A STUDY OF HOSPITALITY:
From human imperative to professional practice

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To Ameil, Lu and Georgie, you are the joys of my life.
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STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICATION

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

..............................................
(Signature)
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the evolving discourse among hospitality scholars and practitioners regarding the development of a philosophical foundation for the emerging paradigm of hospitality studies. This research takes a contra position from that depicted in mainstream hospitality literature, combining as it does, my own thoughts and observations over a long period of time, my experience and knowledge of hospitality business practices, as well as concepts, models and debate from the academic literature.

The contribution of this thesis is achieved by encompassing two competing, perhaps collaborative discourses: the discourse of commercial hospitality and the discourse of hospitableness. I see these two discourses as constituting a dichotomy. To embrace the dichotomy, the research begins by looking at some of the enduring legacies of early hospitable social practices and the contributions these legacies have made.

From hospitable pronouncements on ancient clay tablets, reminders of one’s hospitable duties in early texts and training models from early guilds by master craftsmen, I argue that we catch a glimpse of the beliefs and values that have contributed to the flavour of what we have come to call the hospitality industry. From here, I next examine the contemporary hospitality industry context. Within this context, the research focuses on
the education and training environment of the prospective employee and the subsequent contribution of this to the successful and efficient delivery of service to guests. However, I demonstrate how this managerial focus is concerned with service and operational efficiency, overlooking the more human focus of the employee’s individual contribution to guest satisfaction.

I conclude that employees as people have been overlooked, and it would be beneficial to society and the hospitality industry for their humanity to be accounted for in their employee roles. The research explores Steven Shapin’s (1994) theory that it is through trust that relationships are established, maintained and developed, so making social order possible. I then use his framework for analysing relationships in the hospitality industry. I establish that these harmonious interactions of employees and management, and more specifically between employees and guest strangers, are trust dependent.

Having established the possibility of a harmonious relationship with a guest stranger, I then explore Hannah Arendt’s (1958) conception of humans as actioning beings, having the capacity to reveal themselves as unique and distinct, as a way of explaining the employee’s spirit of generosity in creating an hospitable environment for guest satisfaction. Discussion of the theoretical constructs of trust and actioning beings is grounded in a philosophical exploration of the spirit of generosity during the service encounter. The research concludes that the service encounter is a multi-layered space, where mundane and dynamic levels of employee
interactions with guests coexist to accommodate service and hospitableness.

Moreover, the foregoing exploration reveals a set of tensions at the heart of the industry. The tensions exist because front line employees are *actioning beings*, part of what it means to be human. I conclude the research by communicating the implications of the findings in a letter to the industry.
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PROLOGUE

Having ambled barefoot from the jetty, Mrs. Flanagan waited on the other side of the fence with two bottles of freshly shucked oysters tucked in the palm of her hand. She had a sense about things and always seemed to turn up with oysters on just the day we were having guests. Oyster soup was a favourite with our house guests and Muz loved to show off her skill in making it. It was all part of ‘our’ brand of hospitality. Subsequently, the house would be readied: lashings of mud crab cleaned, cooked and cracked; more oysters opened; snapper cleaned, boned, and cut into bite-size pieces ready for the outside deep fryer (Muz didn’t want the smell in the house!). There would be a generous bowl of egg whizzed, waiting beside the flour for the fish; vast quantities of potatoes peeled, sliced and a first fry complete (you always fry chips twice if they are to be crisp); alcohol iced; and plates, serviettes, and condiments laid out.

My family, Muz and Father and we three girls, lived in a seaside town in country New South Wales. My father loved parties and as a well known local identity, was never short of an interesting and diverse array of guests. We all dressed for these parties: often in some creation our father had bought on his latest trip to Sydney (we never thought to question his taste, although I do recall he hated green clothing!). He loved being in the company of people, offering his brand of hospitableness to them. He was a
generous, charismatic and flirtatious man, bountiful as a host. My mother, on the other hand, is a rather less frivolous person and more disciplined.

She did much to attract my father’s admiration; her oyster soup, carefully made and laced with the fresh briny mollusc, was a worthy lure. In her way, our mother’s hospitality reflected her more disciplined approach to her life; considered rather than spontaneous, nurturing but restrained, efficient without exuberance. Muz played by the rules.

Because we lived in a household where generosity was bountiful, my sisters and I absorbed a sense of the ‘goodness’ of that giving. The message, albeit subconsciously, permeated our values and I have realised as we became independent adults, we have all been drawn back to the sense of goodness that generosity provides. One of my sisters entertains socially and has flirted with commercial hospitality, and the other has been in hotels, restaurants, and a Bed & Breakfast with me, and is a wonderful private entertainer. As for me, I have spent much of my adult life owning and operating a diverse range of hospitality businesses and currently teach in a university hotel degree program. In addition, I have recently built a coastal guest house with a small art gallery and tea room attached. So hospitality is the focus of my career and my private life.
INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

On the road to hospitality

At home, I spend an inordinate amount of time making special things for my guests: getting things just right, making food that my friends love, conjuring up great conversation starters, and choosing their favourite music. I set the perfect scene. This is my brand of hospitality. My friends come anticipating (and knowing) that they will be well looked after and cared for by me.

Significantly, I have observed, on many occasions, this same care being taken in a commercial hospitality setting (a hotel, for example), where an employee fusses over a guest, taking time and getting things right. But the difference in this scene is that the commercial guest is a total stranger and the space is a commercial one—a public hospitality space. There is no friendship, there is no wanting to impress, there are no accolades and there is no applauding. So, why does an employee mimic that same brand of my hospitality in a public space, and with a stranger?

Much of my thinking in the last few years has been about hospitality. In an attempt to reconcile my own values, beliefs, and understandings of
hospitality and the *industrial* processes in hospitality organisations, I have pondered the question of what hospitality is all about. I have resolved, as others have before me (see for instance, Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath and St Clair, 2007), that the hospitality industry comprises paradoxical and competing values. The following example illustrates competing values in an organisational setting:

... *plain old management is complicated and confusing*. *Be global, managers are told, and be local*.* Change perpetually, and maintain order. Make numbers while nurturing your people*. *How is anyone supposed to reconcile this? To be effective managers need to face juxtapositions in order to arrive at deep integration of the seemingly contradictory concerns ... managers need various mind-sets* (Gosling and Mintzberg (2003)).

So, competing values can be described as various mind-sets and in this way, hospitality and hospitableness fall into such a paradox. As Brotherton (1999) suggests, there is a serious flaw in taking the approach that *hospitality is the same as hospitable*. Definitions range from the overtly holistic to the commercially-focused, creating a rather vague and imprecise view of how *hospitality* and *hospitable* connect.

On the one hand, the product-based nature of hospitality as played out within the industry could justify a commodified and commercialised engagement. The process becomes embedded within a financial arrangement where employees meet the needs of paying guests. In this process, the guest and organisation come together to form a temporary and transitory relationship: the *hospitableness* and tangible product (the
hospitality package) is paid for and, as a business proposition, certain assumptions are made by both guest and organisation. The success (usually financial) of the process, based on this mutual business engagement, is crucial to the ongoing sustainability (longer term) and viability (current profitability) of the organisation. Perhaps this is the key: hospitality is a business where paying guests engage with these organisations.

Diametrically opposed to the commercial imperative is the socio-cultural, value-laden integration of hospitableness into the hospitality transaction (Brotherton, 1999). The challenge here is that the underlying nexus of host-guest appears not to be relinquished for the sake of a pay-for-service transaction. My domestic or social interaction with my guests (friends) is partially transposed into the commercial setting. There is a sense that the domains of hospitality, social, private and commercial (Lashley, 2000), are blurring into a single, homogeneous model, where personal and business behaviours are expected by both the guest and the organisation for service to be successful.

The paradox has created a puzzle for me regarding the actions of front line employees. I am intrigued by the generosity of spirit I have witnessed among current hospitality employees and the lack of generosity of spirit in the protocols, management and structure within hospitality businesses. Furthermore, I have reflected on the spirit of hospitableness and the distinction between hospitality as a prescribed process, and as spontaneous, generous and genuine care. So, how can the actions of front line employees be explained?
My ongoing question is: why were these employees maintaining a sense of genuine care and warmth when their experience, level of appointment and remuneration would suggest they take a more perfunctory approach? The answer to this question has implications for hospitality businesses that seek to promulgate hospitable behaviour through prearranged protocols. But more than a query of employee behaviours, this question ponders our humanity. How can we interpret warm and hospitable behaviour in a work context, particularly if the behaviour can be interpreted as a natural action in social interaction?

So, the immediate questions that can be posited, and upon which I shall critically reflect throughout the thesis are:

1. Does the commercial protocol negate or work against social interaction which is natural and warm?
2. Is caring (hospitableness) universally present in human behaviour?
3. Can it be learnt or is it a cultural phenomenon?
4. What are its sources of motivation?
5. Is caring essential in hospitality practice?
6. To what extent does the influence of a service context impact employees’ natural behaviour?

This thesis explores these questions with specific attention to the role of the front line employee in the hospitality industry, namely in a hotel or restaurant setting. For clarity throughout the thesis I refer to personal
thoughtfulness as hospitableness, and non personal aspects of the industry as hospitality.

In summary as identified in this introduction, the major issue of investigation is the ongoing tension between hospitableness (care, personal thoughtfulness, warm and hospitable behaviour) and hospitality (fee for service, hospitality as an industry), which shows up in a number of different forms in the hospitality industry. For the purpose of this thesis, this tension will be explored as it relates particularly to the front line employee, in the context of him/her offering hospitableness beyond what might be expected.
At the crossroads to hospitality

This thesis combines my own thoughts and observations over a long period of time, my experience and knowledge of hospitality business practices, as well as concepts, models and debate from the academic literature. My methodology is both reflective (thinking about something I have done) and interpretive (similar to Veal, 2006). My work constitutes an exploratory journey from historical to modern times. To explore the generous spirit of hospitableness, the thesis utilises an essay format that draws together observation, experience, and reflection to make links with theory and historical evidence.

My research highlights tension between two discourses: the discourse of commercial hospitality, and the discourse of hospitableness. To embrace this tension, I gather theory from within hospitality management and import theories, concepts and techniques developed in other disciplines, applying these to hospitality organisations. I have written a series of theoretically informed reflective essays, each with its own theme that echoes my journey, and that embrace the various elements that appear to me to be significant to the hospitality-hospitableness nexus.

Throughout my whole journey I aspire to being scholarly and thoughtful in my approach to my research. I am presumptuous enough in my approach to thoughtfulness to trust in my idiosyncratic selection of
theories and experiences rather than shape the enquiry through a commitment to well known or dominant paradigms. I have been inspired throughout my research by D. H. Lawrence’s poem, Thought:

*Thought, I love thought.*

*But not the juggling and twisting of already existent ideas.*

*I despise that self-important game.*

*Thought is the welling up of unknown life into consciousness,*

*Thought is the testing of statements on the touchstone of consciousness,*

*Thought is gazing onto the face of life, and reading what can be read,*

*Thought is pondering over experience, and coming to conclusion.*

*Thought is not a trick, or an exercise, or a set of dodges,*

*Thought is a man in his wholeness, wholly attending.*

Somewhat like a conversation, the research, as a series of reflective, theoretically informed essays, is an

*attempt[ed] to surround something — … a problematic irritation …*

*wheeling and diving like a hawk, each seemingly digressive spiral actually taking me [us] closer to the heart of the matter. In an … essay, while the search appears to be widening, even losing its way, it is actually eliminating false hypotheses, narrowing its emotional target and zeroing in on it* (Lopate, 1994: xxxiix).

Several researchers have suggested a *new research* agenda, exploring and demonstrating a shift away from the more traditional objectivist and
positivist research approaches to a more interpretative, alternative and
critical mode of enquiry (Wilson, Harris and Small, 2008:15). This view is
supported by Paul Lynch (2008) whose own PhD was an autobiographical
account of commercial home accommodation. He noted that a new
research agenda would empower both researchers and students of
hospitality (Lynch, 2008).

I set out on this journey with the view that all roads led to a converged
model of what hospitality is all about. However, along the way it has
become clear that the road is far from straight: alternative paths crisscross
each other and lead in very different directions; parallel paths are also
evident, necessarily so, but from divergent perspectives.

This research journey has given me the opportunity to explore a vastly
diverse hospitality landscape. From pragmatic and rigid to fluid and
human, I have reflected on the hospitality phenomena (O’Gorman, 2007).
The English philosopher, Grayling (2001:viii) considers such reflection

\[\textit{as a valid way to think about things like inspecting a map so that finding something worthwhile in a foreign land is not by chance … I might be able to … contribut[e] to a conversation.}\]

I see my work as deconstructing, taken for granted understandings of
hospitality industry processes, particularly as these relate to front line
employees, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the hospitality-
hospitableness nexus. As Bourdieu (1991:6) points out, the best chance
... of any specialized discourse resisting objectification lies, as we can see, in the enormity of the task involved in revealing the complete system of relations which informs it.

Much of the hospitality discourse can be seen as having an objective tone, presuming to describe things the way they are. As Lashley (2007) suggests, the book, *In Search of Hospitality: Theoretical Perspectives and Debate*, (Lashley and Morrison (eds), 2000) turned on the light to alternate ways of thinking about the fields of hospitality for some, while for others it seemed to shy them away from real hospitality, that is, operational hospitality. The approach I take serves to reveal something of the system of relations by which the hospitality discourse has evolved. In so doing my work allows us to glimpse more clearly at the phenomena of hospitality-hospitableness.

Within the thesis I have used stories told by hospitality front line employees to explain and illustrate many of the theoretical constructs I turn to in my exploration of hospitableness. I gathered these hospitality service stories from front line employees prior to commencing, but as a part of the overall process of collecting data for, this thesis. In undertaking a series of fifty interviews for an operational investigation, I unexpectedly found that these revealed the employees’ constructions of their individual service experiences. I found that the interviews generated in the interviewees a desire to tell their own stories, though not sought, were of great interest to me and indicated there was a profound disjunction between how the front line employees are trained, remunerated and positioned with management hierarchies and the nature of the activities
that they are daily engaged in. Crotty (in Higgs ed),1998:205 argues that stories … talking about oneself and one’s everyday experiences … is what most people are invited to do in most forms of descriptive research today …. and that as such constitutes a legitimate form of data gathering. These spontaneous stories formed the initial impetus for the direction the research subsequently took. So the front line employee stories are drawn upon as the basis for my application of philosophical reflections.

Section One: Legacies Enduring and New, comprises four essays focusing on ways of placing the hospitality industry in a social and historical context. These provide a context and a background to the main story. Some of these pieces are short vignettes, insights and reflections that paint a picture of a kaleidoscopic hospitality landscape. Among other stories, I show how in Ancient Iberia, clay tablets created enduring bonds of hospitableness so strangers’ animals could cross another’s land in safety. The breadth of my approach is depicted through my recourse to ancient history as well as to spanning leisure theatre through to contemporary television.

In Section Two: A Review of the Field (Essays Five and Six), actors become teachers as leisure theatre gives way to lecture theatre or classroom, the more common location for hospitality training and education in contemporary society. I have written two essays focusing on education and training as the field is both complex and diverse. From butcher to cocktail waitress, human resource manager to financial controller, all need to know their craft, and how to please a guest. In Essay Five I undertake a review of
operational aspects of the current industry, including an overview of what service means when applied to the hospitality industry. I review service as a necessary component of such a review. In Essay Six I focus on skills, the activity practiced by front line employees in their quest to offer service to guests. However, the word *skill* caused me to narrow my focus and explore its meaning. Skill seems a catchall phrase. The word *skill* has been commercialised and commodified as illustrated by the Australian Government offering financial incentives to private operators to provide training courses for the Australian workforce. Private providers, as training businesses, reacted to the monetary incentives by tacking the word ‘skill’ onto training course names (ADEST, 2006). Grayling (2006:99) suggests the name of an important idea comes *to serve as shorthand for a variety of associated ideas, which they take themselves to mean when they use the word*. The word *skill*, because of the bounty on its head, may well fall into this category.

Section Three: Bringing a Different Perspective, moves away from the *industrial* setting of hospitality (the focus of Essays Five and Six) and explores in detail the underlying complexities of social relationships and interactions, the coming together of the organisation and the guest. I begin with a short introduction explaining my thoughts on bringing a different perspective to the way hospitality is conceptualised. Central to this is the notion that we can identify distinct spaces within the hospitality service transaction, this being the core function of front line employees. I suggest that Lashley’s (2000) differentiation between different types of hospitality, private social and commercial hospitality, based on socially and culturally defined principles, creates an opportunity for consideration of these
distinct spaces as existing in the hospitality framework. By creating distinct areas of focus within the hospitality framework, the principles opened the way for a broader research focus, … from the narrow[ly] focus[ed] managerial concerns of service quality and operational efficiency …to a …social dimension (Lugosi, 2007:139), where researchers are able to have a dialogue or debate focused more generally on sociological aspects of the guest and the guest experience. From this differing perspective within the hospitality industry, Lugosi (2007:139) proposed the concept of meta-hospitality—a temporary state… that (is) different from rational manifestations of hospitality. The essay further explores temporary hospitality states.

Essay Seven introduces the complexity of trust as it applies in society and the role played by trust in the hospitality transaction. I do this through engagement with the work of Steven Shapin (1994). He explains that trust is an essential component in the development and growth of society, and I show how it is trust that underpins a relationship’s formation: both personal and industrial.

Essay Eight, builds on the notion of the trust factor as creating relationships in society and adds another dimension—Hannah Arendt’s (1958) theory of actioning beings, a theory that positions humans as self-determining and self-revelatory, and in so doing, relates intrinsically to the hospitality transaction. I explore Arendt’s theory of action in a regimented way, stepping through her theory as she builds a case for humans as actioning beings. Interspersed throughout the essay are examples of the applicability of Arendt’s theory to the actioning of hospitality employees.
Essay Nine brings a philosophical reflection to hospitality operations. At this junction, I examine *actioning human beings* and the spirit of generosity during the service encounter. I do this by viewing the service encounter as multi layered. The first layer is depicted as representing the managerial influence exerted over the service encounter. I argue that a gateway transitional area exists between this layer and a second layer. I conceive the second layer as an unbounded space where the spirit of generosity can exist as a gift given by the employee to the guest (O’Gorman, 2007). Here, the essence of hospitableness lingers with the front line employee fleetingly, where the guest attaches to the stranger, and contact is made with the humanity of the employee.

The final section of the research, the Dénouement, has two parts. In the first part, I reflect upon my insights into hospitality and hospitableness. I reiterate the purpose of the inquiry; that in reflecting upon the warm and hospitable behaviour of front line employees, I might contribute to the developing discussion among hospitality scholars and practitioners of a philosophically informed understanding. I conclude the thesis with a letter to the hospitality industry, exalting them for the progress of the industry and suggesting there is still work to be done in developing the industry into a global industry with an enviable reputation for its duty of care toward its human resources.
SECTION ONE:

LEGACIES ENDURING AND NEW

Introduction

In this set of essays in Section One I do two things: provide indications of how hospitality theorists construct a history of their field, and identify within their stories indications of hospitable practices. As well, I proffer numerous versions of the hospitality story ranging from historical accounts on clay tablets and the role they played in transhumance practices, host-guest stories where hosts and guests entertain and host each other, and stories where strangers are guests. Telling stories from a number of perspectives can serve the purpose of deepening and enriching understanding of the legacies, informing contemporary understanding of the phenomenon of hospitality.
Essay One

Constructing a history of hospitality

And talking about borders, in a sense, is talking about openings and reception, welcoming reception. It is about hospitality. (Dikec, 2002:228)

There has been a growing interest in contemporary society of the manifestation of different forms of hospitality (Lashley and Morrison, 2000; Lugosi, 2007; O’Gorman, 2005; O’Gorman, 2007; Slattery, 2002). Academics have distinguished between different types of hospitality and explored the way social and culturally defined principles have influenced hospitality industry practices (Lugosi, 2007). Research on the topic has progressed to where hospitality has become located as a significant means of exploring and understanding society (Lashley and Morrison, 2000). For Lashley and Morrison, studies of hospitality have become more inclusive of areas such as the world of business and management … support[ing] reciprocal application between individual constructs and practices of both hospitality and business and management (Lashley and Morrison, 2000 and O’Gorman, 2008:214). This essay both constructs a history of hospitality and uses hospitality as a vehicle to explore an important aspect of the nature and evolution of societies.
Hospitable acts

In identifying what constitutes hospitable acts, one can begin to read stories of hospitality as depicting something about the way by which relationships are developed and maintained and through which societies evolve.

There is evidence that hospitality practices have been evolving since the beginning of human history (O’Gorman, 2005). Classic and ancient records of hospitality suggest it is inherent in human nature to offer hospitableness (Livy in Bolchazy, 1995); societal and early religious teachings support and reinforce this idea (Heal, 1990). Historically, hospitable acts take diverse and complex forms, always as a contribution toward the development of a relationship, albeit sometimes a fleeting relationship. The relationship may have formed based on protection.

When hospitality is understood as a form of protection, it might be protection toward oneself, or protection towards those in a person’s care; it was considered an honourable thing to provide protection for one’s guests (Heal, 1990). Hospitality, as hospitableness, creates relationships where one, through the act of giving, gives to another, and where the giving may comprise a warm welcome; food; a comfortable place to sit; charming company; and entertainment (O’Gorman, 2005:145).

Some writers consider that historically, hospitality was offered without the expectation of a reward, other than knowing that one had done a good deed (Aramberri, 2001). In early England, it was understood that those of
considerable means had an obligation to provide food to the poor (Heal, 1990). It was preached from the pulpit that *all those who were in need should be provided for, regardless of social status or acquaintance* (Heal, 1990:67). The clergy encouraged landholders to take responsibility, whereas once it had been the role of the church. However, the church was able to use biblical scripture to emphasise to the congregation their Christian duty (Heal, 1990). Giving food was regarded as an essential part of human existence, particularly because it concerned providing basic human needs. Wheler (in Heal, 1990:66) considered England *a happier land when lords had provided liberally for all comers to their halls*, the indication being that a happier land was comprised of happier people. Thus hospitality, in this instance, was seen to contribute to the good of society.

It is interesting to consider hospitality etymology at this juncture. O’Gorman (2005) ponders the word’s meaning and gives a detailed account of how earlier meanings inherent in the word *hospitality* are still utilised. Early histories of the word *host* tell us that *host, guest and stranger* have all come from the same root word. All three are contained in this earlier concept of the word *host*, and yet it has evolved to the point today where common usage pulls out host as a separate entity. When *host* is pulled out, we exclude *stranger* and *guest* from the more dynamic meaning of hospitality.

O’Gorman (2005) indicates the idea of *host guest stranger* as being closely related may be apparent in contemporary society. He sees echoes of this in current popular media formats such as some reality television. He suggests that reality television presents shows where the show’s host changes with
each episode, and where the host is a different guest presenter for each show. In a similar construction in the contemporary hospitality industry, each time a guest requires service, they may encounter a different front line employee. To the guest, the front line employee is not only a stranger, but may be a different stranger to the one the guest encountered in a prior transaction, and this stranger is also their host. When the front line employee does a shift in a different area of a hotel from their previous shift, then they are a guest in that area, albeit as an employee. To serve a guest they become host guest stranger; a stranger to the guest (and possibly their fellow workers), a guest in their shift location, and a host to the guest. In these illustrations, not only are the employee and the guest strangers but the employees may be strangers to each other (that is, they may not have previously met). The context of the facility, however, means each person involved is titled in familiar terms, as guest or employees, for example, and this familiarity distracts from seeing those encountered as strangers. The context and title mask their status as a stranger.

In O’Gorman’s (2005) interpretation of the word hospitality, he argues against being loose in our usage of hospitality terms: clarity is important because in the past, the guest and the host have been understood to have taken two different roles in hospitality offerings. However, in O’Gorman’s (2005) contemporary interpretation, where the host, through his title as host and through the context in which the host is situated, protects himself from the external possibility of danger from a stranger, then both host and stranger receive a measure of hospitality. The guest receives a form of commercial hospitality from the host, and the context and title host gives the host protection in limiting their hospitality to the stranger. Clearly, if
the host is protecting himself or herself by performing a hospitable welcome-ritual, then both can be seen as recipients in the hospitality encounter.

History has suggested hospitable acts can be seen as part of society’s cultural and social fabric. The role played by the host in extending hospitableness toward a guest has been blurred as it can be shown that both host and guest might contribute equally to the host-guest transaction. Moreover, hosts may have been recipients in the hospitality encounter. Hence, hospitality encounters play a significant role in the formation of relationships.

**Relationship management**

From the stories told about the histories of hospitality practice we can identify principles of hospitableness that may together be described as being concerned with the management of relationships. Taking a long view of history, it is possible to say that hospitality practices are borne of, and contribute to, social evolution. In a sense, social evolution can be seen to be essentially based upon social relationships. In broad terms, relationships range across interchangeable states of independence, dependence and interdependence. In an historical review, the forms that these interrelationships took range widely across myth, magic, spirituality and pragmatism.

Selwyn (2000) suggests that hospitality may have played an influential role in the development of relationships between distant communities. While
there is evidence that early forms of hospitality were about providing travellers with shelter and food (O’Gorman, 2005). Selwyn (2000) suggests hospitality was offered to those visiting distant communities as a welcome, and a gesture of friendliness. As travelling became more commonplace and various access routes were created, travel increased. Villages once deemed too distant became accessible. Selwyn (2000) suggests visitors to a village felt at liberty to enter the community and share in that community’s food because food was used as a welcome gesture of hospitableness. So, with the sharing of food to bridge the unknowingness, a new relationship would be formed (Selwyn, 2000). In this telling of hospitality it is the sharing of food, as a pragmatic symbol of hospitableness, which builds relationships.

Another telling of early English hospitality focuses on the way the lord of the manor took responsibility for the needs of those who lived in their village. While Heal (1990) acknowledges landholders had provided alms for any poor who called at their gate, in this telling of hospitality history, what is most emphasised is that the lord of the manor created employment for such callers, turning many villagers into employees. As the need for food sources increased, the lords farmed their landholdings with seasonal crops, with the poor becoming an employment source. The men worked mainly outdoors as laborers, tending animals, crops and maintaining the buildings. The women were employed for laundry and cooking duties ‘downstairs’, and for household duties in the main manor house. The women were equivalent to servants, undertaking whatever duties were required by the estate owner’s wife. Hence, families became members of the landlord’s household and were offered accommodation in servants’
quarters and other accommodation on the estate. Eventually, a social structure developed around the farm workers and their families. And so over time, a country village would evolve. The landowner understood the functioning of the village was his responsibility, and so provided many of the goods and services the families required, including fresh food, milk, meat and poultry from farm supplies. Basic health services, pastoral care for the village families and schooling for the children were provided by the estate. Moreover, the estate offered scholarships for older children from the village to attend college and, where appropriate, university. In this way, the estate owner provided basic hospitality for his employees and their families. It can be seen then, that what began as the lord of the manor engaging in simple hospitable practices toward the poor, developed into complex relationships of hospitality with his employees and families, and finally into the evolution of the villages. Thus, it can be posited that English society evolved from hospitable practices and relationships which built on one another to the point of creating social change.

In times of giving and receiving hospitality, a temporal space, an hospitable space, is created. It is something new. In this hospitable space, host and guest come into contact and create a dynamic relationship. The early relationship space, or hospitable space, is seen today as being distinguished by honour and respect. For some, it was regarded as an honour for someone to visit for the purposes of receiving hospitality. As Bell (2007:29) tells us, the prestige of hosting is an unequal resource. The giver of hospitality was expected to give respect to the visitor, offering a combination of comfort, security and entertainment. Derrida (in O’Gorman, 2007:193) expresses it thus:
I give place to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place that I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names.

However, the arrangement was accepted as a reciprocal one, where the guest, aware of the respect and honour being shown, would add a means of repayment in acknowledgement. O’Gorman (2005:145) supports such a claim by noting how, in Roman mythology, hospitality was established between individuals by mutual presents. However, within the space which has been created by the giving and receiving of hospitality, diverse elements of the guest-host relationship may be evidenced. Aramberri (2001) suggests the guest-host relationship has three main features: protection of the guest by the host, based around their common humanity; reciprocity with the guest returning their host’s generosity; and thirdly, the guest’s support for the host family by offering assistance while in the host’s care. In this telling, the hospitable space will be encased within both the host’s and the guest’s roles in the relationship, albeit created by their hospitable actions.

