

The interstices of hospitality

Luiz Octávio de Lima Camargo

School of Hospitality and Tourism, Anhembi Morumbi University, São Paulo, Brazil

This paper is a review of previous works, and it shows the notion of hospitality situated at the confluence of the concepts of interpersonal relationships, virtue, rites and commercial/non-commercial exchange. In doing so it discusses the most significant authors who have studied this topic. It distinguishes between the philosophical approach, which studies the ethical and aesthetic aspects of hospitality, and the approach of the social sciences, which study the dynamics of hospitality within the context of relationships in society. Finally, it discusses the hospitality of Brazilians.

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Introduction

The title of this article deserves an initial explanation. In one of my first texts on the topic (2003), I outlined a picture that had two categories, time and space, concepts that define what I called the domains of hospitality. Unlike Lashley (2003), who drew an interpretative picture of the dynamic of hospitality, I prepared a descriptive scheme, with times (reception, accommodation, and food; I even took care to add entertainment) and spaces (domestic, public and commercial, plus virtual, which are becoming increasingly important in current social life). The cross-referencing of times and spaces resulted in sixteen study object possibilities.

My objective was to show the whole extent of the hospitality field of study. Such care was necessary because of the students who arrived and asked themselves what to study under the aegis of this title. In this same text, I have been careful to comment on the precarious nature of schemes, like the descriptive formula of social phenomena. They are useful as a key: they serve to open a door and show the mystery hidden behind it. But once the mystery has been unveiled, this key is no longer useful. On the contrary: it also has the harmful property of giving the illusion of totality and this produces a sensation of being satiated, which enriches the spirit, as if a type of lethargy had immobilised our curiosity.

It is therefore, unnecessary to continue going over the same ground again, or rectifying, removing or adding new categories. As Bachelard (1996, 9) says, the geometrisation of the real is a 'first representation founded on an *ingenuous realism of spatial properties*': the most important thing is to work below the space, at the level of the essential relationships that sustain both the space and the phenomena.

Hospitality, over and above being an observable fact, is a virtue we expect when we come up against something strange (and everything strange is also a foreigner), someone who is still not, but *should* be recognised as the other. Everything happens as if the most important sense of the notion is to ask oneself if this encounter resulted in a strengthening or fraying of the social bond that was initially

sought. When leaving home, the host becomes a guest in the spaces in which he moves, even though he may possibly go back to being a host in his paid or voluntary work. In any event, the rule of the city is anonymity disguised in the rules of urbanity, which is fundamentally rehearsed hospitality. People get used to anonymity and urbanity, which teach us gestures for both accepting and refusing contact: for example, they teach us to avoid talking to people we don't know, or that we must treat them with due formality, or that we must avoid allowing emotions to come to the surface in the presence of others, etc. Therefore, what we see is a lack of interest in having any contact, inhospitality – or even hostility, which frequently arises from inhospitality itself. 'It is easy to be hospitable with eleven people; but it's difficult to be the same with six billion people' as the isolated thinker, Konrad Lorenz (1988, 12), the creator of ethology, recalled on the subject when talking about the first sin of civilisation, the loss of human warmth.

Sociologist Craig Calhoun (2014) observes that within the changes that oblige the social sciences to seek a new approximation with social reality, globalisation and individualism are the two logics that together mark out the space in which research is increasingly being called upon to move. Hospitality is moving in a different direction. It is interested in proximity and the encounter and this is perhaps its main meaning when faced with the logic of globalisation and individualism. Analysing the inhospitality and hostility of people who live in Paris towards people who have no documents, notably immigrants, and the existence of the ignored and surprising forms they have of welcoming and taking care of them, Anne Gotman (2013) talks about hospitable *interstices*.

We might say that hospitality happens in the cracks of the dominant inhospitality. That is why we are surprised with attitudes that are full of human warmth, whether from people who dedicate their lives to recognising others, to serving them, whether from a stranger who not only gives us information, but who also takes a few minutes of their

time to help us, or whether from a salesperson in a store or the receptionist of a hotel, all of whom recognise a particular situation and show us so much kindness that we become confused, because it is so unexpected! The *domains* of hospitality happen in reality in the *interstices* of daily life, a story marked by inhospitality, when not by hostility. Hence the meaning of the title, which leads us neatly into thinking about the topic: hospitality analyses interpersonal relationships as a rescue, an exchange of human warmth in an increasingly inhospitable, when not hostile, social environment, emphasising the possibilities that remain in the contemporary world for manifesting or recreating social ties.

The nature of the exchange is equally a dimension of the subject to be studied. The bond established by the exchange may result in a genuine manifestation or a studied and rehearsed one (translated into protocols); it may be not just an ethical attitude, but an aesthetic one too, when it becomes 'a purpose without end', in the words of Kant, but in a veiled or clear way it may also hide a material interest (a business deal) or immaterial interest (prestige, ostentation, power). With this thinking, which I imagine to be in evolution, I felt the need to try and deconstruct the notion of hospitality, in such a way as to integrate all the active currents of thinking, without delegitimising them or underestimating them, but merely contextualising them.

