Hospitality spaces, hospitable relationships: exploring the

entanglement of social and commercial hospitality 1

(Draft paper; please do not quote without permission)

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Abstract

Recent years has seen growing interest among social scientists and management academics in the complex relationship between social and commercial forms of hospitality. Within this emerging body of work, the physical, symbolic and abstract dimensions of space have been examined from a diverse range of perspectives. This paper builds on and advances this emerging body of research by reconsidering the relationship between space and hospitality in both its social and commercial forms. It examines the ontological nature of space and hospitality, and uses the emerging conceptual themes to explain how hospitable spaces are produced and consumed. The discussion examines the complex and often contradictory relationship between commercial and social manifestations of hospitality. Moreover, I consider the ways in which hospitability manifests itself in particular moments and locations, and how expectations or perceptions of hospitality and hospitable relationships may be perpetuated over time and in the production of abstract, symbolic and material space.

The first part of the paper reconsiders the constituent parts of hospitality and its functions and outcomes. I suggest that entertainment forms a fundamental part of hospitality, and I argue that hospitality and hospitable relationships are not necessarily means to social, political or economic ends, but are ends in their own right. The second part examines notions of group and sociality, and discusses the ways in which particular types of sociality are

formed and transformed through hospitality. The third part considers the nature of space. I maintain that the existence of hospitable spaces can only be understood by considering the processes through which they are produced or brought to life. In the fourth part, the conceptual themes surrounding space and sociality are used to explain how hospitable spaces are produced.

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Introduction

Recent years has seen growing interest in the social and commercial manifestations hospitality in contemporary societies (cf., Lashley and Morrison, 2000; Lashley et al., 2007; Brotherton, 1999; Lugosi, 2007a, 2007b). Within this emerging body of work, the physical, symbolic and abstract qualities of space, and the relationships between hospitality and space, have been examined from a range of perspectives. Goffman's (1990) notion of front and back stage continues to be invoked in discussions of how the identities of domestic hosts and frontline workers, and the services or experiences they provide, are defined by the spaces in which they are produced and consumed (Crang, 1994; Erickson, 2004; Mars and Nicod, 1984). Several authors have considered the semiotic qualities of space in shaping the actions and perceptions of hosts and guests, or service providers and their consumers (Di Domenico and Lynch, 2007; Lugosi, 2007a, 2007b; Warton, 2007). Others have considered the ways in which eating and drinking venues reflect the changing social and economic composition of cities and how commercial hospitality transforms contemporary cityscapes (Bell, 1994, 2007; Bell and Binnie, 2005; Latham, 2003). These studies consider hospitality spaces at different scales, from the micro level of interaction to the

macro level of urban forms of sociality. These authors also recognise that commercial and social forces inevitable interact to shape these spaces. The seemingly contradictory motivations entangled in social, hospitable relations and commercial hospitality relationships are highlighted by several authors (Lashley, 2000; Selwyn, 2000; Telfer, 2000). It is problematic to assume, as many commercial operators do, that the social aspects of hospitability can be forcibly mobilised in service encounters; however, dismissing the possibility that hospitable exchanges and relations can form in commercial hospitality spaces is equally misguided. Service exchanges can be transformed into hospitable exchanges when appropriate relations are formed between staff and customers. Furthermore, the experience of hospitality is often not provided by the host alone; nor is it produced exclusively through the host-guest interaction. Instead, the experience of hospitality and the sense of hospitability within service spaces are produced through guest-guest relations and exchanges.

This paper builds on and advances existing research by considering the relationship between space and hospitality in both its social and commercial forms. I examine the ontological nature of space and hospitality and use the emerging conceptual themes to consider how hospitable spaces are produced and consumed. The discussion examines briefly the complex and often contradictory relationship between commercial and social manifestations of hospitality. Moreover, I consider the ways in which hospitability manifests itself in particular moments and locations, and how expectations or

perceptions of hospitality and hospitable relationships may be perpetuated over time and in the production of abstract, symbolic and material space.