Hospitality thus could be understood to regulate the relationship between strangers. The ethos of early hospitality may be characterised in part by the phenomena of the stranger as the guest. Much has been made in the literature of the concept (O’Gorman, 2005), partly, perhaps, because in earlier times spiritual beliefs about strangers led to practices aimed more at protecting oneself from the potential threat of a stranger than offering generosity.
Van Gennep (1960) proffered the view that the treatment of strangers in Greek history may provide clues about how early hospitality developed. He posits the idea that the welcome and generosity shown to the stranger may have been centered around protecting the host community from danger, as opposed to this being a generous, open, welcoming gesture. Bolchazy (1995), in writing about hospitality, suggests primitive peoples showed a fear of strangers (xenophobia), believing that strangers possessed potentially harmful magic-religious powers. So, coming face to face with a stranger for the first time caused fear in the host who believed he might suffer because he lacked knowledge of the stranger (Frazer, 1911). The thought is not an uncommon one, as van Gennep (1960:26) states that an understanding exists that a stranger is sacred, endowed with magic-religious powers, and supernaturally benevolent or malevolent. So fear of strangers, and the host’s unavoidable contact with them, may have been partly the reason for the development of welcoming rituals which were performed for strangers.

Increased population mobility meant an increase in opportunities for strangers to come into contact with one another, with avoidance of strangers becoming more difficult due to a developing need for common social intercourse (O’Gorman, 2005). Strangers such as tradesmen, messengers, ambassadors and holy men had become mobile, not for the sake of just wandering the countryside, but rather with purpose or mission. These travellers moved into new geographical locations as they traded goods and shared knowledge with other communities. Contact with the new mobile populations was unavoidable, so with the intention of disarming strangers of alleged magical skills and of exorcising potential
evil powers, rituals were performed whenever strangers came into contact with foreign societies, their land or belongings (Frazer, 1911; van Gennep, 1960). When a ritual was performed as a welcome, it might also have served the purpose of disarming the guest, thus attempting to protect the host from suspected evil powers. It is conceivable that echoes of this type of ritualistic reception might be seen in contemporary hospitality when front line employees choose to be kind to guests because they are attempting to disarm potentially hostile, yet unavoidable strangers, thus sidestepping unpleasant interactions and consequent dissatisfaction.

Though hospitality is often considered to benefit guests, as previously suggested, it might also be considered to benefit the host. This might be understood to have historic origins when considered as protection for the contemporary host. Rituals as protection from harm have been theorised by Bolchazy (1995) and O’Gorman (2005) as Medea hospitality. Medea hospitality concerns the idea that extending hospitality to strangers to disarm them was invariably advantageous for the givers because by offering hospitality they were protecting themselves from harm. Significantly, this is a further example of hospitality being used as a vehicle for self-protection: hospitality is offered to a stranger so that the giver can protect themselves or their community. This illustrates that it is implicit that the host may have been advantaged. There was mutuality, a symmetry, involved in the hospitable process: the guest received food and protection, and in the process the host received protection, even while giving to the guest (Bolchazy, 1995).
More commonly discussed is the relationship-forming reciprocity associated with contemporary hospitality. When a host and a guest come together for a hospitable encounter, the relationship formed is based on their encounter. It might also be anticipated that a payment will be made by the guest for the hospitality service. In historical accounts of hospitality (see, for example, Aramberri, 2001; O’Gorman, 2005), relationships were also formed with the expectation that hospitality would be returned if the offering host travelled to the home of his guest. As travel became more common, reciprocity may have been a significant condition of early hospitality. There is evidence that the creation of the relationship was often sanctioned by mutual gifts or, if necessary, the mediation of a third person (O’Gorman, 2005). In Roman society, a person connected with a Roman by ties of hospitality was considered more sacred and of greater significance than a blood relative (Schmitz in O’Gorman, 2005). In this way, hospitality can be considered to contribute significantly to the formation of relationships.

As well as being about a host’s protection, a second theme is evident in relation to hospitality being offered to strangers. This was a belief that strangers were in some way representative of higher powers such as a pre-natural force or deity (Bolchazy, 1995:11). Many examples exist in early literature of strangers being thought to embody a pre-natural deity. For example, in the Babylonian telling, Ishtar—the Babylonian counterpart of Aphrodite—wanted the mortal Gilgamesh for her lover (Gilgamesh, Tablet 6 in Bolchazy, 1995) [Essay One note]. In Hindu tradition, the god Sani, disguised as a leper, went begging for food (Thomas in Bolchazy, 1995:11). In the Christian bible, Mathew 25:35 states I was a stranger and you took me
Paul, in Hebrews 13:2, states *and hospitality do not forget; for by this, some, being not aware of it, have entertained angels.* On the strength of such beliefs, it was prudent to show hospitality to strangers; after all, a stranger may have been a higher power in disguise, and thus have the power to change the course of one’s existence.

A further theme in the development of hospitality is derived from the thought that people believed it was the will of the gods (or at least some gods) that strangers be received and treated hospitably (Bolchazy, 1995; Heal, 1990; O’Gorman, 2007). Westermarck in Bolchazy (1995:11) suggests this may have spawned the ethical concept of the *brotherhood of man.* In this telling of history, humanity was obligated to look out for the welfare of others because of a spiritual belief. Heal (1990) also suggests this message was preached from the pulpit in early English churches. Confirmatory sources from ancient literature, described in Bolchazy, (1995:15) include the story of the Odyssey. Zeus, the protector of strangers and beggars, sanctioned a stranger’s right to hospitality. Also in Psalms 145:9, the God of Israel watched over strangers, while in the Agamemnon of Aeschylus, Herodotus vented celestial anger at Paris’ breach of hospitality as the ultimate reason for Troy’s destruction (Bolchazy, 1995).

**The face of hospitality as practice**

Having reviewed the way relationships have been managed through various hospitable practices in different times and societies, one can now construct a hard edged categorisation of hospitable practice. The obvious face of hospitality is that it involves ritual, generosity and commerce. So,
hospitality practice can be seen as both an imperative of human ethics, and the product of it. It has shown that to be generous and kind to others is important not only as a form of welfare, but also so a society of people can feel worth by being considerate of each other.

A contractual form of hospitality is found in early literature (Bolchazy, 1995). In this telling of the development of hospitality, strangers were viewed as ordinary human beings sharing an assurance that when in a foreign land, the obligation of hospitableness would stand. This was explained to be part of a quasi-contractual relationship that afforded any stranger a degree of security and comfort regarding the basic necessities of life when in the foreign land. Evidence of such attitudes is to be found, for example, in the Odysseus when the Greek Diomedes learns the identity of his opponent in battle. He then lays down his weapon and says, you are my guest, friend from a long way back and refuses to fight (Homer in Bolchazy, 1995:17).

An altruistic motive provides another way of understanding hospitality. Strangers, on such accounts, are to be treated hospitably simply because they are in need; those strangers who ask for hospitality are to be treated as brothers (Homer in Bolchazy, 1995:17) because that would seem to be right and wise.

Finally, hospitality might also be about meeting basic human needs. On the one hand, receiving hospitality is culturally significant because it means shelter, food and/or drink has been offered so people have been shown to be aware of those around them. When a society can graciously
give and receive hospitality, then values such as humility and graciousness may be associated with the community. Likewise, giving hospitality can meaningfully impact peoples’ lives. To give to others suggests considering their needs. These are values which Lashley (2000) considers are deemed worthwhile in contemporary communities. Zeldin (1994:437) also suggests hospitality is a basic human need as it broadens the way we think. When we engage with the nature of hospitableness, he suggests, we become open to unusual ideas and opinions, traditions that are alien, and encounters with the unknown. So, in the current global climate, for example, when Christians show hospitality to Muslims, Christians learn about their culture and history, and learn to value and appreciate Muslims as people, as opposed to being fearful and threatened by their differentness. There are many circumstances in contemporary society where if hospitality was extended, societies could benefit from the sharing of food and the extension of generosity to one another. Zeldin (1994) suggests we are just carrying on a long tradition and that hospitality has always been about these generous actions. In the giving of hospitality, ancient societies gained a greater level of engagement with their lives and with the processes of the communities in which they lived.

**Reflections, propositions and implications**

The essay has suggested that various forms of hospitality exist and have existed since the beginning of human history, and that the evolution of hospitality is mirrored in contemporary society. The early teaching of hospitality (Heal, 1990) suggests hospitality was depicted as a virtuous action where those less fortunate were provided access to food and shelter.
Conversely, hospitality was also shown as being for the benefit of the giver. When protecting oneself from the possible harm of a stranger, disarming a potential magic person, or entertaining a spiritual being, welcoming rituals offered to these beings can be seen to sometimes benefit the giver, more than the receiver. However, by protecting themselves, the giver has welcomed the stranger. Apart from being of benefit to the giver or the receiver, when an hospitable action is initiated, the action creates a temporal space where the action can take place. The place can act as a boundary for a relationship to commence. The relationship can be on a personal level, on a community level or on a larger scale. However, it is evident relationships are developed within these spaces.

The essay has emphasised the link between hospitality and being human. Hospitality was highlighted as being essential to the emergence of functional civil society. Hospitality practices have, over time, become stylised, ritualised and commercialised. By exploring earlier stories, one gains considerable insight into the impetuses underlying style, ritual and commerce.

This implies that much of the process of hospitality, ancient and contemporary, follows similar strategies, albeit in differing cultural eras. It also suggests that when societies endorse hospitality and hospitableness both on a personal and a community level, strangers become familiar, cultural practices and rituals become known, and the threat and fear of strangers and the accompanying lack of knowledge subsides. Such knowingness may advance society.
Essay Two

Hospitality in the arts: lessons from social representations

_Serious scholarship can proceed from concrete (albeit neglected) social practices._ (Palmer, 1992:2)

Any attempt to unravel early or contemporary arts texts for the sake of interpreting and understanding hospitality might seem just an attempt to give hospitality a heritage. However, my purpose here is to use the arts which I see as amplifying social practices of various times, in order to explore hospitable practices in those contexts in a fuller way than would be possible if recounting real life events. The artists’ stories developed from their manuscripts are expressions of, and understandings about, depictions of their world. For them, expressions through artistic forms are an engagement with hospitality social practice.

Their manuscripts and workings are recorded as written and visual texts: plays dramatic and comedic; songs; books; poems; films; and so on. In considering these various creative art forms as a valid source of material from which to interpret hospitality, my goal is to examine the significance of hosting in hospitableness and further, to argue for the universality of hospitality over long periods of history. My final, but no less significant
aim in this essay is to show how ingrained hospitality is, in everyday life, from historical accounts until the present day. Grayling (2004) suggests to construct a heritage is to construct an identity, so in this way, I am selecting hospitable practices from different art forms and from different time frames and constructing these into a history of hospitable social practices (Palmer, 1992).

The role of the arts in challenging social practice

Representations in the creative arts give hospitality a license to exist in forms not always seen in our mundane lives. By using the artists’ depictions in their various forms, I am interpreting hospitality social practices from the era in which they worked. Moreover, I am interpreting these artists’ texts in my era, thereby using contemporary events and circumstances to view in some cases, historical occurrences.

By narrating hospitality as an event, it can be related to conditional hospitality (Derrida, 2000). Derrida explains conditional hospitality as hospitality practice where the contexts, laws and rules are known. According to Derrida, it is only when rules, laws and contexts are known that deviations can be understood, so within a play, for example, the playwright, can break or change a social practice to demonstrate a point, only if the social practice is understood by the audience. Poem 13 by Catullus¹ is a fine example, where Catullus asks his friend, Fabullus, to bring food, a girl and wine, and to come and enjoy dinner with him. So,

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¹A Roman Poet from the first century BC. Poem 13 is considered a humorous poem written as an invitation to his friend, Fabullus
Fabullus will dine well with Catullus at Catullus’s house, because Fabullus will bring everything including the evening’s entertainment:

You will dine well, my Fabullus, at my house,
In a few days, if the gods will it.
But only if you bring good food—and plenty of it.
And don’t come without a fair-skinned woman,
And wine and wit and all kinds of loud laughter.
If these you bring, I say,
You will eat well, my handsome;
For the purse of your Catullus is full of cobwebs.
But in return, you will receive pure love,
Or, if you prefer, whatever is sweeter and more elegant:
For I will give you the perfume which Venuses
And Cupids gave my girl;
And when you smell it, you will ask the gods
To make you, Fabullus, all nose.

The social practices associated most readily with hospitality (the host gives and the guest receives), are reversed in Poem 13 by Catullus. In the poem, the guest will bring food, wine and entertainment (a woman) to the home of the host, thereby supplying all the elements for the event. The host will acknowledge the generosity of the guest with love, or the smell of a perfume, intimately connected with the host. The poem suggests a reversal of the accepted practice of a host hosting, whereby the host would provide hospitality.
So, part of the role of a text was to amplify a role which was understood by the audience and then deliver the deviation. In the Catullus poem, the host and the guest roles are reversed where the guest is supplying the contents of the meal. Another example of a text amplifying a particular role might be in dramatic texts which highlighted for the audience neglect of the poor, when humanities values were ostensibly oriented obligations and duty toward the poor. That a text would focus on such a theme is indicative to us now of the importance given to hospitable values at the time.

In texts, scenes can be imagined and conjured up, then written, performed or sung about without the limitations of reality—that is the creative license of texts. For example, according to Derrida (2000), in life, absolute hospitality cannot exist. He explains absolute hospitality as impossible because in his understanding, hospitality requires a host who has some sort of control over those he hosts (O’Gorman, 2007). So, absolute hospitality cannot exist because the stranger is never totally unrestricted by the host. For example, when a person is welcomed into our home, we would restrict their access to private areas of the house and thus place conditions on the hospitality we extend to them. In this way, strangers are not welcome into all areas of our home, but we would treat them kindly and offer them restricted hospitality. Derrida (in O’Gorman, 2007), reports that, in order to offer absolute hospitality to a stranger, a host will offer all that he owns, and never intrude by asking even the stranger’s name. However, O’Gorman (2007:193) argues hosts seek some form of compliance from the stranger, because to do otherwise would be against the basic laws of hospitality. For example, by asking for a stranger’s name the host would be intruding on the privacy of the guest, but realistically, it
would be a condition set before inviting a person into our home. I propose that this condition of the stranger being totally unknown to the host may be deviated in arts texts, and the Wenceslas carol, discussed later in this essay, is an example where the text gives hospitality a license, or freedom, from this condition. However, as this essay suggests, one can glance a snippet of hospitality from a number of dramatic texts which are representative of differing hospitable practices. These texts imply the existence of many forms of hospitality at the time: hospitality is ubiquitous.

In writing plays concerned with cultural practices, Palmer (1992) suggests that throughout the Elizabethan and James eras (from the end of the seventeenth century), hospitality existed as a convention of exchange between competing, often conflicting, orders of society (rich and poor, lord and knight, male and female, family and society, for example). The theatre could provide a social conscience to the audience, reminding them of their societal obligations and providing them with snippets of behaviours; hospitality behaviours that may have been unacceptable, or model hospitable behaviour cast in a fun or dramatic light. Palmer (1992) suggests that, at the inception of Renaissance theatre, hospitality was used as a metonymy, a parody of practices thriving at the heart of English rule. So, theatre was used as representations of practices which were subversive of the culturally accepted meanings of hospitality.

Just as plays could demonstrate acceptable cultural practices from the stage, similarly, written manuals were used to convey instructions to the readers. Wheler (in Palmer, 1992), a fifteenth century doyen of early
society, developed an instruction manual for acceptable standards of behaviour in hospitality matters. Writing such a manual was a convenient way to disseminate the appropriate social values, and could be used to hold societies accountable for their behaviour. Palmer (1992:66) describes Wheler’s published manual of advice to householders as romantic nostalgia for a vanished past … intended in part as a means of excoriating the contemporary gentry for their failures. There is an emerging picture of text being used as a way of reprimanding the English gentry—a task made difficult because hospitality was a voluntary charitable undertaking and secondly, hospitality was a household activity, concerned with the giving of food drink and accommodation from within the home supplies (this is further complicated by the question of who within the household should labor in the name of the poor, an issue which I will not address in this research).

**Playing with host-guest relationships**

Many hospitable characteristics were given attention in the arts. One of the significant aspects of any hospitable action is the relationship which exists between the host and the guest, a relationship often demonstrated in various artistic forms. This is because, for hospitality to exist, a host is required to act. However, as O’Gorman (2005; 2007) argues, even the role of the host may not be a straightforward one. In the opening scene of a play, for example, *The Winter’s Tale*, the role of the host may be established. Using Wheler’s (in Palmer, 1992) definition of hospitality as entertainment, the host’s role is to entertain the guests. *In The Winter’s Tale* (Orgel and Braunmuller, 1998), a play about a relationship between two long time friends, this is illustrated. The story begins with the two friends: Leontes,
King of Sicilia, entertaining and hosting his friend Polixenes, the King of Bohemia. However, after nine months, Polixenes seeks to return to his own kingdom to attend to affairs and see his son. Leontes desperately attempts to get Polixenes to stay longer, but is unsuccessful. Leontes then decides to send his wife, Queen Hermione, to try to convince Polixenes. Hermione agrees, and with three short speeches is successful. Leontes is puzzled as to how Hermione convinced Polixenes so easily, and is suddenly consumed with an insane paranoia that his pregnant wife has been having an affair with Polixenes and that the child is a bastard. Leontes orders Camillo, a Sicilian Lord, to poison Polixenes. In Act 1 Scene 2, Hermione asks Polixenes to stay a little longer with them, outlining for Polixenes the role of the host, and he the guest:

HERMIONE

Verily
You put me off with limber vows; but I,
Though you would seek to unsphere the stars with oaths,
Should yet say ‘Sir, no going.’ Verily,
You shall not go: a lady’s ‘Verily’’s As potent as a lord’s. Will you go yet?
Force me to keep you as a prisoner,
Not like a guest; so you shall pay your fees
When you depart, and save your thanks. How say you?
My prisoner? or my guest? by your dread ‘Verily,’
One of them you shall be.
POLIXENES

Your guest, then, madam:
To be your prisoner should import offending;
Which is for me less easy to commit
Than you to punish.

HERMIONE

Not your gaoler, then,
But your kind hostess. Come, I’ll question you
Of my lord’s tricks and yours when you were boys.
You were pretty lordings then.

A very little later, Leontes wonders if his guest, Polixenes, wants more than hospitality and has taken advantage of his generosity by having sex with his wife. Firstly, Hermione answers Leontes by saying that it is her persuasiveness in speech that has caused Polixenes to agree to stay longer:

HERMIONE

’Tis grace indeed.
Why, lo you now, I have spoke to the purpose twice:
The one for ever earn’d a royal husband;
The other for some while a friend.

At this junction, Leontes becomes disbelieving of the relationship between his wife and his friend, thinking that Mamillius might be Polixenes’s child not, his. Turning to the audience, Leontes says:
LEONTES

[Aside] Too hot, too hot!
To mingle friendship far is mingling bloods.
I have tremor cord is on me: my heart dances;
But not for joy; not joy. This entertainment
May a free face put on, derive a liberty
From heartiness, from bounty, fertile bosom,
And well become the agent may, I grant;
But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers,
As now they are, and making practised smiles,
As in a looking-glass, and then to sigh, as 'twere
The mort o' the deer; O, that is entertainment
My bosom likes not, nor my brows! Mamilius,
Art thou my boy?

MAMILLIUS

Ay, my good lord.

The play exemplifies Leontes’ role as host, but parodies the concept of trust as repayment for hospitality. It is interesting to note at this point that in O’Gorman’s 2005 work on classical and ancient hospitality, in real circumstances of hospitality, there was a distinction between duty and friendship in hospitality (for example, Telfer 2000), and that in the above example, if realistic, Leontes would have been in breach of both these forms of hospitality. Detaining a friend, or being excessively hospitable, was to be condemned. This exemplifies the freedom of the arts in using liberty to narrate hospitality.
Likewise, in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Orgel and Braunmuller, 2002), an unrealistic slant on hospitality is shown by the guests wanting more than hospitality during their stay. The play is a romantic comedy by Shakespeare set in Messina, Sicily. It is about a pair of lovers named Claudio and Hero who are due to be married in a week. To pass the time before their wedding day they conspire with Don Pedro, the prince of Aragon, to trick their friends, Beatrice and Benedick, into confessing their love for one another. The prince’s brother, Don John, jealous of Don Pedro’s power and loving Claudio, conspires to sabotage the coming wedding. The play opens with Leonato, the governor of Messina, welcoming Don Pedro and his deputies, Claudio and Benedick, from a successful battle. Leonato invites them to stay for a month and to have a masked party. Having just returned, they accept Leonato’s invitation:

**DON PEDRO**

*Good Signior Leonato, you are come to meet your trouble: the fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it.*

**LEONATO**

*Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your grace: for trouble being gone, comfort should remain; but when you depart from me, sorrow abides and happiness takes his leave.*

And a little later, we hear the welcome from Leonato to Don Pedro. The suggestion that more might be on their minds is also introduced at this time in the dialogue between them:
DON PEDRO

That is the sum of all, Leonato. Signior Claudio
and Signior Benedick, my dear friend Leonato hath
invited you all. I tell him we shall stay here at
the least a month; and he heartily prays some
occasion may detain us longer. I dare swear he is no
hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

LEONATO

If you swear, my lord, you shall not be forsworn.

To DON JOHN

Let me bid you welcome, my lord: being reconciled to
the prince your brother, I owe you all duty.

DON JOHN

I thank you: I am not of many words, but I thank
you.

LEONATO

Please it your grace lead on?

DON PEDRO

Your hand, Leonato; we will go together.

Claudio decides he will marry Leonato’s daughter Hero, and through a
series of misadventures, including her death, agrees to marry a substitute.
However, as the play draws to a conclusion, the wedding takes place and
Claudio, thinking he is marrying a substitute, finds at the wedding as the
bride is unmasked it is really his beloved Hero! The license afforded to
hospitality through narration in plays is demonstrated:
DON PEDRO
  Good morrow, Benedick. Why, what’s the matter,
  That you have such a February face,
  So full of frost, of storm and cloudiness?

CLAUDIO
  I think he thinks upon the savage bull.
  Tush, fear not, man; we’ll tip thy horns with gold
  And all Europa shall rejoice at thee,
  As once Europa did at lusty Jove,
  When he would play the noble beast in love.

BENEDICK
  Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable low;
  And some such strange bull leap’d your father’s cow,
  And got a calf in that same noble feat
  Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.

CLAUDIO
  For this I owe you: here comes other reckonings.
  Re-enter ANTONIO, with the Ladies masked
  Which is the lady I must seize upon?

ANTONIO
  This same is she, and I do give you her.

CLAUDIO
  Why, then she’s mine. Sweet, let me see your face

LEONATO
  No, that you shall not, till you take her hand
  Before this friar and swear to marry her.
CLAUdio

Give me your hand: before this holy friar,
I am your husband, if you like of me.

HERO

And when I lived, I was your other wife:
Unmasking
And when you loved, you were my other husband.

CLAUdio

Another Hero!

HERO

Nothing certainer:
One Hero died defiled, but I do live,
And surely as I live, I am a maid.

DON PEDRO

The former Hero! Hero that is dead!

LEONATO

She died, my lord, but whiles her slander lived.

FRIAR FRANCIS

All this amazement can I qualify:
When after that the holy rites are ended,
I’ll tell you largely of fair Hero’s death:
Meantime let wonder seem familiar,
And to the chapel let us presently.

So, for Shakespeare, hospitality could be narrated to create stories as ambiguous as pleased him. The notion of host and guest contain inherent ambiguity that troubles easy assumptions. Hospitality, the role of the host,
host as guest, and the role of the guest have been shown in formats which in Renaissance usage (Palmer, 1992) might deviate from the forms of hospitality preached from the pulpits or suggested by culturally accepted standards of that time. It was left to the reader or audience to ponder the question of hospitality and the role of the host in hospitality and hospitableness.

In the English dramatic texts, Heal (1990) suggests much was revealed of the cultural practices of the time, with the plays also serving as a vehicle for presenting audiences with hints and glimpses of the hospitable practices expected of them. For example, Palmer (1992) suggests that Renaissance audiences were shown the host-guest relationship as a message of the cultural practices expected of hosts including the virtue of largesse (Heal, 1990:69) and the hosts’ responsibilities to the poor. The virtue of largesse to which Heal refers, was associated with gentility and so has remained a prime characteristic of the British upper class, even after the class had largely become a myth. Palmer (1992) argues that, as the poor became the responsibility of the householder, the householder was no longer discriminating between the type of group the poor came from; male or female, Irish or Scottish, or Anglican or Puritan. Diversity within the demographics of both the poor and the householders were brought together by the expectations of hospitality which did not discriminate. Simply because of hospitable practice, diverse economic, religious and cultural groups were brought together.

In addition, through the arts, the problem of strangers and their need for hospitality could be addressed in a less daunting and more subtle way. In
plays, audiences could be presented with a social issue which the playwright considered they needed to address; for example, the hosts in a charitable act establishing a relationship with a stranger. Being hospitable has long meant welcoming the guest-stranger, whether into one’s home or as part of the contemporary commercial industry. Realising resistance to welcoming or entertaining strangers existed, and also that society needed to be conscious of their obligation to the poor, accounts of beneficence were presented. However, those who were privileged to see plays were, according to Heal (1990), country gentry who had moved to the city to avoid their responsibility to their country estates.

Going to plays in London was in itself a typical example of the way in which country hospitality was dying. For example, the point can be made that money once spent on helping the poor by keeping large households of servants was now being spent on other pursuits, such as going to plays and being in London enjoying leisure. So, although the audience watched and enjoyed the ‘story of the play’, they did not necessarily take heed of the message (Palmer, 1992).

When he discusses the hospitable ritual of welcoming, Palmer (1992) considers the notion of generous hospitality in practice versus a representation of hospitality, and acculturation of society through arts performances. He tells a story about Queen Elizabeth visiting Norwich in 1578. As part of the welcoming of the Queen to the city (a hospitable action of welcome), a pageant was performed (hospitality of a different nature—hospitality as entertainment) as part of the ritual. Her welcoming included the pageant, *Princely Maske of Mercury and other Gods* by Henry
Goldingham. In this pageant, an actor playing Venus presents the Queen with a white dove as a welcome gift. In Gartner’s (in Palmer, 1992) account of the evening, the dove, having been freed, goes directly to the Queen, where it sits quietly in front of her as though it is tied there. The point Palmer (1992) makes is an interesting one and reflects on the changing nature of hospitableness. It also illustrates the difficulty we have in contemporary society when we reflect on historical social practices through a more modern lens. For example, the ritual of welcome is both very old and absolutely current (Palmer, 1992:273). Included in early welcoming rituals was the presentation of gifts, a practice which continues as a welcoming ritual in hospitality in many societies. However, in contemporary society the gift giving is reversed: the guest is the giver of the gift and the host gives hospitality. The dove was accounted as a frivolous, but enduring gift (Gartner in Palmer, 1992:274). The welcome reflected the social practices of that culture, and demonstrates two important points in the narration of hospitality: the Queen’s welcome ritual was a pageant, and in the course of the welcome ritual, a gift enduring rather than a commodity, was given. Prestation², reflects Palmer (1992:274), govern this moment. The pageant is used to negotiate the differences of wealth, authority and power by using a frivolous gift. In considering hospitable practices, the telling of the story to the Queen through the pageant story alludes to the fundamental nature of social connection in the culture (Palmer, 1992:6). In addition, the pageant is acting as a bridge to smooth out all possible independent social, political, and

² Prestation is described by Mauss (in Palmer, 1992:274) as being an archaic system of exchange. The system described by Mauss is related to the exchange of goods, wealth and produce by groups not individuals, where contracts are made which are bound by obligation. In the example of the dove, the gift of the dove is considered frivolous, as it is not a commodity, but the warm feelings it engenders lives on.
religious factions by using a common language: that common language is hospitality.

Reflecting on hospitable practices and the role they may play in breaching cultural divides, I recall a recent visit to Prague. I explored this remarkable city on foot, and stopped for a rest below the statue of King Wenceslas. Unconsciously, I hummed the words of the Christmas carol, so often sung in my childhood (Neale 1853). The statue looks over a vast city view, and so the words were resonating in my head:

Good King Wenceslas once looked out
On the feast of Stephen
When the snow lay round about
Deep and crisp and even
Brightly shone the moon that night
Though the frost was cruel
When a poor man came in sight
Gath’ring winter fuel

“Hither, page, and stand by me
If thou know’st it, telling
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?”
“Sire, he lives a good league hence
Underneath the mountain
Right against the forest fence
By Saint Agnes’ fountain.”
“Bring me flesh and bring me wine
Bring me pine logs hither
Thou and I will see him dine
When we bear him thither.”
Page and monarch forth they went
Forth they went together
Through the rude wind’s wild lament
And the bitter weather

“In the night is darker now
And the wind blows stronger
Fails my heart, I know not how,
I can go no longer.”
“Mark my footsteps, my good page
Tread thou in them boldly
Thou shalt find the winter’s rage
Freeze thy blood less coldly.”