There are various difficulties when it comes to understanding the theoretical meaning of hospitality (in part already commented upon): its scope and what we might call its double dimension – that of social fact and value. Hospitality, as a way for individuals and families from different places to socialise, lodge together or mutually and reciprocally enjoy services, is a question that is at one and the same time both up-to-date and very old, which refers us back to the proximity between hospitality and hostility, the bourgeois virtue associated with the idea of home and of greatness, assuming that we can receive people without embarrassment, etc. Hospitality can also be a collective dimension and a character of obligation that, for a very long time, was associated with religion and the idea of charity and that today depends, above all, on public services and the domain of social protection (public hostels, hospitals), or with the commercial domain (notably hotels) (Gotman 2008, 116).

In this way, hospitality can also be understood as a dimension of the rights and restrictions imposed on foreigners and immigrants, being transposed from what Raffestin (1997, 166) calls frontiers, the limits of a material order, and others that constitute the standards, that are of a moral order, that are imposed on foreigners, the displaced, refugees, etc., and that govern the right of entry, conventions, etc., and that clearly define the interior and exterior. The passage from interiority to exteriority supposes an authorisation or an invitation, regulated exactly by a rite, that of hospitality. So hospitality designates the ritual of visiting and receiving friends at home, socialising with friends (and even with people we do not know) in the street, in companies (linked or not to hospitality services in themselves) and even the virtual forms of human contact. It is almost as if this term accompanies the different actions of our daily lives in an apparently total way that both frightens and confuses us. It is a 'total social fact' (LANNA, 2004).

This confusion is even greater when we notice that hospitality also designates a value. Thinking about the term, it is as if we were dealing almost with a superego showing us how human relationships *should* function. If it were not thus, the word hospitable would merely designate the encounter and not, as usually occurs, the encounter that stimulates the human bond. Hospitality does not here designate just all the ways in which people meet. Also implicit in this is the option-obligation that both behave appropriately in the meeting. This obligation comes from unwritten laws and, as such, its non-observance generates some form of hostility, or 'hostipitality' (in the expression used by Derrida).

There is also a third difficulty. It comes from the nature of the exchange that takes place in the ritual of hospitality. This exchange may be friendly and loving, marked by the genuine desire for human contact (this is what we usually think of when faced with the term) or mediated by a payment, by money. What's the difference between one and the other? I know I must say 'thank you' to an unknown individual who gives me information, but must I also say it to someone who sells me something and charges me a price that is higher than I expected, even though it is fair (at least from the viewpoint of the seller)? Ideologies are present in this discussion and make a view of the whole difficult, frequently in a Manichaeian way. After all, we already know the process to which the concepts of consumption, commerce, utilitarianism, etc. were submitted. Douglas and Isherwood (2004), Sahlins (1979) and Bourdieu (1996) show consumption as being something more than its simple monetisation, as a phenomenon and as a key for understanding social relationships and symbolic systems.

Talking about domains or interstices responds to a general view of the theme, leading me to take advantage of the occasion to update a reflection that I have been working on since 2002. The point of view adopted in this piece is a notion of hospitality understood as a human relationship, in which an exchange takes place between someone who receives (host) and someone who is received (guest), the development of which may result in a pacifying effect, sentiments that range from friendship, love and human warmth (an expression of virtue) to some level of conflict, aggressiveness and hostility. The dimension involved in the notion of hospitality must lead to some form of deconstruction for understanding its meaning. To do so I shall divide this reflection into the components I believe are essential to the concept of hospitality; the four concepts that, in my opinion, are integrated and will be treated as such here are: human relations, virtue, ritual and exchange. Unfortunately, other concepts could also be developed, but are here merely mentioned *en passant*: hospitality as a paradigm, urbanity, etiquette, etc.

Hospitality as an interpersonal relationship

'There is no social bond or culture without a hospitality principle' (Derrida 1997). All cultures have their principles, unwritten laws of hospitality, which have been inherited in unwritten, ancestral ways from the laws that govern human relationships both in and out of the home. The laws are the same. The local ways of exercising these laws are part of local hospitality, principally in the shape of the rules of etiquette.

Hospitality, therefore, is more than one previously outlined field of study, as occurs in the pure and applied sciences. It is, as Godbout (1998) says with regard to the gift (and hospitality is a gift), a new paradigm for the study of human relationships, a new perspective, a new look at the scenes of encounter that are studied in science and imagined in fiction.

The interpersonal relationship is the basic component of the hospitable scene, hence the importance of dwelling a little longer on this matter. It is here worth remembering and retrieving the classic sociological notions of primary relationships, marked by intimacy, and secondary relationships, marked by etiquette. The former seek approximation, affection and the expression of feelings; the latter recommend distance and politeness, hospitality that might be called neutral. From the viewpoint of hospitality, these notions are important provided they are not placed as binary oppositions, but disposed on the axis of a social relationship that is affected by geographic and cultural mobility. In other words, as individuals distance themselves from the home, intimacy reduces in intensity and politeness begins to be imposed as a norm. The more distant geographically and culturally from the domestic environment, the more the individual is subject to the civilising process of which Elias (1994) talks, to the rituals of civility, urbanity, etiquette, the capacity to live and socialise in society, which we customarily call good manners.

