

PART ONE

# Key Themes in Hospitality Management





# The Nature and Meanings of 'Hospitality'

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Bob Brotherton and Roy C. Wood

## INTRODUCTION

In a volume such as this, devoted as it is to describing a field in state-of-the-art terms, it would be advantageous to pronounce that debates about the meaning and nature of hospitality are at an advanced and sophisticated stage. Sadly, the very opposite is true. To say that the study of hospitality has received little scholarly attention is to articulate a truism. Conceptual development is limited and indeed, systematic analysis of the phenomenon of hospitality is almost completely absent. The academic literature that does exist is scattered, in terms of disciplinary origin, through time and in terms of loci of publication.

From the point of view of both the theory and practice of 'hospitality management' this is both ironic and intellectually problematic. It is ironic because the term 'hospitality management' has emerged globally, but with little apparent reflection as to meaning, as the preferred means of describing the activities of those who provide and manage the provision of accommodation, food and related services in diverse commercial, non-commercial and voluntary contexts. It has come to replace (though by no means universally) such descriptive labels as 'hotel management', 'catering management', 'restaurant management' and 'institutional management'. The irony lies in the fact that in presenting to the world an idea of 'hospitality management' there is little evident understanding of what hospitality 'is' in historical or philosophical terms and little consistency in its application in terms of the delivery of hospitality services. This irony is compounded by the observation that, in a simple commercial sense, the term 'hospitality' offends against the principles of clarity of mission and vision that have been promulgated as central to modern business ideology and the conduct of management. There is a further

suspicion that the Gadarene rush to adopt the term 'hospitality management' has more to do with efforts to professionalize the activities it is meant to embrace than with any meaningful shift in the practice of those activities. Simply put, 'hospitality management' has a veneer of respectability and 'sexiness' not enjoyed by many of those labels it has supplanted. In an industry that is globally notorious for variably poor or mediocre management and employment practices, the term, whether intentionally or not, performs a 'disguising' function. It should also be added that in education, industry and elsewhere, the term 'hospitality management' has something of the character of a wearily adopted flag of convenience, a generic label for summarizing activities that are difficult to classify. This in part reflects long-standing debate about what activities and enterprises should be included in industry classifications of these types of services, and indeed, parallels similar discussions about the nature of tourism (references). In a prescient observation predating much of what has come to constitute debates about the nature of hospitality, Bright and Johnson (1985: 27) commented:

However, despite the widespread adoption of this term [hospitality] and its use to describe the activities of the industry, its meaning is still elusive. Academics have failed to clarify the concept and set it on a firm theoretical base. Meanwhile, industrialists, unconcerned with the finer points of semantics and definition, seek ways in which to operationalize the concept to best advantage.

The intellectual problem attendant on defining the term 'hospitality management' is no obscurantist preoccupation and can be summarized simply: for the most part 'hospitality management' functions without any explicit understanding of the nature of hospitality (Brotherton, 1999a; Brotherton and

Wood, 2000). Within hospitality management itself (that is, the academic infrastructure of the field) there have been occasional efforts at exploring these issues, represented most obviously in collections of papers by Cummings, Kwansa and Sussman (1998) in the USA and Lashley and Morrison (2000) in the UK, but these efforts have not been sustained. The history of ideas is, of course, littered with terms and concepts that are widely used but not clearly defined, and to nobody's particular detriment. Yet in most academic disciplines one encounters at least some reflection on the nature of those subjects which if not consistent over time, or always explicit in the nature of such reflection, mark some serious contribution to the etiological form of the discipline.

At the risk of caricature, it is possible to describe the 'state of the art' in terms of current understandings of hospitality by reference to three, mutually inter-related preoccupations. The first of these is the preoccupation with semantic definitions of hospitality, of seeking to simply and unambiguously circumscribe what is being studied (Brotherton and Wood, 2000). Semantic definitions include those favored by various informed commentators, from dictionary compilers to hospitality academics. The second preoccupation is with semantic definitions of 'hospitality management', which largely emanates from within the community of hospitality academics and practitioners. Whilst ostensibly a more rarefied concern, understanding the received wisdom here is critical to forming more productive strategies for investigating and understanding hospitality as a phenomenon more generally. The third preoccupation focuses on evidential definitions of hospitality which Brotherton and Wood (2000) contrast with the semantic approach. Evidential definitions are precisely those that arise from efforts to understand, interpret and utilize existing diverse documentary sources on hospitality to inform definitional processes in terms of theory building, or more precisely in terms of providing theoretical context. The evidential approach is thus rooted in academic literature and seeks to locate and define hospitality within the 'real world' of evidence, although, as we have asserted, without thus far much evidence of synergy. Nevertheless, attempts at the evidential definition of hospitality provide a bridgehead into consideration of the theoretical sources that have thus far come to inform research in the field. Flowing

from these three preoccupations and, in the manner of a systems theoretical process model, feeding back into them, is a series of research questions or puzzles that constitute something approaching a nascent research agenda. In what follows, the first section of this chapter will review the definitional issues we have described, following the structure of these preoccupations in order to chart the territory of the field as it currently stands. The discussion draws extensively on the authors' previous work in this area (e.g. Brotherton, 1999a; Brotherton and Wood, 2000). This section concludes with some attempt to circumscribe a rather simplistic summary of the main themes thus emerging from the 'study' of hospitality. The second part of the chapter deals with the research puzzles and questions that appear to us to be indicated by a review of extant approaches to the understanding of hospitality and offers a commentary on how these may usefully be addressed in the future.

## SEMANTIC DEFINITIONS OF HOSPITALITY

As intimated earlier, the absence of definitions of concepts is not always inimical to discussion of the substance to which the concepts refer. In the study of hospitality in general, and hospitality management more specifically, definition is problematic because of the lack of general agreement as to what hospitality 'is'. This issue is exacerbated by problems centering on the degree of fluidity that should be tolerated in differentiating and circumscribing the meanings of hospitality in varying contexts, problems that tend to distil to concerns about the 'authenticity' of hospitality in these contexts.

Semantic definitions include those in dictionaries, thus hospitality is the 'friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests or strangers' (*Oxford Quick Reference Dictionary*, 1996: 424) or 'kindness in welcoming strangers or guests' (*Collins Concise English Dictionary Plus*, 1989: 604). Variant terms, such as the word 'hospitable' is defined by *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1970: 405) in very similar terms to 'hospitality' as 'offering or affording welcome and entertainment to strangers ... of persons ...of things, feelings, qualities etc ...Disposed to receive or welcome kindly; open and generous in mind or disposition ...Hence

hospitalableness, a hospitable quality or character'. As with most dictionary definitions, these all share a prescriptive quality in terms of behavior – they indicate to some degree what one should do in order to extend hospitality or behave hospitably.

Amongst hospitality industry academics and practitioners, similarly simple (and often simplistic) attempts at definition are to be found, frequently couched in terms of crude economics with hospitality rendered in terms of the activities of the hospitality industry. Sometimes, such definitions are so general as to be useless, as is the case with Tideman's (1983: 1) observation that hospitality is 'the method of production by which the needs of the proposed guest are satisfied to the utmost and that means a supply of goods and services in a quantity and quality desired by the guest and at a price that is acceptable to him so that he feels the product is worth the price' – a definition that could be a description of almost any economic activity. Our earlier cited dictionary definitions tend to be simple, pragmatic and behaviorally focused, echoed in Tideman-like definitions where the focus, however, is on the nature of the hospitality (industry) product. Thus, Jones (1996: 1) argues that 'hospitality is made up of two distinct services – the provision of overnight accommodation for people staying away from home, and the provision of sustenance for people eating away from home'. The main problem with this view is that it conflates the definitions of 'hospitality' with the commercial hospitality industry. The hospitality industry may well be an expression of some concepts of hospitality but it is but one form of hospitality – definitions like those of Jones and Tideman tell us little about the generic qualities of hospitality. Other academic writers in the hospitality field have proffered more holistic definitions. For example, Cassee (1983: xiv) sees hospitality as: 'a harmonious mixture of tangible and intangible components – food, beverages, beds, ambience and environment, and behavior of staff', a definition modified by Cassee and Reuland (1983: 144) to 'a harmonious mixture of food, beverage, and/or shelter, a physical environment, and the behavior and attitude of people'. These definitions avoid the problem of conflating definitions of hospitality with the hospitality industry but continue to exhibit the underlying assumption that hospitality is something that is, principally, commercially 'created' for consumption.

## DEFINITIONS OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

Definitions of hospitality management parallel the 'conflation model' outlined above, where 'hospitality' is seen as coterminous with the hospitality industry. In the UK, a 1998 study, *Review of Hospitality Management*, commissioned by a key public body, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE, 1998: 2), defined hospitality management as 'having a core which addresses the management of food, beverages and/or accommodation in a service context. Although, as King (1995: 220) points out, 'effective management of hospitality in any type of organization must begin with a clearly understood definition of what hospitality is', 'hospitality management' is a recent term used only to describe the management of industrial hospitality and the associated infrastructure of education and research that supports it. It is perhaps surprising that, following King, it does not seem to have occurred that in seeking to understand what hospitality 'is', a wider interpretation of the term 'hospitality management' could be rather useful in this regard. Freed from its industry context and interpreted more broadly, hospitality management can be construed as the study of how hospitality is managed between individuals, between groups and in the home, or in various commercial and non-commercial public contexts.