In his master’s steps he trod
Where the snow lay dented
Heat was in the very sod
Which the Saint had printed
Therefore, Christian men, be sure
Wealth or rank possessing
Ye who now will bless the poor
Shall yourselves find blessing
The words speak of hospitality, the hospitality shown toward the poor by ‘good’ King Wenceslas. Goodness is manifested by the good king, tramping out into the snow on a dark night with his page, to give the beggar food and wine and wood. The beggar is going to be given usable alms, instant assistance to help him. Interestingly, in the example above, they gave the Queen a dove which was considered a frivolous gift, enduring in nature, whereas the King gives the beggar a gift which is a commodity. This speaks of two different types of hospitable practice: the practice of duty and the practice of entertainment and maybe of reverence to the guest. Conversely, the King has to motivate his page when the going gets tough, by reminding him of his reward for helping the poor.

In these examples, hospitality as a social practice depicts different cultural perspectives, reflecting not only social practices, but also differing religious practices and ethical frameworks. The Queen gets a frivolous dove and the beggar gets instant basic food and goods. The message is significant. The Queen is entitled under the obligation of hospitality to receive a welcome gift (in this case, the pageant and the dove). The beggar is also entitled to hospitality; although in this case the song does not tell us that he came looking for hospitality. The King looked out and saw the beggar, and so chose to meet his hospitable obligations. Meanwhile, the subjects of Norwich also chose to meet their hospitable obligations: prepare a welcome ritual for the Queen. While the Queen rewarded her subjects by visiting them, the King told the page he would be rewarded for his Christian actions by being blessed. Here we see hosting and beneficence in sharp contrast.
Depictions of hospitality in contemporary arts

On contemporary television, examples of hospitality and hospitableness are common. One of the clearly apt examples is the television sitcom, *Fawlty Towers* (Davies, Cleese and Booth, 1975). The comedy is centered on the English seaside holiday town of Torquay, depicting a European waiter who speaks little English, and an owner-operated hospitality establishment. It made transparent a common occurrence: commercial hospitality run by amateurs. In this comedy, the host, Basil Fawlty, and his team run an English country hotel. The hotel depicts a comedy of errors, very much to the amusement of the television audience toward whom the series was directed. The guests are the recipients of service provided by the employee, Manuel, of Spanish decent and with very poor English. Basil often has his own muddled agenda for offering hospitality to a guest, while his wife, the receptionist, Sybil, a rather more stern character, spends much of her time sorting out the resulting lack of service, and resolving her husband’s inappropriate hospitable efforts.

*Fawlty Towers* uses humour to depict hospitality. However, the sitcom does contain another message about privately run hotels where the host muddles in guests’ affairs. Of note is the manner in which Basil, the host, chooses to act in a fashion contrary to established standards of service. Further, such actions require Sybil to constantly countermand his authority. The question could be asked if Basil’s attentiveness constitutes a form of hospitableness, as he attempts to personalise his relationship with the guests. Conversely, Sybil is more restrained in her attitude toward service and keeps a distance from the personal relationships her husband
is keen to promote. However, the humour and laughable reaction hides a real life element, as *Fawlty Towers* mirrors the management style of typical, old world seaside private hotels.

The arts continue to reflect cultural and societal practices. Film, a contemporary art form, often gives a visual presentation of hospitable behaviours, not always in keeping with society’s norms, but as a way of informing the viewing public of a shift that has or might occur. *Pretty Woman*, a 1990 romantic comedy film (Ziskin and Lawton, 1990), is a great example here. Societal practices reflect cultural practices of the era in which film and dramatic texts were written: when the film, *Pretty Woman* was first written it was more a social critique rather than a love story. Societal values shifted to such a degree in a few years that the film was received quite differently from how it was originally conceived. He is her host: this film is an exploration, albeit a Hollywood one, of social and (simultaneously) hospitable practices. *Pretty Woman* centres on the relationship between the titular character, down-on-her-luck call girl, Vivian Ward, and wealthy businessman and corporate raider, Edward Lewis, who hires her to be his escort for several business functions. He is her host, yet she is his guest, a guest in the hotel, and being paid as a prostitute. He hosts her, but she also acts as a hostess for him when he entertains. Further, when he is entertained at the races, for example, she is entertained and is also entertaining him. So, the social practice of hospitality and hospitableness is taking place throughout the film, albeit in differing disguises. In addition, much of the film was shot in a landmark Los Angeles hotel, and so many aspects of hospitality, both tangible and intangible, are explored. Palmer (1992:23) reflects on the portrayal of
hospitable social practices and describes their effect by suggesting the practices were like *so many stones falling into stately pools, where the guests departed but the ripples were felt for some time.*

*Babette’s Feast* (Axel and Blixen, 1987), a film about hospitality, hospitableness and hosting, has at its centre enormous generosity; generosity toward a refugee, the generous gift of caring for a stranger, a reciprocal generosity, a generous preparation of a meal and a passion for food. The film, almost entirely devoted to the preparation of a specialised feast, is a telling story of hosting a lavish meal as an extraordinarily generous gift of thanks. In the early part of the film, two sisters had taken in a refugee as their housekeeper. Fourteen years on, and having won a large sum of money, the housekeeper, Babette, returns to the site where she was saved and spends the entire proceeds of her lottery win on a specially prepared feast of thanks for the sisters and their parishioners. The recipients of the feast are initially hesitant and suspicious but are eventually uplifted and elevated through the fine quality of Babette’s costly gift of hospitality. The amount of Babette’s win was significant so her generosity was a noted feature of the film and was shown in some interesting and contrasting ways: the sisters’ hospitable act of taking in a refugee aligns with Derrida’s (2000:2) exploration of unconditional hospitality. His philosophy is that unconditional hospitality is made possible through the concept of an unknown stranger, and as a refugee, Babette was an unknown stranger to the sisters. However, staying with Derrida’s (in O’Gorman, 2007) notion of conditional and unconditional hospitality Babette was offered controlled hospitality by the sisters because they nominated her as the housekeeper, constraining her in that role. In
that way, the sisters maintained the power in the house and, as masters, could offer hospitality to Babette as her host; a condition of hospitality for Derrida (2000). In contrast, Babette prepares, cooks and hosts the feast for the sisters and parishioners.

So, in these ways, arts texts present hospitality in forms as diverse as plays, songs and films. The stories told in them are not without substance, as the messages contained therein are often potent reminders of social practices which, in the everyday occurrence of life, many find unacceptable or difficult to address. By narrating hospitality, texts can take difficult and edgy practices and spin acceptable contexts and influences onto them. In this way, the audience is at liberty to interpret and assimilate information as free human beings, rather than being hemmed in by the restraints of unimpeded realism.

Scenes can be imagined and written, performed or sung about with less restriction than in real life. Literature borrows something from distinct cultural forms, and cultural forms take something back from literature. In the same way that in the form of this essay I have borrowed dramatic literature—a Christmas carol, film scripts and a television script—to highlight the presence and relevance of hospitality practice, so, too have each of these forms borrowed hospitality practices to entertain, amuse and inform their audiences. By decreasing the borders which exist in hospitable cultural practices through these different mediums, and by exposing the hospitable practices to these forms of scrutiny, hospitality and hospitableness may occur differently thanks to the borrowing. The stories of hospitableness continue to be told in many forms through unexpected
mediums, reaching diverse audiences and demonstrating the giving and receiving of hospitality in ways that are more acceptable because they are one step away from harsh reality.
The journey so far: summary reflection and cumulative interpretation of critical elements

I want to remind the reader of my overall aim, and introduce where I will go with the next essay.

In Section One my aim is to depict some histories of hospitality and to understand the impetus of hospitality practice from varying versions of hospitality stories.

In Essay One, I looked at social practice as it relates to hospitable practice, concluding that communities that choose to endorse hospitable practices both at a community and personal level thereby create conditions where strangers become familiar, cultural practices and rituals become known and the threat and fear of strangers and the accompanying lack of knowledge subsides; in other words, acceptance and knowingness advances society.

In Essay Two, I have retold stories from the creative arts. I have used authors’ materials from film, poem, song and plays which illustrate hospitable practices. One of the themes I explore in Essay Two is Derrida’s (in O’Gorman 2007) unconditional hospitality. From within his theory of unconditional hospitality, I explain the welcoming of a stranger as a gift of hospitality. This has endured as a vexatious issue into contemporary times.
The fear of welcoming strangers and being hospitable to them has seen countries turn angrily on refugees and instead of embracing them, locking them up. Such despicable actions against humanity are based on a fear of a stranger and runs counter to the provision of hospitality. When this occurs, hosting breaks down and hospitality is removed. An employee talking on a mobile phone while a customer waits to receive service might be considered a local example of the same breakdown.

Essay Two concludes that by decreasing the borders which exist in hospitable cultural practices through the texts of creative arts, and by exposing the hospitable practices to these forms of scrutiny, hospitality and hospitableness may occur differently. Moreover, by demonstrating the giving and receiving of hospitality in ways that are more acceptable because they are one step away from harsh reality, the message of hospitality may be more easily accepted. Generosity and kindness to one another can be seen as a universal gift which can be used to harmonise societies through the creation of a common language, which will create a more accepting society in which to live.

In Essay Three, the act of hospitality will be shown to have promoted social networks, created peaceful and harmonising relationships between strangers, and to have been a generous gift from one stranger to another. This account will also demonstrate the evolution of hospitality from a private form of reciprocal hospitality, where agreements were made based on the needs of both parties, to a form of public hospitality where the conditions of hospitality were imposed upon the users by government
authorities. Such a development demonstrates the emergence of an industry.

This account, through the story of ancient artifacts, perhaps indicates much of what is understood about the hospitality industry. The account demonstrates the evolution and emergence of hospitality from its ancient beginnings until now where it has gained status in the industrial economy. Moreover, current hospitality employees are shown to carry the legacy of some of these historical practices. Social networks, for example, are a feature of the current industry. The hospitality industry has a team based approach, where very few of the tasks are exclusively individual; an efficient and harmonised social network is essential, for productive teams are understood to create efficiency. Efficiency is understood to produce customer satisfaction (Heskett, J., Jones, T., Loveman, G., Sasser, W. and Schlesinger, L., 1994). Secondly, in the contemporary industry, the employee’s main function is to deliver service to strangers and to contribute positively to the strangers’ experiences while outside their own residence.

In Essay Three, I introduce another example highlighting similarities between ancient and contemporary experience, where I recount the story of mobile cattlemen in Ancient Iberia whose cattle needed to cross another’s land. The cattlemen were strangers, outside their own residences and could never be certain who the landholder might be. In industry, it can be demonstrated that generosity, where the employee gives generously to the stranger, may result in guest delight. So, too in Ancient Iberia, the generosity of the landholder resulted in a safe passage for the mobile
cattlemen and their cattle. Essay Three proposes that these ancient legacies of hospitality have endured and contributed to the current understanding of the role hospitableness plays in creating positive outcomes.

An anthropological and historical analysis reveals that:

- elements of hospitableness and hospitality are recognised through transitions and time and place;
- hospitable practices are critical to the advancement of human society.
Essay Three

Hospitality products: symbols of hospitableness

The offer of asylum to a stranger begins by giving permission for his travel to and stay at the host place. (Sánchez-Moreno, 2001)

Money and money talk is everywhere. Much has been made in this modern era of wealth and the power of money. Money buys people’s innocence and freedom, while in the everyday, it has been claimed that money corrupts. A significant tip for the maître de on arrival to the restaurant, and perhaps you have won a coveted window seat in an ocean side restaurant; a few dollars for the driveway attendant, and your car is parked up on the driveway and not in the basement of the hotel; and perhaps a handshake with a fifty dollar note in your palm gets the spa closed to all but you and your companion.

The hospitality industry is about money. It is a profit based business enterprise, where privately owned firms offer hospitality products in exchange for money. But I suggest the hospitality industry is about much more: it is also about generosity and putting others and their needs before our own. In contemporary commercial hospitality environments front line employees are known to show generosity, consideration and kindness to guests without thought of money or the price of the service—they do it as
an act of generosity from one human being to another. As the story of the *tesserae* unfolds below, we are alerted to such acts of generosity, albeit practiced many centuries ago. Could it be that the modern hospitality employee can be connected to their ancient counterparts through hospitality?

When hospitality is viewed from an ancient culture it helps us understand how hospitality, and the context in which hospitality has emerged and developed, has contributed to the contemporary industry, albeit with a range of more refined products. Hospitality in ancient cultures gives us important indicators of why, in present day life, social practices have developed and how these social practices are apparent as core functions of management within the modern hospitality industry.

Ancient hospitable practices across different cultures show similarities existed. In Essay one, I wrote of hospitality being extended to strangers. The approach taken by hosts was a welcome ritual, as a shield to protect themselves from either the stranger’s power or their association with their gods. Sánchez-Moreno (2001) notes Diodorus (in Sánchez-Moreno, 2001) records a similar hospitable action in Ancient Iberia. He suggests the culture of hospitality was familiar to the Celtiberians and as an ancient social practice, they practiced hospitality. Hospitality was used for the entertainment of strangers because Celtiberians believed the stranger may have been connected to the gods. Diodorus (in Sánchez-Moreno, 2001:392) notes of the Celtiberians:
as to their manners, they are very cruel towards their enemies and other malefactors, but very courteous and civil to strangers; for to all such, from what place so ever they come, they readily and freely entertain them, and strive who shall perform the greatest office in kindness and respect. Those who are attended upon by strangers they commend and esteem them as friends of the gods.

Theoretically, hospitality consisted of an act of giving asylum and a kind of adoption extended to strangers, whether as individuals, or as members of particular families or cities. It is important to recognise that different forms of hospitality not only existed in ancient history, but required different methods of execution to achieve different hospitable outcomes.

A recent anthropological discovery has indicated that transhumance, the safe passage of one’s animals across another’s land, was practiced in Ancient Iberia (Sánchez-Moreno, 2001). This arrangement was acknowledged by small epigraphic plaques called *tesserae hospitalis*. Transhumance, a safe passage for animals, was used by cattlemen in early communities, as the transfer of animals across another’s land was fraught with danger. Not only was it possible that the landowner would claim ownership of the cattle, but as the transfers were sometimes very lengthy, it also might transpire that the mobile cattlemen were from a community with which the landowner was at war (Sánchez-Moreno, 2001).

In Ancient Iberia, cattlemen and their animals were granted safe passage across foreign lands while they carried stone tablets called *tesserae hospitalis*. In this telling of history, the *tesserae* demonstrate an agreement of
hospitality between cattlemen and landholders across whose lands the men and their cattle crossed. The *tesserae* contained hospitable pacts with landowners. The source of data for this ancient form of hospitium exists through the epigraphic information on the *tesserae* (tablets). Not only was the men’s safety guaranteed by the promise of a non-aggressive, non-warring other tribe by these tablets, but their animals were also safe from being claimed or plundered while the caravans traversed the landowners’ territories.

Sánchez-Moreno (2001:393-4) described the *tesserae hospitalis* plaques as a *social device, enabling communication*. They were small portable tablets on which agreements of mutual assistance between strangers were briefly described or essentially *… cooperation pacts*. The inscriptions and diagrams contained on the tablets were a *… fine visual reminder of their purpose; an agreement between … individuals, families, cities and other political units, in terms of their consensus and reciprocity between the two parties.*

In identifying the *tesserae* as an early form of communication, the Celtiberian inscriptions were in a zoomorphic form. The significance of the form lies in the interpretation. The *tesserae* forms represented bulls, pigs or boars, horses, pigeons, fish, and so on, and some have the form of one or a pair of hands and *… they closely resemble connected hands*—as in the clasp of friendship (Sánchez-Moreno, 2001:394), the visual indication of extended hospitality. Further, the items were held by both parties in order to safeguard the pact. The visual form of communication was understood by both parties, and as such led to a simple understanding of the hospitality concept. The enduring nature of the arrangement meant generations may
have been involved with the agreement. Written forms of agreement were used later but in these early forms of the arrangement, the symbols or drawings needed to be not only understood to their current holders, but understood as they endured. By symbolising the agreement in the visual form, the conditions had enduring meaning.

**Implications of the agreement**

Transhumance or the forms of interaction associated with it may have contributed to the formation of communities. As Selwyn (2000) noted, historically, hospitality impacted the formation of relationships and communities in hunting and gathering societies. As the communities developed, hospitable practices may have contributed to the communities’ ethical and moral value (Heal, 1990; Lashley, 2000; O’Gorman, 2007). Further, different forms of hospitality may have emerged. Lashley (2000) in recognising the significance of hospitality as consisting of different domains (social, private and commercial), considered early hospitality contributed to the socialisation of societies within a social domain where hospitable acts and the impacts of social forces contributed to the formation of communities. In addition, hospitality may have been one device through which social links among different ancient communities were networked and maintained.

Historical accounts suggest that these hospitality pacts may have existed so that the seasonal animal movements could be undertaken in safety and without aggression. Sánchez-Moreno (2001) noted that, in the absence of an accepted agreement upon written history of hospitality, alternate forms
of records such as those seen in the small *tesserae hospitalis* or epigraphic plaques have provided a rich source of data.

In the past it has been suggested by Strabo (in Sánchez-Moreno, 2001) that warfare was the vehicle for social interaction in pre-Roman times. It has been suggested that isolation of tribes and the geography of where the tribes resided, contributed to their war-like nature. This is because warfare was one of the most frequent means of social interaction in pre-Roman times (Sánchez-Moreno, 2001:391). However, the interpretation of the plaques suggests transhumance was also an important vehicle for social interaction, but was peaceful. Again, Sánchez-Moreno (2001:391) qualifies his suggestion by noting *there was also room for peaceful and diplomatic connections when the tribes found it socially and economically to their advantage.*

Further significance may be attributed to the *tesserae* text, according to Sánchez-Moreno (2001). He implies that the *tesserae* would form a later version of an older system of hospitality. The *older version* was a form of economic driver, as animal husbandry was an extensive and prized economic resource in Iberia during the first millennium BC. However, for the trade in animals and animal products to survive, it required an extensive social network. *Diverse ethnic territories would be called upon to allow the safe or protected passage of flocks on the way for trading and taking to fairs and markets* (Sánchez-Moreno, 2001:401). The hospitality pacts meant reciprocal arrangements were established, such as giving of gifts, and trading of animals, slaves and possibly even exogamous marriage. It is the provision of safe and protected passage that implicates hospitality as an economic driver.
Ancient hospitality offered in the form of *tesserae* was an alternative to warfare normally associated during this period with conquering lands and possessions, and was a form of diplomacy credentialed by the *tesserae*. The *tesserae* symbolised a peaceful agreement of hospitableness, so for those with whom agreements were made, the possession of the appropriate tablet meant on one side of the agreement a non-warring access to the stock routes, and on the other side, being a host to the crossing party.

Sánchez-Moreno (2001) indicates that the iconography may symbolise the cultural identity of the members joined by the hospitality pacts and that the political centres would choose certain powerful or magic animals to underpin the strength of the agreements. The hospitality agreements were the fulcrum of the trade. Without safe and protected passage, animals could not have been delivered to the market place, and so sales of the animals would not have been possible. As such, it is the hospitality agreements for safe and protected passage which made the eventual sale of the animals possible. In the contemporary industry, hospitality is used as an economic driver. If service was not offered to guests, no payment would be made and so the hospitality industry would have a short tenure.

The industry reciprocal arrangement is based on money being paid for the services offered; in private hospitality no economic arrangement exists. Such an arrangement suggests hospitality influencing the existence of commerce.

The very simplicity of the tablets was the strength of the *tesserae* as a form of communication. However, entering the period of Roman conquests, Sánchez-Moreno (2001) states that the simple form of *tesserae* was being
replaced by public documents written in Latin. The greater physical dimensions of the surfaces of a document, and the introduction of geometric shapes of the later tablets, encouraged a more complicated set of procedures but keeping the same hospitality function. It is interesting to note that Arendt (1958), to whom I refer in Section Three of this thesis, suggests that language not understood by everyone may create a form of isolation and superiority among some of its users. In the example of the *tesserae*, it might be evident that the symbol on the tablet was only known as the confidential pact for the two parties to whom the *tesserae* referred, and those outside the agreement could not understand what conditions, regulations or provisions the agreement contained. In this way, the pact could be a contained agreement between just two parties. The agreement itself, and any special conditions, were featured in the symbol.

Interestingly, in the contemporary industry, this type of secrecy may also be evident. Two aspects of the contemporary industry display this same confidentiality: industry jargon and loyalty cards.

When industry jargon is used, only those who know its meaning can take part in a dialogue where the jargon is used. Insiders know its meaning, and so are able to conduct a public communication to inform those similarly versed of some special condition. This is particularly evident in restaurants between wait staff and kitchen staff. Concierge and porters are also known for using codes to transfer information about guests.

Loyalty cards give holders special privileges. Hotel loyalty cards are a way of tying the guest into an organisation by offering the guest incentives based on their continual usage of products and services of that
organisation. In hotels, for example, specified floors are more for loyalty cardholders. These floors may provide treats for the loyalty cardholder. The treats might include free cocktails and canapé, maybe a personal ironing service, or flowers and fruit in every room; incentives to remind the guest of their importance. Those without cards are not given these privileges.

As a later development of transhumance, Sánchez-Moreno (2001) notes that simple reciprocal hospitium was replaced with publicum hospitium. The early simple form of tesserae using animal symbols to convey meaning and the accompanying understanding of the arrangements was no longer suitable for the lengthy conditions associated with the evolving public forms of transhumance. The small tesserae were replaced by a larger public-written document known as a general agreement. This means that what had been a series of private arrangements, with conditions established and agreed to by both parties, was being made into a public agreement where the conditions were now imposed upon the users. Sánchez-Moreno (2001) noted that these public documents were announcements. This led to the tesserae form of hospitality being lost; Roman subordination of the client to patron model became dominant (Arendt, 1958). A major transition was thus made towards what we see today in the hospitality industry.

The change from private tesserae to publicum hospitium was the beginning of subordination in the model of the relationship between the provider of hospitality and the receiver of hospitality. While the industry proposes the client is dominant by chanting the mantra ‘the customer is always first’, industry practice is a management designed, service objective strategy.
What this means is management, not through concern for the customers’ needs or wants, but cognisant of the competitors’ offerings, designs a service strategy based on the firm’s ability to finance the scheme, remembering the financial arrangement is slanted in the favour of the organisation. Loyalty cards are a good example of this; management design the incentives to reward the guest for their loyalty—not by guest suggestion. In other words, whatever the customer pays for a service must allow a wide enough margin to not only cover the costs of providing the service, but further margin so (net) profit will result; and all the while trying to persuade the customer to use the firm’s services and not the competitors!

Often service strategies are developed around the organisation’s financial objectives and not with the guests’ needs and wants in mind. This situation provides the context within which the hospitality employee works to ensure the client experience is a satisfactory one by overriding the management’s service objectives, and through the employee’s internally driven personal generosity and kindness. In the transhumance story, the original agreements on the *tesserae* were simple and based on the need of the client; the mobile cattleman needed to get his cattle through the landowner’s property. These two parties came to an agreement and developed a pact which was enduring and had meaning. Once the Roman judicial system took control (in contemporary hospitality organisation this would be described as the management of the organisation), the emphasis went from client to political power, conditions were generalised and hospitality as an act of generosity from giver to receiver was passed over. The contemporary employee is left with a script to follow, a script which is
handed down from management, and the truly engaged hospitality between client and provider is lost because management does not trust their employees.

**Concluding remarks**

The purpose of telling the *tesserae* story was to recount an historical tale of hospitableness and its evolution and to explore such a telling from a social perspective. The giving of hospitality, evidenced by specific artifacts, such as the *tesserae*, not only illustrates the enduring qualities of hospitality, but also shows evidence of the differing forms hospitality takes. Hospitality between ancient tribes and communities has shown to vary little from the continuing of hospitable practice in contemporary society. Secondly, when the judicial system of old writes laws and rules to administer hospitality, we can see in hindsight that hospitality loses some of its potency. In the modern industry, when management discards trust of their employees and writes scripts for them to perform, hospitality loses its personal and engaging qualities. This is because the agreements were not privately orientated within families, as with private hospitality, but involved a wider network of people. What this hints at is hospitality does not require a family bond; it is not an obligation to offer or extend hospitality. Hospitality is the free will action of a person; we can choose to offer or show hospitality to whom we desire.

The discovery of the *tesserae* and the identification of their purpose highlight the generosity of spirit associated with hospitableness and, further, that hospitality has existed throughout much of history in a
diverse and interesting way. Such a telling of history shows the legacies which have been associated with hospitable practices since ancient times, and how these practices are relevant in understanding current hospitality practices. That hospitality can be associated with such an ancient gesture as transhumance, and that generosity played such an important role in the establishment of relationships, may be indicative of what it means to be human. When conditions and a context require action, people search for solutions which will affect others, requiring something of themselves, and in harmonious gestures show hospitableness to others. Much like the Romans honouring hospitality agreements to non-family members (Essay One), transhumance was made possible because Ancient Iberians made hospitality pacts with mobile cattlemen, and through hospitality, men got their cattle to market. This serves to remind society of the significant role hospitality has played in the development of society, including things not generally associated with hospitableness. Notwithstanding the physicality of the artifact, in this telling hospitality has created an environment where an economic transaction has been possible, much akin to today’s commercialisation of the hospitality industry. So, hospitality has created an environment for an economic transaction to take place. Moreover, as with cattle historically and their significance for creating wealth, so, too today, the hospitality industry is considered one of the fastest growing industries in the world, and known to return greater gross domestic product (GDP) than oil. But above money and its importance, this story demonstrates the continuing role generosity has played and continues to play, in establishing and maintaining relationships.
The journey so far: summary reflection and cumulative interpretation of critical elements

The anthropological and historical analysis reveals how past conceptions of hospitableness, as well as past expressions of hospitality continue to influence contemporary practice in the hospitality industry and its associated training systems.

The following essay is a telling of early craft guild history, the recognised early training system for preparation for work. The contemporary training equivalent is the Training and Further Education system (TAFE). My reason for including this essay is as a way of exploring how skills training has been formalised over many centuries, and how from the craft guild methods our current training system has emerged. Skills training is a major consideration in the preparation of hospitality employees. Secondly, apprenticeships emerged from craft guild systems. I only briefly touch on the apprenticeship system, but included it in this essay as a way of demonstrating a scheme where a person trains formally alongside their work. The apprenticeship system has not enjoyed great popularity in modern work history; however, there are hints of a re-emergence of the system as an acceptable choice of work training.

So, how does Essay Four fit within the structure of this overall thesis? Two important points can be established from this telling of history. Grayling
(2002) argues training is a good start in preparation for an education, and I am an example of that. Here is a brief outline of my own education history:

I trained at technical college (a prior name of the TAFE system) in accountancy while working as a management cadet for an Australian retailer. I gained an undergraduate food science degree from an agricultural training college, while working for a food manufacturer. I gained a masters degree from a university converted from a college of advanced education while running my own business (and having children), and now I am gaining a further qualification from my alma mater (Hawkesbury Agricultural College, upgraded to a university) while working for an education provider. Grayling’s (2002) argument being tested!

Secondly, the guilds history of craftsmanship is a fine example of how a manual labor system producing goods with pride and attention to workmanship, is similar to serving a guest with graciousness and pride. When hospitality employees delight a guest by creating a wonderful hospitality experience, they are crafting hospitableness.

In Essay Four my intention is to tell the history of a significant training method, and of the struggle this system experienced before the emergence of a recognisable system of training. In telling the story of craft guilds, I am looking for guiding principles of the modern hospitality training system and some of the reasons behind the interest in skill training. I suggest that training, a skills-based system, delivers competence in task and activity-based work, preparing people who are ‘hands on’ in their work roles. This
is different to university education where students reflect and think as preparation for work. This might be thought of as ‘heads on’ work.

It seems the seeds of current employee skills training can be seen in the patterns experienced by guilds. In this essay, I will be bringing into comparison the presentation of how the guilds operated with relevant continuities in contemporary society. As well, such an examination foreshadows later parts of this work, where I look more closely at those factors which impact on front line employees, and their choice to deliver services with grace and generosity. This essay, however, begins to map out how themes from this history of skills training still echo in the halls of trainee programs for hospitality workers, and therefore ultimately affect their delivery of service.
Essay Four

Of craftsmanship, masters and apprentices: early training methods

In the contemporary hospitality industry, front line employees produce goods and services to meet client needs. They require a range of skills to undertake this work; from basic simple skills to complex multi faceted skills. To be efficient in the required skills, employees learn in a variety of circumstances from off the job laboratory facilities to on the job, context specific areas. Hospitality employees work in teams so that intuitive, deeper learning will occur.

Reflections on the education and training roles of early craft guilds

The time period of guild history illustrates the enduring nature of this style of training as nations struggle to give their citizenry skills to prepare them for independent, everyday life and for employment. Snell (1995:684) argues the time period for apprenticeships can be

generalize[d] in terms of three extended periods. These may broadly be characterized as that of `guild apprenticeship’, let us say from about the twelfth century to 1563, with the state underpinning much practice; the period of statutory apprenticeship, from 1563 to 1814 (with guilds slowly
In the following essay, I recount the story of early graft guilds and the role played by these in preparing people for work. The reason I tell this story is firstly because it demonstrates the role skills play in the development of work roles, and even more importantly, it clearly shows the status and respect shown to those who were highly skilled. This is opposed to today’s general lack of regard for skill training when compared with university education. Secondly, the guild story is significant as guilds were a forerunner to current training schemes. This story reiterates the ‘learn by example’ approach to standardisation, which is a comparable method to contemporary hospitality scripts. As well, this telling reinforces the belief that life experience, and learning and growing as a whole person, rather than in a compartmentalised way, contributes depth and proficiency in craftsmen.