Intimacy and anonymity cannot be understood as binary oppositions, but as a *continuum*. Intimacy is never total and neither is anonymity. As Canclini (1997) and Castells (1973) remind us, individuals create islands of primary relationships, selective forms of sociability in the midst of their sensation of anonymity in metropolises. In fact, this is the meaning of the anthropological notions of place (Santos, 1979; Tuan, 1983), of patch (of land) (Magnani, 1998), spaces that generate sociability through opposition to the non-place (Augé, 1994), and to the passing through a space. From start to finish, the human substrate, present corporealities that react with one another, remains. In each relationship, the individual is located at some point along the anonymity-intimacy *continuum*, which in fact can change various times during the scene. But inhospitality resulting from the predominance of anonymity is a sequel to the civilising process of which Norbert Elias (1994) talked and to its depth in society.

Elias believes that as from the 16th century growing urbanisation, fed by the search for occupation in the city, gave rise to a set of rules for urbanity, which is the behaviour expected of citizens in their relationships with others. Urbanity, as we conceive it to be today, can be here understood as the result of the project for educating people coming from rural areas and from traditional cultures. One of the most important of many rules is that even a certain dose of human warmth can be present, albeit with circumspection when dealing with people, discretion and a control over one's emotions – in short a relationship that is more secondary than primary. However, these rules of conduct are still marks of segregation, dividing individuals between those who are civilised and those who are rude/ignorant, between the polite and impolite, between 'citizens' and country folk, and at the extreme, between the rich and the poor.

Defining the different forms and models of human relationship and the result of the point of view of regarding the reinforcement and fraying of the human bond as the study

object of hospitality also serves to show that hospitality has to do with the relationship between human beings. A company is not hospitable or inhospitable: it is those who are responsible for it, those who deal with the public, who are! A city is not hospitable or inhospitable: it is those who planned (did not plan) the urban space adequately, those with whom we have relationships, who are (or are not). The introduction of 'take a number' queuing systems, in which users wait while comfortably seated in chairs, with a TV, magazines, coffee and water certainly came not from the institution itself but from hospitable people who noted the long queues of users standing and waiting in discomfort to be attended to. The signage effort in a city does not come from an abstract entity, but from urban managers who may or may not be sensitive to the suffering of those who move around the city.

The proposition of these measures may result from charitable spirits or those moved by the service rationality and who proposed the measure, whether out of respect or in the name of administrative rationality. But more important in this case is how the fact is perceived by the users. Understanding hospitality as an attribute of human beings serves to show that the sociability properties of spaces do not exist in themselves. Even so, we talk of inhospitable places (but inhospitable for whom?); of self-hospitality, as Corrado (2011, 655–668) did when studying the intimate diary as a metaphorical dimension of hospitality, or of the relationship of the individual with death, the unwelcome visitor (Verdade, 2006), both as forms of mental ecology (Guatari, 1990). In the same way, we can talk about nature as a host, of the relationship of man with animal and vegetable nature, as Lovelock (2006) did when he showed that Gaia, our mother earth, received us in a hospitable Eden and must find us to be intrusive guests, condemned to expulsion (annihilation) because of our bad behaviour. Finally, to talk like the German existentialists (Binswanger, 1977) about human relationships, hospitality does not only have to do with *mitwelt* (relationship with others), but also with *eigenwelt* (relationship with oneself) and *umwelt* (relationship with nature). At the extreme, we might also talk about hospitality not only of relationships between man and the world that surrounds him, but also relationships between animals and even between plants: terms like commensalism, parasitism, etc.

Hospitality as a virtue

The virtuous dimension of hospitality is the most current, both in ordinary thinking as well as in academic life. Even dictionaries define it as a value, a more advanced stage of human behaviour. This approach places hospitality on a lexical tree filled with terms like solidarity, altruism, charity and love. This explains, therefore, why human thinking tries to approach the subject by way of philosophy and theology. It is unnecessary here to look at the philosophical conception of hospitality as a virtue. We only need to refer to the reflection of Telfer (2003), from which we extract a simple and profound formula: virtue is something that one expects to be of benefit to oneself and others, which requires willingness and that translates as correcting undesirable behaviour. It is something, therefore, that is missing. Designating hospitality as a virtue is to consider that the social panorama is marked by its absence. Montandon (2003) has already observed that every time

anyone talks about hospitality it is as something in the past, something that almost no longer exists. So in the same way as virtue, hospitality appears in the middle of a semantic constellation of terms like sociability, charity, love, etc. Its absence is marked by terms like inhospitality, misanthropy, hostility, aggression, violence, parasitism, ostentation, etc.

What qualities does the virtue of hospitality talk about? For most academics, the virtue of hospitality refers to the desirable behaviour of the host. For Levinas (1996) this virtue – infinite opening up to another – is valid in all circumstances. He believes that hospitality is an ethical-theological problem and not a legal one (Peres 2007, 45). The same can be said about his friend, Martin Buber (1979), and his I-you formula for marking genuine relationships and the I-this for marking instrumental relationships. They were the inspirers of Jacques Derrida (1977) and his total and unconditional law of hospitality, the one that only says yes to others. Although impossible to translate into laws of positive jurisprudence, it serves to defeat inhospitable and hostile behaviour between nations and individuals, above all immigrants.