The paper begins by discussing the different dimensions of hospitality: its content and its functions and outcomes. The following section considers the notions of group and sociality, and discusses the ways in which particular types of social relations are formed and transformed through hospitality. The subsequent section examines the nature of space. Following Lefebvre (1991), I argue that hospitality spaces are not consistent entities, and that their existence must be understood by considering the processes through which they are produced or brought to life. The conceptual themes surrounding space and sociality are used to examine how hospitable spaces and relationships are produced.

Hospitality

Numerous authors attempt to define hospitality and understand it as both social and commercial activity (cf., Brotherton, 1999; Brotherton and Wood, 2000; Lashley, 2000). I do not intend to review these definitions and debates here; nevertheless, it is important emphasise the key elements of hospitality on which authors tend to focus. Brotherton's definition of hospitality serves to illustrate the point. He defines hospitality as:

A contemporaneous human exchange, which is voluntarily entered

into, and designed to enhance the mutual well being of the parties

concerned through the provision of accommodation, and/or food,

and/or drink. (1999: 168)

Similar to many other authors, Brotherton focuses on food, drink and shelter but plays down a further critical dimension of hospitality: entertainment. Telfer (2000) questions whether hospitality and entertainment are the same things. She states that "hospitality is associated with meeting of needs, entertaining with the giving of pleasure" (2000: 39). Nevertheless, in her discussions on the philosophy of hospitality, Telfer (2000) claims that this difference is "only a matter of nuance" (ibid.) and uses the word *entertaining* interchangeably with providing hospitality. However, when considering the intersection of the social and commercial manifestations of hospitality, entertainment and the experiential aspect of production and consumption is a fundamental aspect of hospitable relationships.

The prominence of open display kitchens and the informality and jocularity emphasised in service encounters in foodservice chains such as TGI Friday's has become a key part of service work and commercial hospitality provision. More important, however, is the role of the consumers in providing a spectacle and entertainment for fellow consumers. The guests themselves are part of the experience, whether it is in the form of passive gazing of the male or female body, convivial interaction or through more outlandish, spectacular

identity performances (cf., Lugosi, 2003, 2006a). Engaging and entertaining interaction often goes hand in hand with the consumption of food and drink. The offer of food, drink and shelter can undoubtedly be offered without the offer of entertainment, although the wellbeing of the guest as well the customer is often assured because it is part of the experience.

The functions and outcomes of hospitality

A second dimension of hospitality concerns its functions and outcomes. Selwyn, writing from an anthropological perspective, suggests that hospitality is used "to establish a relationship or to promote an already established relationship…; hospitality converts: strangers into familiars, enemies into friends, friends into better friends, outsiders into insiders, non-kin into kin (Selwyn, 2000: 19). For Selwyn, hospitality is a functional set of activities used to attain a series of social and political goals. However, rather than treating hospitality as the means to an end, hospitality can be considered an end itself. To engage in hospitable exchange is to acknowledge the *other*; moreover, it is an overt willingness, not only to share one's social space, but to create a shared, experiential space in which the participants become part of a contextually defined social entity. Food, drink, the offer of shelter and entertaining social intercourse form a crucial part of this exchange: they facilitate the relationship and give it an ontological reality, but emotional experience is at the heart of hospitableness.

Hospitality is inherently emotional because, to offer hospitality, is to abandon or suspend rational judgement in the creation of mutual wellbeing and joy; hospitability is openness towards the other and it is acceptance of the other, albeit temporarily. By conceptualising hospitality in this way, I am separating hospitality from the exchange of food, drink, shelter or entertainment for rational social or political purposes, which is how hospitality is traditionally treated by anthropologists. These are political or social relationships; they are exchange relationships, but this is not hospitality.