Early craft guilds served multiple significant purposes: for skills training, as an established structure for training; as a regional centre for production of goods and services, particularly for populations of limited mobility; and for the demonstration of craft mastery by master craftsmen. From the early twelfth century, craft guilds provided skills training through apprenticeships. An apprentice was aligned with a master craftsman and moved through a training scheme in the workshop before becoming a journeyman, where they ventured outside their local geographical areas to gain valuable life experiences. This system was based on the belief that
learning about life and oneself was important preparation for working effectively. Local craft guilds provided products and services for local consumption; in some specific cases (such as silverware and porcelain) the product was produced for a broader—and even overseas—market.

Some evidence has suggested guild workshops were harsh, rigid work environments, where the conditions for the journeymen and apprentices were less than ideal. However, the economics of the guilds were recognised as providing employment and out performing their main rival, the rural semi and unskilled labor industry. My purpose in this essay is to reflect on craft guilds as sample sites of skills training and to examine the role craft guilds played in preparing people for employment by achieving training outcomes. In contemporary society, skill training sites, both formal and informal, as opposed to the formal guild site, prepare participants for employment in the hospitality industry. It is hoped that, by demonstrating these historical training schemes, the foundations of current hospitality training schemes will be apparent.

It is a commonly held belief today among some groups in society, for example, Slow Food Movement (SFM Australia 2008), that hand crafted goods are superior expressions of craftsmanship (Wolek, 1999). This is because when products are mass produced, the production methods focus on high volume rather than attention to detail. A fine example of this is the jams presented at the breakfast table in hotels. If a hotel’s demographic is mass tourism, budgets would exclude hand made jams and conserves. However, where a hotel has a niche clientele where breakfast will be a very genteel affair, then mass produced jams and conserves would not only be
out of place, they would be unacceptable. Could you imagine putting Rose’s blackberry jam (mass produced) on a home made slice of freshly cooked brioche? So, hand crafted goods, much like those from early craft guilds, are examples of skilled craftsmen producing specialised products. The skills necessary to produce hand made goods are revered as an ‘art’ in the current mass consumerable society.

An historical study of craft guilds (twelfth century until 1840s) (Snell, 1985) reveals an account of production in a variety of cultural contexts, within a diversity of social and political climates. This suggests the guild training scheme enjoyed broad acceptance as an important feature of the employment landscape from successive political regimes across countries, states, territories and through time. Secondly, the guild membership had significant support because the changing fortunes of successive societies could not uproot the guild’s continuation. The belief was that guild training provided employment skills (Snell, 1985:706) essential to developing societies in contrast to unskilled rural laborers, at risk employment and so dependence on society’s welfare. Guilds were a corporative entity that functioned within boundaries often set by geographical locations (Kammerling Smith, 1999). They were instrumental in developing skills for work and also functioned as units of work that had the capability of impacting political decisions and economic considerations. Wolek (1999:402) describes guild history as fueling controversies in social political theory because the argument about the purpose and long term outcomes of guilds has been extensive. The very existence of guilds also caused political and social controversy because some guilds and their trade membership created significantly large groups which had influence politically, enabling
them to gain advantage over other less well managed groups. Other guilds had religious affiliations which had significant social influence and this too caused other less persuasive or powerful guild groups to suffer. Black in Wolek (1999:401) also raised the issue of skill and solidarity in political independence ... independent trades in fostering anarchy or progress ... liberating versus dehumanizing impacts of technology and capitalism. All these issues listed have resonance today familiar to contemporary work place settings.

A recent example concerns opposition to the new drinking laws limiting youth access to after hours drinking. A consultant acting on behalf of the industry, and the Australian Hotels Association (AHA) encouraged the drinking youth to carry placards and signs to show to the media, to which the youth suggested they were capable of making their own decisions about drinking times and locations (Sydney Morning Herald Thursday January 8th 2009). The campaign was being run by the AHA (equivalent to an historical guild) as well as some of the implicated hotels, and was not initiated by the youth. Just as historical guilds had factions which wielded power, so, too today, there are those organisations within the industry that use influence to maintain profits and power.

A lack of written history of guild culture has created a void in the early history of training systems (Epstein, 1998). The study of guilds has been hindered by an inadequacy of data, leading to difficulties on knowing who ran them, how they worked and what actually went on inside them (Kaplan, 1986). Wolek (1999:402) suggests there are, a profusion of romanticized and demonized myths and an abundance of social issues. However,
Evidence has suggested guild workshops were harsh, rigid work environments where the conditions for the journeymen and apprentices were less than ideal.

Generic similarities may have been evident in guild operations (Lunt, 1957; Thrupp, 1963; Unwin, 1963; Wolek, 1999). The comparisons between guilds were that they formed the basis of craft skills training, promoted a specific trade in a specific locality, were organised into shops owned by masters that employed journeymen and apprentices, and were in existence from Roman times until they were outlawed by legislation. However, the history of guilds does not reveal a picture of social or political harmony. Stories of ownership, management and the economic role of guilds indicate struggles were common within and external to the operations. Internally, conflict arose between members of the guild, journeymen and apprentices because favour, promotion and ultimately profit, charted a less than transparent route. Externally, guilds producing the same products waged war to achieve supremacy; they competed for profits and for social and political influence.

Gender issues also caused conflict in guilds. Generally, men were recruited into guilds to learn the mastery of a craft. Recruitment into a craft guild was not based on choice of the craft, but rather, it was driven by workforce needs. A significant intention of the individual master craftsman was to make the most efficient use of family and outside skilled labor in the workshop. Hence, relations with apprentices and journeymen who did not formally belong to the guild were just as important as those with guild membership.
The mainly skills-enhancing function of guilds might explain why female guilds were so unusual. Women were mostly restricted to activities learned informally at home and formally in female religious houses and orphanages; exceptions were granted to relatives of master craftsmen and journeymen (Snell, 1985). Women seamstresses and tailors were recruited into French guilds. Crowston (2000:339) describes the work of the Royal Government of France (Louis XIV) in creating an independent and exclusively female guild for the first time in over 200 years, which was driven by fiscal, economic and social factors. Unfortunately, it caused conflict with the male dominated tailor guilds because it represented two opposing models of corporate membership and the social identity, honour and gender roles associated with them.

Apprenticeships were run under regulated guidelines. Smith (1976) suggests that the apprenticing ‘laws’ (the contractual arrangements under which apprentices were joined to a craft guild) were a means of restricting access to the labor market. However, Epstein (1998) disagrees, suggesting the financial contribution made by early apprenticeships has been overlooked. With the formal length of training seeming to be out of proportion to the requisite skills, Epstein (1998) suggests it may have been viewed as related to restricting competition. Smith (1976) argued that the learning of a skill did not take the designated length of time (approximately seven years), regardless of the type of skill being learnt, and that many skills could be just picked up by being around those who can perform them. He assumed all skills were general in nature but did not account for the existence and complexity of specific or transferable skills in
some of the early crafts or for the difficulties in transferring expertise. However, in Epstein’s (1998) argument, the trainees needed to learn not only about a range of different production methods and technologies, but about markets, competitive standards, and negotiation with other artisans, laborers, and merchants.

Likewise in the contemporary industry, some of the skills are highly complex and may take time to master. Front of house procedures, for example, require the employee to operate whatever check-in program is specific to the property, and secondly, to manage variations of money and packages. All this needs to be done in a timely and efficient manner while remaining in front of the guest. Similarly, check-in and check-out queues can become overcrowded because many of the mid week guests undertake this process in the similar time range. The technology takes time to learn, keeping control of the environment requires mastering, and the techniques involved in handling the guests also needs practice. This may take some time to master.

From an organising institutional perspective, the operational issues were: how to teach skills; how to allocate costs to provide craftsmen and apprentices with adequate incentives; and how to monitor the labor market to avoid major imbalances between supply and demand for skilled labor. In the absence of formal educational institutions, the best available solution on all counts was a system of training contracts enforced by specialised craft organisations (Epstein, 1998). The significant differences in the length of apprenticeships between similar crafts suggest that duration of the training was an arbitrary and negotiable benchmark, set
because the guilds were unable to legislate on the teaching itself. We see that today there are discrepancies in the length of some courses, depending on the provider or the delivery modality. These were arguments about time frames, and these remain with us today.

Substantial arguments exist in contemporary industries regarding monetary investment in training. Some have suggested that with such a large casual and transitory workforce, training casual employees is not financially viable. Hence when employee skills are lacking, the industry turns a blind eye to avoid the cost of up-skilling and simultaneously blames and denigrates the employee for lacking those very skills that the employer is not prepared to invest in. In guild history, we found a similar situation, in that there was a level of discrimination: some apprentices received more opportunity than others and were thus unable to improve their situation sooner. However, guilds were less persuaded to capitulate to demands for greater access to training and maintained pressure on apprentices to remain loyal to a particular branch of a guild and its master craftsman.

Before the introduction of mass schooling, a degree of formal training was needed to iron out initial differences in skills among children and to socialise adolescents into adulthood. Artisans required skilled labor to produce goods to a standard quality and to raise output. Masters could reclaim their investment costs (which included time spent on training, wasted materials and maintenance) by requiring that the apprentice work for below market wages after gaining a set level of skills. Conversely, in the absence of credible bans against apprentice opportunism which took
the shape of early departure, and of poaching by rival masters who could offer higher wages because they had no training costs to recover, training may have been less than optimal and would have constrained output. More highly skilled masters stood a better chance of attracting good apprentices at lower cost; the effort of teaching could also help develop the master's talents. Guilds enforced compliance, through statutory penalties backed up with a combination of compulsory membership, blackballing and boycott. Thus, regulation became an important part of the training landscape.

Analogously, the entry fee to the guild was a mortgage on trust, which was used to deter lesser known masters from exploiting the guild for short term advantage. This accounts for the nearly universal practice of fixing low or non-existent fees for masters' next of kin. In some highly specialised and cyclical industries, like craft specific skills, ore mining, iron-making, ship building and high quality masonry skills (Epstein, 1998), apprenticeships were often kept within closely-knit family networks. However, rather than being a sign of restrictive practice, the higher risks of those industries restricted the supply of apprentices.

With many competitors in the market, apprentices suffered serious loss if they were discharged early or were poorly trained; guilds therefore passed rules to enforce adequate training. Like masters, apprentices had to be vested with appropriate rights (including a guarantee of proficiency and security of employment over at least an economic cycle) in order to invest in competency development. In sum, opportunism by both parties (masters and apprentices) explains both why the contracts appeared to be
excessively long, and why the relation between length and requisite skills was seldom straightforward.

Skilled workers in scarce supply established regional, and later national, associations to pool information and devise training credentials that were recognised by craft masters across broad domains. Both innovations, the pooling of resources and training credentials, appeared more commonly during the late medieval phase of labor market integration, at which time it became common to provide certificates of apprenticeship, making journeymen employable across firms.

Politically, guilds contributed to the development of state policy. The administration of the laws governing the guilds was enacted at the state level. Through learning how to create support networks to exert influence (Kammerling Smith, 1999:520), the guilds were capable of influencing economic policy. Further, it has been suggested the guilds, in developing solidarity within the member groups, created brotherhoods … for friendships as well as for vengeance … to remain united, come what may (Bloch in Wolek, 1999:402). These voluntary communities supported family members in times of sickness and with bequests to widows and orphans (Hudson and Hunter, 1981:146).

Guilds were regulated by state administration (Section One note). Regulations within the guilds extended to quality of the products, standardised processes, membership and membership payments, and protection of locally made products. As a regulatory body, guilds constantly stressed the importance of regulation. They monitored the
quality of the products and oversaw the maintenance of product standards. Interestingly, it has been suggested that product innovation was not favoured in the guild workshop, although this claim has been disputed (Epstein, 1998). Sewell (1980) suggests that, to maintain quality standards, originality, inspiration and genius were not encouraged, but rules, order and discipline were. Interestingly … *in this scheme of things, art was a rule giving or legislative activity* (Wolek, 1999:404). Epstein (1998) disagrees that quality was maintained by downplaying innovation. He argues that product development did take place, but the inspections by quality officers, who maintained the standards, were conducted at known times and workshops, and at those times the standard processes were maintained.

The regulations governed many aspects of the guild operation. In the seamstresses’ guild in France (Crowston, 2000), admission to the guild was restricted by admission fees that were not negotiable. The admission fees applied not only to those who were holding the status of ‘Mistress Seamstress’, but to all the participants of the guilds. Conflict within the guild came about when those workers outside the guild continued to illegally supply goods into the seamstresses’ ordained markets without contributing fees. The political network activity of the guild was strong enough to have policy legislated against the non-paying workers. Regulations forced even those not wishing to join, but who continued to work as seamstresses, to pay fees to the guild. In the hosiery guild however, *fees and a mastership were only earned after several years of training* (Kammerling Smith, 1999:503).
In hosiery guilds like the one in Nimes (Kammerling Smith, 1999), government policy regulation depended upon geographical locality; power and influence dictated, to some extent, what regulations were. Hand made stocking production was an industry of the poorer class and in order to protect their income from the more technologically advanced guilds of Nimes, the state council issued an arête that restricted the production of the *bas au métier* (manufactured stockings) to eighteen cities (Kammerling Smith, 1999:498). Product quality secured product desirability and therefore market share, and both rich and poor workers were bound by the same quality standards. Guild statutes … devoted almost two thirds of their content to what historians call quality control, but what experts in operations management call product and process standardization (Wolek, 1999:405). It can thus be seen that quality (and quality assurance) was a major driver in guild processes.

In describing quality in the competitive global environment and the impact it has had on the service industries, Sanderson (1995:29) argues that guilds of certain stature were charged with responsibility for global standards of quality; by a charter in 1327, the Goldsmiths Company were given absolute responsibility for the quality of gold, silver manufactured articles (and) hallmarking precious metals sold in the United Kingdom. Further, Sanderson (1995:31) suggests craft guilds were jealous of the positions they held in the craft world as organisations concerned with maintenance of quality, and citing Louis XIV’s finance minister in 1662 describes the benefits to the economy if our factories, through careful work, assure the quality of our products, … [it] will be in the foreigner’s interest to get supplies from us and their money will flow into our kingdom. Interestingly, quality maintains its
significance in the contemporary hospitality industry (the quality of the housekeeping, for example), although as can be seen in Essay Five, in modern times quality is judged by the guest (guest satisfaction relates to the guest’s judgement of the service quality). The guilds understood the value of maintaining quality standards to protect the industry.

The quality of guild products related to the guarded and highly regarded skills of the master craftsman (Kinna, 2000). Hickson and Thompson (1991) consider that the originality of the product was protected from unscrupulous apprentices who might have chosen to divulge craft product secrets to others outside their own craft guilds. The honesty of apprentices was important because they needed to be trusted to not pass on the secret formulae of their masters. Gimpel (1983:85) described the punishment of apprentices who shared secret product knowledge, providing skills with other people outside the guild. He suggests such a punishment might be to deprive [the apprentice] of his craftsman status. Wolek (1999:406) argues that honest producers promote survival. However, Spooner (1972) argues that this secrecy ultimately protected guild monopolies and outdated methods, as opposed to protecting the consumers. Government agents responded because of societal pressures (Poni, 1989:91) to develop independent definitions and enforcement guidelines for the guilds. However, while this decreased the amount of bickering disputes from artisans [it produced] … new tensions with governing agents relating to regulation policy. Guild regulation was a complex matter, impacting the industry on many levels.

Restraining the talent of artisans was not the focus of the guilds. Wolek (1999), discussed regulations within the guilds, and referred to the focus
on workers’ competence rather than on an end product as a measure of workers who were capable. Sullivan (1983:43-4) argued that setting of standards, while not invented by guilds [was] … basic to their operation. Reddy (1984:111) describes the study of guilds as revealing few expressions either of comparative excellence or of detailed measurement [but instead] the proficiency of the worker. Artisan made goods filled the role of functionality, such as clothes to protect the body, and bakery products that were nourishing and edible. Items of embellishment and the heights of quality (Dodwell in Wolek, 1999:408) were reserved for the elite such as royal households and were produced by guilds as a result of the rise of the middle class and bourgeois fashion in the nineteenth century. Conforming to standards was considered fundamental to reliable products.

The regulation of standards did provide goods that were basically identical. However, consistent with the policy that artisans should present a united position in regard to product standards, the regulations were broadly achievable and often endured over extensive periods of time. Consistent also with the standards of the guilds, they did not describe physical dimensions, preferring to focus on a broad definition of the utility of the end product. This custom of the trade standard, however, reveals one of the negative impacts associated with the guild process: resistance to innovation (Thrupp, 1963). Renard (in Wolek, 1999) notes the growing competition for guild because of the guild unwillingness to go beyond the broadly achievable standards. Demand for military goods for continental scaled armies and for export goods that could compete in international markets (Renard in Wolek, 1999:409) led to new government (royal) corporations and merchant produced goods. Here we see the introduction of a competitor,
whose focus was exclusively on production, rather than the holistic approach used by the guilds. The apprentice in the guild was being trained not only to be competent in the skills required to produce goods, but also to have a strong work ethic. This was seen as a way that the guilds contributed to the good of society. A strong work ethic meant apprentices had an appreciation for the quality of the goods they produced, and were aware of the contribution they could make in their employment.

The significant legacy of apprenticing

Similarly, modern day apprentices have made a significant and enduring contribution to training practices. Juran (1995) believes the invention of the apprenticeship was one of the greatest contributions made by guilds to modern society. He argues the contribution the apprentice system can make to a country is invaluable as it fosters both an understanding of how to work and the arduous practice needed to develop novices into both competent workers and proud members of a respected trade group (Juran, 1995:76). Thus, here training systems are overtly linked to workers possibly having something extra: the sense of pride and respect in one’s skills and work role. This foreshadows my focusing question about what it is that enables hospitality front line employees to go beyond the delivery protocols of the organisation to deliver a personal brand of hospitableness to guests.

While detailed information about the learning process and procedures undertaken by the apprentice within the guild remain scarce, Koepp (1986) argues that it is because a precise language to describe work did not exist at the time. Whatever the master craftsmen deemed relevant and how that
work or skill was acquired remained the personal property of the masters of particular guilds. Hamilton and Hamilton (1992) agree that the method of learning skills was through observation and practice, a practice pioneered by the guilds which is effective, and seemingly simple. Progress through the stages was achieved by the master judging the piece as satisfactory and giving the apprentice the authority to move to the next step. The combination of behavioural modelling and repetitive practice produces a complex but also tacit body of knowledge, commonly summed up as know how (Schön, 1995:148). To be accepted as an accomplished artisan, apprentices were expected to internalise a process of work by watching a master artisan and repeatedly producing the same simple or partial piece of work as the master (Wolek, 1999:410). Hudson and Hunter (1981) argue that while guilds did not make explicit the development of knowledge, they could recognise it as a chief reason for their personal pride and group solidarity.

The apprenticeship system had many distracters. Lequin (1986) considers it powerless to stand up to system abuses, and to the autocratic styles of some master craftsmen. Others have criticised the apprenticeship system of teaching and learning as ineffective, based on imitation, and so lacking in comprehension of how and why tasks were performed. More (1980) believes that criticism of the system, as being an ineffective learning process, may have fuelled public support for technical schools as replacements to apprenticeships. It is interesting to note here that contemporary competency testing requires a student to mimic an activity until the supervisor is satisfied the student can perform the task.

Apprenticeships attained the status both of fostering an understanding of
how to work and the practice needed to develop novices into both competent workers and proud members of respected trade groups. For Wolek (1999:410),

*works on modern apprenticeships agree on a basic emphasis on learning through observation and practice. To be accepted as an accomplished artisan, apprentices are expected to internalize a process of work by watching a master artisan and repeatedly producing the same simple or partial piece of work exactly as the master does. When the master judges simple pieces satisfactorily, the apprentice is advanced to more difficult and complete items.*

Jumping to contemporary times, we can see that the introduction of technical colleges signalled a broader training arrangement. Craft guilds performed as significant role models for the organisation of mass training. Likewise, the contemporary Australian TAFE system is one example of a mass training system currently in operation.

Apprentices, studying under master craftsmen, made good and performed services for (largely) local consumption. Guild recruitment practices meant family and local labor supplies were absorbed into artisans’ workshops where they were contracted to produce goods of specified standards. While in the majority of cases the guilds appear to have been successful in their mission, failures did occur. Craft guilds undertook and largely succeeded in providing skills training for many of the young male population. Some females also gained skills training in guilds. Guilds championed quality and gave apprentices an understanding of the
importance of their work; both the product standards achieved and for the consideration it gave them to act as good role models for future apprentices. Guilds paved the way for modern apprentices and for more formalised and regulated skills training in dedicated formal training systems.

The value that guilds placed on apprenticeships remains valid in modern industry (Gospel in Wolek, 1999). Even where apprenticeships have struggled to maintain their popularity as a training system, the guild’s basic idea of expert-based, on-the-job training remains vital. Whether in the appearance of mentors, coaches, or subject-matter experts training, specialists are increasingly being studied and used to accelerate the development of trainees into productive employees.

Section One notes
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Gilgamesh rejects the sexual advances of Anu’s (the sky-god) daughter, the goddess Ishtar (goddess of love and war), because of her mistreatment of her previous lovers like Dumuzi. Ishtar asks her father Anu to send the “Bull of Heaven” to avenge the rejected sexual advances. When Anu rejects her complaints, Ishtar threatens to raise the dead. Anu becomes scared and gives in. The bull of heaven is a plague for the lands. Apparently the creature has something to do with drought because, according to the epic, the water disappeared and the vegetation died. Whatever the case, Gilgamesh and Enkidu, this time without divine help, slay the beast and offer its heart to Shamash. When they hear Ishtar cry out in agony, Enkidu tears off the bull’s hindquarter and throws it in her face and threatens her. The city Uruk celebrates, but Enkidu has a bad dream detailed in the next tablet.

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Relations between guilds and the state could also influence innovation. In Ancient Regime France, for example, rather than the craft guilds it was frequently the state, in alliance with local political and mercantile elites, which developed the vast system of quality regulation over exported goods decreed by economic historians. Moreover, following a pattern also in Venice and Milan, it was frequently an alliance between the mercantilist state and the great merchants that actually stifled artisan innovation aimed at lowering costs. Thus, the invention of a new silk loom in seventeenth-century Lyon was rejected not by the local silk guild, but by the Italian importers of manufactured silk who put pressure on their clients to oppose it. In 1728, new machinery similar to the gig-mill devised by artisans in Languedoc was destroyed by the state cloth inspectors; in 1732, the latter opposed a device remarkably similar to the flying shuttle, ‘invented’ one year later in England. (Eipstein 1998: 697)
SECTION TWO: A REVIEW OF THE FIELD

The journey so far: summary reflection and cumulative interpretation of critical elements

The progress of the thesis has now reached the difficulty of reconciling contemporary expressions of job description and skill sets with hospitableness as human imperative and an impetus to act with generosity. Contemporary operations and terminology demonstrate the hospitality industry service paradigm as bringing into acute focus the hospitableness/hospitality tension.

In the first four essays of my work, I recounted stories of historical social practices which may have influenced the current thinking on hospitality and hospitableness. In this section, Section Two, I review operational aspects of the contemporary hospitality industry. The next essay, Essay Five, focuses on the contemporary hospitality industry. A brief history is followed by a short summary of the industry’s current status. I follow with two focuses: an operational perspective, and an explanation of some of the terminology we use. The terminology will be dry and written in a rather
staccato voice: the purpose of which will be explained at the end of this brief introduction to the essay. But first, a little bit of background.

When my doctoral journey got underway, the route I was taking in my inquiry was somewhat different to the structure and content of this current work. I was following the more common approach in hospitality service research which focused on the operational aspects of service, predominantly from a customer’s perspective. I engaged with many texts on different aspects of service: service quality, service delivery, service scripts, service satisfaction, service recovery and service value, just to name a few. The information, while necessary, I felt was dry, boring, static and voluminous. I wrote about service, along the way untangling meanings to explain the position service concepts played in the macro context of the hospitality industry. I wrote in a dry pragmatic way, as this was the style the material demanded. It was a meaningful chapter in the old inquiry! However, a breath of fresh air wakened my spirit and breathed new life into my journey. I was shown a quote by Dante from Hannah Arendt’s work on ‘action’.

For in every action what is primarily intended by the doer, whether he acts from natural necessity or out of free will, is the disclosure of his own image. Hence it comes about that every doer, in so far as he does, takes delight in doing … (p.175).

From this new, philosophical perspective, I could see front line employee behaviour as dynamic, vital, critical and complex, thus re-igniting my passion for hospitality and creating a fresh and inspiring energy in me. But
much work had been done in laying out the ground work for the old original chapters which I felt told such an important story of the pragmatic operational aspects of the industry, so I did not want to discard them. The material contains valuable insights into the machinations of the industry, reflecting the manner in which the concepts are usually told. Thus, I deleted thousands of words, but I kept the service chapter, converting it into an essay which I see as a story of operational constructs. Moreover, this particular piece of writing which survived had merit in the new structure and it demonstrates the hospitality industry service paradigm as it is more commonly understood, using the industry’s language. I did not want the reader to escape from the dogmatic and relentless service voice still used in the industry. I used this piece of writing (re-drafted), as a way of showing the way employees are often considered by both management and customers. In my telling, employees are treated as the face of the organisation, employed to represent the organisation in the face-to-face, everyday contact with guests and customers. I have made this statement regarding the employees in a manner which I hope hints at my disquiet: employees are represented by management as tools of management; never mind they are humanity at work. At the same time, I have written in the essay of my suspicion that for guests, hospitality front line employees are a substitute for the guests’ personal servants. I have heard ‘come here’ being ordered of an employee from guests more times than I wish to recall. ‘Come here’ sounds like an order to a servant, not a request to a fellow human being.
Essay Five

Perspectives on service in the hospitality industry

The hospitality industry is a service industry where employees, representing the image of the hospitality facility and its management, offer service to guests through the front line employee’s core function called the service encounter. The service encounter is a reciprocal transaction where the guests, having requested service, interact with employees to have their needs, wants and desires met. This essay discusses service. The meaning of the word service, how service is formulated, service scripts which induce service processes and are designed by management for employees to follow when delivering hospitality, make up the body of the essay.

The essay follows the discussion of service and activities within the context of the hospitality industry, so it is timely to remind the reader that by appending the word industry to hospitality, I am acknowledging that an economic transaction is fundamental to the transaction that takes place. That is, money is being paid for the hospitality service.
Reflections on the beginnings of the hospitality industry

Reflecting momentarily on the early beginnings of the industry allows me to give some insight into the position the hospitality industry holds within the greater framework of the leisure industries, a category the hospitality industry is a member of. Further, the reflection allows me to present some macro global developments which have impacted and helped to develop the hospitality industry.

The development of the industry reflects the increase of global travel, whether for business or leisure. There has been a corresponding expansion of hospitality facilities in line with the increase in travel. Moreover, this development reflects changes around the world, initially as new tourism markets opened up, and more latterly in response to changing global economic and cultural conditions. The changing conditions encompass areas such as different working patterns and increases in leisure, due to changes in people’s financial circumstances. Initially, camel caravans (accommodation and travel combined—mobile accommodation!) followed the trading routes; boats and ships also led to an increase in facilities along the waterways, inland rivers and oceans. Stage coaches followed with horse power, then railways under the development of steam. Vehicular travel in various forms was developed in response to the development of roads and petrol engines, and flight in the response to the need for speed. Over time, methods of mobility became more accessible through increasing numbers and types of travel. Moreover, the changing economic circumstances of people meant travel was possible for reasons other than trade. Now possible, peoples’ desires to visit foreign lands increased.
Accommodation facilities have also developed over time. Initially, inns and taverns housed early travellers who did not have established networks for personal hospitality (O’Gorman, 2005) but who travelled to fulfil government duties. Joseph and Mary, the parents of Jesus, are said to have been rejected at an inn because there were no vacancies.