Along the same lines, for René Scherer (1993) hospitality must be the basis of a 'cosmopolitical' law that respects hospitality as a humanisation process and that therefore must be universal. For Jabès (1991), hospitality should be treated like 'good news', the rainbow that symbolises the pact so that the host/guest quality is transmitted from generation to generation. For Serrès (1997), the human bond that is established in the interpersonal relationship generates a '*tiers-instruit*'. The virtue in this philosophy, which he calls '*mestizo*' (mixed blood), is the spiritual conversion that happens and that transforms us. For Isabel Baptista it is the 'respectful and affectionate link with the inhabited world' (2008, 5) and the effort of rethinking, up-dating again and expanding the old laws and practices of hospitality, in a permanent effort to reinvent citizenship. Along these same lines, Brazilian theologian, Leonardo Boff (2005), talks about hospitality as the principle for a new possible world.

The unconditional duty of hospitality is a tonic for authors. But, are the countless risks included in this hospitality unconditional? For the host the risks are of intrusion and of parasitism, when not the simple inconvenience of his guests. For the latter, on the other hand, the risks are of being faced with an inhospitable or even hostile host, who is ignorant of the laws of hospitality or who abuses his right over the space, or even suffocates the guest with kindness or attacks him both physically and psychologically. The virtue of the host is thus to please and at the same time keep an eye on the guest. The term 'keep an eye on' conceals the whole extent of the problem. The solution is the protocols the host establishes: the invitations, passwords, verbal formulae and postures when receiving people, spaces to be used, etc. These rules are seen by guests as barriers, a feeling that the host must counterbalance with the gifts he offers: food, drink, contact with other guests and entertainment.

Derrida himself opposes the unconditional law of hospitality that is not limited to the conditioning and conditional duties and rights that individuals and organisation impose on users.

A cultural or linguistic community, a family, a nation, must suspend or even betray this principle of unconditional hospitality in order to protect their home, themselves and their property against the

unlimited arrival of the other, but also to provide an affectionate welcome (Derrida 2001).

Peres (2007) analyses this principle of unconditional hospitality from an historic and philosophical perspective, showing that Kant talks about limits to the relationship. For this philosopher, treating guests well is a categorical imperative, but the obligation is part of a greater reflection: on the one hand, within the scope of this imperative, but on the other, within the scope of the legislation of external freedom and respect for the law. And can we talk of virtue within the commercial environment? Telfer replies that maximisation of profit is not necessarily the main motivation of the hospitality 'merchant':

You cannot consider that a commercial host will behave with hospitality just because he is being paid for his work. Neither can you consider that a doctor will only behave compassionately because he is being paid for the service he provides. Both may have chosen this profession merely because of the work they do (2003, 45).

In other words, from Telfer herself: is a tradesman hospitable only because of the counterpart of profit or is he hospitable and that is why he chose the hospitality business? This is an undoubtedly complex question, but it at least helps us understand that we cannot be hasty in excluding from business the complexity of the exchange that is carried out, not only on the psychological plane but on the managerial plane as well.

Here her notion of hospitality shows itself in all its depth and extension. The hospitable spirit is easily recognisable in those who provide a commercial service and in those who possess this hospitability, the capability of being hospitable. Telfer talks about a permanent virtue, with which some people are well-endowed. Lugosi (2008) enriches this notion, by establishing three dimensions or forms of hospitality in a commercial space:

The supply of food, drink, shelter and entertainment in commercial transactions; the supply of hospitality, like the search for social achievement or political objectives; and meta-hospitality. These are all temporary states of spirit that are different from the rational manifestations of hospitality. Meta-hospitality is the link to sporadic communicative (communitésque) moments – sporadic emotional experiences that can be constructed or experienced in commercial transactions. (Lugosi 2008, 140)

Over and above his geometrisation of this hospitality, two aspects of Lugosi's reflection are worth highlighting: first, his consideration of the role of entertainment in hospitality. This goes not only for commercial entertainment in hospitality in the urban environment, alongside forms of welcoming, accommodation and food, but also the need for every host to entertain his guest.

In Lugosi's view the space created and hospitable attitudes, and not just the service itself, are the mark, the virtue of the commercial hospitable host. He looks for reciprocity in those who frequent his business, creates a communicative space in which, paradoxically, these people feel they are equally the 'owners'. Moreover, for those who frequent the area, this space goes from being a non-place, a passing space, and is converted into a place in the anthropological meaning of

the term, the creator of intimacy and affection. An aside: affection leads individuals to protest against the destruction of any type of property. This is understandable when dealing with tangible and intangible assets that are protected by law. But how can we understand the consternation and even the protest of regular customers of a bar that is about to be closed or any other sociability space in the city, if not for the fact that they feel themselves to be equally the 'owners' of the space? Second, it places the guest centre stage, the customer who reciprocates. If from the viewpoint of management this can be called the co-creation of value, it also introduces a new theoretical element of hospitality, which is the exchange. This exchange takes place during a ritual, as will be commented upon below.

The hospitable scene must also include the relationship between guests and the employees who serve them and this brings to the surface the discussion of Guérrier and Adib (2003) about service and servility; to serve or to be servile. The different status of the employee in relation to those whom he serves is complex to the extent that it depends on an interaction between the attitudes of both of them. There are those who like servile employees, whom they address in an authoritarian way, and there are those who prefer employees with a haughtier attitude *vis-à-vis* those whom they serve. On the other hand, there are employees who are proud to serve others well, and others who are perhaps more interested in tips and are quick to adopt servile attitudes, among which the withering 'commercial smile'.