The conception of hospitality I advocate here is similar to Derrida's (2000) notion of pure hospitality, which he claims is unconditional engagement. [1] This stands in contrast to the position of writers such as Sheringham and Daruwalla (2007) who argue that such pure hospitality is unachievable because issues of power and differences in status are so fundamental to the host-guest relations. Sheringham and Daruwalla (2007) suggest that hospitality may indeed be a state of abandonment, and a creation by the host and guest of a temporary, transgressive, carnivalesque space. However, they also suggest that such carnivalesque experiences serve to reinforce the social order because hospitality is temporary, and there are intrinsic limits to its existence. Moreover, for Sheringham and Daruwalla (2007) hospitality takes place between host and guest, in the host's physical and symbolic space. Hospitality, therefore, serves to release host and guest from existing

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[1] Derrida goes further and suggests that we can never actually know hospitality: once hospitality is offered within the host-guest relationship, it is transformed; there are limits or laws imposed upon it and it becomes contradiction.

differences in status, while simultaneously reinforcing differences in status. The stance I adopt here is different to this in two ways. First, while differences in status, class, gender etc, are inherently part of a society's spatial practices, i.e., the conditions which determine where and how we interact, hospitality, as conceived here, is the state of being between social actors where these differences are overcome in particular moments in space and time. The differences between constructions of space within the spatial practices of society and the experienced of lived space between individuals is addressed below in the discussion of Lefebvre's (1991) work. A second and more fundamental difference in my conception of hospitality is the abandonment of the fetishism of the host-guest relationship in the creation of hospitable space. Because commercial hospitality venues are inhabited by consumers, who engage with each other as much as they do with the "hosts", consumers create these moments of hospitality between themselves. Consequently, the issues of power and status that are so important in host-guest relations are not the same in guest-guest relations and in their transformation of commercial hospitality venues into hospitable spaces. This too is addressed in the latter part of the paper.

Hospitality is emotional and sincere engagement, and it is therefore inherently ephemeral: within hospitable relationships differences in morality, class and social status are abandoned in favour of the existential hospitable moment. Such a conception of hospitality requires an alternative conceptual vocabulary – one drawn from Turner's (1969, 1982, 1992) work on liminality and

communitas. The next section outlines Turner's work and suggests a new concept: the communitesque, which is used to understand moments of hospitality and the creation of hospitable spaces.

Hospitality, hospitability and the communitesque

Central to Turner's work on communitas is liminality. The concept of the liminal emerged from van Gannep's (1960) studies of the sacred rites of passage ceremonies of pre-literate societies. Liminality is the stage in ceremonies where the participant has moved from one status, but has yet to move to the next: these are transitional phases or periods of anti-structure located between one structural state and another. Turner (1969, 1982, 1992) uses the notion of liminality to conceptualise periods of symbolic, emotional and political detachment from contemporary, western societal norms. He introduces the concept of the liminoid: anti-structural phenomena produced and consumed through profane leisure activities. According to Turner (1992: 57), liminoid phenomena "develop most characteristically outside the central economic and political processes". They are "plural, fragmentary and experimental"; "they compete with one another in a cultural market and appeal to specific tastes"; and, more important, "they are often subversive, representing radical critiques of the central structures and proposing utopian models" (ibid.).

Central to Turner's work on liminoid phenomena are the forms of social organisation they engender. Within playful, liminoid leisure activities, participants become members of communitas – social entities temporarily detached from social structures or institutions. Turner goes further and distinguishes between existential, normative and ideological communitas, each of which is briefly outlined below.

Existential or spontaneous communitas can be thought of as temporary states of affectual bonding created through direct interaction. During these moments participants "become totally absorbed into a single synchronised, fluid event" (Turner, 1982: 48). Interaction is governed by a sense of "honesty, openness, and lack of pretentions or pretentiousness" (ibid.). Notions of individualism and individual identity are abandoned and replaced by a sense of collective being. Consequently, within these moments of interaction, the unity felt by those participating transcends differences in role, status, race, sex or class.

Existential communitas have been conceptualised as psychological constructs that are felt or imagined (cf., Turner, 1992: 61-65). However, physicality and materiality are central to the experience for a number of reasons. First, the body becomes part of the process through which shared experiences are produced and mediated, and the body is also the site where these experiences are consumed. Second, the experiences of existential communitas are consumed in physical geographies, and are therefore inherently linked to the production of social spaces. Within hospitality venues,

the material and corporeal aspects of consumption, including the physical presence of consumers, convivial interaction, mutual entertainment amusement, and the consumption of food or drinks become key components in the experience of existential communitas. These help to create a liminoid space where such communitas *can* exist.