The western cultural experience of early travel may begin with the leisured elites of ancient Greece and Rome and more latterly the development of spas and the Grand Tours of the 17th and 18th centuries (Towner, 1995:339). The forerunners to the modern hotel were the private homes of wealthy Europeans. The homes were part of the Grand Tour system of travel, a form of education undertaken by the British elite classes. These were highly customised arrangements, where the service of the landlords’ servants was extended to guests. In contrast, the new American hotels had a philosophy where accommodation was for the masses (Nailon, 1982), where all guests were welcome, regardless of their social standing. Unlike the European model of private servants providing for staying guests, the American form of accommodation introduced mass employment into the hospitality industry. Ordinary citizens waited tables and made the beds of other ordinary citizens. Miller (1968:41) described how Statler, a founding father of the modern American hotel, suggested the American hotel guest was drawn from all social classes:
a man may wear a red neck tie, a green vest and tan shoes and still be a
gentleman … The stranger in the cowboy boots, broad rim hat and rusty
black boots may be the president of the railroad … you cannot afford to be
superior or sullen with any patron of this hotel.

This makes an interesting contrast to an earlier warning given to travellers
in London (referring to Londoners from the common classes), that
travellers wishing to stay in a first class hotel would only be permitted to
check in if they booked in advance or were able to produce a letter of
introduction.

The American and European philosophy of service and guests were in
stark contrast to each other. The Americans understood that hospitality
was a business and thus created an industry open to all comers, regardless
of social status. The American management style of hotels was based on
mass tourism and mass service, whereas the European style of hospitality
was based on a more personal style of service. European hoteliers were
bound to protect the wealthy from the masses: wealthy Europeans staying
at hotels were at leisure, and did not wish to be confronted by the issues
such as the needs or poverty of the lower classes. These contrasting styles
of management may still be seen in management styles in the
contemporary hospitality industry, the contrast often being further
exacerbated by the managing director’s country of origin or level of
education.
The rapid growth of the industry can no longer be attributed only to the expansion of travel, although the travelling public continues to generate demand for new hospitality products and services (for example, a hospitality facility near a sacred sight).

**Introducing the concept of a service economy**

Deeply embedded in the tradition of hospitality management is the concept of service. Service is everywhere in our daily living; service is ubiquitous. On any given day, many people in society rely on other people for food, to assist in maintaining their health, to be educated, to travel from one place to another and to maintain law and order. The generation and sale of food, health services, education, law and order, along with many other activities and tasks, are part of a service economy. So, to go about these daily activities, people form a temporary relationship with service providers where the relationship is based on trust: trusting information people give them; trusting people to give them the goods and services as promised, and to maintain order and structure in the communities in which they live.

**Service: an ambiguous word**

The use of the word *service* is critical to understanding the meanings attached to the concept of the service encounter. Service and services are often used interchangeably (Edvardsson, B., Gustafsson, A. and Roos, I., 2005) in diverse ways, resulting in meanings that are broad and often contestable (Lovelock and Gummerson, 2004). The word implies that a
person will serve. The Services in Australia can indicate the Defense Forces, meaning the group of men and women charged with the protection of Australia against enemy attack. In this context, the personnel are referred to as ‘being in service to their country’. Also in Australia, we have public institutions, such as health and welfare services, and medical and dental services, institutions which are considered as being for the common good of the nation. Private service industries also exist, whose mandate is an economic exchange relationship between organisation and customer, and where employees generally serve customers and guests. The service industries are often associated with high levels of human contact; people serve people.

The increase in the use of the word service over the recent decade (Johns, 1999) not only suggests an increasing rate of evolution and development of the term, but also demonstrates its importance. Society uses service and services in multiple ways. In the following, I outline three aspects of the word service which are commonly applied in the hospitality industry:

1. jobs and roles
2. the word service in communication
3. the word service in contemporary society

1. Jobs and roles

The word service is significant in reference to the world of work; what people do at work and the roles they undertake as part of their employment. This is because employment titles (supervisor, manager,
general manager, chief executive officer, for example) show a progression of management roles and so give society the means by which we understand who and what people are, and do at work. In the hospitality setting, titles denote the status of the employee and so the level of involvement they will have in serving the guests.

Titles may be an indication of the level of respect or trust we place in a person. For example, if someone is announced as a doctor, they command a socially endorsed level of respect (trust), credibility and interpersonal status which may be significantly different from those who are hospitality front line employees, for example. Hospitality employees are generally poorly considered (for example, Martin, 2004).

2. The word service in communication

In this point, I outline some of the lines of command in the hospitality industry and how the word service may be applied in these circumstances. Speech, as a means of communication, plays a primary role in the service process. In the hospitality service setting, because service has intangible characteristics, verbal communication—speech by the employee—reveals who the person is (Arendt, 1958:179). This is significant for the service outcome, as all hospitality employees will have different ways of verbally demonstrating hospitality. Some examples of communication in the service process are:
a. Manager to employee
Managers and supervisors communicate abstract ideas such as service, productless and intangible, to front line employees. How a manager and supervisor communicate will impact the employee’s response and reaction. It will also impact the employee’s understanding of the organisation’s service culture.

b. Guest to employee
‘Can you serve me please?’ The word *serve* is the means by which customers communicate their service needs to the employee and therefore to the organisation. How the word is spoken, the tone of the customer’s voice and their body language will impact how the employee receives the message, and how they respond.

c. Guests about service
Guests generally verbally communicate their service experience. Service words are used by guests to articulate their service experience (service quality, in hospitality jargon) to the organisation. Word of mouth is a powerful marketing tool in both a positive and negative sense. How and to whom the guest articulates the service experience may result in customer loyalty and repeat business, or a failed service experience and the loss of a guest.
d. Dissemination of information via the written word

Finally, the word service is written and developed in concepts by hospitality researchers, among others, as they seek to explain and describe what service is and what form, role, function, process and system applies.

3. The word service in contemporary society

In contemporary society, the word service is widely used to denote an industrial sector that does things for you (Silvestro, Johnston, Fitzgerald and Voss, 1990:206) and that does not make things (it is evident that such a meaning is developed by economists where there is a need to classify economic activities). Such an industrial sector may be the hospitality industry.

Services are frequently described as intangible and their output is viewed as an activity rather than an object (Edvardsson et al., 2005). The distinction is significant. The difference between service industries such as the hospitality industry, and the action of hospitableness, is that service may be accompanied by a product and it is this product which identifies the industry to which the service belongs (if a meal is served, we recognise that this is the hospitality industry, and part of the restaurant sector). However, society’s understanding of such a distinction may not always be clear; concepts are merged and the communication process itself can lead to misunderstandings.
The indication that service is an activity points to services as processes. This is because an activity has a starting point, and moves into phases post the activity starting. Lawton (1993:39) considers that service as a process implies the delivery of something, usually the core function of the industry. Hence service industries deliver service and the receiver has an expectation of service being delivered. He suggests customers do care about things ... *which help them achieve ... desired outcomes. These things are ... deliverable, objectively observed, countable and occur in discrete units.* So service is something that customers care about because the delivery of it (things) is the way guests achieve their desires, needs and wants. This is a noteworthy point as it implies that service, which the guest has an expectation of and understands through general usage of the term, brings to the encounter not only their expectations of ‘things’ they will receive, but also what the word *service* means in the common language. So the guest brings into the service process their own interpretation of the service they will receive. The differing interpretations of service by the individual participants—guest, employee and the organisation—have the potential to cause a discrepancy between the guest and providing expectations. The employee, as a human being, brings their own values and beliefs; the guest brings their personal cultural expectations and those of previous organisational experiences into the service environment; and the service culture of the organisation also has a perspective. As a contribution to expectations and consequent interpretation of service and service offerings, culture is outside the organisation’s control or the adaptability of the employee. However, as the world shrinks for travellers, hospitality
establishments may be tempted to script and therefore control service encounter transactions to meet cultural protocols.

In summary, the word *service* has a great richness and diversity of meaning. This leads to multiple interpretations of the concept, particularly in the management environment, where it might be an industry, an output, an offering, or a process. Conceptually, the word *service* creates further ambiguity when humans as employees, and humans as guests struggle to interact with understanding each other’s expectations.

**Hospitality as a service industry**

The Hospitality industry, as a service industry, has benefited from the growth and development of the service economy (Kandampully, 2002). Society’s use of their leisure, and changing social and economic conditions, have generated demand for hospitality facilities and subsequent services. Guests and customers interact with other guests and with employees who are providing service. Moreover, a customer’s need and perception of the provider’s service will be significantly impacted by both the customer’s perception of, and attitude to, that service.

Each time we interact with another human being we are exposed to a form of exchange. A relationship is formed to produce an outcome. Commonly known as co-production (Brotherton, 2004), this exchange occurs because exchange can only take place when a relationship is present. So, the hospitality transaction requires co-production. People come together in a system of exchange and in so doing interact with one another. The
interaction of an offer of assistance and the response, be it acceptance or rejection, is a vital element of hospitality; hospitality only occurs when both offer and response have taken place. In addition, hospitality action involves a particular product, or mix of products: accommodation, food and beverage, and/or entertainment. These assist in defining the service offering as being within the hospitality industry. Moreover, the hospitality action needs an outcome such as service satisfaction or dissatisfaction. If an outcome is not achieved then hospitality has not been actioned (Brotherton, 2004).

In hospitality industry settings, the service transaction is the significant point of contact between guest and host. The firm (hotel, motel, and so on) is represented by front line employees who are the deliverers of the hospitality service and while the firm has an inventory of mechanisms and tools (hotel rooms or a ritualised welcome for guests, for example) to assist in providing customers with some kind of tangible representation of the service, customers are largely left to take the firm on trust that it will be able to deliver on the expectations of those customers (Coulter and Coulter, 2002). So, the transaction does not result in ownership of a tangible product; its outcome is more likely to be an experience, a moment in time. The transaction is said to constitute the period of time during which a customer directly interacts with a service (Shostack, 1985:243). So, in my telling of the service encounter, each transaction can be viewed as a dynamic, tripartite transaction between the employees, the customer and the hospitality firm. Even though they are bonded through the employment contract, the employee and the firm are, in a practical sense at least, separate entities in the transaction of the service encounter. This clear
distinction between the employee and the firm exists because the employee contributes individual emotions, attitudes and behaviours to the transaction, and these stem from personal characteristics (Lovell, 2005). The employee is an individual person, and while in the industrial context acts on behalf of the employer, still maintains their individuality. In this way, employees act from both their individual values and beliefs, and from the employer’s service protocols. Hence, in the hospitality industry, individual identities mediate the interpretation of the protocols.

To maintain the intended level of service quality, hospitality organisations can set boundaries (protocols) for the service exchange process. These service protocols include strategic, economic and resource parameters and constraints. Rosenthal (2004) suggests these protocols may also form part of management’s control of employees, where management constrains employees’ personal inputs into the service transaction by requiring them to follow prescribed scripts. These employee scripts can be likened to actors’ scripts in that they are written ‘dialogues’, which have the effect of controlling employees’ inputs in the service encounter. However, in medium and long term service encounter exchanges, employees are more likely to slip beyond the protocols and, in diverting from the script, engage in a more genuine and authentic manner (Lovell, 2005).

Service scripts

Within the hospitality industry, the service encounter is considered the core task of the front line employee. For the service encounter to take place, the employee delivers service to the guest. Many researchers have
lamented the human characteristic of heterogeneity (Edvardsson et al., 2005) is unavoidable in services because, when variations are uncontrollable as they are in high contact services, the outcome is also variable service. Different management styles and the demographics of customers contribute to variation, as do internal differences in service processes within the same organisation. This contribution to variation of the same service by different providers, or the non-standardisation of services, may cause confusion for the customer, or may even be desirable in meeting guest expectations for personalised service (Bitner, Booms and Mohr, 1994). One way organisations have exercised control over the service offerings has been to give employees service scripts developed in line with the organisation’s service objectives. Hospitality management research shows customers can easily detect scripts and do not always appreciate them (Victorino, Verma and Wardell, 2008). Service scripts are designed by management in hospitality organisations to facilitate standardisation within service offerings. Brand standards present the image of an organisation, and are said to create standardisation. However, service scripts which are designed for specific service offerings are scripted service processes which management requires employees to deliver when delivering standard services in hospitality organisations.

Below is a sample of the service script for a front line employee (front desk) for a large international hotel. All indicators of the organisation’s identity have been removed. Preceding the script, Figure 1 shows a conceptual presentation of the ‘zone’ referred to in the script.
Figure 1. A Greeting Zone service script

**Front Desk (if available for service): 4 levels of greetings to (incoming) guest**

Zone 1 (Most distant): At chandelier. Make eye contact; no verbal communication. If a guest query results, do not respond to guest verbally; motion to guest relations.

Zone 2: At floral arrangement. Look up, smile, and nod on recognition of guest presence. Do not respond verbally to guest queries. For guest queries, motion to guest relations. Do not engage the guest in conversation.
Zone 3: Guest moving to floor rug. Smile, time of day salutation; Good Morning, Good Afternoon, Good Evening. Continue to face guest. Do not answer a phone or a query from another person. Maintain eye contact with guest walking toward desk. For guest queries, motion with hand to Guest Relations desk.

Zone 4: As guest approaches the desk, prior to guest placing a reservation or personal identification on the desk, greet guest (a second time) with time of day greeting. Modulate tone of voice for age of guest.

Read the name of the guest from paperwork the guest presents (reservation, credit card, passport). Repeat the name. Mr … Mrs … Welcome to … How may I assist you?

If the guest has a language difficulty, inform the guest you will provide a translator. Do not continue speaking to the guest. Motion for guest relations, and move the guest to the left hand side of the check-in station. Phone communications.

Such a script is most prescriptive, serving to prevent the employee from taking the initiative and acting with originality. However, in personalising their response, the employee is exhibiting their individuality. When an hospitality employee engages with a customer during service of a McDonald’s hamburger, the contact is scripted and momentary; little individual input is required as the firm standardises any dialogue required and the product received. This scripting extends as far as using photographs to represent the product; in this way an individual’s input is reduced and adherence to service protocols is maintained. However, in a
lengthier engagement, a greater level of verbal communication is generated, and so less control can be maintained over its content. Spontaneous questions are asked and require spontaneous answers; the answer cannot be pre-formed as management-designed service scripts. When an organisational script is unavailable, the employee responds to guests’ questions as an engaged, improvising individual. In this way, success or failure of the encounter comes to be dependent on individual employee responses.

The service encounter from the organisation’s perspective

The service encounter transaction is initially a commercially driven process which delivers service to guests. From an economic perspective, the industry understands service as a commercial undertaking, and as such, requires tight financial control in order to maintain organisational sustainability. Guests also interpret service as a commercial transaction; by paying money they are entering into a contract with the organisation to receive service. So, the core task performed by front line employees conforms to commercial objectives.

One way the organisation controls the service encounter process is by developing the already mentioned service protocols, forming part of the overall objectives of the organisation. The service protocols are a costed response by the organisation to perceived customer needs. In other words, the organisation makes an educated guess about the guest. The organisation decides what sort of desires they have by drawing on previous experiences of their guests. These organisational service
objectives, developed into service strategies to operationalise them, allow for the delivery of the service process for a specified economic value, which the organisation forecasts the guest will be prepared to pay. When setting such objectives, the management might ask of the service encounter content, ‘could this aspect of service be expected in a commercial transaction?’

The service transaction process has been described in a number of ways. Grönroos (2001), among others, suggests the process nature is significant. He argues service processes are activities, where the activity may be related to intangibility, and further, is an interactive construct where the interaction takes place between the customer and the service provider. The interaction is about solving guests’ service dilemmas. Likewise, Vargo and Lusch (2004, a, b) agree that services are for the benefit of another person or persons, however they argue that it is the skills and knowledge of the delivery entity which defines them. Edvardsson et al. (2005:113), in analysing the opinions of leading scholars, conclude that many of the definitions given are abstract and so can be operationalised and interpreted in a number of ways. However, agreement exists among service scholars that the service offering can be a value creation construction and secondly, that it can also be an activity that is the object of exchange.

Value creation as an organisational objective of service offerings suggests that services can be offered where the guest feels satisfied with the service received thereby determining they (the guest) have received value, and secondly that guest and organisation have co-produced the service. In this way, guests have paid what they believe is a fair price for the service they
have received. Interestingly, Grónroos’s (op. cit) research relates the satisfaction of the guest to value and in so doing, fails to recognise, at least in this research, that guest’s satisfaction with the value of the service might well come from the guest having received hospitableness, a concept which might be priceless.

However, Edvardsson et al. (2005:113) conclude the concept of service is fuzzy [and] as service research enters a more mature phase, a more precise definition may be needed. Notably, in terms of the scope of the research, Svensson (2006) argued the greatest issue was that research had not accounted for the provider’s views in any depth and hence, most research had neglected one side of the service encounter.

In summary, it would seem likely that, from an organisational perspective, the service encounter has much to do with value creation. As the hospitality industry is a large segment of the global service industry, which is faster growing than manufacturing (Metters and Marucheck, 2007), then such an economic focus by organisations is not surprising. What is of concern, however, when the size of the industry and its employee numbers are considered, is that so little research has been done into the role employees play in undertaking their major role in hospitality. This thesis is about the gap.
Deviations from the organisation’s service objectives

Service organisations deliver service following considered, planned and integrated investments in numerous assets, processes, people and materials because services are often not physical entities, but are a combination of processes, people skills and materials, and they must be properly integrated to result in a planned or designed service (Goldstein, S. M., Johnston, R., Duffy, J. A. and Rao, J., 2002:121). However, deviations of service objectives may be as high as ninety per cent (Australian Catering Association survey, Hart, 2004). The service breakdown can occur as a result of processes, people or materials.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) developed the service quality gap model to expose the litany of breakdowns or deviations in service delivery processes. The gap model can be described as the gaps between consumers’ expectations of service and their perception of the actual service delivered. Customers assess service quality by comparing the service they receive with the services they desire (Kandampully, 2002:84). The model comprises five gaps in service quality as perceived by the customer.

Gap three is about differences. It is referred to as the service performance gap and is an exposure of the difference between the service delivery objectives designed by management of the organisation and the manner in which the service is actually delivered. Kandampully (2002:85) suggests the gap occurs when employees are either unable or unwilling to perform the service at the desired level. While the focus of this thesis is not concerned with an analysis of the gap model paradigm, it is relevant to note that any such
judgement as that encountered in gap three would be a subjective assessment, either observed by management, and therefore subject to a non transaction participation criterion, or by the reporting of the service outcome by a customer. In both cases, subjectivity, as opposed to objectivity of the difference, may play a role in the assessment of the gap. Any deviation or breakdown of organisational service objectives might result in economic loss for the organisation, based on cost differentials, employee time to re do the service process, or costs of goods offered as compensation. Two service areas where deviation may have a significant effect on the organisation’s budgetary constraints are: economic issues and concern for customer compensation.

1. Economic issues

In the service encounter environment, economic issues may take an employment focus or a value focus. Service delivery processes have value criteria as a budgetary control measure. When a deviation occurs, the cost centre in the specific area would be negatively affected. However, it is important to note that in the hospitality industry, checks of this specific nature would be rare as deviations and breakdowns are very common (as stated earlier, as high as ninety per cent).

The second area of focus might be the employee’s time as they transact the service process. Because deviation is outside the structured service transaction, they may require greater time usage. This is in contrast to a known and standard method to transact a regular service transaction. This
might lead to a smaller number of customers receiving service and secondary issues of crowd and capacity control.

2. Customer compensation

Compensation post a negative service experience has been under theorised. However, Mattila and Cranage, (2005:275) have suggested that compensation from the organisation was effective in generating the feeling by the customer that they had been fairly compensated. Hence, it could be suggested that customers look favourably on compensation. In addition, empowered employees in the hospitality industry are often given compensation tools, such as meal and/or beverage vouchers and price reduction limits, which they can distribute to guests as a form of compensation. However, common hospitality industry mythology (and a practice of which I am guilty) abounds with stories where disgruntled and complaining guests are well compensated by employees as the employees struggle to overcome operational and process failure, such as slow meals and allocated rooms still being unmade past normal check-in times. The cost of compensation is rarely considered on a one-by-one basis; however, general (budgetary) service failure factors are commonly written into monthly hotel budgets. If guests are not compensated, and the source of their dissatisfaction is not attended to, they do not return to the property. Service failure research (Butcher, Sparks and O’Callaghan, 2001) abounds with tales of woe for organisations where loss of clients and bad press (word of mouth) has resulted in alarming levels of occupancy rates, particularly in hotels.
Guest expectations

A guest comes into a hotel with an expectation: the guest is ‘expecting’ service. Service is the action of the service employee in meeting the needs of the customer, which may also involve a hospitality product. This may take the form of physical products such as accommodation, food and beverage, conference facilities, pool or spa, for example.

Service and products are offered to the guest as part of a package that attempts to meet the guest’s expectations. The package includes hospitality products, service delivery and services, the guest experience and the guest’s safety, security and well being. The guest accesses the products and services offered when the provider and the guest interact. The ‘provision’ will come from an employee as service delivery and hence may vary significantly each time hospitality is offered. In hospitality service this is known as heterogeneity. However, regardless of these differences, assistance will be needed to access the hospitality product. This access is known as the service delivery process.

The guest is expecting to be served and the employee will deliver service. Interestingly, when the customer comes into the hotel expecting to be served, they bring expectations and preconceived notions about service with them. This expectation by the guest carries great weight—‘the customer is always right’ philosophy is built around meeting this expectation, and yet, in reality, it would be very difficult for an organisation to know what it is a customer is really expecting. It might be a value for money concept, it might be related to a previous experience, it
might be related to specific needs or wants, personal or otherwise and it might be simply what someone else has told them they received. The service experience may be significantly impacted by guests’ and an employee’s previous experiences, expectations and perceptions. Nonetheless, none of the above can be altered by the element of an expectation to be served. In the service transaction setting this creates a possibility for one of two outcomes: the customer’s expectations, needs or wants will be satisfied and the immediate impact and result of the action will be a positive one; or the customer will not feel satisfied and a further service transaction will commence directly related to the first unsuccessful transaction. The conclusion is that the customer came into the hotel expecting the service from employees and the action they were expecting is related to the service offering and the way in which the service will be delivered.

**Measuring Service**

The hospitality literature suggests that for each participant, any service encounter can be either a success or failure (Gremler, Bitner and Evans, 1995). Either the interaction may successfully accomplish its intended purpose or outcome, or it may be unsuccessful because it fails to achieve the desired service result. Although organisational factors, like physical surroundings and service scripts, play a role in the encounter, this thesis highlights the influence on service encounter outcomes of individual, spontaneous employee actions. It is the latter which I argue results in individual hospitable employee responses in service transactions.
The resulting outcomes of hotel service encounters have important implications for the organisation as a whole. Specifically, service encounters are a key factor influencing customers’ perceptions of, and satisfaction with, the service they receive (Zeitham and Bitner, 1996). Nickson, Warhurst and Dutton (2005) state that service interactions are a critical part of the overall service ‘product’, and are essential to customers’ perceptions of service quality. Heskett, Jones, Sasser and Schlesinger (1994) support the view that the relationship between service encounters and organisational outcomes is critical in their Service-Profit Chain. Heskett’s et al. (1994) chain illustrates the relationships that exist between service interactions, customer satisfaction, service quality, customer loyalty, employee productivity and profitability. Further, they note the significant influence that service encounters and their resulting outcomes have on customer loyalty, company profitability and revenue growth for hotels. While the Service-Profit Chain recognises the influential relationships between each of the outcomes as mentioned above, this thesis focuses on the processes within service encounters, as I believe it is within the processes that human interactions produce hospitableness.

**Measuring employee contribution to service**

The significance of service encounters and their outcomes in the hotel industry has resulted in a body of literature which investigates the role of employees in these interactions, and their influence on the resulting outcomes (Nickson et al., 2005; van Dolen, de Ruyter and Lemmink, 2004). Specifically, it has been noted that by interacting closely with the customer, employees strongly influence the customer’s experience (Bitner and
Hubbert in van Dolen et al., 2004). In addition, employee behaviours and emotions have been identified as significant contributors to service encounter outcomes (van Dolen et al., 2004), and thus also to judgement made by customers about their level of service satisfaction. Lashley (2002) argues, therefore, employee behaviours are critical to hotels’ business success.

Employee behaviours are defined as the individual’s attitudes, and any observable action or reaction of an individual in response to the environment, or situation (Arnold, Cooper and Robertson, 1998; Baron, 2001). In a hospitality context, employee behaviours are referred to as ‘employee-specific’ and ‘interaction-induced’. ‘Employee-specific’ behaviours are produced and performed by the employee alone, whereas ‘interaction-induced’ behaviours are more reactive and reciprocal in nature, and are co-produced with the guest (van Dolen et al., 2004). Price, Arnould and Deibler (1995) and van Dolen et al. (2004) both conducted studies examining employee behaviours. Price et al. (1995) investigated the role of employee behaviours and their influence upon the customer’s emotional response to service interactions. The study proposed five dimensions of employee behaviour: mutual understanding, authenticity, extra attention, competence and meeting minimum standards. All five were found to be significant in explaining variations in customers’ positive feelings during service encounters. The study also indicated that, on average, consumers have little or no emotional response to service interactions. Hence Price et al. (1995:43) suggest that if satisfaction remains narrowly defined in terms of the unfavourable or favourable continuum, then the complex distinctive categories of emotion which may be
correlated to positive and negative feelings about a service provider’s performance may be overlooked. When this occurs, they suggest marketers … assume that the same things that produce satisfaction, in their absence, produce satisfaction (or vice versa). When emotions are examined as separate dimensions of service provider performance, it is easier to explore those which contribute positive and those which contribute negative feelings about the provider’s service performance.

Following the Price et al. (1995) study, van Dolen et al. (2004) investigated the effect of employee behaviours in creating encounter and relationship satisfaction, and whether the emotions evoked during a service interaction influenced customer satisfaction. The Price et al. (1995) framework was recategorised by van Dolen et al. (2004) in relation to ‘employee-specific’ and ‘interaction-induced’ behaviours: competence and authenticity were ‘employee-specific’ behaviours, whereas mutual understanding, extra attention and meeting minimum standards of civility, were classified as ‘interaction-induced’ behaviours. This classification recognises the interactive nature of the service encounter and thus, notes that some behaviours are more dependent on the customer than others (Crosby, Evans and Cowles in van Dolen et al., 2004). This study also indicated that all five behaviours have a positive impact on service encounter satisfaction. Additionally, the results identified that only mutual understanding, extra attention and competence have a significant impact on customer relationship satisfaction. Positive emotions have a significant positive impact, and negative emotions have no significant impact on satisfaction with the service encounter or the relationship (van Dolen et al., 2004). Price et al. (1995) were criticised by van Dolen et al. (2004), arguing that the
earlier study did not identify which behaviours impact satisfaction or
dissatisfaction. This questions the Price et al. (1995) conclusion that the
same behaviours produce satisfaction and, in their absence, dissatisfaction;
it was identified as an area for further research (van Dolen et al., 2004). The
van Dolen et al. (2004) study also suggested that additional research was
needed to understand employee behaviours exhibited during service
encounters and the impacts these behaviours have on success.

In comparison with the Price et al. (1995) and the van Dolen et al. (2004)
five-behaviour framework, Butcher et al. (2003), in addition to other
factors, investigated the notion of ‘social regard’ in service encounters.
‘Social regard’ was defined as the genuine respect, deference and interest
shown to the customer by the service provider. This behavioural
dimension included authenticity, in the sense that it was unscripted,
making the guest feel important, taking an interest in the guest, and
respecting the guest (Dotson and Patton in Butcher et al., 2003; Goodwin
and Frame, 1989; Mohr and Bitner, 1995).

The above theoretical frameworks for the service encounter expose some of
the variances in the way employee actions are described, adding to the
complexity of remedying any such failures through further training of
employees. While the Price et al. (1995) and van Dolen et al. (2004)
frameworks can be understood to differ from that proposed by Butcher et
al. (2003), there are similarities. Price’s et al. (1995) and van Dolen’s et al.
(2004) employee behaviours of ‘mutual understanding’ and ‘authenticity’
appear to correspond with displaying interest towards the guest, and with
genuineness, both part of Butcher’s et al. (1995) ‘social regard’ element.
However, Butcher et al. (1995) uses the element of social regard as a general term to describe how the interaction is observed from an external point: the employee was understood to have displayed socially acceptable standards toward the guest. For me, this suggests the behaviour of the employee is being held solely accountable for the service transaction outcome, through their enacting of ‘socially acceptable standards’. I question whether such a judgement is acceptable when the interaction is, at the same time, understood as a co-production between employee and the guest. Moreover, I contend, based on thirty years of participation in the hospitality industry, that employees are used by management of the organisation as scapegoats for service failures which should be attributed to either failure by management to understand the service processes, or failure by management to recognise and embrace the service requirements of guests.

Bettencourt and Brown (1997) also conducted a study to investigate employee behaviours in a service context. In comparison to the studies previously discussed, these authors focused on the relationships between employees’ perceptions of workplace fairness and their service behaviours, in relation to job and customer satisfaction. In other words, Bettencourt and Brown, (1997), understood employees’ interactions with guests to correspond to management interaction with them. The employee mirrored the treatment of employees by management, in their (the employees) treatment of guests.