Put another way, in terms of the scale and complexity of the provision of hospitality, however defined, approaches to the study of hospitality management that begin with industry contexts are likely to be circular and unlikely to be either analytically profound or complete. As we noted in our Introduction to this volume, there is a semantic circularity at work here: hospitality is what the hospitality industry offers and hospitality management is the management of what is offered, which is hospitality. With regards to the likely absence of analytic depth and completeness in such definitions there are two basic limitations. The first relates to the necessary but reductionist (industry) imperative of defining hospitality and hospitality management purely in terms of products and services and in studying (and delivering) these products and services mechanistically. The dominant model in the analysis of product and service provision in hospitality is characterized by a crude systems

orientation reflected in the treatment of human agency, and in particular, human interaction with hospitality products and services as a cipher: people are seen as acted upon by systems but not as contributing to the mutability or operation of those systems (Wood, 2004). Secondly, applying 'hospitality management' only in the hospitality industry context invites application of an interpretive framework based solely on the repertoire of formal management concepts and techniques to the provision of hospitality products and services. In the wider context of the provision of hospitality such a framework is a blunt instrument that effectively excludes detailed consideration of the social, and indeed sociological/social psychological influences on motivations to provide and receive hospitality. More significantly, the application of management concepts and techniques is viewed as (relatively) intellectually unproblematic as is reflected in periodic attempts to construct theories and 'models' of hospitality management which borrow concepts from 'general' management discourse and seek to adapt these to the hospitality sector (Nailon, 1982).

In summary, as is implied by King's earlier quoted remark, an approach to the study of hospitality management based solely on industry provision and employing the language and concepts of management provides us with an approach that is in essence atheoretical, having no theory of hospitality and, more importantly, offering little prospect of ever developing one.

## EVIDENTIAL DEFINITIONS OF HOSPITALITY

Thus far we have considered semantic definitions of hospitality and hospitality management. Those definitions emanating from within the hospitality 'community' are usually narrow and limiting (although there are honorable exceptions, e.g. Burgess, 1982; Reuland, Choudrey and Fagel, 1985; Hepple, Kipps and Thomson, 1990) and point to a need to consider the nature of hospitality more generically. Evidential definitions of hospitality rooted in an (albeit) limited and dispersed literature offer the potential to do this, not least because the absence of extensive consideration of the phenomenon of hospitality means that the intellectual terrain is relatively easy to map. At the same time however, it must be recalled that the absence of extended

theorizing about, and empirical investigation of, hospitality means that there is little in the way of a coherent theory or theories of hospitality and therefore pronounced limits on potential for generalization.

Most 'broader' discussions of hospitality are to be found in social scientific literature, generated in particular from within the disciplines of philosophy, history, and sociology and range from the highly theoretical and analytic (Finkelstein, 1989; Heal, 1990; Murray, 1990; Visser, 1992; Mennell, Murcott and van Otterloo, 1992; Beardsworth and Keil, 1997; and Warde and Martens, 1998) to the largely descriptive in nature, being primarily concerned with tracing the evolution of the type and incidence of hospitality practices over time (Langley-Moore and Langley-Moore, 1936; Watts, 1963; White, 1968; Borer, 1972). From the earliest days of academic consideration of the nature of hospitality, two themes have run throughout this literature – hospitality as a means of social control, especially the control of 'strangers', people who are essentially alien to a particular physical, economic and social environment, and hospitality as a form of social and economic exchange (including hospitality as a 'gift') (Muhlmann, 1932). We shall consider these themes in turn.

### *Hospitality and the stranger*

The concept of the stranger has enjoyed considerable social scientific attention in the last two decades largely because of interest in the work of German sociologist Georg Simmel (1858–1918) (see for example Frisby, 2002). For Simmel, the stranger was a core figure in the newly, nineteenth century, industrialized and urbanized European landscape. As Pickering (2001: 205) puts it: 'Simmel treated the stranger as a social form at the centre of structures of interaction characterized, from a perspective of belonging, by both remote and close at hand, mobile and yet somehow settled, feared and yet desired'. For Pickering (2001: 204) strangers occupy an inherently ambivalent position in society because they are 'neither socially peripheral nor symbolically central but somewhere peculiarly in between'. They also possess power, a power which derives from their very quality of ambivalence, 'of 'being strange' but not starkly unfamiliar, of being close and yet distant' (Pickering, 2001: 206).

Pickering (2001) tends to focus on superordinate or 'absolute' categories of stranger in terms of ethnicity or those from other countries. In this, he follows a trend established by Bauman (e.g. Bauman, 1990) perhaps the most pre-eminent contemporary sociological commentator on the subject of the stranger. Bauman (1990: 54) asserts that a stranger is not simply someone who is unfamiliar, someone not known well, but, more remarkably, tends to be to a large extent familiar or, put another way, in order to label someone as a stranger we must, generally, know many things about them. What Bauman appears to be arguing is that in order to label someone as a stranger we must be able to draw on contextual knowledge about their differences from other, 'non-strangers', whether these are physical or social. Bauman (1990: 61) comments on the range of possible responses to the ambiguous position of the stranger in society. One such response is to send them back 'where they come from' and Bauman notes that if this is not successful, genocide may follow as an extreme form of restoring order to a social world fractured by the presence of strangers. More often, separation occurs between 'strangers' and the rest of society (as, one presumes, in the creation of ghettos for example). This said, Bauman (1990: 62–63) then asserts that this kind of separation rarely occurs, because, spatially, our society (by which he means, following Simmel, contemporary urban society) encourages high density living and people travel a lot. The consequence of this is that for (Bauman, 1990: 63):

The world we live in seems to be populated mostly by strangers; it looks like the world of *universal strangerhood*. We live among strangers, among whom we are strangers ourselves. In such a world, strangers cannot be confined or kept at bay. Strangers must be lived with.

Even ignoring the seeming unevenness of Bauman's comments (first strangers are distinguishable from non-strangers, secondly they are separated from society, then they are not) it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that he is arguing that 'we are all strangers now'. The consequence of the 'we are all strangers now' argument for Bauman is that – echoing Foucault (1979) – societies develop means of controlling strangers – all of us – through diverse means of conducting surveillance and establishing entitlements. Thus are concepts of 'admission' established such that when moving

around strangers must identify themselves in order to demonstrate their entitlement to enter a space (Bauman, 1990: 65). He cites security guards and receptionists as typical examples of the occupations that manage such identifications and entitlements. A satisfactory outcome to these processes is that some (but by no means all) of strangers' 'stranger-ness' is removed but we cannot remove of all the unsettling aspects of living and dealing with strangers who we constantly encounter in everyday life. At the individual level, Bauman (1990: 66–67) argues, other methods of control exhibit the characteristics of Erving Goffman's concept of 'civil inattention' (Goffman, 1963) whereby in a studied way we do not look at, or listen to, the strangers around us, most commonly evidenced in the avoidance of eye contact.

As might be expected, where the concept of the stranger has been dealt with explicitly in the context of tourism and hospitality, both differences and points of contiguity with the more general social scientific themes caricatured above readily emerge. The most significant conceptual distinction in this literature is that between private and public hospitality and the role of the stranger in each. Authors like Visser (1992: 93) writing from the perspective of the history and sociology of food tend to focus on domestic hospitality:

The laws of hospitality deal firstly with strangers – how to manage their entry into our inner sanctum, how to protect them from our own automatic reaction, which is to fear and exclude the unknown, how to prevent them from attacking and desecrating what we hold dear, or from otherwise behaving in a strange and unpredictably dangerous manner. We remember that we too might one day need a stranger's help. So we behave in the prescribed civilized manner...

Zeldin (1994: 437), from the perspective of cultural history, elaborates the domestic/public axis of hospitality:

Do people find it more or less easy to speak to strangers than they did in the past? The answer can be found in the history of hospitality. Today in the rich countries, hospitality means, above all entertaining friends or acquaintances in one's home; but once upon a time it meant opening one's house to total strangers, giving a meal to anyone who chose to come, allowing them to stay the night, indeed imploring them to stay, although one knew nothing about them. This kind of open hospitality has been admired and practiced

in virtually every civilization that has existed, as though it fulfils a basic human need.

Mary Douglas' work on the social structure of the meal arguably undermines Zeldin's suggestion that *above all*, hospitality means entertaining acquaintances since acquaintances possess many of the characteristics of the stranger, and in terms of domestic hospitality are entitled only to lesser forms of hospitality (see for example Douglas, 1975). This aside, in the quotation above and elsewhere, Zeldin (1994: 438) undoubtedly captures a further dimension to discussions of the private/public divide in hospitality when he talks of the decline of the former which he traces to sixteenth century England:

As soon as the rich appointed almoners to do their charitable work for them, they lost direct touch with their visitors; as soon as distress was dealt with impersonally by officials, hospitality was never the same again [...] Free hospitality was superseded by the hospitality industry.

Zeldin's remarks reflect assumptions about the decline in hospitality not principally in terms of a diminution in the quantity of domestic hospitality, but in the wider cheapening of the nature of hospitality as it becomes increasingly, and nastily, commercialized. Such assumptions in the literature are therefore reinforced by a tendency to imbue moral virtues to hospitality – the hospitality of archaic and pre-industrial societies (or traditional 'domestic-based' hospitality) is 'good' and industrial and post-industrial hospitality ('commercial' hospitality) is 'bad' (Wood, 1994b). This vulgar Orwellianism was foreshadowed by Mauss (2002) and Muhlmann (1932: 464), the latter writing:

The germ of the decay of hospitality is inherent in the institution itself, in that it inevitably extends frontiers and the domain of peace and promotes trade; as a result there arise public legal principles, which go beyond the personal and the familiar and take the place of hospitality ... Primitive hospitality was addressed to the public enemy; in the modern world the distinction between friend and enemy in the political sense is irrelevant. The old hospitality was a social or religious obligation; that of modern times rests with the discretion of the individual.