Finally, we must gently (and because of this, quickly!) enter the area of the virtue there is in serving, a virtue to the extent that the person being served enjoys a higher social status. Based on the theories of Freud, there is an intense discussion in psychology about sublimation and hysteria, which are vulgarised in the common sense as being the producers of a neurotic liking for the tastes of others; to serve, in fact!. We have no wish here to recklessly enter this rocky terrain, but the feelings of altruism, philanthropy and a liking for serving are not exclusively produced by this psychological dynamic of compensating for repressed drives. As Bachelard said, precisely when criticising the vulgarisation of psychoanalysis in the 1930s, 'the manure doesn't explain the rose' (Bachelard 1990, 70).

The ritual of hospitality

It is unnecessary to remind ourselves of the presence of ritual in our lives. Our interpersonal relationships (present corporeality) are ruled by rituals. For Rivière (1997), the rite can be considered to be a 'set of repeated symbolic behaviours', which respond to uncertainty, to social ambivalence and to disorder. The rite orders, classifies and prioritises the tasks of daily life, conferring on the individual the feeling of living in an organised society and not part of the chaos. The rite is 'the vehicle of permanence and change: of a return to order or the creation of a new order, a new alternative'. However, it is extremely important to refer to the fact that our culture hates ritual, the rite and rituality, because they are not part of the domain of reason. But there is no way of fleeing from the revelation of Durkheim (1978, 499) that the rite is the breath of society, of society acting: 'the rite establishes the rhythm of social life, of which it is the result'. In the words of Rivière

(1997, 28) 'there is no society without rites, nor rites without society'.

The laws of hospitality regulate social relations. Put another way, interpersonal relations demand the ritual of hospitality so that everything turns out well. When asking for information, the individual stands before an instantaneous host and seeking to maintain an appropriate posture, is obliged to begin with 'please'. On the other hand, when meeting someone we know in the morning, nothing is done without first saying 'Good morning!' 'How are you?' This scene is accompanied by an aesthetic that is not just of the space, like the clothes and adornments of the host and guests. The scene itself has its own aesthetic that comes from the good performance of the players. We must remember here how the ethical and aesthetic dimensions of hospitality were incorporated by the Greeks into their notion of *καλοκαγαθία*, the good and the beautiful, as an ideal of every citizen. The well-executed hospitable gesture expresses at one and the same time both moral correctness and a gestural perfection that mixes ideals of goodness and beauty.

What is the ritual of hospitality? It is a scene, in the theatrical sense of the word, with two central actors, whether individual or collective, one considered to be the host and the other the guest, with precise marking points in both time and space. Whether in the home, in the street, in the square, in public government offices, in the work environment or even in the virtual media, the ritual always begins with an invitation or a request to be welcomed in. Before the encounter there is the threshold of the 'door'. Here, the guest must hesitate and wait for the signal to cross it. Then, he becomes a guest in the expression of the word and, as such, is introduced into the host's space. So the hospitality scene is always a micro-ritual of passage in the three phases that were defined by Van Gennep (1978): separation, transition and incorporation.

The ritual is complex. *Proxenia* is essential in the scene. We might even also talk of marks in the theatrical sense of the word. The greater or lesser the distance that is kept from the host or from another guest has a special meaning: it can show affability or interest or, inversely, tedium and bad temper. The things people say are studied more or less, depending on the intimacy of the players, but some will always be ritual and obligatory, like a theatre script in which there are recurring and firmly established expressions in the ritual of each language: 'excuse me', 'I'm sorry', 'please' and above all, 'thank you'. Analysis will be centred on the mishaps and especially on the slip-ups of the actors, who are balanced on a veritable tight-rope in the midst of rules. If there are any slip-ups relating to compliance with such rules, then this can lead to an unsuspected ending. The hospitable host saves himself from these slip-ups in an elegant way, but the bitter taste of having violated the laws of hospitality continues. Here and there are scenes of *potlach*: the best wine, the most expensive clothes, the most renowned *chef de cuisine*, the greatest celebrities, etc. A new polarity begins here between the expression of identity and social distinction, a special chapter for the sociology inspired by Bourdieu.

What are the rules of the scenic exercise of hospitality? According to Pitt-Rivers (2012), the basic law is that the person who receives (the host) must honour his visitor (guest), serve him the very best things there are in the house, attend to his needs for being welcomed and provide him with

accommodation, food and entertainment. He must invite him to enjoy what he wants or needs ('make yourself at home') and organise the space earmarked for this encounter, while at the same time keeping an eye on him. In his turn, the guest must honour the host with words and gifts, occupy only the space that is reserved for him (he needs permission to use any area outside this space), and accept every kindness he receives.

The hospitality scene is marked by an exchange of gifts and counter-gifts. The invitation that is made or the request to be welcomed in that is accepted is the first gift from the host. The counter-gift from the guest is himself: 'I'm honoured by/grateful for your presence!' the host will say. The guest will say 'Thank you for the invitation!' The new counter-gift of the host is the promise of commensality and entertainment. Commensality is the high point of the scene. The host has to offer his guest(s) the very best he has in terms of food and drink. The guests in their turn must socialise among themselves: providing this experience is the greatest gift the host can offer. The final gift to the guest is the offer of a bed, of accommodation. In the small space that is reserved for him, the gift he will receive is a small but intimate space, almost a new home. Once again he must hesitate and accept only when the host insists a lot.