The behavioural concepts adopted by Bettencourt and Brown (1997) also differed from the frameworks utilised by Butcher et al. (2003), Price et al.
(1995) and van Dolen et al. (2004). Bettencourt and Brown (1997) proposed the notion of pro-social organisational behaviour, which incorporated three key dimensions: role-prescribed customer service, extra role customer service and cooperation. This concept of pro-social organisational behaviour appears to have a place in understanding behaviours in service interactions. Support for this can be taken from other studies which adopted the same concept (Hoffman and Kelley in Bettencourt and Brown, 1997). Two of the three dimensions of pro-social organisational behaviour, ‘extra role customer service’ and ‘role-prescribed customer service’, were identified as relevant in, and influential on, service encounters. However, the guest, as the ultimate judge of the employee’s behaviour, will be the one who is satisfied or dissatisfied with the outcome of the encounter. As with the previous studies of Butcher et al. (2003), Price et al. (1995) and van Dolen et al. (2004), Bettencourt and Brown (1997) came to a conclusion which is preoccupied with the service transaction judgement resting with the customer (in hospitality industry jargon this is known a service quality). However, I reiterate, this issue is contentious, as the service encounter is a transaction which is co-produced between all participants: management, employees and guests. However, hospitality organisations are cognisant that guests judge the value they have received and in doing so, become satisfied or dissatisfied accordingly.

Hospitality organisations generate value through the delivery of tangibles and intangibles which are often difficult to describe to customers. Likewise, it is very difficult for customers to express precisely what they expect from service. As there is no agreed objective standard about the service to be delivered, the only criteria left for the guests to evaluate the
service delivered (service quality) are subjective comparisons of their perceptions and expectations of their anticipated desires, needs and wants, and their own assessment of what service they actually did receive (Carrillat et al., 2007; Zeithaml et al., 1990).

**Measuring service quality**

While Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) define service quality as a judgement by a customer of the firm’s service capabilities, very often the customer will make a broad assessment of the *general service* offered by the organisation. This means from the moment the guest comes into contact with the hospitality organisation, they are making a judgement about whether they are receiving what they expected. In such a case, the customers may talk of their experience as the organisation’s *service* (Bitner, M. J., Booms, B. H. and Tetreault, M. S., 1990). This is because a customer does not break down the experience into component parts, but rather takes an overall view of their entire experience. For example, if a guest arrives at a hotel by car, whether as a passenger or driver, they will expect the driveway attendant to show up promptly, open their door and acknowledge their presence. When this does not occur, the guest may feel slightly lost, wondering what action they should take and where they should leave their car. So, for the guest the experience has commenced and it has started badly. The guest could comment at this point in their experience that the service in the organisation is very lax, and they have not received any attention. If the scenario is reversed, the contrast in the guest’s experience will be startling. The guest arrives in the driveway and in a flash, the driveway attendant appears. With a flourish, the attendant opens the door
and offers a warm and friendly verbal greeting. The attendant asks for the guest’s name, and establishes if there is luggage to be collected, and if so, immediately attends to it by waving for the porter. Having jotted down the guest’s name the attendant calls the guest by name, and refers the guest to the porter for check-in. In this contrasting scenario, the guest is welcomed, acknowledged and guided by employees so the guest is saved from floundering in the new physical environment where they have to ask for directions. In this way the guest reacts confidently in their surroundings, making the guest feel significant and cared for. The judgement of these two scenarios will be of the service the guest received, and this will colour their future expectations from that establishment.

When the guest perceives their needs are being met and they are happy and contented with the amount and type of care they are receiving, they bring together their sense of satisfaction with their judgement of the experience they are having, by merging satisfaction into a component of quality. Remember, very often the guest judges the quality of the service delivery through a number of factors which they have encountered during their entire experience. Oliver (1993) has suggested that consumers relate satisfaction to consumption of the service, but they consider service quality as relating to overall excellence.

Service quality can therefore have different meanings for each of the participants in the tripartite encounter. For an organisation’s management, service quality engages financial considerations which play costs against revenue. For employees, quality can be about their relationship with the customer during the encounter. And for the customer, service quality
assesses whether they received value (which may not necessarily be a singular assessment of a monetary value) and the degree to which their needs and wants were met. From all three participants, quality relates to outcomes: outcomes of profit for the organisation, job satisfaction for the employee and service satisfaction for the customer (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985).

One of the methods used to estimate service quality is the SERVQUAL instrument. Developed by Parasuram, Zeithaml and Berry (1985; 1988) it identifies five dimensions of service quality (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy). The approach taken by Parasuram et al. (1985; 1988) suggested that customers develop expectations of the performance on the service dimensions, observe the performance, and later form perceptions of the performance. The SERVQUAL instrument works by comparing the customer scores with the ideal SERVQUAL scores, and these are known as service gaps. It is important to note here that SERVQUAL has been developed using an ideal service delivery, suggesting the comparison is made with theoretically excellent customer service.

From my perspective, service quality remains a subjective judgement despite Parasuram’s et al. (1985; 1988) claims to the contrary, or the ideals and guides such as those implicit in the SERVQUAL instrument noted above. The SERVQUAL instrument is used for reflecting on how the customer thinks, and this information is adapted for use in organisational service delivery strategy. To do this, the organisation collects data from the guests, regarding both their expectations and their perceptions of the
service received, analysing these responses so the organisation can better meet guests’ expectations. This is known as an organisational service strategy. The three related concepts are customer service, service quality and customer value, and Rust and Oliver (1994) suggest that while these three concepts often are treated interchangeably, they may be distinct from each other. Customer service, as one of the concepts in the organisation’s service strategy, has been considered as a summary of cognitive and affective reaction by the customer to a service encounter or a service relationship. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the result of the degree to which customers’ expectations are met (Oliver, 1980). Service quality is measured internally and externally: it may be encounter specific, or relate to a series of encounters or service incidents. Customers are also looking for value, a blend of quality and price, in service encounters. For the customer to receive (perceived) value, then both the service and the price must meet the customer’s expectation.

Service quality is a significant component in an organisation’s service strategy. The commonly accepted discourse in managing service quality has three aspects: designing the service environment, designing the service product, and delivering the service. The service product is described as whatever comprises the features of the service encounter transaction (Neslin, 1983), whereas the service environment is described as the service scape, comprising the setting and props used to administer service (Bitner, 1992), and delivery refers to how service is provided on a specific occasion (Bitner, Booms and Tetreault, 1990). From these characteristics it becomes evident that measurement of the service quality will encompass customer satisfaction, quality and value alongside service product, service
environment and service delivery. So service quality comes to be an objective and economic item, quantifiable and ‘scientific’ in the eye of the service quality theorists.

Service quality, as a measurable item in service organisations, is used so organisations can make comparisons in measuring their service quality goals, giving the organisation a way to manage quality effectively. Organisations use guests’ assessments and perceptions of satisfaction, quality and value as a core component of the measurement, because these are the components guests use to assess the service they have received. These are significant judgements by the guests of an organisation, as they may contribute to customers’ future choices for repeat usage. If a guest’s assessment of service quality is closely approximated to what the organisation’s service delivery offerings are, that guest will be happy and satisfied with their choice. When guests are satisfied across all three components, then they have no need to seek alternate or competing properties to meet their service expectations.

**Determining customer satisfaction**

Finally, customer satisfaction has been summarised by Oliver’s framework (1989) in which he suggests that satisfaction is focused on fulfilment and is related to reinforcement and arousal. Low arousal fulfilment produces *satisfaction as contentment*, where the service is rated as performing satisfactorily in a low state of arousal. An example here might be the air conditioning in a hotel room where, provided the temperature is within an acceptable range and meets the guest’s level of acceptability, the guest will
be passively content with the temperature. In contrast to this, satisfaction to surprise is a high arousal state and can be either positive or negative. An example here might be entering a lobby of a hotel and being excited by the design. Conversely, you may enter a hotel lobby and find it shabby and tired, in which case, you, as the guest, will be surprised in a negative way. Satisfaction as pleasure occurs when there is positive reinforcement, such as when your room has a pleasing view; in this case the product or service is adding pleasure to your experience. Finally, ‘satisfaction as relief’ results from negative reinforcement, or when a negative situation is removed, such as when air conditioning in a public space works effectively to combat extreme external temperatures.

The situations above are describing satisfaction states (Rust and Oliver, 1994), where high levels of arousal and ecstasy result as part of satisfaction fulfilment. In this way, it is thought that service satisfaction can be tailored to exceed expectations on surprise and delight dimensions. Rust and Oliver (1990) suggest that satisfaction may also be a process. The expectancy disconfirmation theory suggests satisfaction can be viewed as meeting or exceeding expectations. (Oliver, 1977; 1980; 1981; Oliver and De Sarbo, 1988; Yi, 1990). When this theory is put into practice, both external (Steebkamp and Hoffman, 1994) and internal (Folkes 1994; Oliver and Winer, 1987) cues are evident and subsequently, disconfirmation judgement or comparisons by the guest of their expectations against the service received is made. The comparison is a subjective assessment of a process, where the feeling (Rust and Oliver, 1994) the customer has at the conclusion of the process contributes to satisfaction (or dissatisfaction). While disconfirmation theory frequently emerges as the key determinant
of customer satisfaction, direct effects of outcomes and expectations are also frequently noted and assist in the explanation of satisfaction (Churchill and Surprenant, 1982; Oliver, 1980; Oliver and De Sarbo, 1988; Tse and Wilson, 1988). Satisfaction states suggests that it is always possible to tailor the service delivery system in a certain way, which of course it is not. The satisfaction states imply prior knowledge of customers’ expectations, perceptions and previous experiences, which of course, is not possible. So, in a way, satisfaction states set management on a rather hopeless treadmill.

**Improvements in service quality: a management perspective**

From a management perspective, there are three main elements to service quality that are generally targeted for improvement: service product, service environment, and value within service delivery.

The processes they use to measure and monitor quality improvement are common to service quality theorists and industry practitioners.

1. Service product

The first element of service quality, the service product, is denoted as being the service as it was designed to be delivered. Often service is depicted as having specific features that are unique to a particular service provider. The service product is also seen to involve service specifications and targets. For example, the Novotel at Homebush Bay has set a customer
special request limit of five minutes and declared that no guest will wait longer than that for their request to be actioned.

Management develops a service strategy which aligns with their overall organisational goals and objectives and from which derives its various service products. For example, a three star property may not have a driveway service distinct from their porter service. This is because three star properties do not offer that level of personal attention to guests—the price variance of room rate does not allow for the extra staff required for separate driveway employees. So, from this example, it can be understood that management’s design of their property’s service objectives and standards is related to generally recognised and commonly identified features related to industry norms.

2. Service environment

The second element of service quality, the service environment, is construed in the literature as having a dual focus: internal and external environments. The external environment is related to the physical service scape. The internal environment is focused on organisational culture and the philosophy professed by management, and might be considered to represent the functional areas of management. Within the internal environment, Berry Conant and Parasuraman (1991) have compiled a list of the dimensions and sub-dimensions to be explored within a firm to ensure the internal environment is structured to provide superior quality service. The dimensions might include the firm’s marketing orientation, its service organisation, new customer generation, current customer retention,
and its internal marketing, including employee relations (support and reward). Bitner (1992) and Lovell (2004) have argued the impact of the external environment on service and customer satisfaction and success. Further, it has been suggested that the external environment (physical service scape) has an effect on the performance levels and job satisfaction of employees. When environmental dimensions of the service scape are considered in relation to service quality, it will include items such as employee uniforms and name badges, internal furnishings such as table lamps and flower arrangements, and signage within and external to the hospitality property. Other less obvious elements which may impact service but are physical environmental considerations are elements such as the space itself, the ambiance of the property and the functionality of the environment. Oliver and Rust (1994) suggest these elements will have an effect on the approach avoidance and interaction disposition of the employee and the customer. Moreover, Mangold and Babakus (1991) discuss employee perceptions and how they differ from the customer’s perceptions. From their perspective, the external environment is an important service characteristic and should be given sufficient attention by management.

3. Value within service delivery

In understanding how value is considered when presented as a construct of service quality, it is important to define the concept in its own right. Value is a construct used to determine whether the economic price attached to the item, be it a service or a good, is received favourably or unfavourably by the guest. One of the most commonly cited examples here
is the rack rate of an accommodation room, and the cost of a meal in a restaurant. Gavin (in Holbrook, 1994) suggests there is a problem for the construct of value because value and quality are often used interchangeably; such is the level of confusion regarding the definition of the terms. The concept of quality, he argues, is best explained when related to the environment in which it occurs, and when it is contextualised, it can be understood and defined. However, for value to be understood, it should also be considered in the context in which it is used, and not considered as an isolated element. Value in this context is related to, and part of, the guest’s experience and when considering the cost of the hospitality experience, guests keep the amount paid for the hospitality item in perspective with payments they generally make within the whole hospitality experience. So, for example, a $3.50 coffee in a beautifully decorated room in a significantly grand hotel might be perceived differently to a $3.50 coffee in a railway station café. In this way, customer value becomes part of the overall service experience. Value is part of the consumption experience (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982) and does not reside with the object but rather with the experience derived from the object. In relating the value of an item directly to the service experience, Morris in Holbrook (1994:38) explains that it is in the services associated with the goods, not upon the goods themselves that one places the emphasis of value. He suggests that goods are wanted because they are capable of performing services. So, for the coffee to have value to a customer at $3.50 per cup in the hotel setting, the, guest can relax, enjoy a little down time, maybe consider their day, make plans for their next activity, and so on. They even enjoy the coffee as a way of socialising with a friend or colleague. The service in this example is related to the guest having a little time out of
their general routine. In the same way, the railway coffee is also a time out service. However, it is conducted in a bustling, dynamic, highly peopled environment, where the physical surroundings would produce an entirely different experience.

However, customer value (perceived) may be the characteristic that lures a customer away from a competitor. In this sense, perceived value and satisfaction will attract managerial attention. Zeithaml (1988) suggests that value may be determined as arising from quality and price, or what a guest gets from what they give (exchange theory). Value increases as quality increases and as price decreases (Rust and Oliver, 1994). Conversely, Holbrook (1994) argues value is subjective and is related to our personal preference, so we choose where we will drink coffee, not in relation to the price we pay, but more related to our personal choices. He further suggests that quality may be a type of value. However, it has been suggested that value depends on quality and price. An example of this would be a coffee valued at $3.50 which is thought of as good value, but at $6.00 is not. Holbrook (1994) suggests that at the higher price, both quality and value has decreased. Conversely, it may be that the quality is constant but the value has declined.

If value is taken to represent the dual component approach, namely that value is a combination of what is received and what is sacrificed, Holbrook (1994) argues value is a preference. He suggests that value should be defined and calculated as being about choice and retention, because these result from preference. Further, it might be contended that customers
would choose from among alternative service providers based on a return on investment. Customers make an investment (price) and experience an outcome (quality). If a customer maximises the quality to price ratio (efficiency) they also maximise return on investment. Holbrook (1994) refers to an ‘efficiency type of value’ and that would agree with this concept.

An alternative viewpoint is that customers maximise utility (Rust and Oliver, 1994). Utility is defined as the state or a characteristic of being useful (Macquarie Encyclopedic Dictionary, Delbridge and Bernard, 1990). Value theory suggests customers experience value when they believe they have received satisfactory service/product quality; however, they are not always satisfied with the price they pay for the value they believe they have received. The customer selects the service that gives them the best value for money. Rust and Oliver (1994) suggest that the utility gained from the increasing quality shows diminishing returns. For example, if bed sheets in a hotel room are cotton, the guests wanting only cotton sheets on their bed will be satisfied. If however, the cotton sheets were Egyptian cotton, the guests might not even notice this higher quality of sheet. The utility increase would be minimal, even though an exceptional increase in quality had been implemented. Likewise, quality needs be a certain level before utility begins to grow noticeably. An example of this would be polyester sheets on a bed in a hotel room. If a guest wanted cotton sheets, then the amount of polyester in the sheets would have to be decreased to a very low level (maybe less than one per cent) before utility would reflect that cotton sheets were on the beds. Moreover, the guest’s level of affluence or ability to pay a certain price will impact disutility from
increasing price. Eventually, disutility spikes to infinity as prohibitive prices are attained. An example might be the price of a hotel room—the average worker’s disutility to price for the room is likely to be much steeper than the Shah of Persia, because the average worker’s money would run out more quickly.

Finally, in order to achieve quality, the process of service delivery has been considered as a role performance or script. Some recent literature has drawn attention to the importance of this service characteristic (Solomon, Surprenant, Czepiel and Gutman, 1985) because of the contribution scripts may make to the employee’s delivery of the service. It has been suggested that consumers have an expectation of the sequence of the service process and perceived service provider role in service encounters (Lovell, 2005). Violations of customer expectations can contribute to post service customer behaviours such as complaints and changing providers. Firms also use role performance and scripts to manipulate customer behaviour in the service encounter process (Lovell, 2005). Further, management can actively engage the customer in a direction set by the organisation by presenting role scripts and performances specifically designed within the organisation. The service delivery process therefore may be a tool which management can use to encourage customer behaviours and usage of services.

Hence, from the customer perspective, service quality is a subjective matter and service encounter satisfaction results from perceived quality, value performance on various non-quality dimensions, relevant prior expectations and disconfirmation of those expectations. Value is formed from perceived quality in combination with price.
Kotler (1991:4) argues the process of exchange is the core of marketing activities. *Marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals ... obtain what they need and want through creating, offering and exchanging products of value with others.* Exchange, therefore, becomes a transaction in which two or more exchange agents are involved. Each agent gives up something of value in return for something of value. Two implications are noted in the transaction: firstly, the exchange is *socially justified* because the parties are better off following the exchange as opposed to prior to the exchange; and secondly, the activity is an exchange (because it is a transaction) and exchanges are related to customer value (Holbrook, 1994). Therefore customer value is core to marketing activities (Rust and Oliver, 1994). However, Holbrook (in Rust and Oliver, 1994:23) laments the lack of a clear, articulation of the role of customer value in consumer research, and suggests until this situation is remedied, the concept will be poorly understood.

**Conclusion**

In summary, service in the hospitality industry can be thought of as an exchange where the guest and the employee come into an industry-specific operational system to achieve expected or stated outcomes. Service delivery is the core activity of the hospitality front line employee’s organisational objective, which is customer satisfaction, and so is paramount in creating a satisfactory experience for the guest. Service has many components which contribute to the customer having a satisfactory service experience, including employees, whose behaviour reflects the
image of the organisation, and the organisation’s service objectives, including value. When the customer reflects on the service they have received, they consider the quality of their service experience, and make a subjective judgement based on multiple factors. These factors include the behaviour of the employee toward them as well as more externally based factors such as external and internal environmental factors. Further, it can be argued that guests aim to achieve their expectations, needs and wants at the most considerate price, thereby being satisfied they have received value for their money.

When customers seek satisfaction from their hospitality experience, irrespective of hospitality industry systems and the role these systems play in enhancing the experience, it has to be remembered the delivery of service, as an intangible service construct, finally falls to the employee. In this way, the more convoluted and complex the service systems become, and the more the employee is entangled by the complexity of the systems, the more difficult it becomes for them to cut through the service maze and effectively deliver their version of service.
The journey so far: summary reflection and cumulative interpretation of critical elements

The link is now made and acknowledged between contemporary hospitality practice and associated skills training (particularly as these relate to preparation of the frontline employee to deliver appropriate service), and what is understood as the well spring of human hospitable action (an impetus to act with generosity of spirit).

In the previous essay, I introduced a service inventory. I explained some service jargon, the terms which are commonly used within the hospitality industry when the hospitality industry environment is described. The service inventory terms are those terms which contribute to an understanding of the service effort, the service product and the role service plays as a central operational component in hospitality organisations. In addition, I have shown how many of these terms also describe the hospitality operation which is performed by front line employees in the service encounter. I have shown how the service encounter is a reciprocal transaction between the employee and the guest where each party is aiming to achieve an objective. The employee plans to offer service that meets guests’ expectations, needs and wants and the guests would like to receive that service. For the employee to execute the service transaction, they require skills which are appropriate to the task.
In the following essay, I commence with a background summary of skills and the role and place they have in industry. This is followed by a brief overview of skills in hospitality literature, a discussion of skills and their meaning, and the essay concludes with a scenario of skills in the hospitality industry.

The relevance of an exploration of skills relates to the core activity of the front line employee. For the purpose of this thesis, a skills exploration means an exploration of the activities of employees at the request of the organisation. The organisation requires the employee to deliver service according to the organisation’s service protocols and the method of this activity is via an employee’s skills. Skills are the foundation of service delivery, and skills training has created a separate segment of the hospitality industry (for example, Firth, 2009). So in my telling, front line employees need skills to deliver the service qualities so necessary and desirable in the hospitality industry.
Essay Six

Are ‘skills’ enough?

Some dilemma exists about the definition of skills, and of the application of that term to industry. Yet, skills are a requirement for the preparation of people for work in the Australian hospitality industry. They have been declared an official component of the hospitality industry training model: the competency model (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2006). However, the users rarely define the meanings attached to the term skill because the assumption is made, that those using the model have a common understanding of the term. This lack of clarity opens the way for misinterpretation and misunderstanding in many areas relating to hospitality, including academic discourse. It is therefore important to make terms a lot clearer. The hospitality industry requires an efficient, demand driven training system to supply it with suitably skilled potential entrants. To create efficiency, accurate analyses of industry needs are required, as well as clear communication of these needs, to the hospitality education and training providers. Where no such analysis or clarity is provided, imprecise and unsuitable training may result.

Most service organisations are aware that an employee just knowing about something does not neatly translate to the employee knowing how to do something. The execution of a request for service requires the front line
employee to have the necessary and appropriate ability to undertake the task. A barista may not be an efficient waiter, for example. In service delivery, the required action might be a singular task, such as making a cup of coffee, or it might be a set of tasks such as food service (taking multiple food orders, and servicing an array of table requirements). It might be a highly complex multiple skill set requiring a diverse range of skills and activities to complete a single activity, such as a check-in or check-out of a guest. However, regardless of the content of the request, it is the process characteristics of the task the employee undertakes in fulfilling the request which require skills. Employees require skills if they are to move from knowing about skills to being able to operationalise skills in the hospitality industry.

When hospitality applicants are asked if they have the requisite skills for the job, the employee is expecting to discuss their ability to undertake a task, such as carrying plates or make up a room. Whether they smile a lot or are friendly is not something they would consider a requisite skill, and will not have been something that was taught. Is being ‘friendly’ a learnt skill so that performance becomes acting, and therefore the organisation requires people who can act? One of my areas of interest in this section of the research centres on such an inquiry: how might skill be defined? Can being friendly, for example, constitute a skill or be part of a broader skill set? The questions are: what are skills, and what are not? What role do skills play, and what cannot be achieved through skills? How does someone learn a skill? Further, I explore what role skills play in hospitality industry service delivery.
In this essay, I will explore skills both as a term used universally and also as a term with an industry-specific meaning. Early in the research, I found some discrepancies in the way in which the term skill was applied; so I want to explore the various interpretations of the term, with the goal of demonstrating how unclear the term still is at this point in history, and the implications this has for all levels of industry. Some refer to skills as soft or hard, cognitive and physical, while others add the word skill to most operational facets of an employee’s performance. There are skill sets, skill levels and groups of skills. After some reflection and conversations with both employees and trainers, it became apparent that the term skill is considered a general term. Grayling (2002:99) explains such a language discrepancy by suggesting that in some circumstances, the name of an important idea comes to serve as shorthand for a variety of associated ideas, much like we might refer to getting ‘a McDonald’s’, when what we are actually purchasing is a hamburger.

Skill talk

Skill talk is everywhere. Skill talk is in much that we read. And yet there is a lack of clarity about what a skill actually is. Whenever an activity or task requires a name, or needs to belong to a category of things, the activity or task is called a skill, a level of skill or maybe even a set of skills.

The term skill, when loosely applied and appended in an inattentive way, is sometimes referred to as skill talk (Barrows, 1987; Hart, 1978; Smith, 1987). For some, skill talk refers to both training and education of industry processes so that training and education become meshed into the one skill
(Hart, 1978) which is then used interchangeably. In this way, skill might mean education, it might mean training or it might mean capacity. For example, in the Jafari (2002) model education and training requires potential managers to be reflective and considerate of the conceptual knowledge which applies to the functional areas of the hospitality facility. For some, these are considered skills, but as Jafari suggests, being reflective and considerate of conceptual knowledge is about education, and so in his telling, these are not skill based activities, but are conceptual considerations gained through one’s education, those of an educated individual. Further, managers need to be aware of the functional concepts which may be applied to different areas of the facility’s operation. For example, when a restaurant guest has a complaint, the manager, as opposed to the floor supervisor, will understand which restaurant protocol and procedures need to be considered in resolving the complaint and meeting the guest’s expectations of the service. This means the complaint can be handled in a discrete and thoughtful manner while maintaining the restaurant’s quality and standards of budgetary objectives. The manager is managing. Conversely, the supervisor in the restaurant will need those competencies that deliver operational aspects of the restaurant service objectives, being aware of the floor staff and their timely efficiency and productivity in carry out service.

For others, skill talk creates confusion about individualised skills at the level of learning that is specific to a particular context (Barrows, 1987). For example, with meal service, there are service protocols for taking food orders from the table. When food orders are taken, the order needs to be legible and recorded in such a way that meal preparation will be correctly
done, that special dietary requirements reach the kitchen and that meals are delivered correctly. Some of these elements of the food order are hospitality specific, while others, such as the logic of the order and the handwriting are general and non-context specific. The logical sequence of recording a meal order is important, while a take away order can be recorded in any sequence. Handwriting is important in recording meal orders, while for a doctor the handwriting is very often illegible to any one but the pharmacist. Getting special orders for meal service is important for guest satisfaction and for health reasons, and getting the correct order of the meal is important for quality, for guest satisfaction, and for the restaurant’s reputation.

For others (Smith, 1987), skill talk is regarded as an excuse for people to not be personally responsible for what they can and cannot do. If, for example, a waitperson has a lack of motivation toward service, instead of them taking responsibility for this, they can use the excuse that they do not have the skills to undertake a certain task. They might choose to carry only two or three dirty plates from a table which has finished eating their meal, when correct protocol would be to remove all the plates from a table at the one time. So, skill talk can mean excuses are made and a lack of skill is blamed, when the problem lies more with the individual person and their choices.

Skill talk might be described as a broad stroke of the training brush. The term gives a word picture (Grayling, 2007). We can use skill talk as a way of putting brackets around an area and creating some exclusive space (Lugosi, 2007) where, when people dialogue from within that area, they
might take some liberties. For example, in hotels, the front desk is the hub of the guest’s contact with the property. It is the guest’s first physical introduction to the hotel and their point of contact for services throughout their stay with the property, it creates the guest’s first image of the property and it represents the continuity of service offered throughout their stay. The front desk, for the guest, is an area which is bracketed as ‘the hub’ of the hotel. However, from within the hotel and the hotel’s operation, the ‘front desk’ includes many areas and represents many operational services. It includes check-in and check-out, driveway service, porter service, concierge services and guest relations. It is also the area for telephones, reservations, booking services and answering guest queries. So, the ‘front desk’ area requires multiple individual skills, some sets of skills and some skill groups. The front desk also requires activities which may not be skills at all; for example, being polite with guests, taking care with other people, being generous and kind, showing empathy and compassion, or being neatly attired and looking bright and cheery. However, when reference is made to the ‘front office’, those from outside the industry would be unaware of the different competencies required for the different operations.

In this way, when hospitality employees have a dialogue among their colleagues, particularly in hotel hubs such as the front desk, there is an expectation from the group of employees that common understandings exist between them about the operation of their section. The employees all have some prior knowledge of the general operational elements and so understand the terminology. Guests are not privy to such an understanding. Further, from within the created skill talk space, when a
particular term is used, we are excused from giving a detailed explanation of each aspect of the term, assuming meanings are shared. This gives skill talkers liberty to reflect, merge and create new understandings and meanings for their concepts which can further result in lack of precision and clarity, not just in definitions, but also in training programs or in assessment of what is known.

Smith (1987) and Barrows (1987) suggest skill talk may be a ploy. They have argued real education is diminished by indiscriminate skill talk because it capitulates to the current trend of education as a scientific enterprise, where education can be described by an intellectual and finite set of behaviours somewhat akin to how one develops muscle (Barrow, 1987;159). Hart (1978) reminds us that, skill talk did not exist prior to the current trend, because there was a tighter regime in the way the term skill was used. During the fifties and sixties, for example, skill referred to technical mastery and was understood as a vocational term. Apprenticeships, for example, were vocational training systems used in a diverse range of industries, and highly regarded as effective and desirable forms of skilling the workforce (Wolek 1999).