Muhlmann's complaint is, that in essence, the spiritual qualities of 'traditional' domestic-based hospitality have disappeared to be replaced in the public sphere by a formally rational system of impersonal hospitality based on monetary

exchange. More importantly perhaps, underpinning most of the commentaries mentioned so far is a somewhat romantic view of what might be termed the 'nobility' of pre-industrial hospitality. This is most emphatically seen in the emphasis placed on notions concerning the protection of strangers through hospitality in pre-industrial societies. For Muhlmann (1932: 463) hospitality 'represents a kind of guarantee of reciprocity – one protects the stranger in order to be protected from him'. Visser (1992: 93) points out that in the control of strangers in our 'inner sanctum' abusing a defenseless stranger is unacceptable. Zeldin offers an entertaining historical insight when he informs us of the Albanian host's obligation to entertain strangers and revenge himself upon anyone who harmed them before they reached their next destination (Zeldin, 1994: 437). Heal (1990) in her seminal study of hospitality in early modern England (c. 1400–1700) locates hospitality as a phenomenon emanating from the home, and contemporary hospitality as something comparatively free of overtones of social duty inherent to hospitality in fifteenth to eighteenth century England.

Although, historically, the protection of strangers may have had a self-serving function, a clear theme in the literature is that this was subordinate to a system of social values that emphasized the proffering of hospitality as a duty and virtue, vestigial elements of which remain in the modern domestic sphere but have been largely expunged from modern forms of public provision of hospitality. Indeed, Heal (1990: 1) begins from this position noting that: 'For modern Western man hospitality is preponderantly a private form of behavior, exercised as a matter of personal preference within a limited circle of friendship and connection'. As we have seen, this is a view subsequently echoed by Zeldin (1994) and others. What, in essence, we are offered here is a two dimensional model of hospitality which proposes a distinction between 'historical' hospitality, rooted in domesticity and premised on duty and virtue and highly personal in conception and delivery, and 'modern' hospitality which is publicly organized and premised on forms of 'rational' – usually monetary – exchange (i.e. is predominantly commercial) and is highly impersonal in conception and delivery. It is not a very persuasive or plausible model. Many of the writers cited mistake the importance of impersonality represented by public hospitality.

If Bauman (1990) is correct (and interpreted correctly) that in modern society 'we are all strangers now', then impersonality constitutes a normative feature of nearly all contemporary public social behavior. If impersonality is a social norm then it makes little sense to analyze contemporary hospitality wholly by reference to a putative (and evidentially unsafe) historical benchmark as to what hospitality 'was', especially when that benchmark contains more than an element of apparently romanticized nostalgia.

To summarize thus far, most treatments of the role of the stranger in the provision of hospitality are rooted in (a) assumptions about the distinctions that exist between the provision of hospitality in domestic and non-domestic, usually public commercial, contexts; and (b) fairly simplistic assertions (economic, historical) about how these forms of provision have changed, by implication, mainly for the worse, over time. Although the stranger is placed at the heart of 'historical domestic hospitality', as the person to whom such hospitality was directed, very little is said in the literature about the role of the stranger in modern public hospitality, an asymmetry which taken with the tendency to moralize and romanticize the qualities of pre-industrial hospitality forces us to turn to outwards to the work of those, largely influenced by Simmel, who offer more generalized perspectives on the societal role of the stranger. Even here, clarity is not assured but at least there is a positioning of the stranger in a wider social web, a positioning which, if Bauman (1990) and Pickering (2001), as representatives of this broader approach, are correct, suggest that contemporary social interaction fundamentally comprises the personal and inter-personal management and control of encounters between strangers, albeit there are varying degrees of 'strange-ness' in these encounters.

Such an attitude finds resonance, albeit largely unintentional, in the academic field of tourism and hospitality studies. Although largely in ignorance of these issues, a strand of thinking in tourism and hospitality studies has developed the idea of the impersonality of the tourism and hospitality 'experience'. As Ryan (1991) notes, tourists are strangers and bring with them the threat of social, cultural and environmental damage. The tourist is not, however 'simply a stranger, but a *temporary* stranger ... they are a guest, but

an impersonal guest' (Ryan, 1991: 42). The consequences of this impersonality for hotel hospitality have been characterized by Wood (1994c) in terms of the mechanisms that hotels use to control their stranger-guests. For public hospitality more widely however, the problem of the stranger is compounded by the fact that the majority of persons who participate in public hospitality are not tourists but permanent members of their communities who use the public hospitality facilities rooted in those communities. To what extent are regular users of these facilities justifiably classified as strangers? In our own country, the UK, the culture of the public house is instructive in this regard. We refer to the hostelry we most frequently visit as our 'local' and frequent visitors to a particular hostelry are known as 'regulars'. Are regulars strangers? Following Bauman (1990) we can perhaps suggest that by establishing clear traditions of access and entitlements, some strangers are less strange than others, even in a world comprised entirely of strangers. Indeed, if the desire existed to be mischievous one might argue that Bauman's 'we are all strangers now' is a deliberately self-negating argument – if we are all strangers now then can we speak any longer of 'strangers' as a generic category? The point is not wholly trivial, for as we have seen, in many of the accounts of the provision of hospitality considered in this discussion, the 'stranger' effectively disappears at that supposed point in history where morally virtuous private domestic-based hospitality gave way to amoral commercial, publicly provided 'institutional' hospitality. This is a point to which we shall return subsequent to examination of our second major theme here, hospitality as a form of social and economic exchange.

### ***Hospitality as social exchange***

It is important to begin this discussion by noting that any attempt to link extant commentaries on the role of social exchange in hospitality to broader sociological debates on exchange theory are bound to be limited because writers on hospitality and social exchange have made few connections to wider debates about 'general' exchange and rational choice theory, the intellectual spadework does not exist. The principle reason for this lies in the indebtedness of such writers to concepts of

exchange developed by Marcel Mauss (2002) which emphasizes the role of reciprocity within a system of gift exchange. In contrast, rational exchange theory in its diverse forms emphasizes the workings of the market and, as Shilling and Mellor (2001: 167) observe:

Utility-maximizing exchanges are guided by rationality, rather than normative factors, and produce social relationships rather than being shaped by them. Patterns of exchange do not derive from the pre-contractual foundations of solidarity, but emerge as individuals seek to maximize their interests. Sociality and solidarity ... are *secondary* phenomena arising from rationally interacting individuals.

Shilling and Mellor (2001: 167) contrast rational exchange theory quite explicitly to the work of Mauss who, they claim, refutes a view of exchange as rationally informed utility maximization. At the heart of Mauss's argument is the notion that the apparently voluntary nature of gift exchange 'disguises how it derives from the creation and sustenance of allegiances between families, clans and tribes' and is in fact predicated on complex rules and obligations. Even in modern society, Shilling and Mellor write, Mauss 'emphasized that the emotional values arising from gift exchange can represent the consolidation and creation of bonds between people'. Shilling and Mellor's point is that Mauss' view of exchange has been effectively excluded from consideration in 'mainstream' rational exchange theory. In an earlier review of the field, Scott (1995: 75) goes a little further, noting:

The exchange model of interaction has sometimes been compared with an earlier analysis of exchange ... developed by Marcel Mauss ... [.] Mauss presented an account of the exchange of gifts in tribal societies, but he showed that these exchanges involved a norm of 'reciprocity' that was quite distinct from the economic logic of the market. Although many exchange theorists have attempted to build norms of obligation and reciprocity into their work, this has always been a problematic exercise. Economic theorists, the mainstream of exchange theory, and recent 'rational choice' theories have all been more at home with those forms of action that can be assumed to follow a purely rational 'economic' or 'market' orientation.

Both Scott (1995) and Shilling and Mellor (2001) regard such distinctions as sufficient basis for effectively sidelining accounts of

exchange in the tradition of Mauss (although writers like Davis, 1992 take a less dismissive view). This is perhaps, understandable. Debates revolving around the varieties of rational exchange theory on offer reveal themselves to be highly disputatious even by the standards of modern sociology (Ritzer, 2003) largely because they strike at the heart of the sociologist's trade in seeking, crudely put, to explain social structure and behavior in terms of economic imperatives. It is, however, worth noting, that the distinction in the 'stranger literature' between pre-industrial, domestic hospitality and industrial and post-industrial hospitality characterized by commercial imperatives mooted earlier in this discussion finds a peculiar, even bizarre, reflection in this rather dismissive approach. The preferred and somewhat sentimentalized view of the former in that literature effectively demonizes 'commercial' hospitality as a form of exchange and has very little to say on the subject. The position of writers on exchange theory described above, none of them with an interest in 'hospitality', whether commercial or of any other kind, effectively writes out of intellectual history views of exchange represented by writers such as Mauss (2002) because incorporating such views, in Scott's (1995) words, is a 'problematic exercise'. Descriptively this may be accurate, but as a justification for excluding a particular intellectual tradition from consideration it seems somewhat cavalier. Just as in the 'stranger literature' there is a privileging of 'historical' domestic hospitality and an ignoring dismissiveness about the forms and meaning of commercial hospitality, exchange theorists seem content to privilege those forms of exchange that valorize modern industrial societies while marginalizing those that might be supposed to underpin historical and less complex societies, a point effectively demonstrated by Davis (2000) in her essays on the gift in sixteenth-century France, who shows that the Maussian and other social anthropological approaches to exchange will not simply go away.