It is up to the host to outline the space in which his guest must move and the latter should not be deluded by the 'make yourself at home!' and must respect the space occupation rule that has been established. But although in this great hospitality scene the superiority of the host remains, each reciprocity, each counter-gift marks a change of position in a complex asymmetry, and even though it may only be momentarily, the guest reassumes his position of superiority. All this takes place as if the hospitality scene were, in fact, some bizarre scene on a seesaw with the host and the guest exchanging and inverting their positions.

When there is a large number of guests, as in the case with a reception or a party, the number of micro-scenes that take place and become integrated is greater, each one with its own host and guest. Harvey Cox (1974), observing medieval feasts, noted that the success of a party appears when what is called 'organised chaos' is established, the coming and going of those invited and their integration, which the guests reciprocate with a new invitation ('next time the meeting will be at my home'). For each gift and counter-gift a word appears, which in fact is the ellipse of a longer phrase: 'you did me a favour and for this I feel *obrigado* [obliged – the Portuguese word for 'thank you'] to reciprocate'. Reciprocity brings to the surface yet another paradox in the ritual of hospitality, which is interest. The host must offer the gift without any other interest than to serve, even knowing that the other is likely to reciprocate. The phrase 'How kind. You needn't have!' with which the host smilingly reciprocates when he receives a bunch of flowers from the guest should not delude him. Yes, he needed to and both of them know it!

Hospitality laws do not cover, therefore, just the host. If we want to make an adjective from hospitality it must also refer to the person who is received. Both inseparably overlap in the scene. The existence of this bond finds its greatest expression in the French and Greek terms, *hôte* and *xenos* respectively, which designate equally he who receives and he who is received. It might be said that the logic of the scene lies in

questions that assail the imagination of the players. The host: how does a guest not know my name? How dare he snoop around my home? How dare he show off and stand out more prominently than the person who is being honoured at the party? The guest: how can he invite us and then deprive us of the best things he has? Are we lesser guests? How long is he going to keep us here? Why is he insisting, if I don't want to eat any more?

Without the mishaps of different forms of hospitality scene, comedies and every type of fiction would lose much of their plots. They would be fatally different. Inversely, it is no coincidence that the main territory for observing hospitality are novels, short stories, films, etc., which psychologically explore the interpersonal relationships of the characters. But where are these laws? Is there a hospitality annual? It doesn't exist ... which means that these rules were never written down. We simply learn them at home, during the course of our informal, non-formal and formal education, or, as Bourdieu (2007) more appropriately says, by way of our *habitus*, the set of provisions we incorporate during our socialisation process, by incorporating past experiences, which act like a perception matrix. They are non-written laws, but obedience to which in our social life condemns us. The minimum slip-up establishes discomfort or the opposite of hospitality, which is hostility (it is no coincidence that it has the same etymological root).

The high point of the ritual is commensality, the 'eating together', which according to Boutaud (2011, 1213) 'assumes a symbolic and ritual meaning in addition to the simple satisfaction of eating [and] condenses the features of hospitality and the table'. In commensality, the two essential axes of our humanisation are in play, the horizontal, with our peers, and the vertical (origins, hierarchies). And what about in the commercial environment? To what extent does money affect the ritual? Gotman (2009) is right when she says that every gift implies a sacrifice of something that is offered and that generates reciprocity. Money is reciprocity that blocks the giving-receiving-reciprocating. It's a fair exchange. It's hospitality that can be called neutral, with impersonal rituals. But, in fact, the host who is genuinely (as an individual and not just as a businessman) hospitable will try and understand and create a form of interaction with his guests that gives rise to new rituals. One of the most illustrative examples is that of the individual bottle of alcohol in the bar, when the host, to a certain extent, materialises in the commercial scene the longed for 'make yourself at home'. Another example is that of the tip, which will be analysed below.

Hospitality as exchange

The theme of exchange is central to anthropology and economic sociology, since it is one of the bases of the interpersonal relationship (Mauss, 1974). It might be inferred, therefore, that exchanges of tangible and intangible goods take place in interpersonal relationships: the one who receives exchanges something with the person who is received. The mishaps in this exchange have already been mentioned. Therefore, over and above illustrating these exchanges, here we must discuss their nature.

Among the classic authors in the study of exchange in anthropology, one who stands out is Marcel Mauss and his 'Essay on the Gift' of 1925. In this text, he talks about the

model of human exchange, which is ancestral to commerce, in opposition to the modern and prevalent model of commercial exchange. The former is based on characteristics of *personality* (who offers the gift matters more than the gift itself), *infinite* (friendship is its best expression), *asymmetry* (the person who receives is in a subordinate position relative to the person who offers the gift). It is based on a series of gifts and counter-gifts that can go on infinitely in the classic formula of giving-receiving-reciprocating – what we usually call friendship.