Turner's notions of liminoid phenomena and existential communitas offer a conceptual vocabulary that helps to appreciate both the sense of collective abandonment in hospitable encounters and the short-lived, ephemerality of that engagement. However, these moments of blissful togetherness cannot be sustained indefinitely. Differences in class, culture, age or attitude inevitably re-emerge in social relations. Nevertheless, for actual and potential participants, the notion of existential communitas – a collectively experienced sense of liberated or liberating time-space – becomes an ideal to be recreated and relived over and over again. In order to recreate the sense of collective, existential abandonment created in these hospitable experiences, communitas emerge in two forms: as ideological and normative communitas.

For Turner (1969), the creation of ideological communitas is:

> once an attempt to describe the external and visible effects – the
> outward form, it might be said – of an inward experience of existential
> communitas, and to spell out the optimal social conditions under

which such experiences might be expected to flourish and multiply
(1969: 132).

Ideological communitas are utopian models of social organisation based on existential communitas. However, as Malbon (1999) argues, the creation of ideological communitas should not be seen as attempts to create some ideal otherworld. The term utopia, meaning 'no-place', is effectively an unachievable, ideal state of being for a group of people. According to Dyer (1999), it is necessary to differentiate *models of utopian worlds* from *feelings of utopianism* associated with the hedonistic consumption of modern leisure. Attempts to create ideological communitas in commercial hospitality venues are attempts to define the consumption process as a temporary, playful, utopian experience. As Malbon (1999) suggests, the consumers of such utopianism may be fully aware that hospitability in the commercial hospitality setting is fragile and that the sense of mutual care is short-lived, but continue to take pleasure from these ephemeral experiences.

Despite the playful nature of ideological communitas, their construction and maintenance relies on legislation and normalisation. Existential or ideological communitas morph into normative communitas in which participation is subject to conditions. Members begin to have roles, functions and obligations towards the communitas and the spaces in which they are constructed and maintained. Inside-outside dichotomies are imposed, which means that inclusion and exclusion is determined partly by individuals' ability to meet the

conditions of membership, but also their willingness to fulfil their obligations towards the communitas. In the same way, staff or guests in commercial hospitality attempt to recapture or recreate a hospitable moment with other staff or guests by engaging in specific lines of conversation and particular interaction rituals, and they may exchange gifts of food, drink or money.

Turner's concept of existential communitas can help to understand the immediate experiences of hospitality between frontline staff and customers and between the customers themselves. It also foregrounds the role of embodied practices in producing and mediating the ideological assumptions that are fundamental to the experience. More important, perhaps, the notions of ideological and normative communitas help to conceptualise the *basis of association* and the *obligations of association* that enable individuals to recreate the experiences of existential communitas. Highlighting the existential, ideological and normative dimensions of hospitality emphasises the ephemerality and creative vitality of the immediate experience. It also helps to comprehend the processes of regulation and control that maintain hospitality and hospitability as ideological constructs, which are reproduced over time through a series of social rituals and institutional practices.

An inherent danger in invoking Turner's notion of existential communitas is that it overstates the ecstatic nature of hospitality. To speak of communitas is to frame social intercourse as a pseudo-religious experience. Yet, existential communitas is an evocative term which makes direct reference to the

emotional dimensions of interaction and the sense of abandonment which it entails. Just as Turner adapted the notion of liminality, and created the term liminoid in his discussions of ludic states of being in contemporary western culture, the notion of communitas can be adapted to help make sense of hospitality. Hospitability, for want of a better term, can be though of as the creation of communitesque experiences. The suffix esque implies that it resembles communitas, but is something different to communitas. Communitesque refers to the momentary sense of unity and sociality created during moments, in which individuals create a sense of shared space. As with existential communitas, communitesque are fundamentally psychological constructs; they are sensed and they are felt.

