightful citizen of the globe. As Sandra Zákutná puts it, “Kant considered the state of mind of a man, who is aware of being citizen of a nation and member of a society of global citizens, to be the most noble idea that a man can have as a goal; a goal that will direct humanity toward the state of perpetual peace and just society”.⁵ In Kant's view, this moral vow is broken in a state of war. As a politically imposed situation of hostility and enmity, war divides humanity. It introduces an unbridgeable opposition between two sets of human beings – the “friends” and the “enemies”.

To avoid such a breaking of the cosmopolitan vow of peaceful human existence, Kant formulates several anti-war conditions for maintaining the situation of perpetual peace. In his third preliminary article, he indicates that, to make the perpetual peace possible, “Standing armies (miles perpetuus) shall gradually be abolished entirely”.⁶ And, in the sixth preliminary article, he add that

³ Kant, I., 2006. *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*. In: Kant, I. *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, trans. David L. Colclasure. New Haven: Yale University, pp. 67 – 109.

⁴ As Kant puts it, “Enlightenment is the human being's emancipation from its self-incurred immaturity.” Kant, I., 2006. *An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?*. In: Kant, I. *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, trans. David L. Colclasure. New Haven: Yale University, p. 17.

⁵ Zákutná, S., 2020. Na úvod. Reflexie Kanta v 20. storočí. *Studia Philosophica Kantiana*, 9(2), p. 11. Personal translation.

⁶ Kant, I., 2006. *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*, *ibid.*, p. 69.

No state shall allow itself such hostilities in wartime as would make mutual trust in a future period of peace impossible. Such acts would include the employment of assassins (*percussores*), poisoners (*venefici*), breach of surrender, incitement of treason (*perduellio*) within the enemy state, etc.⁷

Both of these conditions of perpetual peace presuppose universal human trust based on universal human forgiveness of atrocities and crimes committed in previous wars. Kant rightfully supposes that humanity cannot be at peace while holding grudges from the past. It is therefore necessary to forgive all the previous injustices, sufferings, and wounds. Based on this cosmopolitan moral *duty* to forgive past wrongdoings, Kant's forgiveness is presented as an inevitable condition for "perpetual peace".

At the same time, however, Kant delimits his universal appeal for human trust and hospitality by sovereignty of the local rules of hospitality. While every citizen of the globe has the right to visit other states and benefit from his hosts' hospitality, this hospitality is limited in time because it means a right to visit, not a right to stay. Kant's hospitality is also conditioned by its conventional reciprocity, by foreigner's willingness to return the service. And, finally, it can be calculated by the proportionate amount of respect the foreigner shows to the local laws. A rude, unrespectful foreigner may be denied access or expelled. To be welcomed peacefully, one must attempt a friendly interaction "with the old inhabitants".⁸ Kant's right of universal hospitality means a right of foreign arrivals, which are, according to local laws, not seen as arrivals of enemies.

Michel Rosenfeld notes that

Kant's own moral theory internalizes the Enlightenment's commitment to freedom and equality for all and prescribes its realization at the highest levels of abstraction, thus setting a counterfactual ideal rather than providing moral principles susceptible of implementation through law and politics. Specifically, Kant proposes universally applicable moral norms that are self-imposed.⁹

By commenting on Kant's moral theory, Rosenfeld proposes to move from the Kantian ethical perspective of identity to the Derridean ethical perspective of difference. I propose to follow Rosenfeld's path. What

⁷ Ibid., p. 70.

⁸ Ibid., p. 82.

⁹ Rosenfeld, M., 2008. Derrida's Ethical Turn: The Case of Terrorism. In: Goodrich, P. – Hoffmann, F. – Rosenfeld, M. – Vismann, C., eds. *Derrida and Legal Philosophy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 86.

Derrida's reading of Kant shows is that, just like peace, compassion for otherness can be neither perpetually nor universally imposed. It is not a law that could be enforced. One cannot forgive on command, one can only promise to try. Therefore, as Rosenfeld claims, "a deconstructive ethics of difference cannot yield an unequivocal and categorical condemnation of global terrorism".¹⁰ If it cannot categorically condemn human terror and war, it is because of the radical singularity that precludes establishing a common intersubjective criterion to assess conflicting claims issuing from different perspectives and from the uncertain willingness to forgive. Contrary to Rosenfeld, however, I would not say that Derrida's deconstruction abandons the transcendental idea of perpetual peace. I argue that Derrida's thinking opens a new ethical path toward it.