Such are the lacunae with which commentaries like this must deal in seeking to elucidate the nature of hospitality. In considering hospitality as social exchange, we do not have the luxury of ignoring the Maussian tradition, but nor do we possess the means to assess the role of hospitality in the context of rational exchange theories. The key work of Mauss in question is *The Gift*, first published according to Lechte (1994) as *Essai sur le donne* in

1923–24. *Contra* rational exchange theory (or at least some varieties of it), Mauss does not view social relationships as being determined by processes of economic exchange but rather there is a complex interaction between economic and social factors in such relationships. Put this way it is hard for a lay reader to credit some of the intent of rational exchange theory since such a statement, experientially, seems obvious. In the Maussian tradition, the inter-relationship between economic and social exchange is taken to involve shared values and trust, not simple economic rationality on the part of social actors alone. In the field of hospitality this view has been most obviously developed in an inexplicably neglected paper by Burgess (1982). Burgess (1982) takes the view that the concept of the gift is best used as a *metaphor* for studying hospitality and hospitable behavior. Five important dimensions of this 'hospitality as gift metaphor' are important.

First, though any gift may have symbolic qualities, those who give seek to enhance the value of their gift by transferring some part of the self to the recipient in order to establish bonds which communicate, variously, degrees of formality in relationships, personal warmth and sincerity. Burgess argues that this evidenced in the '*mein host*' role adopted by many hospitality practitioners (whether proprietors or managers) in an effort to convey something of the 'self' and imprint their own personality on the operation (in the context of small hospitality businesses this has almost become a *sine qua non* for understanding the nature and forms of relationships in these establishments, see, for example, Stringer, 1981, on bed and breakfast providers and, more recently, Lynch, 2000, on the homestay sector).

Secondly, gifts convey information about and confer identity on those who give, just as the nature of hospitality offered in a particular context establishes the commitment and involvement of the host in hospitality provision. Here, Burgess reflects early (and anticipates subsequent) work in the sociology of food and eating and in particular that part of the field which focuses on domestic dining, which, using Bauman's terms, explores rights and entitlements of 'admission' to particular forms of hospitality within the home (see for example Douglas, 1975). Additionally, the degree of hospitality perceived by guests to be on offer has been the subject of some debate. Stringer (1981) notes that in bed and breakfast establishments

the ambivalence of the 'host' over the degree of access to certain parts of the building, or the availability of certain facilities, can create doubts about the extent to which guests are welcome (see also Wood, 1994c).

Thirdly, Burgess argues that gift exchange and hospitality share a preoccupation with assessing the needs and desires of recipients by givers/providers which tends to be focused on optimization of bonds of trust in the exchange relationship. Perhaps one of the limitations of Burgess's 'metaphor' approach is that in 'industrial hospitality' there is a constant tension between formal corporate proclamations of commitment to customer service (themselves often highly metaphorical in content) and the resources available to realize such commitment and service. Put more obviously, large hotel organizations and corporations must treat customers as an agglomeration whereas customers themselves buy in to the metaphor that they are individuals with individual needs, desires and problems that should be addressed individually (Wood, 1994c). It is when metaphor meets reality that the binds of hospitality are truly tested as is witnessed by the whole actual and parallel academic industry centering on improving customer satisfaction and service.

Fourth, Burgess (1982) suggests that gift exchange and hospitality are both oriented towards establishing an 'interaction order' whereby the character of exchanges is developed according to implicit rules negotiated by parties to the exchange. These rules include, *inter alia*, those concerning mutual respect of public and private areas of hotels (Goffman, 1959), participation in the rituals of the hotel organization (Hayner, 1969 (1936)) and maintenance of prevailing standards of decorum (Wood, 1994c).

Finally, the reciprocity involved in social exchanges, together with the rules that are applied in practicing exchanges, assume a shared responsibility for the outcome of the exchange on the part of givers and providers.

The greatest significance of the general Maussian view of exchange and the role of reciprocity, as well as its more specific applications in Burgess's (1982) essay lies in the fact that, notwithstanding the peculiarities of rational exchange theories alluded to earlier, it raises a so far unanswered case for the role of social exchange and reciprocity in (at least historical) analyses of hospitality that cannot, as it were, be brushed under the intellectual carpet. More importantly, concepts of exchange

and reciprocity in the sense outlined here permit us the beginnings of a more even and less romanticized view of the development of hospitality. This is because they clearly suggest that the giving of hospitality, domestically, historically or in pre-modern societies, was never a neutral act, a point somewhat ironically acknowledged by Heal (1990) who otherwise, as we have seen, tends to the rose tinted view of such hospitality. Christian (1979), in possibly the earliest contribution from the perspective of hospitality management to the debates outlined in this essay, additionally notes that, historically, private domestic hospitality might have been offered without charge or monetary expectations but some form of reciprocity *was* expected. One motivation to protect strangers is the desire to control them and in so doing protect one's property, effects and immediate social circle. Another motivation is the possibility of reciprocal benefits that might accrue as a result of such protection, in other words the prospect of some form of exchange benefit inherent to the act of 'giving' hospitality. If this view is accepted then there are further reasons for rejecting the 'nostalgic' view of hospitality, not simply from the viewpoint of the expectation of reciprocal benefits from the proffering of hospitality but also in terms of the seemingly intrinsic 'falseness' that motivates the protection of strangers. Put another way, not only is the integrity of pre-commercial hospitality undermined by the exchange principle but so is the very concept of pre-commercial hospitality promulgated by some writers. This is because the idea of 'protecting the stranger' is, in motivational terms, indivisible from the expectation of some 'return'. This point is reinforced by the philosopher Elizabeth Telfer (1996: 82–87) who in discussing the different meanings of the terms 'hospitableness' and 'hospitality' argues that the former can be motivated by diverse forces including desires for company, the pleasures of entertaining, the desire to please others, and to meet others' needs. Other motives might include a person's allegiance to their perceived duties in matters of hospitality, and even ulterior motives which have nothing to do with a guest's pleasure or welfare. Indeed, Telfer (1996: 82) goes as far as to suggest that 'Being a good host is not even a necessary condition of being hospitable' or, in other words, it is entirely possible to 'achieve' hospitality and hospitableness without being intrinsically motivated by reasons of altruism

or duty, a fact to which the modern hospitality industry more than adequately testifies.

## TOWARDS A WORKABLE SYNTHESIS

So far in this chapter, we have sought to bring together some of the main themes in the (so far limited) study of the concept of hospitality. Meaningful synthesis is difficult to achieve because of the diversity of perspectives involved and, in the case of the sociological literature at least, because some of the themes and issues are, to put it diplomatically, expressed at a high level of abstraction. Nevertheless, it is possible to create some semblance of coherence from the foregoing discussions. Rather than rehearse the arguments reviewed so far, a number of propositions will instead be advanced as representing a consensus on 'the state of the art'. From here, we will identify and elaborate and comment on related research puzzles and questions that may plausibly form the basis of a future research agenda.

The first of these propositions is the simplest: it is that hospitality is an evolving phenomenon that exhibits multiple qualities and characteristics at all and different points in time. To propose that there is some dividing point in history where the qualities and characteristics of hospitality *fundamentally* change is a proposition requiring investigation, not an immutable fact. This is not to say that the nature of hospitality has *not* varied over time, it has, and continues to do so in different contemporary environments, cultures and countries. This diversity is precisely what requires further study rather than some artificially imposed attempt at closure.

Secondly, hospitality as a phenomenon is present in multiple social contexts, there is no simple dichotomy between 'domestic' and 'non-domestic' hospitality. Indeed, the very concepts 'domestic' and non-domestic' are problematic, especially when directly linked to notions of fundamental historical change in terms of a move from a form of hospitality based on personal duty centered on or around private residences to a form of hospitality based on commercial provision in public places. This is because the latter represents a too delimited concept of the non-domestic, ignoring for example non-commercial provision of hospitality in public places.

Thirdly, hospitality is provided for diverse motives but always embraces the expectation of reciprocity. This is not the same as saying that all forms of the provision of hospitality actually involve reciprocity although many, and probably almost all do. What it does mean is that the existence of such expectations creates a particular and common form of social relations that are subsequently negotiated according to the context of provision.

Fourthly, insofar as hospitality is about the control of strangers, then following Bauman (1990) and Ryan (1991) 'we are all strangers now' and tourists are temporary strangers, but the particular forms that tourism and hospitality encounters assume means that 'strangeness' can hardly be treated as an absolute category or indeed one that is especially exceptional. Indeed, both our major literary themes, 'strangeness' and 'reciprocity' seem, in the light of what has gone before strangely inadequate as a basis for a full investigation of the nature of hospitality although their value as an intellectual orientation cannot be gainsaid.

Fifthly here, and following Telfer (1996) hospitality can be provided and experienced without the provision or experience of hospitable behavior. This is a more important point than at first appears, if only because it moves us away from the idea that the concept of hospitality is in some way inseparable from its practice, the assumption that bedevils much of the 'stranger' approach to the topic as we have seen. Further, in pointing to the diverse motivational reasons for providing hospitality, Telfer's view also liberates us from the deterministic ramifications of rational exchange theory whereby social relationships are produced by rational economic actions.

These five propositions are probably all that can be confidently asserted about what we know of the nature of hospitality, anything else is speculation, albeit informed speculation. We could add that all hospitality situations, whether public or private, are imbued with symbolic associations and significance but to do so would be to articulate a commonplace. There can be few social situations that are not characterized by symbolic associations. What remains to be identified and debated are those particular to hospitality. We could also add that hospitality also involves the provision (or at least availability) of physical artifacts in the form of accommodation, food and/or drink. This seems to be a fair operating assumption although it

is theoretically conceivable that hospitality can be experienced as a result of the provision of other kinds of artifacts. What is certain is that these propositions generate a list of questions and puzzles for future research without which there is likely to be little further advance on current forms of discussion. It is to these we turn in the final part of this chapter.

