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# The Origins of Hospitality and Tourism

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# 2

## Philosophical Perspectives on Hospitality

Although no specific studies into hospitality and classical philosophy have been identified, certain contemporary philosophers have written on the philosophy of hospitality. Examining the work of these philosophers allows for exploring the complexity of the phenomenon of hospitality, through critically evaluating the studies and thoughts of contemporary philosophers who have considered the phenomenon of hospitality. In reviewing the relationship between philosophy and hospitality, three separate issues are evident in the writings:

- ◇ moral philosophy of hospitality from the perspective of the guest/host relationship;
- ◇ hospitality between peoples and nation states; and,
- ◇ the use of language in hospitality provision and consumption.

### 2.1 Individual moral philosophy: host

Derrida (2000b) defined hospitality as inviting and welcoming the 'stranger'. This takes place on different levels: the personal level where the 'stranger' is welcomed into the home; and the level of individual countries. Derrida was credited as the inventor of 'deconstruction', the practice of dismantling texts by revealing their assumptions and contradictions. Normally life is lived at the level where things are presumed; people are accustomed to think in narrow ways. Deconstruction attempts to highlight just how much is taken for granted in contemporary conceptual thought and language.

Derrida's interest in hospitality was heightened by the etymology of Benveniste (1969) who analysed 'hospitality', which is from a Latin root, but derived from two proto Indo-European words that have the meanings of 'stranger', 'guest' and 'power'. Thus in the 'deconstruction' of the word, there can be seen:

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