However, as the term skill has become a popular expression, its meaning has becomes less defined, and so the clarity has disappeared. Apprenticeships have also become less desirable, and so the community’s understanding of the benefit of skills training has become less understood. Indiscriminate use of the word skill leads to misunderstanding and lack of clarity because it remains unclear what is being taught or evaluated, or even if it is a skill that can be taught. If skill is assumed to have meaning,
and therefore used to indicate an activity a person can do, the expectation of the skilled person is that they can undertake certain tasks. In the hospitality industry, for example, if the guest relations officer is assumed to have excellent writing skills, they might be asked to oversee the media office, prepare quotes for group bookings or write follow up correspondence to guests. These activities would require a range of writing skills.

Skills have also been touted as being for the benefit of a society; skilled populations are capable of being employed thereby reducing the need and dependence on state welfare systems. Historically, Socrates taught populations of Ancient Greeks the skill of rhetoric so the ordinary citizen could defend themselves against the authorities by arguing for benefits, in the same way as in skilled contemporary societies, people can create advantages and opportunities for themselves by being competent in their general approach to living and possible opportunities for employment. When populations achieve sustainable levels of skills, the quality of life is raised. If indiscriminate skill talk misrepresents a person’s achievement, then not only does the person suffer, but society struggles to keep all levels of the population employable.

Hart (1978) is critical of indiscriminate skill talk. For Hart (1978:205), when the term skill is appended carelessly to ordinary tasks, it means parading skills as something they are not. He suggests that in educational writing, for example, the term skill was appended to activities as a kind of grace note to create acceptance of the activity and to stop criticism. By dressing up reading activities with the term skill, it allowed the real skill (comprehension) to get
lost because the boundaries were blurred between different things that are learnt. His claim is that indiscriminate skill talk misrepresents what education is and what it is to receive an education. For Grayling (2002:106) education comes after training. Training gives people skills which, when learnt, gives them confidence and the materials to profit from the next step, which is proper education: the process of learning how to think. The difference between education and training is highly controversial. Whether or not we agree with Grayling that there is a linear progression from training to education, nevertheless, training is usually associated with skill development whereas education implies a different level of thoughtfulness.

If skills cannot be considered as education, and education is considered to be only available to those who have been trained, then training becomes devalued. This binary however is disrupted by a different valuing of training, in a different domain such as medicine. In the contemporary hospitality industry, employees have vocational skills which are referred to as hands on skills. On reflection, it is interesting to note that dentists and medical doctors have hands on skills, and yet would be generally revered in society as having attained high standards of education.

Indiscriminate skill talk may be a way of protecting human resources in the work place. Being gentle with or subtle about what a person cannot do might create a better work environment, particularly as work environments where skills are paramount might not always be high powered and formal work environments. However, if by using the term skill, subterfuge is created as Smith (1987) suggests, then society is being
misled. Smith (1987) argues that suggesting a person needs skills training when they fall short of meeting job requirements is allowing people to get away with not taking responsibility for their own shortcomings. He suggests that by using the term *skill*, the responsibility is verbally removed from the person to an ‘attachment’ of the person. (that is, it is not about them personally; it is about their skills or lack thereof). In this circumstance, the person can be deemed as having inadequate training to fulfil the job expectation, when for some people, they may be disinterested in doing their job thoughtfully and well.

Indiscriminate skill talk might mean the term *skill* can be left isolated from the task category with which it is associated. Such an oversight leads to generalised assumptions about a person’s competency, and further, may demean a person’s true potential to undertake a complicated or significant process. Barrows (1987) considers such an oversight causes skill categories to be overlooked in favour of a general amalgamated word covering all usage. Such a view leaves skill meaning a *task or activity*, without attaching a qualifying category, such as physical or cognitive. In the hospitality industry, for example, a waitperson may be competent in a particular language. If the waitperson is certified as competent, then management has an understanding of that competence. However, the following brief scenario demonstrates the pitfalls of such a system:

If, in a hotel, a foreign speaking customer requested a meal without dairy products because of health or religious reasons, the waitperson would need to convey this important message clearly to the kitchen. This may require a different ordering process. Firstly, the request needs to be
understood from the guest. The waitperson will then competently translate the request from the guest’s language to the language used in the hotel; presumably English in these circumstances. Secondly, the order needs to be relayed to the kitchen in the language of the kitchen. Instead of just recording the order, the waitperson would take a more complex approach to the situation. Understanding the seriousness of the request, the waitperson would circumvent the standard ordering process and record the request with the chef de brigade (the person in charge of the entire kitchen operation). Further, it would need confirmation as the kitchen might have to change an operation by appointing a special chef for the request (kosher, for example). Finally, having completed the task, the waitperson would ensure the food delivery was in the correct order and all meals were ready at the same time. The language skills and the level of competence would need careful consideration, as would the ability to translate the language, record in the correct language and the exact level of detail, and then generate appropriate follow up. These all seem like minute details, but if the request was placed for medical reasons then a mistake could be a costly one. In this example, the skill language level would need clarification; does the waitperson have a basic, intermediate, business or professional level of proficiency? Further, the language category would be important: spoken skills, written skills, translation level. Finally, a category of language covering dialects may need to be articulated.

Inexact use of skill terminology fails to recognise skills as generic or contextually bound. Barrows (1987) cites specific intellectual abilities and the nomination of them as generic. Examples might be critical thinking in intellectual abilities, problem solving and creativity. To think critically or
creatively, a person has to think about something and to do so, they must have an understanding of a particular context; for example, a St Valentine’s Day dinner in a fine dining restaurant. St Valentine’s Day dinner service has a reputation in the restaurant environment as being a difficult dinner service. Guests’ expectations are often high and it would be usual for the restaurant to be full. When the guests are seated, the supervisor sees a couple who is not communicating, but is sitting in uncomfortable silence. Under standard conditions, orders would be taken based on the order in which the guests have arrived. However, a creative waitperson, someone who is thinking critically about their guests and the guest experience, may take action. They could advance the position of the tables in order to speed up the food service. They might approach the table and offer some comment about the view, something to start the conversation. Alternatively, they could bring some special food treat to the table. Whatever the waitperson chooses to do, they would work through a series of options to improve the guests’ experience, trying to open up another avenue of dialogue or create topics of conversation to stimulate conversation between the couple. In this way, thinking creatively may well salvage a potentially disastrous experience for the couple. Alternatively, the couple be left to their own devices and the restaurant might well experience guest dissatisfaction as a result.

It is possible that practice at critical thinking has some value for developing a person’s inclination to be critical, but that does not make a person good at critical thinking. Training in the generic skill of critical thinking does not necessarily mean that a person can think critically. Whether the person is capable of critical thinking will not be known until
they attempt to think critically about something in a particular context. This also reiterates the question of transferability and again whether being contextually bound will render the skill useless in a different situation.

Smith (1987) makes a final point about skill talk in relation to what it means to be human. In allowing ourselves to be swept up in the hustle and commercialism of contemporary society, he claims we have lost the ability to self correct (my word) and to be aware of our surroundings. We have lost consciousness of how to be real in our environments. In my view people lack involvement and conversely, are self-absorbed and obsessed. This lack of coherence between ourselves and our awareness of our environments leads to losing a ‘grip on what it means to be human’ because the skills once necessary for survival have been ignored, forgotten or outsourced by us. For some tasks, we engage ‘others’ to undertake these in place of us (eating in a restaurant, for example, as others cook and serve food for us), while for others, we have simply abandoned the skill (bread making, for example). Our skill talk is the dialogue of contemporary society; computer skills and technological skills (SMS-ing!) have replaced home duties and sewing. So the opposing argument is held true: that by undertaking skilled work, properly understood, we can restore humanity to us.

I do not want to let it escape attention how important skills are. Part of the reason skill talk exists is because skills are prevalent in living. Regardless of the level of engagement with life, active or slothful, skills are evident. Secondly, skill has an economic value. The Australian Government has made skilling the population a priority. This achieves the following
government objectives: it fills in a stated employment gap which is a lack of employees with skills (AGDEST 20026); it makes the population employable and so decreases on social welfare; and it achieves one of the fundamental pathways for lifelong learning.

Categorising skills

Hospitality knowledge and its field of theory and practice, is connected by a wide range of diverse subjects and themes, amongst them training and education (Jafari, 2002). According to Jafari, training and education should direct the present and future human resource development task currently assumed by universities and colleges, the institutions that contributed to hospitality knowledge in the first place. For hospitality educators and trainers, this is not an easy task, as the workforce is made up of many part time or casual young female workers (Freeland, 2000). Only a small percentage of the hospitality workforce are involved in management and leadership roles. From a conceptual perspective (figure 2), the top and the bottom positions stand in contrast to one another.
For this inquiry, training will refer to skilling and in particular, skilling of those who occupy the secondary and lower level. Education refers to the top level, where *minds on* as opposed to *hands on* input would apply. In the middle and lower ranks, work station training involving technical skills with a hands on approach to *know how*, sit in contrast to the top layer, where education is considered as a field of vision and conceptual *know why* (Jafari, 2002). This essay focuses on those employees who occupy the middle and lower levels of the diagram.

As discussed above, the meaning of *skill* is complex and contested. Wills (1995:i) observed when discussing the meaning of *skill*, a Tower of Babel image emerges. From her analysis of documentation on vocational applications, five distinct meanings of skill were evident. Definitions varied from broad to specific in that one referred to any human characteristic on which people may differ in the performance of work, while another included only competence to perform specific job-related
tasks. She emphasised that definitions are important because they are used to determine ways of relating information to the needs of participants, and for collecting, measuring and using data about workers and job performance. For example, specific measures can be used for comparing jobs, establishing occupational clusters, identifying transferable skills and accurately constructing job descriptions. Defining skills clarifies what tasks and activities actually are, without which the hospitality industry struggles to determine what the skill and training needs are for specific jobs.

**Cognitive and physical skills**

Skills may be categorised into types (of skill). Wills’s (1995) analysis uncovered many different approaches to describing skills. Most widely recognised is the distinction between cognitive and physical (or motor) skills. Cognitive skills may range from general intelligence to more specific capacities in verbal comprehension, numerical ability, memory, spatial ability and the like. Physical skills include strength, stamina, flexibility and manual dexterity. From here, the debate on skill becomes very complex. For example, there are arguments about which capacities should be included in the category *cognitive skills* (Barrows, 1987; Johnson, 1998; McPeck, 1981). Should this category include only mental activities that are consciously controlled, such as thinking skills (Bailon, Case, Coombes and Daniels, 1999), but exclude comprehension and instinctive knowing, which are supposedly not (Smith, 2002)? And to what extent can skills be taught and learned? Are skills capacities that the person has, or are they developed through training? And if the skills need to be developed, to what extent should they be linked in the curriculum as a sequenced set, or
a coherent whole, rather than as discrete actions and procedural steps to be learned (Norris and Ennis, 1989:421)?

The connotation of the term *skill* creates a broad argument around the National Government’s initiative of life long learning (2005-08 Commonwealth-State Agreement for Skilling Australia's Workforce); learning not directly related to specific employment, but considered essential for employment nonetheless. Griffith (1987) argues that a political and educative debate exists around skills, based on the relationship that exists between the two systems of training and education, where those who have some form of qualification, be it either education or training, are more employable. She claims more value is placed on intellectual ability over manual skills. She argues that, appropriately defined and clarified, skill should not result in such a divide because, if interpreted inclusively across a broad range of meanings, skill will have a central meaning. The deviations of the term will be as branches attached to the central trunk of the term. Her ‘inclusive’ meaning of skills includes knowledge, experience and cleverness, and also dexterity and training. This is important because it sheds light on her understanding and use of the term, and explains why confusion and misunderstanding exist within the skill dialogue.

The waters are muddied further when distinguishing between key and core skills (Kearns, 2001), and beyond that to distinctions between generic and context-specific skills. Key skills are essential life and employment participation skills. *They unlock the door and enable people to do something with their aptitudes and education* (Borthwick in Collins, 1993:26). They are not specific to work in particular occupations or industries, but are essential
for effective participation in further education and in adult life more generally (Australian Education Council, 1992). Core skills are developed from the application of key skills. They are essential for effective participation in employment because they are job-related. There is often a fine line between key and core skills and considerable differences of opinion exist over the extent to which vocational education should focus on the job-specific, rather than more general, life skills.

Generic skills can be exercised in a variety of contexts. Their most distinctive characteristic is their transferability to a new setting once they have already been learned or applied in another. Kearns (2001) believes that generic skills are the future of vocational training, as they are the foundation for the current trend of life long learning (Kearns, 2001:3). Hinchliffe (2002), however, argues that skills cannot be transferred for the most part. His point is that it is not skills that are transferred, but the knowledge a person has and the ability to use that knowledge in a different context. This suggests that key skills underpin the capacity to apply learned skills in different settings.

**Skill Complexity**

Skill complexity can be considered as a form of grading, from basic to more difficult (Griffith, 1987). In making her point, Griffith uses Ryle’s (1963) concept of ‘knowledge how’ and argues that a continuum exists for most skills, since degrees of distinction in skill level can be identified. At a basic level, skills may be narrow in range, but nonetheless, are the foundation and building blocks of a person’s capacity to undertake job-
related tasks (Hinchliffe, 2002). In an example of cognitive skills, a job holder understands the fundamentals of counting the cash. At a level that is a little higher, this person can balance the day’s accounts against the day’s operational activities. At a higher level still, this person assesses the extent to which business operations are in line with longer range targets and strategic objectives, and can plan to correct discrepancies. At this more complex level of enactment, cognitive skills require procedural knowledge of how to perform certain tasks but with the additional application of judgement and discretion. Physical or motor skills can also be demonstrated at different levels of proficiency. At higher levels of capability, motor skills are used for the completion of a task with ease and precision … in which a predetermined objective is accomplished with maximum efficiency and a minimum outlay of energy (Robb, 1972:39).

Skilled acts may also be part of a sequence of activities. Fitts (1964) argues that what distinguishes a skilled act from an unskilled act is patterning, and that patterning is a hierarchical organisation of activities that is part of a ‘plan’ (Miller, Galanter and Pribram, 1960). The plan is the process of sequenced operations that are to be performed in order that the skilled act can be executed. Meta competencies (Bridges, 1993) consist of multiple skills at multiple levels of complexity being undertaken simultaneously. Bridges suggests that, at this level of complexity, the enactment of the skill may more aptly be described as an art. Hinchliffe (2002:194) also uses this term when he refers to skill that is enacted at the highest level of skill mastery. Such skill involves a series of actions assisted by interpretative understanding—a performance oriented toward producing a publicly defined outcome or process. … Interpretative understanding, he suggests,
requires the participant to engage in the skill process in a way that acknowledges the context or situation.

**Acquisition of skills**

Acquiring a skill may occur through a variety of methods (Barrows, 1987). Discrete skills, such as the clicking of the fingers are learned in a simple and straightforward way, while reading, for example, requires more complex learning processes. Some skills require formal instruction, while others might not. For example, learning to ride a bike can be undertaken in isolation and without instruction: one falls off, gets up again, balances, and then falls off again until balance has been mastered. Other skills, such as how to make a cappuccino could be learned by oneself, in isolation, or as an act of imitation through apprenticeship. Polanyi (1958) considered that all skilled acts requiring motor ability are difficult until the task is mastered, while Hodgkin (1985:9) noted that *skills that [now] seem easy and automatic, started as an achievement that was difficult and required energy.*

Dewey (1916) argued that where a skill was being mastered, the process could be assisted by an emotional engagement with a task. For example, when undertaking the set up of a restaurant; when the employees understand the quality of their work as meaningful and important (polished cutlery, shining glassware, measured distance for the place settings and so on), as essential to the outcome of the guest experience, then their dedication to the task becomes important and the room will have a sparkling impressive tone. However, sloppy and careless work by demotivated and disengaged employees is very noticeable.
Skills in hospitality settings

I now present three scenarios of skill competency to illustrate the problems with skills and competency in the hospitality industry. They show how skills are operationalised in different areas of hospitality organisations, and the difficulty that exists in attempting to outline the extent of the problems associated with skill terminology; secondly, they demonstrate the diversity on skills needed and the manner in which they can be misrepresented and misunderstood. The three scenarios are:

1. Mixing cocktails

In training, a bar person learning to mix cocktails is required to perform activities related to handling the glass, knowing the correct way to pour a drink, knowing the ingredients and finally, placing the drink on the counter. If a trainee completes the physical activity in line with the standard procedure specified by the competency model, the person is deemed competent (conversely, if they fail to complete the sequence, they are deemed not competent). But in reality, the person certified as competent may be unable to carry out the duty to the expectations of a particular employer. This is because the person may lack additional attributes including drink knowledge, speed, personality, style, innovation, flair and energy. In fact, these additional attributes may be just as important to the ambience and reputation of the particular facility where the task is carried out, and to justify the expense and ‘mythology’ of the place.
2. Cutting an onion

This is an activity requiring basic motor skills executed as a learned set of steps. It is a core skill for a kitchen worker, and is specific to the job. There is little need for the job holder to develop mastery beyond learning the simple steps involved and completing the task efficiently. The person can either do the task or they cannot. However, to cut an onion in a timely and efficient manner may require practice.

3. Folding a napkin

Within the competency framework the physical action of folding a napkin fits well with the definition of a skill. However, no other aspect of this task would be treated as such. Certainly, folding a napkin is a learned motor skill, repetitive, and context (hospitality) specific. It requires no outside input beyond the initial learned instruction. But if we see the napkin as a decorative table artifact, napkin folding as a skill takes on greater significance. As an ‘art’, the practitioner may engage personally and emotionally in executing perfection in the design, become highly skilled in this, be recognised for his or her creativity, have a large repertoire of original and copied designs, and be very time-efficient in executing the task. Conceptually, napkin folding is essentially a motor skill, but when the execution of the task is indicative of higher levels of skill, it also draws on the job holder’s creativity. At increasing levels of mastery acquired through training and practice, it could be described as an ‘art’. It is not a generic skill because it is not readily transferable to other occupations, and it represents a core skill for the hospitality worker. The competency
framework deals with the basic sequence constituting napkin folding, but not the ‘art’.

In this next section of the essay I introduce the discussion on skills in hospitality settings by giving some historical background to the selection of the competency model used for skills certification. I do this as a way of adding clarity to the skills debate regarding the selection of the competency model, and to introduce the concept of competency as this is a term I use often when I make reference to skills in the hospitality industry.

The skills debate in Australia has an agenda. Historically, the Australian Federal Government had voiced concern over the ‘lack of skills’ apparent in the Australian workforce and offered financial incentives for organisations to commence creating a more skilled workforce (Australian Government Tourism White Paper, 2003). Such a cry is still relevant in this time as the Rudd Federal Government continues to encourage a focus on training and skilling the Australian workforce (AGDEST 2006).

In the late 1980s the then Department of Technical Education and Training commissioned an inquiry to recommend the most appropriate way for the nation to become skilled. A committee of experts from industry and academia was formed and the investigation by the Carmicheal Committee (Carmicheal and Employment and Skills formation Council Australia, 1992). led to the selection and inception of the competency model. The model, which had originated in England and America, was deemed appropriate for Australian conditions and standards. It was adjusted for Australian training standards and the Australian competency model
training system was rolled out across various industries in Australia. This became known as the Australian Vocational Education and Training program; the foundation of this program was skills and skills training. Interestingly, hospitality was one of the industries chosen as a trial for the competency model (Smith, E., 2002).

Skills, both the language of skills and their associated activities, seem tangled up in misrepresentation and a lack of clarity. In the hospitality literature, for example, Varca (2004:458-9) has suggested that skill is about ability; skill is the individual’s capacity to perform a task and is synonymous with ability. However, he also argues that as performance is a product of skill, then excellence in service performance is factored entirely around a person’s skill, and that motivation cannot be substituted for skill in service transactions. His point here is an important one when considering the training methods of hospitality employees, and the setting up of a restaurant for service is again a good example. It is not evident to the untrained eye what is impressive about a well set up restaurant. The guest experiences the ‘wow factor’ at the entrance and this impacts their dining experience; the image creates a first positive experience for the guest. However, to the trained eye, a quick glance around the room can spot even the minutest mistakes. A well trained employee can adjust table settings to be almost identical in distance, so that the room has a very symmetrical feel. Watching a skilled employee set a table is akin to watching a performance. The precision of their cutlery and glassware placement is a skill to be admired. From time to time, I have checked their work with a measure, and am often delighted by their accuracy. So, this is not merely about the employee’s motivation; it is about the employee’s skill, together
with their desire for service excellence. He concludes that *worker skills in the services environment are unique* (Varca, 2004:41). In the interpretation suggested by Varca (2004), service excellence is entirely dependent on skill. This suggests that when employees are skilled, service efficiency will result—motivation notwithstanding. Despite such a consideration, when an employee is unable to perform a task (for example, not knowing all the coffee or cocktails in a range), then overall service satisfaction may be affected. In these circumstances, it may not be that skills are entirely responsible for service dissatisfaction, but that it may be more related to an employee’s lack of product knowledge. So Varca (2004) interprets the term *skill* as synonymous with ability, not about the effort or motivation applied to the task by the employee. Such an argument does not sit easily with my thoughts on employee motivation.

However, while motivation may not be a substitution for skill, having the motivation to offer service may still be a significant component in the service transaction. The vision of an employee, having a private conversation while a guest waits to be offered service is perennial (texting messages on mobile phones are adding to this scenario significantly). Execution of a skill by an employee is partly reliant on the motivation of the employee. The employee may choose to be motivated not to offer service just as they may be motivated to undertake a task. Hence, service delivery is reliant on employee product knowledge, skills and motivation. To offer service, the employee requires a caché of elements from the employer, themselves and the guest. Desire to please will not deliver service excellence without the product knowledge and the skill to deliver
service, and the organisation must also be available to offer the conditions necessary for the employee to carry out their duties.

The evaluation of employee competence is possible from three sources: firstly, if the employee has been through a training course, then their competency has been evaluated prior to gaining certification; secondly, the customer is the judge of quality in the service encounter transaction and therefore ultimately the competence of the employee; thirdly, the employee will act as a silent witness to their own performance.

Undrinkable coffee, wrong meal orders, badly made cocktails, no knowledge of a wine, and guests served incorrectly are service problems we have all experienced, and can impact the way a guest feels both toward the employee and the quality of the service they have received. However, in each of these circumstances of evaluation of the employee’s competence, the judgement is subjective. Even the first one, where they are tested, is reliant not only on the trainer’s expertise, but also on their judgement or even their coaching. An anecdote explains my point:

Recently I acted as room supervisor for a registered training organisation undertaking a competency module for the RSA (Responsible Service of Alcohol) course. The course is a legislated requirement for all persons undertaking bar work. There were ninety students doing the one day course. Under the competency guidelines for certification, students are required to demonstrate their learned knowledge, either in the workplace, or in a laboratory setting. I personally coached a group of six participants who were struggling to answer the written questions (a written component is also required), and ‘together’ we wrote the answers on the required
sheet. I would nominate this coaching as being not only subjective on my part, but also as relying on my judgement.

Most recently, hospitality and other related industries have been regarded as having evolved from the service economy into the experience economy (Baum, 2006). The experience economy is defined as the consumer paying for an experience (Pine and Gilmore, 1999:2) as opposed to the service economy where, according to Pine and Gilmore, the consumer purchases a set of intangible activities carried out on his behalf. These distinctions are interesting because the difference being discussed is between experience and activities, and yet, purchasing an experience and purchasing activities represent the same outcome. In my view an experience is just the sum of various activities. Activities are the tasks undertaken by front line employees as they transact the service encounter (of which the guest is the co-producer). For the purpose of this essay, I will not argue if the hospitality industry is being either in a service or experience economy as this is not the focus of the research. Needless to say, a service economy is when the focus is on the attributes of service and the service delivery, while an experiential economy relates to an economy where firms are focused on making the customer’s entire experience paramount. The shift of focus from employee to guest may mean even less attention is devoted to the needs of the employee as more attention goes toward creating the guest experience at any cost.

Some recent service skills literature in suggesting hospitality now resides within the experience economy has argued that the industry has differing needs from earlier economies such as the industrial and service economies.
It infers that the evolution to the experience economy has created the need for emotional intelligence and aesthetic skill in hospitality employees. Pine and Gilmore (1999:182) recognised that the experience economy requires particular emotional employee skills, suggesting the need for workers who possess the ability to truly care. Baum (2006:125) considered that, in the recent past, hospitality employees had been classified as having low skills, because a technical and western centric perception of hospitality work was espoused. In the contemporary environment, he suggests hospitality skills need a broader focus to include generic, emotional and aesthetic skills.

Baum (2006:127) suggests skill definitions are not necessary in the hospitality industry because front line employees deliver service through their personality and so no discussion of their skill is warranted. He suggests, for this reason, that discussion of what is skilled or not in absolute terms is of little value. He argues this is the case because the nature of hospitality work is predominately a social construct, that is, service delivery relies on the ability of front line employees to just get on with other people. [And so] we are more interested in how skills deliver work than in the actual operational tasks (Baum op.cit). Being friendly and pleasant suffices for competence in this argument, and so when a front line employee is lacking in competence, the guest overlooks the shortfall because of the front line employee’s pleasant manner. This argument suggests that skill, skill type and skill characteristics will not enhance the productivity of any activity performed in the hospitality industry, and that rather than try to give employees a particular set of skills, the employee just needs to be social. It also assumes that being social will result in guests accepting the employee as a nice person and so will tolerate any reasonable standard of service, based on
the niceness of the employee. In a private hospitality setting this may be correct. However, the issue of value and of guests’ needs, wants and desires being met has been largely overlooked by such a conclusion.

Conversely, differing levels of skills are evident, and may be necessary, if service is to be efficient and timely in its execution. These levels may describe the relationship the skill has with a task, where, for example, setting up a room for dining service requires engagement with the process and a basic level of skill. More complicated, however, will be the level of skill required to undertake a night audit, where the financial transactions from the day are recorded into budgetary reports. Further, daily costs associated with the running of the facility are moved into daily running sheets and these figures are prepared for the daily department meetings the following morning.

Nailon (1981:10) in his inaugural lecture as Professor of Hospitality, suggested the early style of hospitality shown in the grand hotels of Europe left a paralyzing legacy of attitudes for current hospitality front line employees. He suggested that what is currently seen as a lack of employee skills is actually a residual attitude of the servitude historically expected by guests from employees in those grand establishments. Interestingly, he spoke of skills being ‘blamed’ for the lack of service in 1981, which means little has been done in almost the last three decades to remedy the problem. However, ‘serving and servitude’ does have significant consequences for what is promised to guests in the mission statements and service guarantees of many hospitality facilities. For example, The Sheraton Group has the following information on their welcome page:
You don’t just stay here. You belong. This is Sheraton. Welcome.

**At Your Service**

Sheraton® Hotels & Resorts is uniquely qualified to welcome you and make you feel right at home - whether you’re staying with us for business or leisure. We’re always working on new ways to better care for you. (Sheraton Hotels and Resorts 2008)

The example gives some interesting insight into a service guarantee and demonstrates Nailon’s (1981) point. The historical account of people being welcomed into other people’s homes is evident from statements such as *right at home*, where the Sheraton group is indicating to the guest that it is home, the Sheraton’s home, the guest is coming into. *At your service* also indicates to the guest that the employees are there to be at the service of the guest, and while the quote does indicate that the service is being developed from working on new ways to care for you, this does have the overtone of the *paralysing servitude* referred to above by Nailon (1981:10). The issue Nailon (1981) makes, is evident from the Sheraton site: displaying the notion of employees being ‘in’ service for the guest, so the guest comes expecting to be served. When the employee does not perform in a subservient manner, then the guest becomes dissatisfied and complains. Management blame a lack of employee skills for the failure, and Nailon (1981) is proved correct.
Summary

As indicated earlier, the structure of the thesis has changed in line with my findings as the work has progressed. Perusal of the skill literature did reveal some evolving terminology, it also became apparent that a skill taxonomy, while vital to the final picture of what it is that front line employees do, did not answer the original query, ‘What makes front line employees hospitable during the service transaction, even when confronted with difficult and trying guests?’

I found skills were a vital component of the service encounter. Without skills, employees are unlikely to exhibit the service qualities so necessary and desirable in the hospitality industry: motivated, service oriented employees willing to take the time to understand guests’ requests and then have the capability to solve the problems; and employees who are competent in carrying out their duties in an efficient and timely way.

In my telling, front line employees’ skills help them deliver service. This is because the front line employees’ competence is required to undertake tasks within the range of hospitality. So basic skills, such as preparing the restaurant, are narrow in range and are associated with the foundation and building blocks of a person’s capacity to undertake tasks. However, key and core skills, such as those required for the night audit, are more broadly situated within a task and are related to a person’s ability to undertake a skill where greater scope and depth of knowledge for success may be required. Of greater interest, though, is the understanding that, while skills are evident in the efficiency of the service delivery, further insight is
needed to explain what the other qualities evident in employees’ transactions with guests are. These might be the small gestures so often overlooked by the employer, but those which the guest has noticed and factored into their assessment of the overall service of the facility. The generosity on the part of the employee to make an elderly guest’s coffee a little less hot than another guest, an extra face towel in the bathroom of guests where a baby is evident, or the warning to a guest about a very smelly cheese on the pizza. What is it that leads to such generosity, grace and kindness? Skill classification, level of competence in skill execution and efficiency in a timely response to a service request, are not sufficient explanations for front line employees showing an instinct of care to solve guest service problems.
SECTION THREE
BRINGING A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

This section presents a recognisable transition point in the unfolding of the thesis. It moves from analysis and reflection, which largely deals with laying out the parameters of the problem, to consideration of what constitutes a situation improvement. The case is made in this chapter that improvement can be most effectively be sought, not in terms of skills, but through re-constructing the view of hospitableness and hospitality, through recourse to philosophical discourse (the work of Shapin and Arendt).