III. Derrida's Promise of Peace

Since the beginning of the 1990s, recurrent inquiries of deconstruction have revolved around phenomena or concepts such as promise, testimony, responsibility, gift, justice, hospitality, and friendship. In his essay *Force of Law*,¹¹ Derrida operated on an ethical transition from the undecidability to the undeconstructibility. From now on, he defines justice not in terms of right, but in terms of promise, which conditions the ethical possibility of thinking the law. As Petra Gehring puts it, ethics finally becomes a topic for deconstruction,

Force de loi is surprising for the vehemence with which deconstruction takes hold of law. The text has a tone of distinct identification. It seems that whereas on the one hand Derrida 'deconstructs' legal discourse, that is, decodes the law with respect to what remains unthought, he simultaneously affirms the model of law; it may even be that he adopts it as a certain broken form of the justice of law, as a paradigm of deconstruction itself.¹²

What Gehring emphasizes is is that, in *Force of Law*,¹³ Derrida defines deconstruction as an aporetic domain of thinking, which is situated in the *interval* between law and justice. For Derrida, the law is an estab-

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 86.

¹¹ Derrida, J., 1992. *Force of Law*. In: Cornell, D. – Rosenfeld, M. – Gray Carlson, D., eds. *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*. New York: Routledge.

¹² Gehring, P., 2008. The Jurisprudence of the "Force of Law". In: Goodrich, P. – Hoffmann, F. – Rosenfeld, M. – Vismann, C., eds. *Derrida and Legal Philosophy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 56.

¹³ Derrida, J., 1992. *Force of Law*, *ibid.*, p. 16.

lished set of norms that can be performatively enforced: every time that something comes to pass or turns out well, every time that we placidly apply a good rule to a particular case, to a correctly subsumed example, according to a determinant judgement, we can be sure that the law may find itself accounted for. Nevertheless, as he writes,

Law (*droit*) is not justice. Law is the element of calculation, and it is just that there be law, but justice is incalculable, it requires us to calculate with the incalculable; and aporetic experiences are the experiences, as improbable as they are necessary, of justice, that is to say of moments in which the decision between just and unjust is never insured by a rule.¹⁴

Such a *justice-to-come*, as Derrida puts it, justice promised and awaited, opens a messianic perspective of hope. Justice, which is in a state of perpetual arriving, is neither present nor absent. It is awaited and hoped for, but never fully present in human behaviour. While human behaviour is always calculated according to the fully present law, which can be enforced, it is impossible to calculate or negotiate with justice. Contrary to the law, justice remains ungraspable, unrepresentable, sublime. It can't be enforced: "justice as the experience of absolute alterity is unrepresentable."¹⁵ Any fight in the name of justice finishes when the fight is won. Such a victory transforms the sublime call for justice into a new law, which legalizes new norms that will be enforced. As such, Derridian *justice-to-come* is a phantom coming to haunt the present law by pointing to its limits. Derrida himself defines the justice as an aporia of the undecidable, which

is not merely the oscillation or the tension between two tensions; it is the experience of that which, though heterogeneous, foreign to the order of the calculable and the rule, is still obliged – it is of obligation that we must speak – to give itself up to the impossible decision, while taking account of law and rules.¹⁶

I argue that, in the perspective of Derrida's deconstruction, the same goes for peace. Just like justice, peace is perpetually deferred and haunted. In his ethics of difference, peace can only be present as an expectation of its future arrival, as an *arrivant* promising a universal improvement of

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 24.

the human senses of solidarity and hospitality. Derrida turns Kant's human right to perpetual peace into a perpetually deferred promise giving us hope for forgiveness, for what may be called a *peace-to-come*. As a promise, this *peace-to-come* is not totally presentable in human behaviour, it cannot be universally imposed and enforced.¹⁷ Any calculable declaration of actual "perpetual peace" replaces the incalculable promise of perpetuity by a temporary and particular political agreement. No declaration of peace can be universal, because it omits the inevitable collective memory with its conflicting interests related to past wars, such as unhealed collective wounds and resentment for previous injustice, oppression or humiliation. All of these triggers may call for a new justice, mourning or revenge that would defer the supposed presence of universal peace. Deadly enemies from past wars can hardly become innocent friends, especially on command.

The suggested difference between the Kantian and the Derridian ethical ornaments of peace can be better understood if we follow Derrida's shift from the bias of duty toward the bias of promise. His deconstructive way of reframing concepts reveals that meanings of so-called binary oppositions are not necessarily opposed because the frame that would reframe these concepts may be seen as porous.

IV. Shifted Bias, Reframed Concepts

What is a frame? Does it delimit and emphasize? Does it divide and eliminate? Kant and Derrida give us different understandings of this concept and suggest its different uses for philosophical goals. In the *Critique of Judgement* Kant describes the frame as a *parergon*, which means a supplement of the work, the *ergon*. He writes that the work ought to allow itself to be well – centred and framed, to have its ground delimited with a frame, against a general background. His aesthetic judgment bears upon the intrinsic beauty of the core of the work, not its mere surrounding decoration or ornamentation, *parerga*.¹⁸ Derrida notices that

¹⁷ As Richard Beardsworth puts it, "For Derrida, the specific enforcement of universal cosmopolitan law, through the executive sovereign, undercuts the very universality it is enforcing as it enforces it. As soon as there is a legislative will, sovereignty, there is enforcement. As soon as there is enforcement, there is executive sovereignty." Beardsworth, R., 2007. *The Future of Critical Philosophy and World Politics*. In: Fagan – M. Glorieux, L. – Hasimbegovic, I. – Suet-sugu, M., eds. *Derrida. Negotiating the Legacy*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 55.

