

## A Short Typology of Guests in a World of Hospitality

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The world of hospitality is one of extremes. This is true of the standards by which one kind of hospitality is provided (rather than another), and it is also true for the guests of hospitality. It is the extreme possibilities of encounter that mark hospitality as a special meeting place. It should be no surprise, then, that the place of hospitality attracts and produces different types of guests.

In the two papers given us, we find two extremely different guests of hospitality: the French-Armenian diplomat-translator in a highly ritualized court at the border of East and West (on the one hand) and the ignorant German traveler who makes it to the New World without learning a thing and just recording the inconveniences of travel (on the other). In the following, I will use this constellation as my starting point. The contrast it provides could not be starker. Ignatius Mouradgead'Ohsson is a smart player who speaks many languages, masters many codes, and plays his cards to his advantage. He is the perfect insider who can cast himself as an outsider when it serves him and vice versa. He passes successfully between the Ottoman Empire, Revolutionary France, and royal Stockholm. Many paradoxes apply to him, as Burcu Gürsel elaborates, and he is the model of the *persona non grata*. Whereas the verbal expression “*persona non grata*” seems not to exist prior to 1842, he may well be one of its early incarnations when he gets expelled from the Ottoman Court because he does not seem to be a loyal Swede.<sup>1</sup> To be *persona non grata*, privileges and passports had first to be granted, only to be later revoked. Even when he gets expelled, his special status is recognized. Dr. Matthias Stupicz, alias Dr. Stupid, is in all respects the opposite. He is boring and often seems bored. During his travels he records only the mundane affairs of daily hassles. He comes to the United States with few privileges, but expects German order. He is not welcomed, but he flies below the radar and is perfectly well ignored and endured. Whereas d'Ohsson speaks many languages, Stupicz does not speak any of the languages of the New World and gets by with his German. D'Ohsson becomes rich, whereas Stupicz becomes (or stays) poor. D'Ohsson is a creature of the most ritualized and complex social world of diplomacy, whereas Stupicz travels in the swamps around Charleston hoping to find people to provide basic shelter. Stupicz's only practical joke and entertainment, which Heather Morrison records for us, is to give a false identity when traveling between German cities, just for fun.

In light of the two papers, it is appropriate to present these two figures as archetypes of hospitality:

First. D'Ohsson represents **the ironic shifter of identities**, the slick abuser of hospitality who knows more than anyone else but who also can deceive anyone about his true loyalties (if indeed he has any). He is the perfect guest since he knows the ways of his host, and he is the host's nightmare, since he can exploit and betray him better than anyone else. I am not in a position to question the sources about d'Ohsson. Some scholars seem to suggest that he had some real commitments, others point to his quickly acquired wealth as his primary motivation. However, based on the paper in front of us, it is paradoxical and, I would call it, *ironic*, personality that dominates. That is, it shapes how others perceive him.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “Post-classical Latin *persona non grata* is attested in a German-language context in 1842. In discussions of German ecclesiastical law such as the one in which this occurs, the more usual negative is *persona minus grata*.”

Second: Dr. Stupicz, in contrast, is the classic figure of **the naïve and ignorant traveler** or *the idiot*, who is unaltered and unimpressed by his surroundings. He hardly seems to recognize that he is a foreigner or guest who travels in a new world. He only notices when things do not work, like his money and letters. He learns nothing, not even the language. He seems to stay in the United States primarily because suing his employer works better there than it would have in the Old World.

When looking at the panorama or spectrum that stretches between the extremes d'Ohsson and Dr. Stupicz, there is a third figure of hospitality strikingly absent. But we can find him in the records of both. We find him in the son of d'Ohsson and we find him in the brother of a member of Stupicz's company. Stupicz was part of a botanical expedition. In that expedition was a painter with the name Moll. This Moll died young in Charleston. However, Moll had a more famous brother, another painter, who survived and also went to America, Johann Albrecht Ulrich Moll, better known today as William Berczy, a co-founder of Toronto. William Berczy (and also at least to some degree d'Ohsson's more famous son) was an **idealistic believer**. He believed in hospitality, viewed the world as a hospitable place, and with his idealism was seductive for others who followed him. Maybe hospitality is a fetish, as Rebecca Spang suggested yesterday in our discussions, but it is a fetish that can keep drawing others in as long as there are believers-seducers who suggest its potential reality. William Berczy led 180 Germans to the United States and then Canada to settle there, though the whole affair was a ruse by some profiteers to get free laborers. Nevertheless, Berczy overcome one betrayal by American and British-Canadian officials after another, and even negotiated with Native Americans, in order to get the people who followed him to settle.

According to the minimalistic typology I have just sketched, there are three extremes of guests of hospitality: 1) The ironic master of rituals who understands all differences, 2) the naïve wanderer who does not realize how different things are, and 3) the idealistic believer who claims that the gaps between worlds can be overcome by means of hospitality. And believing in it, he thereby produces it. It seems that one needs all three to understand the space of options that is opened by hospitality.