With the Industrial Revolution and the creation of nation states, the currencies of which were guaranteed by a treasury, commodity exchange became the prevailing exchange model. This model is based on characteristics of *impersonality* (the individuals are transformed into principal and contractor), *finitude* (contracts must have a closure clause) and *equality* (where the ‘free and equal’ formula is also present in every contract). It is important to understand why the perception of those who study the subject of hospitality (notably of French origin) looked for theoretical and methodological inspiration in this essay by Mauss. In our opinion, this happens because almost all the facts and texts he studied in some way always refer to the process of human hospitality. ‘I know no one who receives who doesn’t like being received’ (Mauss 1974, 23). The beginning of this old Scandinavian poem is the first of the many hospitality facts observed by Mauss in his essay. In this current, rather than possible exchanged objects, the act of receiving someone is in itself a gift, which obliges reciprocity from the one who receives. It is natural, then, for this influence to be present in authors who specifically studied hospitality (Montandon, Gotman) and that from them has come the opposition between the hospitality that exists within the commercial system and the hospitality in the gift system, as binary opposition.

It is curious to note that many of the manuals on hospitality deal in fact with the commercial strand, mainly the hotel trade, reserving just a few pleasant pages for the Olympic Games, medieval monasteries, etc. Everything that happens in these manuals is as if the ‘old’ hospitality had disappeared and another commercial hospitality had arisen in its place. On the other hand, in the encyclopaedia compiled by Montandon (2011), more than 80 authors work with the concept without once referring to commercial hospitality. Even the chapter that deals with the history of inns and hotels stops unexpectedly in the 19th century, with the arrival of hotels in their current concept, as if hospitality in accommodation had disappeared with the advent of commercial hospitality on a massive scale.

Can commercial hospitality be analysed in the light of the Maussian paradigm of the gift? Has the gift system disappeared under the avalanche of commerce? Alain Montandon (2003) sees hospitality as a synonym of a good welcome in commerce, without involving the turbulence that the deeper notion of hospitality implies.

Qualifying commercial accommodation (as hospitality) is not *scandalous* provided we are in agreement with the definitions. The commercial use of the term indicates, in any case, how hospitality remains a brand, a perspective and a horizon for a successful interaction between men who are customers, friends or simply strangers with their hand out-stretched (2003, 142, my italics).

In a way that is not quite so pleasant, Anne Gotman (2008, 117) suggests that this is an ‘ingenuous and ideologically compromised attempt to camouflage the marketing appeal of selling something’. She holds that in tourism, instead of genuine hospitality, everything is merely stage-managed. Today there are a large number of researchers, notably the Alain Caillé group, who are trying to show that Marcel Mauss was not talking about the gift as a habit in extinction; on the contrary, based on the contributions collated by researchers in the *Revue du M.A.U.S.S.*,¹ we might even formulate another hypothesis, that the so-called third sector is, in itself and in its ideology, an attempt to eliminate the figure of profit from this mixture of two paradigms, the gift and commerce. The journal’s objective is precisely that: to reveal the logic of the gift that persists in the current forms of exchange, including in commerce, within the hypothesis formulated by Alain Caillé (2002), according to whom:

the triple obligation of giving-receiving-reciprocating ... continues to operate vigorously even at the very heart of secondary sociability. No public or private company, no scientific undertaking could function if it did not mobilize for its own benefit the networks of ‘primarity’ cemented by the law of the gift (2002, 148).

The persistence of the gift system in commerce is also the theme of Brazilian anthropologists, who show that gift and commerce systems overlap, since conflicts derive less from the contract, for which legal action *vis-à-vis* consumer defence bodies exists, than from the gift. Special emphasis must be given to the study by Brazilian anthropologist, Ciméa Bevilacqua (2001), who analysed the complaints lodged with consumer defence bodies, and noted that they referred less to products or prices and more to the disrespect of which people were the victims, or to the relationship mediated by the gift.

Would it be over-hasty of us to conclude that in the same way that there are inhospitable gestures, there are also hospitable gestures in commercial hospitality? Anne Gotman, albeit reluctantly, supplies us with a clue:

A bottle of champagne that is opened ‘exceptionally’ ‘just once’ to celebrate the birthday of a customer may constitute a gesture of hospitality. Systematically resorting (to this gesture) is merely a commercial differential (Gotman 2009, 25).

Above all, in the hotel and restaurant field the question arises: is the champagne to which Gotman refers all that rare, an excrescence of the daily life in these sectors? The research by Lugosi (2008) in a bar in Budapest illustrates the fact that in all service areas there is an infinite number of gestures that are not regulated exclusively by the market. Mention is made of the figure of the waiter-confidant, who is very common in fiction and who has never been accused of not being very plausible. Regular customers will certainly report other experiences of human warmth provided by their hosts. In other words, everything happens as if the hotel receptionist or any other tourism professional, even those who flash the ‘commercial smile’ of etiquette, of the secondary sociability mentioned by Caillé (2002), even though they mobilise their communication resources in the service of the hotel’s contract with the guest, will still be someone capable of reacting positively to the hospitable appeal of the guest; or they themselves might take the initiative. Up to what

point are they acting because of a contract or because of the ancestral appeal of the gift and its laws? Lugosi (2008), with his three degrees in hospitality, gives us a good study clue in commerce. An hospitable hotel, bar, restaurant or store certainly gives honest service, employs initiatives that are capable of entertaining the guests and finally supplies a communicative environment, as a collective construction of hosts and guests.