¹⁸ Kant writes that "Even what is called *ornamentation (parerga)*, i.e. what is only an adjunct, and not an intrinsic constituent in the complete representation of the object, in augmenting the

although Kant himself claims that the role of the parergon is to separate the inside of the work from its outside, in Kant's own description of the artistic work, the parergon remains on an uncertain margin between the supposed core of the work and its surroundings. As Derrida puts it,

Hence one must know what is framed and know what one is excluding as frame and outside-the-frame. We are thus already at the unlocatable center of the problem. And then Kant replies to our question 'What is a frame?' by saying: it's a parergon, a hybrid of outside and inside, but a hybrid which is not a mixture or a half-measure, an outside which is called to the inside of the inside in order to constitute it as an inside.¹⁹

In Derrida's view, this parergon's instability, characterized by its movable disposition, unclear limits, and possible excess, has two contradictory consequences. On the one hand, because it lacks the ability to make a clear division between the "inside" and the "outside", it cannot produce any clear-cut division resulting in binary opposition. Derrida defines it as a porous frame, which is introduced between two binaries, two conceptual oppositions, to separate them. Its porosity sets the relation between these opposed concepts as an interval, not as an opposition. While in Kant, *parergon* does not belong to the complete representation of the object internally as elements, but only externally as frames, in Derrida's *logic of parergonality*,²⁰ *parergon* is aporetic. As Derrida emphasizes, the logic of parergonality is characterized by the inadequation of the frame to the framed, of framing at all.²¹ In Derrida, the frame remains unstable, porous, permeable.

Following Derrida's logic of parergonality, I suggest reframing the

delight of taste does so only by means of its form. Thus it is with the frames of pictures or the drapery on statues, or the colonnades of palaces. But if the ornamentation does not itself enter into the composition of the beautiful form — if it is introduced like a gold frame merely to win approval for the picture by means of its charm—it is then called *finery* and takes away from the genuine beauty" Kant, I., 2007. *Critique of Judgement*, trans. James C. Meredith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 57.

¹⁹ Derrida, J., 1987. *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington, Ian McLeod. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 63.

²⁰ According to Irene E. Harvey, Derrida's claims perform the 'satire of the abyss.' As she puts it, "The abyss is the distance between Kant and Derrida, it is the difference between a critique and a deconstruction, between metaphysics and non-metaphysics, between metaphysics and the rhetoric of metaphysics, between the *parergon* in Kant's sense and the same in Derrida's sense." Harvey, I. E., 2004. Derrida, Kant, and the Performance of Parergonality. In: Silverman, H. J., ed. *Continental Philosophy II. Derrida and Deconstruction*. London: Routledge, p. 68.

²¹ Ibid., p. 67.

supposedly opposed concepts of peace and war. In his attempt to re-frame the given concepts, Derrida suggests overcoming their understanding as binary oppositions, trying to see the supposed “inside” as the actual “outside” and *vice versa*. Such a deconstructed concept of peace is no longer strictly opposed to the concept of war. In the interval built by the logic of parergonality, under specific circumstances, an enemy may be imagined as a friend and *vice versa*. Thanks to its permeability, the logic of parergonality introduces the interval of forgiveness between these binary oppositions. Without forgiveness, human beings could not reunite in their peaceful moral imagination. To be at peace, they need to heal the moral traumas caused by the already experienced overwhelming horrors of human wars. In situations of war, moreover, Kant’s moral maxim is declaratively abandoned. Human friends turn into human enemies, their supposed hospitality collapses into hostility. Who is more reliable in such a situation – a declared friend or a declared enemy?

Derrida’s answer to this question is that “The two concepts (friend/enemy) consequently intersect and ceaselessly change places. They intertwine, as though they loved each other, all along a spiralled hyperbole: the *declared* enemy, the true enemy, is a better friend than the friend.”²² A living enemy remains present in the simulacrum of the unfaithful friend who is, in a sense, worse than a faithful enemy. The declared enemy is, paradoxically, my best friend. If I can predict my enemy’s behaviour, I rely on him, I trust him. Derrida even speaks about his enemy’s fidelity – he can rely on his enemy’s hatred. Much worse is the sudden unreliability of a trusted friend – if I trust him, I cannot predict his betrayal. These binaries haunt each other – my friend (*amicus*) can be my enemy (*hostis*). One concept bears the phantom of the other: “I can be hostile towards my friend, I can be hostile towards him publicly, and conversely I can, in privacy, love my enemy.”²³

Derrida therefore suggests seeing the frame separating these opposed concepts as porous, permeable. I propose to follow Derrida’s logic of parergonality to deconstruct these binaries by reading his comments on Kant’s conception of perpetual peace. This will be done in two steps – firstly, by reframing the binary oppositions of hospitality and hostility, secondly by reframing the binary oppositions of friendship and enmity. In both cases, the logic of parergonality will blur the distinction between

²² Derrida, J., 2020. *Politics of Friendship*, trans. Gabriel Motzkin, Michael Syrotinski, Thomas Keenan. London: Verso, p. 89.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

inclusion and exclusion. Let us start by the parergonal reframing of hospitality and hostility from the perspective of visitation.