## RESEARCH PUZZLES AND QUESTIONS

For convenience, we have consolidated these puzzles and questions into five categories mirroring our five propositions. They are as follows.

First, what can we say about the different forms that hospitality takes through time and in different places and cultures? What are the drivers of these forms and the changes that are wrought by time and culture? Second, in addition to time and culture, what variations in hospitality occur according to place/location? Third, how are different motives to provide hospitality mediated by time, place and location (including social structure and agency) and how are they molded by, or themselves mold, systems of economic, social and power relations? Fourth, how might the behavioral aspects of hospitality be understood in terms of the treatment of would-be recipients of hospitality? How voluntaristic is the 'hospitality relationship' between two or more parties, what are the benefits that accrue to the parties who engage in it in terms of commensality and the mutual enhancement, if any, of these relationships? Finally, what concepts and frameworks beyond those already considered are most useful for understanding the nature of hospitality and its forms?

These five areas are distinct yet inter-related. They are all concerned with either the dichotomous question of whether hospitality is spatially and temporally universal or contingent and/or the challenging of commonly held assumptions regarding the nature of the exchange relationship between providers and receivers of hospitality (Brotherton and Wood, 2000). They also imply a need, as has been previously argued (Brotherton, 1999b; 1999c) for more conceptual and empirical research at macro and meso comparative, and micro, case-specific levels. Furthermore, these puzzles and questions can only be addressed and answered

by research effort characterized by much greater conceptual depth and empirical detail.

To illustrate this consider the following observation. The question of whether hospitality remains constant over time or between differing spatial entities has often been considered at a rather superficial level. At this level it is possible to make self-evident statements to demonstrate that specific 'forms' of hospitality, in terms of type of location and format, do evolve and change over time. In short, that the places hospitality was predominantly offered at in the past are no longer the primary locations for this activity today. Similarly, the particular form/s most commonly accepted as 'the way to provide hospitality' in the past are not those necessarily viewed as the 'norm' today, the conclusion then being that hospitality today is different from hospitality provided in the past.

The same argument applies to spatial and cultural variation. Because the United Kingdom is spatially and culturally different from say China or Japan, or even France or Turkey, it would be tempting to conclude that the different spatial (i.e. resource, and cultural characteristics) of these countries would evolve different, perhaps unique, views of what hospitality is and the practices it should embody. However, once again, this may be a superficial and misleading conclusion. Although it is axiomatic that different economic and socio-cultural antecedents have influenced the present forms of hospitality in different societies and cultures, and that these do embody visible differences, the question is whether these differences are as fundamental as they may appear to be.

In both the temporal and spatial, generic-specific, dichotomies it is, and clearly has been, according to much of the extant literature, easy to fall into the trap of arriving at conclusions based on 'self-evident' evidence that, because certain obvious differences exist then these differences must indicate the presence of significant, if not fundamental, differences in the motives for the provision, the forms of, behaviors embodied within and the predominant locations where hospitality is provided. The problem with this interpretation is that it fails to distinguish between what has been referred to as the generic core, or essence, of hospitality and the more visible, malleable and contingent periphery (Brotherton, 2002; 2004; 2005; 2006).

Brotherton and Wood (2000) and Brotherton (2002; 2004; 2005; 2006) have produced work designed to address this core/periphery

issue and develop possible approaches for comparative analysis. One analogy used in this work that may have some further value in relation to the issues discussed above is the distinction between species and varieties, or more specifically between genotypes and phenotypes. Even though a particular species may have a large number of varieties the critical issue is not the extent of the variation but the commonality existing across the varieties belonging to a particular species. This is not to say that the nature of the variations are not important in terms of influencing specific behaviors and manifestations – they clearly are – or that these differences do not have any significance or meaning – they clearly do – but the corollary of this line of thinking would be that there are no universals, or at the very least, that if these did exist they would be subservient to the contingent variations. This would deny the primacy, if not the existence, of general principles and universal laws.

In an attempt to avoid this problem Brotherton (2002; 2006) proposes a more systematic approach to developing a 'general theory of hospitality'. This work presents a conceptual model identifying the parameters (natural and human resources), independent (economic, socio-cultural, politico-legal, technological), intervening (domestic and commercial hospitality behavior) and moderating (future expectations) variables influencing the dependent variable of the nature, incidence and forms of hospitality in any given time period and spatial location. Thus, this model explicitly recognizes and incorporates the variables influencing, or determining, the specific form and volume hospitality takes within any temporal – spatial nexus. By postulating the nature and direction of the relationships between these variables the model moves the debate forward by addressing the generic-specific issue through the application of a consistent theoretical framework. The challenge this presents to other researchers is the empirical testing and refinement of this model and its components to verify, or otherwise, its ability to explain, and possibly predict, the common and different aspects of hospitality.

That said, this model really only deals with the macro and meso levels. Though it may be applied to the manifestation of hospitality in a given time period or country, or perhaps to an inter-sectoral or industry analysis, in this form it lacks a suitable operational definition necessary to explore the detail embodied in

apparently different forms of hospitality. If any given manifestation of hospitality is to be compared with another, or others, to discern whether they can be categorized as the same (generic) or different (contingent) then an appropriate basis, or framework, for comparison has to be developed. Without such a common denominator comparison is difficult, if not meaningless.

To address this Brotherton (2002; 2003a; 2006) proposes that hospitality may be conceptualized as comprising four dimensions (spatial, behavioral, temporal, physical) relating to where, why and when hospitality occurs and what is included in it. The spatial dimension is concerned with the where aspect, and therefore facilitates a consideration of the locations and places hospitality occurs. The behavioral dimension focuses on the motives underlying the provision of hospitality and the human processes involved in its delivery. The temporal dimension is concerned with the incidence of hospitality, i.e. hospitality occasions, and finally the physical dimension identifies the physical features and products associated with any given type of hospitality.

In a dual attempt to empirically explore the efficacy of this operational definition and simultaneously address the issue of what hospitality means, or how it is conceived by its commercial recipients (guests and customers), Brotherton's (2003a; 2005) exploratory study produced some interesting findings. This was a multiple case study with two hotels comprising the cases. As hospitality is a multi-dimensional concept and its manifestations, in peoples' experience, are varied the use of a context, i.e. the hotel, as a reference point, or cognitive anchor, for respondents to relate their responses to was an important consideration. By contrast the data collection instrument and process was somewhat less structured, using metaphors as stimuli to elicit responses through face-to-face interviewing of the hotel guests. Although this is a common approach in new product development and market research in general, it has rarely, if ever, been used within this context to ascertain, in a quite unrestrained manner, the guest or consumer view of what they associate with the concept of hospitality. From the results of 89 interviews conducted in the two hotels cross-tabulation and chi square analysis of the data indicated there were no statistically significant relationships between the categorical variables of age, occupation, ethnicity, repeat

visitation, gender, and reason for stay and the responses recorded to the substantive questions asked.

The words the respondents associated with 'hospitality' were overwhelmingly behavioral in nature with only a minority relating to the physical or temporal dimensions referred to above. The words they associated with the physical and service aspects of hospitality in the hotels were identified as being either impressionistic, in terms of the physical and service deliverer characteristics, or judgments made in relation to the performance of the physical or service part of the hospitality experience they were receiving. When the respondents were asked to consider these physical and service aspects as a color, an animal and a season of the year again it was clear that they used these metaphors as vehicles to express their impressions and judgments in a similar manner. Certain colors, animals and seasons were used consistently to record poor impressions and/or performance, and vice-versa.

In a follow-up, as yet unpublished, study to this conducted by the same author and using the same methodology within fast food restaurants very similar findings were obtained. In this study 200 customers were interviewed in two fast food restaurants, a McDonalds and a Burger King, in the UK. The chi square statistics for this data again were not statistically significant indicating once again that the instrument was robust in relation to respondent characteristics variation or, in short, that age, gender, occupation, ethnicity etc do not significantly influence the nature of the words associated with hospitality or the nature of the metaphor chosen to represent their impressionistic or judgmental views of the hospitality being received.

There was also quite a remarkable degree of similarity and consistency in this study's results compared to those in the earlier Brotherton (2003a; 2005) study. In the case of the words associated with 'hospitality' again the majority were behavioral in nature, some were physical or temporal and others were spatial, referring to other types of location or place where hospitality could be expected (see Table 1.1). In this sense the findings not only confirmed the behavioral dimension to be the dominant one in the mind of the guest or customer but also that all four of the dimensions posited by Brotherton (2002) were recognized in these responses.