Communitesque experiences are lived and are created through close interaction in particular spaces and times. Communitesque encounters are not ecstatic, liminal periods of abandonment: they are liminoid experiences in which the rationality of relationships is abandoned in favour of a playful, emotional openness towards one another. These experiences involve the production and consumption of food, drink, the offer of shelter, but they are fundamentally about mutual entertainment and the creation of a shared emotional space. The construction and reconstruction of communitesque moments relies the potential members' ability to create the existential spaces and the sensations they encompass. Therefore, to comprehend the construction of communitesque in particular moments, and over periods of time, it is necessary to examine fundamental nature of space. To do this, the

next section draws on the work of Lefebvre (1991) and uses his spatial dialectic to examine the ontological nature of space and the processes of its formation.

Commercial hospitality spaces and spaces of hospitability

Lefebvre (1991) argues that space is an unstable, dynamic entity produced through the interaction of three elements: 'spatial practices', 'representations of space' and 'representational spaces'. Spatial practices refer to the organisational practices of societies as they delineate particular sites for specific forms of human activity. This process of designation involves the purposeful organisation and deployment of human labour and capital in production relationships, which ensures that social relations and the dominant modes of production are continually reproduced. Actions are thus institutionalized and ritualized in particular locations, which then come to simultaneously define the location, the activity, and the identities of those involved.

Commercial hospitality venues are thus produced as various agencies, including drinks manufacturers, distributors, operating companies, marketing agencies and licensing authorities, interact to delineate specific sites as work and play spaces. Within these sites, workers and customers are located within organisational regimes, and thus have duties and responsibilities towards such institutions. It is also through such spatial practices that the consumers'

roles become redefined: the division between workers and customers are blurred and patrons begin to participate in the production process (cf., Lugosi, 2003, 2006a, 2007b).

Spatial practices are tied to representational acts that reaffirm both the existence of hospitable experiences and the significance of the sites in which such activities take place. Lefebvre (1991) emphasizes the role of cartographers, scientists and urban planners as they envision the organization of space, although it is also essential to recognize the representations of writers, journalists, marketing agents and the narratives of consumers in reproducing conceptions of space. When consumers and guests reproduce their hospitable experiences in stories or other representations, they are reaffirming the emotional significance of those moments and the importance of the sites in which these experiences were lived.

The final element in Lefebvre's dialectic, representational spaces, refers to "space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'" (1991: 39). According to Lefebvre, spatial practices and their representations produce a delineated and codified space, but the notion of representational spaces highlights the transformative nature of lived experience. "Organized gestures, which is to say ritualized and codified gestures, are not simply performed in 'physical' space, in the space of bodies. Bodies themselves generate spaces, which are produced by and for their gestures" (Lefebvre, 1991: 216). These experiences of space are

disruptive because they involve the appropriation and adaptation of existing cultural practices. However, these experiences are also constructive because they become a form of living memory that reproduces cultural norms.

Hospitality spaces, hospitable moments

Frontline staff and customers inevitably engage in service relationships within commercial hospitality spaces, but these prescribed interaction rituals represent only one type of experience within these locations, and the production of a specific sort of space. There is always the possibility to transform such functional, commercial relationships into hospitable spaces through the interaction between staff and customers and between the customers themselves.

As with Turner's communitas, communitesque moments do not have a simple empirical reality. If we assume that the moments of hospitality are a series of sensations, researchers can merely provide thick descriptions of events, which point to, rather than confirm the existence of the communitesque. In this spirit, the final part the paper presents an account of an incident which helps to demonstrate the creation of hospitable space. The incident is drawn from a larger ethnographic study of hospitality and space (see Lugosi, 2003, 2006b). The incident illustrates the ways in which commercial and social forces interact and transform the commercial service environment into hospitable

space. The subsequent discussion examines the interaction of the various agencies in the construction of such a hospitable moment.

12.15 a.m., Budapest

Walking down Nagymező Utca it was easy to miss the place: there were no windows and the entrance was a small black door. A small neon sign above the door said 'Piaf' [after the singer Edith Piaf].