IV.I. Parergonality in Hospitality and Hostility

In his book *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*²⁴ Derrida points to a parergon in Kant's thought on hospitality. On the one hand, Kant extends the cosmopolitan law to include universal hospitality without limit. Such is the condition of perpetual peace between all human beings. He expressly determines it as a natural law that would be both imprescriptible and inalienable. In his view, the Earth belongs to human beings. All human creatures, all finite beings endowed with reason, have received, in equal proportion, common possession of the surface of the Earth. On the other hand, however, if Kant specifies that this common place covers the surface of the Earth, he also expels from it what is erected, constructed, or what sets itself up above the soil: habitat, culture, institution, State etc. Therefore, not all of this, only the soil upon which it lies, must not be unconditionally accessible to all comers.

According to Derrida, Kant deduces two consequences from this condition, which introduces the institution of limit as a border, nation, State, public or political space. At first, Kant limits hospitality to the right of visitation. He excluded hospitality as a right of residence, which must be the object of a particular treaty between states. But also, by defining hospitality as a right, Kant makes it dependent on state sovereignty, which is of great consequence for the "violations of hospitality". Kant's hospitality is dependent on and controlled by the law and the state police. For Derrida, therefore,

It is a question of knowing if an improvement of law is possible within a historical space which takes place *between* the Law of unconditional hospitality, offered *a priori* to every other, to all newcomers, *whoever they may be*, and the conditional laws of a right to hospitality, without which *The* unconditional Law of hospitality would be in danger of even being perverted at any moment.²⁵

Moreover, as Thomson notes, in the Derridean reading, Kant's laws of hospitality enact exclusion of species: "Even if hospitality were to be of-

²⁴ Derrida, J., 2005. *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. Mark Dooley, Michael Hughes. London: Routledge, pp. 20 – 21.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 21.

ferred universally to any other human, it would still be a limited hospitality – and perhaps the very definition of a humanism. (Can hospitality be offered to the non-human other: whether animal, vegetable or mineral?)²⁶ Thanks to the logic of parergonality, Derrida's ethics of difference goes beyond this specieism, beyond Kant's frame of hospitality as an exclusive bond between human beings. Contrary to Kant's binary framing of concepts, Derrida's deconstruction allows for ethically including hospitality into human moral thinking. By the same token, it allows for reframing the concepts of friendship and enmity and to define them as not opposed, but bridged, as we will see in the following section.

IV.II. Parergonality in Friendship and Enmity

In *Politics of Friendship*, Derrida claims that, in Kant, what unites mankind must be able to happen. And the condition of the possibility of this human unity must be universal. Kant supposes the possibility of the *friend of man* who loves the whole human race, and he loves it because of his duty. He rejoices with other men when something good happens and will never disturb this joy without profound regret. This very regret is the sign of his solidarity with the whole human race. Kant's *friend of man* concept corresponds to an infinite rational rigour, the Idea. This is what distinguishes the friend of man from the "philanthropist" who is content with merely loving mankind, without being guided by this Idea. In Derrida's words, "Kant establishes this Idea: it is not only an intellectual representation, a representation of *equality* among men, but *consideration* for this representation of equality, a '*just consideration*' for such a representation. Equality *is necessary*. There is no equality, but there must be"²⁷.

Kant's equality of men is a just obligation, demanded by human justice. Equality is not only a calculable measure, a statistical objectivity; it bears within itself a feeling of obligation, hence the gift and its sensibility of debt, gratitude. This duty is inscribed in sensibility's relation to the purely rational Idea of equality. This is the condition for the existence of something called the friend of man, the friend of the whole race.

Derrida notes that Kant's cosmopolitanism, universal democracy, and perpetual peace would not have the slightest chance of being

²⁶ Thomson, A. J. P., 2005. *Deconstruction and Democracy. Derrida's Politics of Friendship*. Continuum: London, p. 90.