Again, in common with the earlier study, the words the respondents associated with the physical and service aspects of hospitality in the two

**Table 1.1 Words associated with hospitality**

<i>Behavioral</i>	<i>Physical</i>	<i>Temporal</i>	<i>Spatial</i>
Pleasantness/politeness/manners/courtesy/helpfulness (82)	Comfort (14)	Travel, Tourism	Hotels (8)
Service – great/good, customer, quality (71)	Cleanliness (12)	and Holidays (3)	Restaurants (3)
Friendliness/Warmth (66)			Home (2)
Welcoming (46)			Hospital (2)
Care/attention/being looked after (33)			Bars (2)
Kindness/hospitableness/generosity (23)			

**Table 1.2 Words used to describe the physical aspects of Hospitality in the restaurants**

<i>Impression</i>	<i>Performance</i>
<i>McDonalds</i>	<i>McDonalds</i>
Modern/bright/colorful (16)	Very Nice/good/ excellent (3)
Basic/ functional (12)	Adequate/satisfactory/ average/acceptable (6)
Shabby/tacky/plastic/ unwelcoming/cheap/ Boring (14)	
Clean/tidy (51)	
Pleasant/comfortable/ welcoming (9)	
<i>Burger King</i>	<i>Burger King</i>
Modern/bright/colorful (16)	Very Nice/Good
Basic/functional (8)	Excellent/appealing (6)
Shabby/tacky/plastic/ unwelcoming/cheap/ Boring (9)	OKay/satisfactory/ adequate/ Average (7)
American (13)	
Clean (33)	
Pleasant/comfortable/ welcoming (16)	

restaurants were clearly of an impressionistic or judgmental nature and were also almost identical to those used in the hotels context (see Tables 1.2 and 1.3). The only differences were that there were fewer impressionistic words offered by the fast food respondents to the physical aspects question and more reference to speed, efficiency and regimentation by these respondents in the service aspects responses. However, such variations in the relative volume or specificity of words used may be expected where the physical and service aspects clearly differ. In a hotel the physical environment is more heterogeneous and richer than that evident in a fast food restaurant and, similarly, it is not surprisingly to find much greater reference to speed etc in an environment where this is

**Table 1.3 Words used to describe the service aspects of hospitality in the restaurants**

<i>Service deliverer behavior/characteristics</i>	<i>Service deliverer performance</i>
<i>McDonalds</i>	<i>McDonalds</i>
Friendly/cheerful/welcoming/ polite/pleasant/ helpful (52)	Very good/excellent Good (4) Average/reasonable/ satisfactory (4) Poor/awful (2)
Quick/fast/efficient (17)	
Slow (3)	
Bored/uninterested/unfriendly/ unwelcoming/ unenthusiastic/slow/ careless/robotic/ regimented (25)	
<i>Burger King</i>	<i>Burger King</i>
Friendly/cheerful/ welcoming/polite/pleasant/ helpful (32)	Good (7) Acceptable/okay/average/ Adequate (8) Poor/disappointing/not good (7)
Quick/fast/efficient (21)	
Slow (7)	
Bored/Uninterested/unfriendly/ unwelcoming/ unenthusiastic/slow/ careless/rbotic/ regimented (24)	

expected and known to be one of the operation's keys to success.

The predominant colors, or groups of related colors, chosen by the fast food respondents in relation to the physical aspects of hospitality (see Table 1.4) were virtually identical to those of the hotel guest in the previous study, as were the reasons given for the choices, suggesting that it may be possible in the future to develop a more standardized and parsimonious instrument to elicit, record and analyze this type of data. It would appear that the nature of the color association or connotation for the guest or customer is consistent regardless of the nature of the physical environment. This postulate also

**Table 1.4 Words used to describe the physical aspects of hospitality in the restaurants as a color**

<i>Color group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Reasons why</i>
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Brown	3	3.2	Basic, no frills, indistinct, poor hygiene.
Orange	6	6.4	Bright, cheerful, energizing, fast, pleasant, warm.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Brown/Amber	2	2.0	Stained, needs attention.
Orange	2	2.0	Warm, friendly.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Red/Pink/Lilac/Maroon/Cyan	11	11.5	Predominant color, vibrant, lively, warm, in your face color, welcoming, pretty.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Red/Pink	51	51.0	Friendly, bright, comfortable, energetic, exciting, warm, welcoming, happy, vibrant, bold passion, strong, brash, bold, color of chairs, seating, signs, logo and power.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Beige/Cream/Peach	13	13.7	Bland, dull, neutral, boring, plain.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Green	8	8.4	Predominant color, cool, peaceful, refreshing, calm, relaxing.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Green	2	2.0	Clear, freedom, simplicity, nice.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Blue	13	13.7	Calm, peaceful, pleasant, clean, cold, bland, basic.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Blue	14	14.0	Bright, caring, clean, cold, clinical, modern, neutral, depressing.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Black/Grey/Silver	20	21.0	Standard, bad, boring, dull, outdated, plain, bland, cold, dark, no individuality, ordinary.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Grey/Silver	11	11.0	Bland, basic, clinical, regimented, uninspiring, old, worn out, uniform, mundane.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Yellow/Gold	14	14.7	Bright, cheerful, relaxed, eye catching, fresh, clean, bright, warm, welcoming, color of logo, good quality.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Yellow	11	11.0	Accessible, bright, cheerful, nice, welcoming, alive, happy, pleasant, relaxed, busy.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
White	6	6.3	Clean, bright, neat, light, plain, open.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
White	5	5.0	Clean, clinical, sanitized, sterile, impersonal, little personality, relaxing, quality.

holds for the service aspects of hospitality. Here there was again a remarkable consistency between the colors chosen and the reasons given to explain these choices by the fast food restaurant, and earlier hotel, respondents (see Table 1.5). Although there were some differences and inconsistencies between the two sets of results in terms of whether a color was chosen for negative, neutral or positive reasons there was enough commonality to suggest that

certain colors are always, or at the very least generally, used to denote positive, neutral or negative impressions and judgments. Therefore, in common with the colors and physical aspects above, it should also be possible to develop a more parsimonious instrument in this respect in the future.

The range of animals associated with the physical and service aspects by the fast food restaurant customers was somewhat wider than

**Table 1.5 Words used to describe the service aspects of hospitality in the restaurants as a color**

<i>Color group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Reasons why</i>
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Orange/Gold	3	3.0	Bright, colorful, good vibes, good quality.
Brown/Amber	6	6.0	Bad, dull, poor hygiene, unfriendly, robotic, rude.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Brown	1	1.0	Bad service.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Blue	10	10.0	Calm, clean, polite, easy going, approachable, uniforms, efficient.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Blue	20	20.0	Calm, caring, relaxed, welcome, clean, cool, friendly, honest, genuine, uniforms, confused, miserable, forgetful.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Red/Pink/Purple	26	26.0	Bright, cheerful, pleasant, warm, welcoming, active, quick, enthusiastic, fast, speedy, inviting, synthetic, fake, rushed.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Red/Pink/Purple	18	18.0	Bright, cheerful, rushed, welcoming, friendly, hot, fast, frantic, staff uniforms.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Green	4	4.0	Fresh, good, welcoming.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Green	3	3.0	Healthy, safe, hygienic, warm, simple, boring.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Cream/Magnolia/Beige	6	6.0	Bland, lacks personality, calm, dull, no frills.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Cream/Magnolia	3	3.0	Background color, unoffensive, bland.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Grey/Silver/Black	21	21.0	Robotic, awful, rude, dark, depressed, no smile, unfriendly, bland, banal, regimented, bored, monotonous, dull, lifeless, cold, ordinary, predictable, unenthusiastic.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Grey/Black	15	15.0	Slow, bad communication, dull, boring, disappointing, uninterested, monotonous, drab, not hospitable, no interaction, no enthusiasm, unfriendly.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
White	6	6.0	Bright, fresh, pleasant, clinical, efficient, quick, good service.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
White	12	12.0	Basic, bland, clean, efficient, helpful, not creative, quick, impersonal, plain.

those selected by the hotel guests in the prior study (see Tables 1.6 and 1.7) but there was consistency between the two sets of respondents in terms of the type of animal seen to represent a negative, neutral or negative view of both. Once again this suggest that the same 'reductionist' process referred to above could be applied to this element of the instrument in the future.

Finally, consistency was equally evident between the results from the earlier study and those from the fast food restaurant customers in relation to choosing a season of the year to reflect their impressions and judgments of the

physical and service aspects of hospitality (see Tables 1.8 and 1.9). In short, Spring and Summer were chosen for positive and Autumn and Winter for negative reasons. Moving along a scale from very positive to very negative the arrangement would be – Summer, Spring, Autumn, Winter. Once more this holds out the prospect of using a more standardized form in the future.

Nevertheless more work does need to be done to test these postulates in a wider range of hospitality environments and differing cultures. One issue that could not be resolved in these studies, because of the composition of the samples, was how sensitive the instrument may be

**Table 1.6 Words used to describe the physical aspects of hospitality in the restaurants as an animal**

<i>Animal</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Reasons why</i>
<i>McDonalds</i> Cat	16	16.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Calm, relaxing, capable, clean, cuddly, friendly, warm, happy, slow, tame, ordinary, common.
<i>Burger King</i> Cat	23	23.0	<i>Burger King</i> Calm, clean, tidy, pleasant, warm, welcoming, friendly, relaxed, tame, well groomed.
<i>McDonalds</i> Horse	1	1.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Reliable, steady.
<i>Burger King</i> Horse	2	2.0	<i>Burger King</i> Not glamorous, gets the job done, just there to do a job.
<i>McDonalds</i> Bear	5	5.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Big, clumsy, sturdy, cuddly, enveloping, bright, clean, no fuss, no extras.
<i>McDonalds</i> Elephant	6	6.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Big, noisy, slow, sturdy, slow.
<i>Burger King</i> Elephant	5	6.0	<i>Burger King</i> Large, inviting, trustworthy, hardwearing, clumsy.
<i>McDonalds</i> Dog	13	13.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Friendly, helpful, warm, welcoming, loyal, reliable, comforting, familiar, pleasant, pleased to see you.
<i>Burger King</i> Dog	13	13.0	<i>Burger King</i> Clean, tidy, comfortable, cute, friendly, convenient, loyal, warm, inviting, soft, cuddly, energetic, scruffy, shaggy, raggy.
<i>McDonalds</i> Bird	4	4.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Common, nothing special, staff shuffle around the restaurant, nice if well kept.
<i>Burger King</i> Bird	14	14.0	<i>Burger King</i> Vibrant colors, bright, attractive, colorful, dynamic, American style décor, different colors.
<i>McDonalds</i> Insect	6	6.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Unclean, dirty, poor service.
<i>Burger King</i> Insect	1	1.0	<i>Burger King</i> Damp, dirty toilets.
<i>McDonalds</i> Rabbit	5	5.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Calm, serene, friendly, soft, homely, welcoming, neat, quiet.
<i>McDonalds</i> Fish	8	8.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Calm, chilled, clean, peaceful, streamlined, well designed, boring.
<i>Burger King</i> Fish	4	8.0	<i>Burger King</i> Calm, tranquil, appealing, all the same, no difference.
<i>McDonalds</i> Pig	6	6.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Unhealthy food, unhealthy people, manners.
<i>Burger King</i> Pig	2	2.0	<i>Burger King</i> Dirty.
<i>McDonalds</i> Cow	1	1.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Burgers
<i>Burger King</i> Cow	7	7.0	<i>Burger King</i> Not clever, you take what you want and leave, providing food, beef.
<i>McDonalds</i> Monkey	4	4.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Appealing to kids, circus atmosphere, fun.
<i>Burger King</i> Monkey	3	3.0	<i>Burger King</i> Bright, bubbly, helpful, grabs attention, in your face.