We rang the bell and an assertive blond-haired woman opened the door. She told us sternly that it cost 500 Forints to come in and this was a 'private bar'. [Prior to our visit, others had told us about the entrance ritual. Just like a scripted greeting at a Harvester restaurant, the welcome was exactly as people had described it, down to the colour of her hair and her attitude.] We paid the money and stepped into a small, dark, smoke-filled room.

There was a bar on the right side and sets of low tables and chairs closely pushed together in between the bar and the door. A similar row of tables and chairs were set against the left-hand side of the room. A narrow space between the tables on the left and the bar on the right lead through to the back of the bar. A

piano was squeezed into the right-hand corner facing the bar with
a number of chairs and settees around it.

The bar was laid out over two floors, including an even darker
cellar where dance music was playing. Both floors were darkly
painted with deep reds and black intermixed; the lighting was low
and the upstairs tables were lit with candles.

We sat down at one of the tables in front of the piano. Two girls
in their mid 20s were sitting to the left of us. An older man was
playing the piano, while a woman in her late 40s sang French
chanson songs. After about half an hour, the singer finished her
set and the man continued to play the piano. The proximity of the
tables to the piano meant all the patrons at the tables could talk
to the pianist. One of the two girls asked for some songs. The
pianist produced a songbook and she stood up and looked
through it. Meanwhile, four men had sat down at the table next
to the piano. Three casually dressed, all in their late 20s or early
30s. The fourth was considerably better dressed and obviously
thought highly of himself.

While looking through the songbook, the girl asked about certain
songs and the pianist played the first few notes from each song.
After a while, the girl started to sing some of the songs she

recognised, but in a quiet voice. She constantly looked up at her friend who was watching and encouraging her, showing obvious amusement and giving supportive comments. Having agreed on a song, the pianist played it and she sang it all the way through, albeit quietly and nervously. We all clapped, including the men sitting next to the piano who had also taken an interest in her performance.

They decided to try another song, and one of the men stood up and started to look through the songbook. The pianist, the girl and the man agreed on a new number and sang it. By this time, the friend of the girl had moved next to the piano alongside the other men. They sang another song, and everyone, including us, seemed to find it very amusing. More people started clapping including another two inebriated men, who, until then, had been having a loud conversation at a table just to the right of us. Alongside clapping, one of the men started making a clicking noise with his mouth.

This encouraged two more men (both in their mid to late 20s) to come from one of the back tables to come and join in. The newcomers and the three still-seated men offered suggestions. Most of these were Hungarian quasi-folk songs from the 1970s onwards. The singing got louder and the girl who instigated the

performance started to sing with more confidence. All the men seated at the front were singing by now, except for the well-dressed man who seemed to be above such behaviour. Another older man (late 40s) came over from the back of the bar and joined in the impromptu concert. They were all singing loudly, and in unison, while visibly enjoying themselves and constantly exchanging smiles and comments. This went on for about 20 minutes, after which time, they seemed to get bored. The two men went back to their tables at the back and the girl sat down with her friend next to the four men. The older man hovered around for a while but eventually went back to his table at the back of the bar. The two girls continued drinking and talking to the men but they went their separate ways after a while. One of the two drunken men to the right of us kept clapping and making noises after the others stopped singing. This noise was audible throughout the bar and the assertive blonde-haired woman went up to him after a while and asked if he was O.K., which effectively meant 'stop doing that'.

The participants did not know each other before they met that night. This was certainly true for the two women and the four men as they did not acknowledge each other when the men sat down. This also seemed to be the case for the two young men and the older man from the back of the room. They did not engage in lengthy greetings when they joined the people singing

and they went back to their tables as soon as the singing ended rather than staying to communicate. None of the younger men attempted to engage the older man in any conversation.