²⁷ Derrida, J., 2020. *Politics of Friendship*, *ibid.*, p. 227.

promised without the presupposition of such a friend. It is precisely this promise, which makes it necessary to perpetually opt for peace. And Derrida's ethics of difference goes even further, it questions Kant's cosmopolitanism as a global friendship. As Thomson puts it, Derrida's understanding of friendship is by definition exclusively individual. It cannot be based on a universal duty:

The paradigmatic experience of friendship, Derrida suggests, can be seen to be determined by what he calls 'the question of number': as both the necessity of enumerating or counting friends, and as an implicit limit to the number of friends I can have. Since friendship is always defined by the act of loving, being loved is not enough to qualify as friendship. Conversely there must be a limit to the number of people I can (actively) love.²⁸

In Derrida's view, Kant's cosmopolitan peace is at once pure and impure. Kant's peace retains a trace of what threatens it. Temporary peace is framed by weapons – threatening arms separate the state of peace from the state of war. Contrary to an armed peace, which is simply a suspension of war, Kant insists that the perpetual peace must be unarmed. Derrida deconstructs the seeming purity of this conception of peace by pointing to two impure traces in his thought that undermine it by dividing human compassion. Firstly, Derrida questions Kant's formulation of exclusion of unhuman beings from perpetual hospitality. Derrida's subversive trace introduces a hint of freedom in Kant's cosmopolitan duty by suggesting to offer hospitality to other than human beings too. As a promise, suggested by Derrida, Kant's perpetual peace should be re-framed. Secondly, Derrida questions Kant's formulation of human duty to befriend every human being. In his view, we can not necessarily become friends with every human being, but we can forgive them their hostility and enmity. Derrida's subversive trace introduces the freedom of choice in friendship. Because forgiveness cannot be done on command, one cannot be imperatively obliged to regain trust and live unarmed. One shall decide freely to forgive his enemy, to heal the wounds left by past enmities. Such a healing process could be rather expressed in terms of hope than in terms of duty. Let us have a closer look at the performative side of this Derridian ethical ornament of peace framed by promise and practiced by iteration.

²⁸ Thomson, A. J. P., 2004. *Deconstruction and Democracy*, *ibid.*, p. 15.

V. Performing Peace: Inclusion as a Poematic Gift

As we have seen, Derrida deconstructs Kant's description of a frame as a limit reliably separating the inside from the outside, the meaningful from the meaningless part of a work. I argue that Derrida's subversive framing of concepts allows to question Kant's understanding of a frame as a limit strictly dividing inside from outside, good from evil, peace from war. Derrida's deconstruction of Kant's binary framing of concepts helps to rethink the Kantian moral duty of peace, hospitality and friendship as necessarily interconnected with incorporated traces of war, hostility and enmity. His focus on interval between binary oppositions reframes Kant's duty of peace as a promise of hospitality and forgiveness of past traumas.

Derrida reminds us that there is a paradox in Kant's conception of perpetual peace: universal human hospitality is restricted and governed by state sovereignty. In this Kantian perspective, hospitality appears as a "conditional hospitality":²⁹ ritual practices of peace-making have to be repeated after the rules set by local laws, not by the universal moral duty of humanity. Kantian particular law of the state is above the moral unity of humanity – local law makes us repeat ritual gestures and rightfully punishes any transgression. This means that, in a situation of peace, Kantian foreigners are only allowed to visit, not to stay. Kantian host treats the one he shelters according to right, along with the relation that links him to murderers or the police or judges. From the perspective of Kant's right, the guest, even when he is well received, is a foreigner and remains a foreigner. Derrida explains this contradiction by emphasizing that Kant opposed war to "perpetual peace" as an ultimate, unchanging state of peace. Such a "pure" concept of peace requires abolishing everything that might disturb or threaten it. As Derrida puts it,

for Kant, the promise of perpetual peace promised a peace that was no longer even threatened with war. It was not a matter of simply distinguishing peace from armistice, of distinguishing peace from the end of the war. It was a matter of distinguishing peace from any potential war. A mere threat

²⁹ As Michael Naas puts it, "Kant gives us the *best example* of what Derrida will go on to call somewhat critically a "conditional hospitality." While Kant's hospitality will aim for a certain universality, it will nonetheless be limited, conditioned, and, as such, it will begin to "ruin" the kind of hospitality that Derrida will call unconditional, the only hospitality truly worthy of the name." Naas, M., 2024. *Threshold Phenomena. Derrida and the Question of Hospitality*. New York: Fordham University Press, pp. 104 – 105.

of war, any mere threat, even if it be symbolic or unconscious, interrupts peace.³⁰

Contrary to Kant, Derrida speaks not about a perpetual duty, but rather about an ongoing *promise* to not threaten the peace. He also reminds us that the concepts of threat and promise are binary oppositions: while I can only promise good intentions, I can only threaten with bad intentions.³¹ Derrida emphasizes, however, that every performative may fail. By commenting on Austin's performatives and Searle's speech acts,³² Derrida introduces the problem of iteration and demonstrates how rituals idealize repetition to the point that they tend to unsee the performative possibility of their failure. As de Ville puts it, in spite of recognising that infelicity happens in all *conventional* acts, which have the general character of ritual, Austin regards the possibility of failure as a mere accident which does not tell us anything of the structure of the utterances that are analysed. By contrast, Derrida points out that the performative–constative distinction of speech-acts, “is typical of the idealisation involved in the metaphysics of presence”.³³

This idealization produces an aporia in the rituals of mourning,³⁴ an aporia that may be deconstructed. On the one hand, Derrida understands the moral rule of forgiveness. On the other hand, from Derrida's view, friendship with the enemy is not something that should be taken for granted. It may fail at any point. Paradoxically, one must forgive his enemy's lack of compassion to be compassionate with his enemy's suffering. In other words, one must forgive the unforgivable to turn old enmity into new friendship. Understood in this sense, forgiveness is no duty, but a hope for peace. It is an uncalculable, unexpected gift. In other words, if practices of performing peace are iterable, they are not

³⁰ Derrida, J., 2024. *Hospitality II*, trans. Peggy Kamuf. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 175.