*(Continued)*

**Table 1.6 cont'd**

<i>Animal</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Reasons why</i>
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Reptile	2	2.0	Cold, hard, not lovable, not warm.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Reptile	4	4.0	Chirpy, fast, physically sound, old, worn out.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Rodent	1	1.0	Unattractive.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Rodent	3	3.0	Routine, dashing about, doesn't do a lot, not noticed.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Other Animals – Sheep (3), Sloth (2), Armadillo (2), Goat (2), Hippo (2), Donkey, Fox, Hyena, Lemming, Panda, Squirrel, Wombat.	18	18.0	Follows orders, follows the crowd, white and comfortable. Little effort, slow, dull. Hard, uncomfortable. Dull, boring, unwelcoming. Big, fat, tranquil, spacey. Happy meal toys. Pessimistic. Awful music. A bit of a joke, follows what other do. Gentle. Uncomfortable, unapproachable. Filthy.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Other Animals – Zebra (2), Buffalo, Giraffe, Sloth, Dinosaur, Donkey, Hippo, Panda, Skunk, Wolf.	11	11.0	Black and white floor and tiling. Chaotic but patterned. Two-tone coloring. Lazy, boring. Old retro-feel, cool, not bad. Works for money, alone, no motivation. Adequate. Always eating. Black and white. Loud, aggressive presence felt.

**Table 1.7 Words used to describe the service aspects of hospitality in the restaurants as an animal**

<i>Animal</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Reasons why</i>
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Dog	23	23.0	Caring, friendly, helpful, polite, loyal, obedient, quick, simple, attentive, welcoming, subservient, likes to please.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Dog	14	14.0	Docile, safe, loyal, eager to please, willing to help, friendly, fast, efficient, obedient, quick, reliable.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Cat	17	17.0	Approachable, clean, reliable, friendly, happy, polite, pleasant, non-threatening.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Cat	24	24.0	Attractive, beautiful, friendly, helpful, temperamental, harmless, tame, quick, efficient, timid, dependable, free-thinking, subtle.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Fish	10	10.0	Efficient, quick, fast, kind, pleasant, ruthless, friendly, tired, helpless.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Fish	6	6.0	Cold, efficient, neutral, nothing special, shuffling around, inoffensive.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Insect	8	8.0	Filthy, slow, not organized, not expressive, agitated, likely to snap, all follow the same orders.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Insect	9	9.0	Annoying, fast, disorientated, many colors, efficient.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Sheep	5	5.0	Follows orders, same standard pattern, no extras, quiet, slow, unexciting.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Sheep	3	3.0	No difference in personalities, staff stick to the corporate instructions, a lot of staff.

*(Continued)*

**Table 1.7 cont'd**

<i>Animal</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Reasons why</i>
<i>McDonalds</i> Reptile	5	5.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Doesn't go anywhere, slow, staff are hopping around to serve orders.
<i>Burger King</i> Reptile	6	6.0	<i>Burger King</i> Fast, quick, precise, slow, unresponsive.
<i>McDonalds</i> Sloth	3	3.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Lazy, incompetent, slow, unenthusiastic.
<i>Burger King</i> Sloth	6	6.0	<i>Burger King</i> Lazy, slipshod, slow, laidback, rude.
<i>McDonalds</i> Rodent	4	4.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Busy, unhappy, fidgety, no personality, small, indiscriminant.
<i>Burger King</i> Rodent	4	4.0	<i>Burger King</i> Doesn't do a lot, expressionless, quiet, quick.
<i>McDonalds</i> Monkey	4	4.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Circus atmosphere, fun, funny.
<i>Burger King</i> Monkey	2	2.0	<i>Burger King</i> Helpful, not serious.
<i>McDonalds</i> Bird	1	1.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Cheerful.
<i>Burger King</i> Bird	4	4.0	<i>Burger King</i> Fast, staff run around like headless chickens.
<i>McDonalds</i> Other Animals – Rabbit (3), Donkey (2), Fox (2), Bear, Elephant, Kangaroo, Goat, Pig.	12	12.0	<i>McDonalds</i> Calm, serene, friendly, soft, neat, quiet. Hard working, not enjoying their job, doing a good job. Fast, quick, unaware of its motives and morals. Cuddly. Big style. Quick. Only interested in getting food. Grunting, cheerful.
<i>Burger King</i> Other Animals – Horse (3), Elephant (2), Cow (2), Pig (2), Rabbit, Hyena, Mule, Panda.	13	13.0	<i>Burger King</i> Fast, friendly, hardworking. Large, inviting, doing what is necessary, no customer interaction. Lazy, providing food. Fatty food, offering to increase meal size. Jump for attention and then back away when approached. Always smiling. Not fast. Kind.

to different cultural perceptions and cognitions of colors, animals and seasons. Because the composition of the samples in these two studies was dominated by White-European respondents the opportunity did not arise to test this particular issue. However, given that both the general literature on comparative, cross-cultural research and Brotherton (1999c; 2000; 2003b) identifies the crucial importance of establishing an appropriate, valid and reliable 'comparative base', this work has initiated a process designed to develop such a basis for comparison and thus has moved the hospitality field closer to a position where both the conceptual basis of hospitality and the ability to systematically

apply a comparative framework to address the generic-specific debate can proceed with greater clarity.

As we noted earlier in this chapter, there is a strong underlying theme in the hospitality literature *per se* that takes the view that participation in any hospitality exchange situation, and associated relationship, is voluntary on the part of the parties entering into this exchange. In many respects this may be true as the vast majority of hospitality situations are non-coercive in the strict sense of the term. People generally participate in hospitality exchanges without being forced to do so. However, to view voluntarism as a universal principle and

**Table 1.8 Words used to describe the physical aspects of hospitality in the restaurants as a season**

<i>Season</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Reasons why</i>
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Autumn	32	32.3	Dull, past its best, boring, colors are red and brown, drab, not bright but not sunny, décor, interior tables.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Autumn	19	19.2	Bland, plain, cool, dull, past its best, predominant colors, not memorable, quiet, sad, unenthusiastic.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Winter	21	21.2	Bare, minimal, cold, grey, depressing, miserable, uncomfortable, lonely, harsh lighting.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Winter	20	20.2	Calm, quiet, cold, colorless, dreary, unwelcoming, dark, gloomy, depressing, nothing exciting.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Spring	26	26.3	Fresh, clean, warm, bright, airy, exciting, cheerful, color scheme, youthful.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Spring	21	21.2	Warm, welcoming, bright, clean, hope, light, optimistic, fresh, lively, colorful, blossoming.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Summer	20	20.2	Bright, colorful, comfortable, easy going, fresh, sunny, warm, vacation, fun, relaxing.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Summer	39	39.4	Alive, vibrant, warm, attractive, pleasant, cheerful, bright, hot, lively, happy, summer colors, refreshing, big.

**Table 1.9 Words used to describe the service aspects of hospitality in the restaurants as a season**

<i>Season</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Reasons why</i>
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Autumn	15	15.0	Bad, boring, breezy, dull, mediocre, no excitement, no extremes, in between warm and cold, impersonal, not sunny.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Autumn	22	22.2	Average, bland, cold, dark, dull, dying, neither good nor bad, sad, unenthusiastic, poor attitude, fake smiles.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Winter	31	31.0	Miserable, cold, uninviting, depressing, frosty, dull, gloomy, lonely, tired, unaccommodating.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Winter	23	23.2	Grimy, cold, colorless, unwelcoming, slow, unhappy staff, miserable, dull, gloomy, disappointing, rushed.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Spring	24	24.0	Bright, airy, happy, sunny, cheerful, fast, fresh, clean, pleasant, appealing, youthful, warm, inviting, friendly.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Spring	23	23.2	Bright, cheerful, busy, clean, fresh, new beginnings, new life, young, friendly, helpful, smiling faces.
<i>McDonalds</i>			<i>McDonalds</i>
Summer	30	30.0	Bright, attractive, colorful, friendly, easy going, pleasant, happy, hot, pressured, smiling, polite, approachable.
<i>Burger King</i>			<i>Burger King</i>
Summer	31	31.3	Busy, cheerful, warm, happy, friendly, relaxed, hot, smiling, welcoming, pleasant.

characteristic of hospitality exchanges may be too simplistic and, in some cases, probably incorrect. This issue really revolves around how 'voluntarism' is conceived. If we take an extreme view and see this as the absence of physical coercion then it may well be a valid proposition. However, there are other forms of coercion, psychological, emotional, social, economic etc., that may have a role to play in making, at least some forms of hospitality less voluntaristic than is widely assumed.