This was a point of commonality where they came into closer proximity to each other. For that 20-minute period, they all participated in the focused activity (Goffman, 1963) of singing and they reified the hospitability of their social space. It is possible to question the factors that facilitated this communitesque moment. The physical ecology undoubtedly played an important role: the layout of the bar meant people were physically close together, which meant they were more likely to interact. A second important factor was the shared knowledge, in this case of Hungarian songs, which underpinned their experience. These factors point to the necessary conditions that facilitate the formation of such communitesque encounters.

A further issue concerns the agency which created the event and the key actors involved. A number of individuals played a prominent role: the girl who initially stood up, selected the music and decided to start the singing after the professional singer withdrew, the pianist in encouraging people to offer suggestions for songs, and the man who initially stood up and joined in. However, everyone in the vicinity played an active part. Even watching, laughing and clapping encouraged the playful sentiment. The sense of communitesque was generated situationally as people came together and contributed to a specific emotional event in space and time.

Finally, it must be recognised that this sense of communitesque existed for a very short period: this event took place over 15 – 20 minutes. During this time, a number of interests and motivations intersected: the people found novelty, amusement and a sense of commonality for a short period. The social unit was the strongest and most coherent during a very short period. Some of those present were more enthusiastic and came into closer proximity in that brief social moment, although others (i.e., the well-dressed, self-conscious man) were more distanced from it. The sense of commonality was potentially exhausted after a while and the people separated. The two girls began talking to the other men, but it is not clear how their relationship continued after that night. Nevertheless, it is clear that once the moment had passed, general rules of conduct and decorum were reclaimed by most of the participants. The drunken man failed to acknowledge this and kept making noise after the singing had finished. He was subsequently reprimanded.

Admittedly, the ethnographic gaze may seem to project a sense of value on to the moment. Nevertheless, some social event undeniably took place during those 20-minutes, and in that brief period, some sense of coherence and closeness was articulated. They identified with each other albeit in limited ways and for a limited time. From the expressions of mutual amusement and enthusiasm it was clearly evident that those present took part in a creative moment, in which they transformed a commercial hospitality venue into a hospitable space.

Conclusion

This paper has identified three principal strands of discussion. First, I suggested that hospitality should be conceived as an emotional state of being in which the participants are prepared to create a shared existential space in which difference is temporarily suspended. Developing Turner's work on communitas, I have called the social entities that emerge within these liminoid moments: communitesque. Second, I argued that commercial hospitality spaces, and hospitable moments within these spaces, are produced through Lefebvre's spatial dialectic. Within this dialectic, three forces interact: a) the spatial practices which order space and prescribe set of interactional rituals for its inhabitants; b) representations of space, which establish expectations and shape perceptions about behaviour in particular sites; and c) the immediate nature of lived experience within particular sites, which has the potential to create or transform spaces – in this case, turning commercial hospitality venues into hospitable spaces and hospitable moments in which the communitesque is experienced. Third, I suggested that our understanding of hospitality sites and the processes by which they are transformed into hospitable spaces should shift its emphasis from host-guest to guest-guest relationships. I argued that with commercial hospitality sites, consumers have a key role in transforming the experience and in creating new forms of sociality.

These three lines of discussion have a series of implications for our understanding of the relationship between commercial and social hospitality and the spaces in which they are produced and consumed. When considering the nature of commercial hospitality, it is necessary to reconsider the role of the "host" or provider in creating the experience for their consumers or "guests". The provider is no longer the sole creator of experience. This means that the now-popular stage metaphor, and the notion that frontline staff perform as part of the consumer experience, is limited in defining primarily the roles of management and frontline staff. The host or commercial provider is not necessarily the one who defines the qualities of space or the experiences felt by the consumers within. Management and frontline staff become facilitators or orchestrators: the physical and symbolic milieu they provide is an empty signifier, the meaning of which is filled by the consumers in their interaction. It is only when we appreciate the potential power of the guest in constructing hospitality and hospitable moments, that we can fully understand the tense and often shifting relationship between commercial and social forms of hospitality. The provision of commercial hospitality represents a series of possibilities, but it is in the social encounter, sometimes between provider and customer, but most importantly in between consumers themselves that the possibilities of hospitable spaces are realised and brought to life.

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