³¹ In Derrida's view, “for classic speech act theorists, a promise always promises something good. You don't promise something bad. You promise a present, a gift; I don't promise to do you harm. That's a threat. If I promise harm, it's a threat; it's not a promise. I cannot say, “I promise to kill you,” in principle; that should not be said”. Ibid., p. 176.

³² See Derrida, J., 1972. *La dissémination*. Paris: Seuil, and Derrida, J., 1977. *Limited Inc*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. This problematic is further developed in Moati, R., 2009. *Derrida/Searle. Déconstruction et langage ordinaire*. Paris: PUF, and in Fišerová, M., 2022. *Event of Signature. Jacques Derrida and Repeating of the Unrepeatable*. New York: SUNY Press.

³³ de Ville, J., 2011. *Jacques Derrida. Law as Absolute Hospitality*. London: Routledge, p. 52.

³⁴ These rituals of mourning are extensively described from the Derridean perspective in Thwaites, T., Seaboye, J., 2013. *Re-reading Derrida. Perspectives on Mourning and Its Hospitalities*. Plymouth: Lexington Books.

received as a law, but as a gift, which is a poetic act of pure hospitality. In Derrida's view, such an activity of *poēsis* is not only creative, but also *poematic*: "the experience of pure hospitality is that of the signature and the making that erases itself, of the host becoming erased in the poem, in the poematic, which I will always prefer to the poetic".³⁵ Derrida explains this "poematic" aspect of the gift on the relation between foreigner's respect and inclusion. Kant requires foreigner's consideration for his host's sovereignty as host: to receive there whomever I like, I have to be master in my home. In other words, the host has the power to choose his invitees, visitors, or guests, those to whom he decides to grant asylum or right to visit. Host's sovereignty, therefore, "can be exercised only by filtering, choosing, hence, by excluding and doing violence. This collusion between the violence of power or the force of law, *Gewalt*, on the one hand, and hospitality, on the other, has to do, in an absolutely radical way, with the inscription of hospitality in right".³⁶

Without such a thoughtfulness, a welcomed guest may easily turn into a "parasite",³⁷ an undesirable foreigner, virtually an enemy undeserving any hospitality. Every arrivant is not received as guest. Wherever the "at-home" is violated, one can expect an ethnocentric, nationalistic, xenophobic reaction directed against the foreign language, religion, or nation that threatens the traditional conditions of hospitality. Derrida sees that Kant's rule of selection of hosts contains virtual traces of xenophobic perversion. In Derrida's words, "The perversion, the pervertibility of this law (which is also a law of hospitality) is that one can become virtually xenophobic in order to protect or claim to protect one's own hospitality, one's own at-home which makes possible one's own hospitality".³⁸ By his conceptual work with reframed binaires, Derrida seeks to shift the ethico-political bias from perpetual duty to ongoing promise. This shift allows him to reflect on inclusive potential of ritual performatives in the peace-making process.

Let us have a closer look at his ability of performatives to construct the "ethical ornament of peace", as I propose to call the peace-making process. Inspired by Derrida's work on iterability of performatives, Ju-

³⁵ Derrida, J., 2023. *Hospitality I*, trans. E. S. Burt. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 157.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 94.

³⁷ Derrida distinguishes between a guest and a parasite by defining the parasite as an intrusive and abusive, illegitimate, clandestine guest, one liable to expulsion or arrest. As he puts it, "to constitute the space of an inhabitable house and a home, one also needs an opening, a door and windows, that is to say one must open a passage to the foreigner." Ibid., p. 96.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 93.

dith Butler reminds us that common representations of historical events via commemorating rituals and narrations is shaped both politically and aesthetically. In her book *Frames of War*,³⁹ she focuses on censorship of photographic reportage of war events to reveal the way we collectively frame common mourning and compassion with war “enemies” by eliminating the testimonies of their suffering. The ethical ornament of war is constructed via performative iteration of selected pictures, which constructs the “enemy” both aesthetically and politically. Similarly, Gregg Lambert rethinks this performative construction of *sensus communis* by naming it the “practice of friendship”. In his view, this practice is based on sharing of “mutual affirmation of the same tastes, the same opinions, the same culture”; on “creating a homonymy of taste, leading to the specific production of a sphere of culture that defines the association between friends”.⁴⁰ Both of these thinkers relate to Derrida’s views on the inclusive potential of shared ritual performatives of friendship in the peace-making process. And yet, following Derrida, they take into consideration the inevitably failing potential of performatives. Derrida himself sees performatives as iterable, which means disseminable and reusable, but not exactly repeatable. “Facing this repetition that never repeats itself”,⁴¹ Derrida finds that performatives return the meaning in an event that happens “once”, which makes each of its returns singular and elliptical, curved, unidentical. However necessary, the planned and performed “forgiveness of the unforgivable” may never totally happen.