From economic sociology, Sahlins (1979) pointed out that market and non-market exchange are not binary oppositions, but the extremes of a *continuum* in which even money can be both a commodity and a gift at one and the same time. This assertion can be illustrated with the controversial topic of the 'optional' tip, in addition to the one that is legally instituted. This is the reciprocity of the guest for the person who provides a service that he assesses as being genuinely hospitable. In this case there is no blocking of the flow of the gift, thus generating a new counter-gift, which is service that is even more hospitable next time.

Final considerations

There are aspects of philosophy and theology that deal with hospitality from the aesthetic and ethical viewpoints. Anthropology reveals the mishaps of the exercise of these ethics and aesthetics of the hospitality scene along the axes of intimacy and anonymity, a genuine and staged, interested and disinterested feeling. It opens up a great raft of alternatives for the application of pure and applied science in the hospitality field. This generates a singular situation according to which the researcher in hospitality will note that most of the studies on the subject do not even mention the word. Here we find studies dealing with human relations in the different daily spaces and times (psychology, sociology and anthropology), with the ethics and aesthetics of the hospitality scene (philosophy and semiology), and with management, which deserves an additional comment.

As final considerations there are two reflections that are transversal to the text. The first is about management. First of all, it must be remembered that hospitality in the commercial area largely includes the same challenges that are found in the domestic area. The problems are the same: how to create a communicative and happy environment without making room for guests who have a liking for intrusion, stealing and parasitism, etc. The protocols established in both of these cases are barriers. Common sense would ask: happiness, but with order, or order, but with happiness? Philosopher Jacques Maritain (1956) has already remembered that in adversative coordinated clauses, both phrases do not have exactly the same weight: is what comes after the 'but' more important?

This assertion by the philosopher finds an echo in the reflections of Brotherton and Wood (2003) who pose the following question: what is the epistemological status of the expression 'administration of hospitality'? Which of the concepts has the predominant status? If the predominant status is 'management', the effort will fall on the fair price relationship between what is offered and what is reciprocated in monetary terms. If the predominant epistemological status is hospitality, the challenge will be to go beyond and in a complicated way: how to organise an environment for relationships of sociability, interaction, happiness, etc. We might say that the

sciences applied to management are still in their very early stages of this challenge of understanding what it is to develop a formal service and at the same time allow such manifestations to happen and favour them.

The final reflection is the reference to the hospitality of Brazilians. Tourists and visitors frequently say that Brazilians are hospitable people. What does this mean, if all cities, nations and regions insist on defining themselves as hospitable? In fact, we Brazilians and our Latin American neighbours are known for our bizarre behaviour, which amuses those who visit us because it has little to do with the polite standard of urbanity: a liking for physical contact, the forced search for intimacy; the habit of punctually arriving for meetings and parties a half an hour after the agreed time and of the host never fixing (or, being able to fix) the time for something to end; the predilection for using first names instead of surnames; the liking for nicknames; the ready smile, and so many others.

The hypothesis is that this hospitable nature does not refer to a specific gene of those who are born in our particular confluence of latitude and longitude, but a feature resulting from the specific characteristics of the dynamics of the country's urbanisation. It is natural that the social visibility of anonymity in the street is greater in England, which has been mainly urban since the beginning of the 19th century, than in Brazil, where it only occurred at the end of the 20th century. A large European city is a portrait of consolidated urbanisation. In England, eight generations have been submitted to this education, while in Brazil the immense outskirts of the major cities contain large contingents of an urban population who are still being faced for the first time with the rules of urbanity.

It is also true that there is an urban population that is more accustomed to urbanity, whether because of an urban strain that goes back a long way, or by the *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1996) that has been formed throughout their lives. But we are still cordial in the sense that one of our greatest sociologists of culture, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (1989), attributed to the cultural character of Brazilians: happiness and violence, sentiments that are always just under the skin. According to this author, the cordial man, whose feelings and emotions tend to flourish in all their varied hues, from euphoria to depression, from intimacy to violence, is the typical Brazilian. Urbanisation in most European countries, and even in North America, is a process that involved populations of a rural origin, but who had a rich material culture and who already knew at least the standards of urban civility, even though they did not practice them on a daily basis in the countryside. In Brazil, on the other hand, we had a special circumstance.

As Flusser (1998) noted, it is impossible to know Brazilians without understanding that the infrastructure (sic) of urbanisation in Brazil comprises a population that remained isolated from the coast and the civilising practices that little by little arrived there. Only after the 1950s, when the great exodus from the countryside and from small towns (which also had rural habits) began did these immigrants have contact with urban civilisation. Our hospitality rituals, therefore, are still strongly marked by our traditional and rural culture (Buarque de Holanda, 1989). From the point of view of hospitality, the progression of Brazilian urbanisation places this cordial nature in check. Will our future be the same as the people who live

in countries where urbanisation is older? Are we doomed to substitute our cordial spirit for etiquette? There is a transformation going on, but the traditional insists on lingering on. As Garcia Canclini says, among us 'traditions have still not gone away and modernity has still not finished arriving' (2008, 17). Where is this Brazilian hospitality going, then? The hope is that public policies relating to our intangible cultural wealth (regional accents, typical festivities, etc.) will temper the furor of the civilising process and help distinguish the substrate of poverty that must be eradicated from that which must be preserved.

Notes

1. *Mouvement Anti-Utilitariste em Sciences Sociales.*

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