We will explore these issues presently but prior to this it should also be noted that they are closely associated with the 'host-guest' or 'self-other' dichotomy. Much of the literature focusing on these, provider-receiver, issues takes the view that there is a munificent relationship between these two parties, and that the host or provider of hospitality seeks to protect and keep safe the guest or receiver of the hospitality while he/she is within the host's domain. This is closely connected with the welcoming, valuing and protection of the 'stranger' discussed earlier. Indeed the French philosophical tradition (see Jelloun, 1999; Bowlby, 2000) consistently invokes the view that 'true', 'pure' or 'authentic' hospitality is given and received in a totally voluntaristic and selfless manner. The corollary being that any ulterior motive or influence contaminates this action and renders it as contrived, false or inauthentic. If purity is viewed in such a philosophical manner then this may be true but real world behavior invariably is not predicated upon such lofty thought. Most people's behavior, including that associated with hospitality, is driven by more instrumental motives that, in turn, modify not only the motivation and reasoning lying behind the provision of hospitality but also its manifestation.

One of the dominant forms of social connectivity and loyalty, whether for voluntary or more pre-determined reasons, over time has been the 'group'. The group, whether based on tribal kinship, caste, religion, social class, family, economic activity, or other criteria, and regardless of whether it is conceived at macro or micro levels always exhibits one key characteristic; a centripetal force that serves to bind its membership into a cohesive entity. Of course, the strength of this force is variable but where it is stronger it serves to differentiate the group more from other groups by encouraging, if not coercing in varying

ways, its members to see their individual self-interests as synonymous with those of the group as a whole. Conversely, where the centripetal force is weaker the group becomes less cohesive and the interests of its members become more individualistic and self-serving. In short, the very antithesis of a cohesive group, centrifugal forces come into play.

The point of this is that, for the individual, voluntarism is relative, and therefore it is hard to see how hospitality, in the vast majority of its manifestations, can be regarded as pure and authentic when there is always an instrumental referent emanating from the nature of the individual's connectivity within the milieu that he/she exists. This may be something as relatively esoteric as a spiritual belief, i.e. that the person's God wishes them to express their religiosity and faith through engaging in the provision of hospitality to others less fortunate than themselves (see Murray, 1990) or something far more earthly and concrete, for example, because they believe that by providing hospitality to others in a position to assist their economic well being is a rational and sensible thing to do, i.e. corporate hospitality being one instance and political hospitality another (see Hollander, 1981). One of the major underlying issues that is said to transgress all, or nearly all, instrumental hospitality exchanges is the, invariably implicit, expectation of reciprocity as a product of the obligations established between the participants within the act itself. What is rarely, if ever, explored in this context is the nature of the power relations and dynamics established by, and operating within this exchange, and their implications for any future exchanges, a point recognized by Sherry, McGrath and Levy (1993) who, in their exploration of the darker side of gift giving, suggest that these types of exchange can engender high levels of anxiety amongst the participants.

Most societies, both those existing in the past and today, have tended to value the concept and practice of hospitality, albeit in varying forms and to varying degrees, because it tends to have a moderating influence on the tensions inherent within any society that has structural inequalities of one kind or another. Prior to the establishment of propertied, class societies Bell and Henry (2001) argue that the tribal societies pre-dating this change embodied 'the rule of hospitality' which constituted the basis for a universal social relationship within such

societies. Under these conditions hospitality – ‘the mutual right and obligation to receive and provide subsistence’ (Bell and Henry, 2001: 211) – was a kinship duty because of the collective nature of social and economic organization and necessary for the survival of the tribe. This collective equality, and hence other relationships based on it, disappears with the advent of money, debt and private property that, in turn, leads to increasing commodification and a desire to establish quantitative equivalence within exchange relationships to reflect relative value within an exchange. Over time this migrates to societies that reflect these changing power relationships, within which power elites and dependents of one kind or another signify the asymmetrical ownership and control over the means and processes of production and survival. As this evolves, the provision of hospitality from those who control these means and processes becomes a political imperative, albeit often dressed in the guise of a social or religious obligation, to moderate any potential revolutionary tendencies within the mass of the population who are dependent on the power elites. So, for example, from feudal times, when the power elites provided hospitality for those less fortunate while simultaneously exploiting them (White, 1968), through ameliorating charitable provision in early industrial societies to more contemporary concepts of welfare provision in advanced societies the establishment of obligations and expectations of reciprocity have served to act as a form of social control. Thus, the particular form that hospitality takes, whether viewed historically or contemporaneously, is bound to vary because of temporal and/or spatial variation in the conditions that give rise to it. On the other hand, the underlying reasons for its provision and, in turn, their basic purpose/s have in essence not changed since the emergence of propertied societies. They have always been, and continue to remain, those designed to primarily protect the interests of the provider, whoever and whatever that may be.

Regardless of whether this is viewed from a societal, or a more macro-perspective, or one closer to most peoples’ experience of hospitality, i.e. at a domestic or commercial level, the principles hold. In commercial hospitality provision there are hosts and guests and essentially the same expectations of obligation and reciprocity, although the issues of direct monetary exchange do muddy the waters somewhat. Nevertheless, the provider has its vested interests and seeks to

inculcate these in the more explicit ‘contractual’ obligations pertinent to the exchange rather than these being known as unspoken ‘norms’ by the receiver. What is different in commercial hospitality provision from that provided on a non-commercial basis is that the basic structure of the situation and process moves from being dyadic to triadic. This complicates matters and leads to competing loyalties, as Mars and Nicod’s (1984) *The World of Waiters* study demonstrated. There are now (at least) three groups directly involved in the hospitality exchange; the provider (the company), the guest (the consumer) and the deliverer (the staff) that is, in turn, mediated by monetary exchange.

What is interesting here, and something that has received relatively scant attention in the literature, is that although commercial hospitality exchange environments include rules, roles and rituals, in common with non-commercial environments, these are likely to generate different hospitality ‘repertoires’ because, at least in part, the assumption of voluntarism cannot be equally applied to the participants in the exchange. Although it would be reasonable to assume that the companies involved in providing hospitality have voluntarily, within competing commercial options, decided to enter into this form of business this cannot be so easily assumed in the case of the other two parties. While, on the one hand, it is probably true to say that, in most cases, the people who work in the hospitality industry have not been coerced into doing this against their will it may be equally fair to comment that, on the other hand, many such employees make this choice on the basis that it provides a job with income but not on the basis that it is their ideal form of employment. Similarly, in the case of the guest or consumer, some do make the choice to stay in a hotel or eat out etc on a free and voluntary basis. Equally, however, others do not. For example, people traveling on business, whether internationally or domestically, are doing so as an integral part of their job and the necessity of using commercial accommodation and/or eating establishments while engaged in this travel is a forced choice. Under these circumstances, where employees may not really wish to be hospitality deliverers and guests may not particularly wish to stay or eat in a hospitality establishment, at best it is clear of quasi-voluntarism that the traditional host – guest view of hospitality, and all that this implies, needs to be modified.

## CONCLUSION

In our Introduction to this volume we noted that investigations of the concept and meaning of 'hospitality' have been relatively sporadic and, more recent investigations, principally from within the community of hospitality researchers, have amounted to very little. The two are connected. Recent investigation of the concept of hospitality has been unsystematic, reflecting both the piecemeal tradition in hospitality (management) research as well as reluctance to engage with the range of philosophical and social scientific literature where consideration of the nature of hospitality has taken place. This collection of essays edited by Lashley and Morrison (2000) evidences this. While constituting the major recent resource for debates about the nature of hospitality, the volume consists principally of a disparate, if fascinatingly valuable, collection of fragmented insights into the topic.

Of course, to argue in this way is to court accusations of both inconsistency and 'control freakery'. In respect of consistency, it can be fairly argued that consideration of the nature of hospitality and hospitality management outside the community of hospitality management researchers has itself been piecemeal. Accordingly, for an area of investigation still in its infancy, there is merit in garnering as many perspectives as possible in order to generate insights and opportunities for further investigative refinement. On the 'control freakery' question, an objection might be that there is little to be gained in seeking to generate highly delimited frameworks for 'testing' particular investigative routes as these may embody the possibility that some such routes will be effectively closed off. Neither of these positions really holds much water. There can be no reasonable objection to the generation of as many insights as possible in investigating and refining any phenomenon. However, if this activity studiously avoids both establishing linkages to what has gone before and contributes little to conceptual refinement and understanding, then what is left is a situation best represented by the popular misunderstanding of the meaning of Occam's razor, of multiplying entities beyond necessity. On the question of developing models to 'test', we are well aware of the positivist overtones of such a position. Nevertheless, a reading of that literature which has addressed the

meanings of hospitality does suggest profitable avenues of investigation that are in danger of being ignored. Negligence for negligence's sake does not constitute a rational research strategy.

The nature of hospitality is an important topic of research and not only for those engaged with hospitality management. It is, as we have seen, largely neglected in philosophical, economic and sociological research, it is on the periphery of social investigation like other, 'taken for granted' (even by sociologists!) aspects of human behavior such as food and eating (the latter, as we noted in the Introduction to this Handbook, a not infrequent complaint of sociologists of food). For hospitality management, the importance of *systematically* extending our understanding of the concept cannot be underestimated. It is not simply a question of 'knowing what we are talking about'. It is about seeking to build a framework that may have conceptual and methodological utility in supporting investigation of the wide range of subject applications applied to 'hospitality management' represented in this volume.

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