Finally, let us distinguish the two ways of performing forgiveness as an ethical ornament of peace. There is Kant’s ethical ornament, which conceives universal duty of forgiveness as a condition for perpetual peace of humanity. And there is Derrida’s ethical ornament, which is framed by the aporetic forgiveness of the unforgivable. He understands peace as a peace-to-come, which does not exist yet and needs to be performed in a time that is not yet. While Kant’s ornament of perpetual peace, framed by the rule of local legal duty, treats foreigners as moral insiders and political outsiders, Derrida’s ornament of ongoing peace puts emphasis on the messianic promise. By doing so, it allows to host foreigners as ethico-political quasi-insiders. Derrida explains his “quasi-ethical”⁴² philosophical position as an undecidable interval introduced

³⁹ Butler, J., 2009. *Frames of War. When Life is Grievable*. London: Verso.

⁴⁰ Lambert, G., 2017. *Philosophy after Friendship. Deleuze’s Conceptual Personae*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 63.

⁴¹ Derrida, J., 2003. *Voyous. Deux essais sur la raison*. Paris: Galilée, p. 19. Personal translation.

⁴² Simon Critchley explains the aporetic position of Derrida’s ethics in the following way:

between the traditional conceptual binaries. It erases the strict opposition between binary concepts of forgivable and unforgivable, friend and enemy, hostility and hospitality. He exposes his reasons for blurring of these conceptual oppositions in detail in *Le siècle et le pardon*⁴³ where he comments on the quasi-unforgivable nature of the crimes against humanity that consists in absence of any sufficient punishment. Derrida sees this disproportional trauma as the very reason for change of ethical bias of historical narration and ritualization of mourning. After Shoah, Kant's idea of humanity remains meaningful only if it allows to forgive the unforgivable. Such a "hyperbolic ethics"⁴⁴ would mark this particular forgiveness as an unforgettable historical exception. This exceptional forgiveness, framed as a permanent recollection of disproportionate injustice, would introduce the dimension of collective mourning into the performativity of historical narration.

In *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*⁴⁵ Derrida comments once more on the dilemma of forgiveness as reconciliation with major historical wrongdoings such as exterminations, genocides and massacres of human beings. In his view, however, "Forgiveness is not, it *should not be*, normal, normative, normalising. It *should* remain exceptional and extraordinary, in the face of the impossible: as if it interrupted the ordinary course of historical temporality".⁴⁶ To discourage returns of the phantom of bad faith by *forgiving* the committed injustice, Derrida suggests cultivating collective remembrances and mourning of the unbearable, disproportional injustice. As Derrida puts it, "forgiveness forgives only the unforgivable. One cannot, or should not, forgive; there is only forgiveness, if there is any, where there is the unforgivable. That is to say that forgiveness must announce itself as impossibility itself. It can only be possible in doing the impossible".⁴⁷ If the broken vow of perpetual

"Ethics, properly speaking, is restricted to imperatives that are categorical; and for Derrida, the ethical moment is the interruption of the general context of conditioned hypothetical imperatives by an unconditional categorical imperative. *Ethics arises in and as the undecidable yet determinate articulation of these two orders*. As Derrida writes, this moment of unconditional appeal is revealed in the link that connects deconstruction to the 'Yes', the moment of affirmation that one finds repeatedly in Derrida's writings." Critchley, S., 2014. *The Ethics of Deconstruction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 40.

⁴³ Derrida, J., 2000. *Le siècle et le pardon*, *ibid.*, p. 101 – 133.

⁴⁴ Smreková, D., 2017. *Filozofický príbeh odpustenia. Odpustenie a neodpustiteľné u V. Jankelévicha, J. Derridu a P. Ricoeura*. Bratislava: Iris, p. 81. Personal translation.

⁴⁵ Derrida, J., 2005. *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, *ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 32 – 33.

peace can ever be repaired, it is thanks to this aporetic, seemingly impossible promise to forgive the unforgivable.

VI. Conclusion: “We are going...”

In their ethico-political revisions of peace, the Kantian and Derridean perspectives lead to partially different solutions. While Kant sees the ultimate goal of Enlightenment in the rational emancipation of man, Derrida observes the historical failure of this Enlightenment goal in the 20th century. Based on the historico-political trauma of Shoah, that Europeans experienced more than a century after Kant's death, Derrida reevaluates the totalitarian violence structurally built in the Western metaphysical thinking. He even sees this violence as partially built in the construction of collective memory via iterable, ornamental representations of past events.

In *Archive Fever*,⁴⁸ Derrida conceives deconstruction as a philosophical tactic capable of revealing metaphysical violence of the “selecting” work of all memories and archives. Each memory is born from selection, each archive is born from censorship – both start with the decision about what will be forgotten. According to Derrida, the notion of archive seems at first to point toward the past, to refer to the signs of consigned memory. However, before recalling faithfulness to tradition,

the archive should *call into question* the coming of the future. And if we still lack a viable, unified, given concept of the archive, it is undoubtedly not a purely conceptual, theoretical, epistemological insufficiency on the level of multiple and specific disciplines; it is perhaps not for lack of sufficient elucidation in certain circumscribed domains: archaeology, documentography, bibliography, philology, historiography.⁴⁹

In other words, Derrida suggests a psychoanalytical explanation of historical memory: erasing guilt through a new form of narration systematically avoids it and, thus, makes us forget it. Just like our hospitality for foreigners, our forgiveness must remain a promise, not a right. Because no one has the right to be forgiven, it is up to our hosts to decide if they forgive or not. Because hosts can select their visitors, just like they can select what they remember and what they forgive from the past, there is

⁴⁸ Derrida, J., 1998. *Archive Fever. A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 33 – 34.

no universal and perpetually present justice we shall refer to.

Similarly, in *Force of Law*,⁵⁰ Derrida defines deconstruction as a tactic operating in the interval between deconstructibility of law and undeconstructibility of justice. The force that enforces the law cannot be applied to justice because it is, in Derrida's view, a *justice-to-come*. Derridian justice is a mere promise to punish the guilt. Its arrival is perpetually deferred. Every fight "in the name" of justice ends when the fight is won: such a "victory" turns the call for justice into a new law that will be enforced. Justice is a promise to punish the guilty – it is the condition of possibility of the law. It is, however, impossible to fulfill this promise in legal practice. Derrida emphasizes this uncertainty in reaching universal justice or forgiveness. He sees the Kantian perpetual peace as perpetually deferred. One cannot be morally obliged to forgive the unforgivable. Forgiveness is no duty, but an ongoing process of healing from previous traumas caused by enmity. In this sense, Derrida's quasi-ethical promise precedes Kant's moral duty.

And yet, to a certain degree, these two ethical ornaments of peace pervade. In Derrida's view, Kant leaves a gap between two orders – the order of global ethics and local politics. Kant's pure practical reason is distinguished from pure theoretical reason by the lack of intermediary schemas between ideas, concepts, and sensibility that "would procure for us the best mediations between the ethics or holiness, if you like, of messianic hospitality and the political 'peace process'".⁵¹ This hiatus marks a discontinuity between two orders, between the order of messianic promise and the order of determination of a political right. It introduces an indecision into the basis of which a decision must be determined. Therefore, his moral maxim is a "messiah" whose arrival is foretold and awaited, but never totally experienced. Derrida even finds that this Kant's "leap over the abyss"⁵² between the two orders is a guarantee against totalitarian decisions in ethics, politics, and jurisdiction.

The ongoing performativity of this "leap over the abyss" is, in Derrida's view, an unfinished work of forgiveness and hospitality. Because of the uncertain healing process, forgiveness is never fully accomplished. It can only be approached partially, by little steps – "No hospitality, step of

⁵⁰ Derrida, J., 1992. *Force of Law*, *ibid.*, p. 16.

⁵¹ Derrida, J., 2024. *Hospitality II*, *ibid.*, p. 197.

⁵² As Derrida puts it, "If there were not this leap over the abyss, we would merely have to unfold knowledge in a program of action. And there would be nothing more irresponsibilizing and more totalitarian." *Ibid.*, p. 198.

hospitality. We are going”⁵³ As Derrida puts it, for the invited guest as much as for the visitor, crossing the threshold remains a transgressive step.

It is as though hospitality were the impossible: as though the law of hospitality defined this very impossibility, as if it were only possible to transgress it, as though *the* law of absolute, unconditional, hyperbolic hospitality, as though the categorical imperative of hospitality commanded that we transgress all the laws (in the plural) of hospitality, namely, the conditions, the norms, the rights and the duties that are imposed on hosts and hostesses, on the men or women who give a welcome as well as the men or women who receive it. And vice versa, it is as though the laws (plural) of hospitality, in marking limits, powers, rights, and duties, consisted in challenging and transgressing *the* law of hospitality, the one that would command that the “new arrival” be offered an unconditional welcome.⁵⁴

In every new step of hospitality, we are transgressing our limits in forgiveness, we are overcoming “these interminable, uncrossable thresholds, these parergons”⁵⁵ In the perspective of Derrida’s deconstruction, it is not the peace that is to be considered perpetual, it is the poematic work on forgiveness that is. What maintains peaceful relations is their ongoing renewal by performative rituals of hospitality and forgiveness.

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⁵³ Derrida, J., 2005. *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, *ibid.*, p. 75.

⁵⁴ Derrida, J., 2000. *Of Hospitality*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 75.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

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