I begin with a story. This story is the account from a front line employee; a porter not yet in his twenties, employed at the time at a large metropolitan hotel on the fringe of a major Australian city.

*In the early hours of the morning, I helped an inebriated (drunk) guest from a cab. He (the guest) had no jacket, wallet or briefcase with him, so I just paid the fare, and as the cab was just about to drive off, I asked the driver where he had picked up the fare. I was concerned about his things, like his briefcase and stuff, because with*
his wallet gone, and him from out of town, I knew there would be a problem. I wondered about his briefcase as it was his work things. I got a spare room key from the guys at the front desk and took him to his room. Because he was almost asleep, I decided to take off his shoes and just get him onto the bed. I decided I’d get the bloke’s things from (the place). I rang them and said I’d be around to get the things. I was thinking they’d take his money. I sort of knew him; he’d been staying (at the hotel) for a while and I’d say hello to him. Often when he came in after work I’d ask him about his day, so we had talked about what he did. As it turned out, he left his jacket, briefcase, wallet, and his watch. When things were pretty quiet, I jumped into my car and picked up the bloke’s stuff. When I got back I tossed up about going to his room and just putting his things in there, but I felt a bit worried about what the bloke would think. So I waited until he (the guest) came down for breakfast and then just put the stuff at his table. I placed the briefcase down like he’d left it at the porter’s desk and hung his jacket over his chair. When I came back I put the wallet and stuff in an envelope because I was a bit worried about getting busted with the bloke’s wallet. I didn’t know what he’d say about me having it. As soon as I put the stuff down I went back to the desk and went home.

During my interview¹ I asked the porter: ‘Can you tell me what you were thinking?’

I just knew that bloke was going to be in trouble. No money and no work stuff, I wondered how he would go at work without the stuff (he lives out of town so with no wallet, I thought he’s in trouble). I thought it would be easy for me to duck out and get the stuff because it’s pretty quiet at night so front desk would cover for me.

¹ This story was told at the conclusion of one of the interviews I undertook as part of this research in 2005.
At this point in the interview, I again asked the porter, ‘and what did you think?’

I felt really good, actually I felt pretty relieved, just like it was my own stuff. He’s a really nice bloke, and you know, you always look after your mates when you’ve had a few. Us blokes, we gotta stick together.

So, how can this employee’s actions be explained? In the above story, there is recognition of the employee undertaking his role as a porter (greets the guest, and opens the cab door), offering service protocols of the organisation (assisting the guest), ensuring the guest safety (escorting the guest safely to his room), and presenting a good image of the organisation (acting responsibly in not entering the guest’s room after the guest had retired). As Essay Five in Section Two explains, organisations set boundaries for the service exchange process based on the guest’s safety, image of the property and the financial considerations of the organisation’s overall strategic objectives. However, in this instance, the porter has gone beyond organisational service protocols by treating the guest as he might a friend. Moreover, the employee has put himself in the guest’s shoes. This empathy shows a commitment to treating the guest as another human being, rather than just as a ‘commodity’. The employee said he felt he knew the guest, indicating his sense of a relationship between them. And what might such a relationship contribute to understanding employee actions? There may be many service protocols within the above scenario. However, the scenario shows a kindness, a generosity of spirit, an empathy with a fellow human being that would transcend all protocols. The porter’s actions were above service efficiency; something else occurred.
The story illustrates the actions of employees beyond the parameters of the service protocols. But many times every day, hospitality employees are acting in this way, suggesting to me that people, not employees, are acting beautifully towards strangers in the context of their work. So I went searching for an explanation for employees acting beautifully towards other human beings.
Moving from service to hospitality

Change has been heralded; there are different ways to approach the complexity of service in the hospitality industry. Along with the development of the contemporary hospitality industry and the growth of service industry culture, service *per se* has come to be divided into spheres of disciplinary competence: economists argue hospitality service is a site for financial generation; industry practitioners argue it is the organisational imperative for customer satisfaction; guests claim it is the site of experiential journeys; and employees see it as a liminal site of self-experimentation. The complex phenomenon of hospitality needs to be richly informed by other discourses (economic, psychology, philosophy and sociology, for example) because, after all, it does involve transactions between people as hosts (employees) and *stranger-guests*, with collectives organised as communities (organisations). When service occurs, service scripts and protocols act as guide ropes, but perhaps generosity is that which moves employees beyond service scripts and protocol parameters.

Subsequently, a single hegemonic conceptual framework cannot account for and recognise all the diversity and conflicting notions of hospitality service, its forms and processes. Consequently, it can be argued that no one possesses all the knowledge and wisdom required to understand, analyse and interpret in total, this hospitality service sphere. It can be argued that we need diversity and alternative perspectives to keep alive the ongoing enquiry into the meaning of hospitality.
The changes experienced and the developments made in service culture within the recent past—customers first, but not always right, employees’ emotional labour versus hard skill sets, employees as individuals versus scripted employees—are all indicative of transactions occurring within hospitality. Lashley and Morrison (2000) established an interdisciplinary dialogue on the changes in concept, notion and practice within hospitality, searching for a narrative that includes rather than evicts marginal thoughts and concepts within the entire hospitality framework. In doing so, they provided examples of theorising in the critical space between disciplines where new knowledge and directions for constructive reflection can be fostered.

One such critical consideration can be framed as spaces of hospitableness. Bell (2007:29) recognised that a moment of hospitality created an hospitable space when he proposed that the host-guest relationship is marked by an asymmetry of mobility. He posited that the position of the host as static, fixed, rooted and the guest as on the move, rootless may create a transitory hospitable space. Lugosi (2007) writes of meta hospitality as being created by people coming together in hospitality environments. Meta hospitality according to Lugosi is recognised as a temporary state of mutuality which created an hospitable space. Such a space exhibited hospitality differently from the rational manifestation of hospitality, when protocols are strictly followed. Lugosi’s experiential argument rests with the roles individuals play in creating their collective space.

However, another way of looking at the creation of hospitable spaces may be a philosophical one based on Arendt’s (1958) framework of actioning
As it relates to practice. As a reminder, here is a summary of Arendt’s theory of actioning beings:

Arendt suggests that a condition of our humanity is the predisposition for action: the capacity to act even in the most unlikely circumstances and in doing so, creating an environment for the purpose of sheer human togetherness; a space where humanity can be in a relationship with one another. For Arendt, humans are actioning beings because we are creatures who act in the sense of starting things and setting off chains of events. So, according to Arendt, mindful of their actions, people have within themselves the capability to swathe the created relationship space in hospitableness. When hospitableness is encased in a space, whether the space be a public relationship space as Arendt suggests, a collective experience space clothed in hospitableness as Lugosi (2007) suggests, or a space where hospitableness is understood through mutuality and welcoming of the guest as proposed by Bell (2007), the question then becomes how the space might reveal the true nature of hospitableness.

The space comes through the relationship of people interacting with one another. When people create spaces through their revealing of themselves as unique and distinct, then the space has form and remains in existence until such time as the group disbands and in so doing, physically deconstructs the space. The space does not survive past the life of the temporary relationship; it disappears with the dispersal of the coming together. What is implied here is that the space is potentially there, but as the space ceases to exist, so does the reason for the space that is external to, but existent within, the primary action of the initial space creation. Maybe
service and hospitableness exist within the specific incident of action, and vanish when the action morphs into the next incident. In this way, neither service nor hospitableness can be stored and so is recognised as having an evaporative quality. Hospitality service and hospitableness may be fleeting.

The environment created so that the action by the actor can take place is an important consideration. The service environment is a bounded physical area, such as a hotel lobby, where an organisation can tout its wares. The front line employees create hospitality spaces within the service environment. Actioning in the service space discloses the revelatory quality of the actor (Arendt, 1958), disclosing the person without them knowing themselves what is being revealed, and further, the person cannot know before the action what he will reveal of himself. However, once the story of the action is told, not by the actor, but by the recipient of the action (in the service transaction this is the guest), then it can be argued that the characteristic of the action now becomes tangible. Once the guest is recounting their service story, the qualities of the employee’s action and the employee’s qualities associated with the delivery of the service action, have substance.

So, guests’ stories may hold the key to changing perceptions of service and hospitableness. It is known that customers make their judgement of service post the service experience. Having formed their opinion about the service offered, the customer declares their judgement, not that service was not physically available (although in some circumstances this may be a purposeful organisational strategy), but rather the service met or failed
their expectations. The overall judgement of the service by the customer, regarding the quality of the service (Essay Five, Section Two) can be related as a story because their judgement is inclusive; satisfaction or dissatisfaction, value or not value, and therefore the overall judgement of success or failure. The declaration by the guest now renders the service tangible and so the story of the service action and actor is being told.

What this scenario of intangible and tangible views of the service creates is a differing view. In the past, hospitality service has not been viewed as tangible. However, by not considering service as tangible, hospitality trainers, educators and researchers have taught, analysed and researched (and educated prospective employees) on aspects of only half of what is involved, omitting the power of tangible stories. I am making available for reflecting critically something that was hitherto seen as intangible, tangible.

Section Three considers some factors that contribute to a differing view in configuring service; how Shapin (1994) constructs a perspective on trust which gives humanity the freedom to act, and how Arendt (1958) constructs action as a condition of humanity.
Essay Seven

An exploration of Stephen Shapin’s theory of trust

Introduction

In this essay I explore Shapin’s theory of trust. In his telling (A Social History of Truth, Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England, 1994), he explores the notion of trust in relation to knowledge and the development of social order. He suggests that, in order to build on knowledge, we evaluate prior knowledge via its source person. Having considered the source as reliable, we consider the knowledge trustworthy. Essentially, we choose to believe the person is telling the truth.

I trust Shapin’s work; I have accepted his credentials as a reliable source and have therefore used his knowledge about the origins of trust to explore trust in hospitality organisational settings. It is important to remind the reader that I am neither philosopher nor sociologist, but a hospitality practitioner searching out meanings and reasons for employee actions in hospitality service settings. I consider trust integral to this enquiry about employees’ ways of acting. Shapin is a sociologist and unravels the deeper meaning of trust in a way that I feel is applicable in
the service context. I will endeavour to explore Shapin’s construction of trust, which I propose is important in assessing hospitality employee behaviour in service transactions, and I will use hospitality industry service as a vehicle to operationalise the examples.

**Trust and the development of knowledge**

Shapin considers the *base upon which factual scientific knowledge is held* (p.xv) and in doing so, explores trust. Trust, he proposes, is the word that describes an action, the moral bond within a relationship. For Shapin, this action is the ladder (my word) that spans the bridge of knowledge across to what we hold as truth. For Shapin, social order is trust dependent. This means that what we have come to believe as true and verifiable knowledge is knowledge that has been developed by someone else or a system that is trusted as being reliable.

In gaining knowledge we rely on others. We trust others. This means that gaining knowledge is not only trust dependent, it is also relationship dependent. The relationship starts when we gather information that another person has developed. A good example from the hospitality industry would be when a customer orders a latte in a coffee shop. Both the guest and the front line employee know what is meant by a latte. How do they know what a latte is, and does their understanding match each others? Culturally, is a latte universal? Interestingly, differing communities might have a different understanding of the precise nature of a latte, and in the hospitality industry this could result in a guest being dissatisfied. I will
consider differing understandings of knowledge (Shapin calls it truth mobility) later in this essay.

To action the latte order, the employee trusts the knowledge and their learnt skills to produce a hot coffee drink which in their knowledge approximates a latte. The guest also has an understanding of what it is they are ordering and so they prepare themselves for a taste which they consider is a latte.

How did the employee know what to do to fulfil the guests order? Someone else’s knowledge was used; the employee trusted what they had been taught about the ingredients of a latte and how to prepare it. The employee has trusted the teacher to give them the correct skills, teach them competently, impart correct techniques and, give them correct information about the necessary ingredients, and thus the process by which a latte was prepared. The guest has actioned the same trust mechanism: someone else’s knowledge informed the guest about the taste, and therefore the ingredients of a latte; the guest believed what they had been told was a latte; and the guest trusted the employee was competent enough to make a latte.

Knowledge, trust and morals

There is a moral element to the way we gain and hold knowledge. Shapin uses the word trust to indicate the moral relationship between the purveyor of the knowledge and the user of that knowledge. He reasons that the conversion of ideas, which for him is the making of knowledge, takes
place within a moral realm within a relationship, and because peoples’ characteristics are divulged in the process, the process becomes an indication of a person’s moral character. How might this moral characteristic be applicable in the hospitality service setting? I will explore this analysis further in the section.

When people agree a statement is true, it is an indication the statement approximates their own belief about the material contained in the statement. Within this process, and within the realm of our own belief about the material we are using, we undertake a sorting evaluation of the material. Shapin suggests this is a necessary process within the larger framework of trust, as we are evaluating the material. More exactly, the process we are undertaking is an evaluation of the trustworthiness of the person from whom the knowledge came. This evaluation he calls sorting; a sorting judgement.

As such, Shapin explains this is a sorting mechanism communities use. Communities share common beliefs and so, historically, the authorities within a community would adjudicate about the station of a person and therefore the trustworthiness of the knowledge held by that person. Sorting is central to a community’s evaluation of trust, so when they sort and evaluate a range of statements or issues, any decision is a determination about how closely the knowledge mirrors what is found to be acceptable within the community’s belief systems. Interestingly, this community practice of sorting has a ‘local’ element, in that as Shapin suggests, this localised view of the truth gives rise to the supposition that truth may be mobile (because of the differing local views) or that it may
change over time. Shapin takes up this point by suggesting *the distinction between truth and what locally counts as truth can be adequate for some purposes and fatal to others*. His point suggests a *cultural variation* (p.4) in belief may exist. It is for this reason that Shapin believes that a social history of truth is possible: without mobility or flexibility, truth would be static and a history would not be plausible. He also raises the issue of our curiosity and suggests that when we believe something to be true, we are doing so at the expense of curiosity, because we should be asking how it is that truth can have many *claimants* and how is it that truth *comes always to be on our side* (p.4). The following section addresses how service delivery and service satisfaction outcomes may be significantly expanded by understanding that trust is based on truth within our and the community’s value set.

**Mobility of trust**

In an hospitality service setting, the view that our perception of the truth is the ‘only’ truth, may have some interesting consequences. So, the question that arises is: are employees disempowered by management because the management community of an organisation believes they, and only they, are right? It is widely recognised that large hospitality organisations such as hotels have a need for common operational standards. Known as *brand standards*, these are a set of service delivery objectives the organisation believes best defines the organisation’s service standards that will deliver to the customers the best possible service. Brand standards are strongly entrenched in hospitality organisational culture and are recognised as ‘the way we do things around here’. An example might be the way employees address guests on the phone. The phone rings at the concierge desk and
the employee answers the phone in the *brand standard* recognised format by saying, ‘Good Morning Mr/Mrs Smith, how might we assist you?’ These calls are monitored periodically by the organisation for quality control, and employees will receive a warning if the phone is not answered according to company policy. The concierge’s role, vital to the first impressions of the hotel, is man Friday: ‘knows all says nothing’! Other than a possible initial non-person contact for reservation, the concierge is the first contact the guest has with the hotel. However, if the concierge knows that Mr Smith actually checked in with someone other than Mrs Smith (because this is the role of the concierge), then the competent front line employee will answer the phone thus: ‘Good Morning this is George, how might I assist you today’? How has trust underpinned this transaction?

A trust relationship has occurred at a micro cultural level. Let me explain. The concierge desk attendee’s (driveway attendant, porter, concierge, information employee) role is to assist guests in their endeavours to have their service expectations met. Concierge and front desk employees (the ‘image of the property’) are most often vibrant, gregarious, skilled ‘people’ employees who possess wide ranging *people handling* skills. A concierge employee is expected to familiarise themselves with guests staying in the hotel so they can be aware of the guests’ service perceptions and expectations, call the guest by their name to establish a relationship between guest and hotel, and to create an impression for the guest that, as individuals, they are ‘important’. Trust is being created by ‘stealth’. The employee is creating an environment where the guest does not feel like a stranger, and some researchers suggest this is management’s way of
manipulating the guest to conduct themselves in a way designed by the organisation.

But what is a truth in one community of employees perhaps would have allowed a service breakdown to occur (distrust and truth breakdown) in another employee community. Knowledge circulated by one community has been assumed as true by another community. This occurs because as Shapin explains, in using knowledge,

\[
\text{we have an expectation of that knowledge built up and protected by the constitutively moral processes by which we credit others' relations and take their accounts into our stock of knowledge (p.8).}
\]

Exploring this point in terms of management of the employees and the micro and macro operational communities of the hotel uncovers practices which could be described as breaking trust. Essentially, to vary a brand standard, a manager must apply through formal channels to the head office citing reasons why a brand standard variation will serve a regional community more satisfactorily.

The concierge is aware of who is checking in and very often, because the porters have shown the guests to their room, they have also formed a temporary bond with the guests through idle chatter and casual conversation. The role of the porter means they elicit information from guests informally; often it is the concierge employees who are aware of who is staying in the property and the guests’ status. These employees find guests seek them out if they need clarification or assistance in the early
part of their stay in the property. So not only are the concierge employees aware of information about the guest, their early relationship also means they establish rapport sooner. This relationship with concierge employees and guests constitutes a micro cultural group within the larger culture of the organisation.

The concierge’s privileged position means the trust that exists between the concierge employee and the guest must not be damaged, as this will cause service breakdown and therefore possible complaints from the guest. However, much of the ‘casual’ information known about the guest in the concierge department is unknown to the wider employees within the property. So, while Mr Smith signed in for Mr and Mrs Smith, and Mr Smith swiped his credit card, only the concierge department is aware of the status of his companion. Truth and trust are intermingled within this scenario and only the concierge department ‘needs’ to be aware of the true status of Mr Smith’s companion. To divulge such information to other departments of the hotel would be to break the trust relationship created between Mr Smith and the concierge department; however, the implications of the trust relationship are significant. The service transaction between the concierge and Mr Smith has taken place where trust has underpinned the transaction process, creating a satisfactory outcome for the guest. However, the truth in the concierge department is at odds with the truth in the front office of the hotel.

As guest service is the objective of the hotel, guest service has been offered. But there are two issues that have arisen: one is the issue of the property’s brand standard where the concierge department has gone outside the
protocols of the organisation; and the second issue is disloyalty within the service delivery chain as directed by management. Disloyalty within the hotel has occurred as concierge and front desk areas are not operating with the same information. The concierge department has information which has chosen not to pass on to the front office department. However, service has been delivered to the guest and in this telling, the truth has been submerged to create trust with a guest. While the issue of knowledge generation and truth has not been explored in this example, trust is integral to a satisfactory outcome for the guest where trust has been generated.

Trust dependency of social order

The trust-dependency of social order has always been recognised. Shapin suggests the order of society is a complex web of expectancies relating to prescribed standards (p.8). If this were not the case, it would be impossible to conduct any form of exchange, tangible or intangible. As there would be no expectancy for the commitment to another to be upheld, no exchanges would take place and so life could not proceed.

The trust dependency commitment is diverse: doctor and patient, and parent to child dyads, for example, exist because the former in each case are trusted sources of everyday knowledge, and the reliability of the source of that knowledge is granted. For us to accomplish daily living, including transaction service, we need to live within a rational world, shaped by dependable sources. We cannot live needing to invent for ourselves or personally check and verify all information. Our knowledge
of what people will do is accepted as reliable insofar as we believe that people operate within certain moral standards, enjoying truthfulness and abhorring and condemning dishonesty. Our knowledge of the world is consistent with our belief that certain people are reputable and veracious sources, and act appropriately with regard to their testimony.

Shapin explains how historically, the role of trust in social order was recognised. Trust dependency in social order was considered essential for justice, and justice was considered necessary for upholding society (Cicero in Shapin, 1994). Similarly, Arendt (1958) suggests the power of promise (trust worthiness) underpins the fabric of society and society acted on the basis that a person is morally enjoined to stand to one’s word in all promises and bargains. The foundation of justice was faithfulness (Shapin, 1994), and being firm to your word. Elyot (in Shapin, 1994) proposed a genealogy of faithfulness for early modern society. Faith was the belief in God; loyalty was the keeping of promises made by a subject to his prince; and promise keeping between men of equal estate or condition was ‘trust’. So while trust underpins all relationships, lying dissolves all the bonds of our society.

Trust had a role in the civilizing of society. Locke (in Shapin, 1994) argued that historically, citizens had an obligation to the sovereign power, and this obligation resided in the notion of trust. The sovereign’s commitment to the people was to perform certain offices. Initially, the notion of trust developed to protect people’s property; this was formalised via an indifferent judge who decided disputes according to established law. The judge accepted a trust to execute the task according to certain conditions,
and in return the judge promised to be impartial in the undertaking. So the
existing form of obligation and of civil society was entwined in the
honouring of the trust. If however, the people felt the promise was not
being upheld, both the obligation and social order it enabled were at an
end. Therefore, trust was necessary so that humans could understand and
so describe the workings of their ability to coexist in a harmonious
environment. Further discussion of this point in a modern context is
valuable as the status of the front line employee in hospitality
organisations is very poor (for example, Martin, 2004). A following
hospitality industry story explains my point.

In guest rooms, one often finds a cautionary note to incoming guests not to
leave their personal items in the room. This is a reaction to possessions
often being misplaced from within guests’ rooms. Housekeeping, the hotel
department responsible for the cleaning of guest rooms, is invariably
treated suspiciously when guests report their possessions missing.
However, the process of room cleaning which follows, clearly
demonstrates guest rooms are accessible to the general public for at least
some time during any day.

Housekeeping is one department within a hotel and is the department
which undertakes the cleaning of guest rooms. It is exhausting, physical
work; employees work to tight schedules, cleaning and making up rooms
for guests in residence, and between guests checking out and the next
guests checking in. Housekeepers work to guests’ schedules as opposed to
guests working to housekeeping schedules. This means beds have to be
made, bathrooms cleaned and floors vacuumed at all times within a
twenty four hour cycle, and sometimes while the guests’ personal possessions are in the room.

Housekeeping trolleys are loaded with fresh and soiled sheets and towels, as well as toiletries, cleaners and other sundry room items. Because of the size and weight of the trolleys, they are parked outside rooms, often in tight hallways. Guest room doors are normally left open while the housekeeper completes the cleaning of the room because of the access needed to goods on the trolley. The inference is housekeeping is responsible for the misplaced items.

In the modern context, social theorists have elaborated on the theme of trust and civility. Barnes (in Shapin, 1994:13) rejects the notion that social order influences trustworthiness, and suggests competency proceeds via learning and that it is learning that presupposes trust in the reliability of the knowledge source. He further suggests that, as children learn, they are exercising social behaviour characteristics that are essential for contemporary environments as well as functioning as the building blocks for learning trustworthiness.

Trust and truthfulness continue to have an important impact on the fabric of modern society. Further, within small scale social interactions individuals, when relating to others, tend to act in a manner where they exhibit a promissory character (Goffman in Shapin, 1994:14). In this way, people present themselves to others as a certain kind of person, likely to behave in a certain way and in doing so, expect acceptance as that type of person. This would be a very common scenario at a check-in desk of a
hotel. Many researchers indicate that the anonymity of large hotels provides the opportunity for the guest to present themselves as they wish to be considered, expecting reciprocal treatment from hotel front line employees. The above example of Mr Smith checking in with a companion, where he insinuates the companion is his wife, would be a very typical example of this type of behaviour. Truth in self-presentation, Shapin suggests, is essential to interaction; however, for the hotel employee, the truth may never be known. It has to be acknowledged that hotel management takes no action to discover the true identity of hotel guests; however, payment procedures are considered important enough to warrant credit card verification and identification. This verification action suggests that payment of the account holds more importance than the identity of the guest. Trust will be extended to the guest’s identity for self-presentation, but proof of identity is required for financial transactions; self-presentation will not suffice as a cheque payment of accounts is not acceptable in Australian hotels without prior notice. However, many hotels pride themselves on their levels of personal service and go to reasonable lengths to keep guest registers where the guests’ likes and dislikes are recorded for future use by the hotel!

Self-presentation carries an expectation. When claiming to be a certain type of person, the person acknowledges the appropriate moral expectation that accompanies such a presentation. An example of this would be the bond made payable by students booking into hotels for school leavers’ week. Accommodations on the Australian eastern seaboard accept bookings from the school leavers groups and specify the bond required for the booking to be accepted. The school leavers’ behaviour is a rite of passage for many
students who let off steam after completing school, without parental supervision perhaps for the first time. This form of economic guarantee paid by the schoolies groups has a double ‘presentation’ effect: because the guarantee is demanded, the students act in accordance with the implicit permission to behave in accordance with management’s permission and expectations to party hard and wild. Other factors impact schoolies’ week participant behaviour, including the size of the crowd, the crowd perception of their freedom, mass hysteria and substance use and abuse. This thesis, while acknowledging these factors, will not consider their effects.

However, the above hospitality scenario presents an interesting paradox in relation to trust. When one books into a hotel, it is expected that the guest will behave in a satisfactory and appropriate manner. By asking for a bond to be paid, the hotel is acknowledging that the morality associated with school leavers’ week will be as expected. But the bond also acts as a threat: if the behaviour is as predicted, then the appropriate price will be charged for accommodation, including financial consequences for property damage. The message sent with a bond requirement is a double standard. And does this double standard occur in other areas of hospitality such as service standards?

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1 ‘Schoolies’ is a holiday taken by school students who complete the highest level of secondary school. At the completion of the exam period, Year 12 students take a week’s holiday without parental supervision. Two destinations are the most popular, and thousands of school leavers party unsupervised for a week in these destinations.
Modern trust systems

Trust has also been important in social theorising when considering modern and post modern societies. Simmel (in Shapin, 1994) suggests modern societies work on a trust credit system. He suggests that much about modern society, including the way in which we choose to live (meeting a partner over the internet and trusting the person is who they say they are), requires us to trust people and systems. Because in many cases the acts cannot be personally verified, individuals act in faith. Hence, trust is associated with faith in such a way that people have faith in a probable outcome. So, trust has a functional role because, in contemporary society, people are cajoled into taking action based on trust. The probability of the outcome being as we anticipated, it is as certain as anything else and so in most cases we choose to operate within trust.

A guest action is based on trust when using a hospitality facility; a guest calls room service to bring them food, which is then prepared by a stranger in a kitchen the guest does not even contemplate may not meet health and hygiene standards. They believe the food will arrive, will be delivered by a complete stranger, who will enter into ‘their’ room and set it down among the guest’s possessions. They will welcome the stranger (room attendant) and further, the guest will sign their name for the account. In many instances, the delivery of the food will come while the guest may be less than fully alert: at the end of a long day; early in the morning after sleeping; when the guest is about to shower or has just finished showering. In these circumstances, trust reduces complexity ... [and] ... is a basic fact of social life (Simmel in Shapin, 1994:15). Historically, in many of the above
circumstances, a judgement would have been made by the individual
guest about the individual with whom they interacted. In modern
societies, trust is placed in impersonal systems. So in the contemporary
hotel, for example, we trust the hotel systems (in this case a service
delivery system) to be reliable such as when such a guest orders a latte or
presumes their safety once their room door is locked.

In allowing for trust to be understood as underwriting social order, Shapin
addresses the issue of the problems associated with trust, such as distrust
and skepticism. Society flounders if humanity questions the source of
knowledge or becomes skeptical about the knowledge itself. If humans
decline to take knowledge from authoritative sources, it is at least uncivil,
and skepticism invites lack of cooperation from others. Shapin therefore
feels skeptics risk being evicted from the practical communities of which
they are members. In a service setting, distrust and skepticism may lead to
service dissatisfaction. An example might be during meal service. If steak
has been ordered as cooked through and it comes to the table with pink
meat visible, then obviously the steak is medium, not well done. The guest
might request the steak be returned to the kitchen and cooked till it is well
done. Two things occur at this point: if there are other guests at the table,
they either stop eating and wait for the well done steak to arrive; or they
continue to eat. Either way, one guest is without a meal. Some
awkwardness will be evident. If the steak is presented for the second time
and the guest is still unhappy, skepticism about the re-cooking will give
way to dissatisfaction with the competence of the kitchen, and the wait
staff. Unless the guest dissatisfaction can be rectified by the wait staff, the
kitchen staff where the problem has occurred will not suffer, but the wait
staff might not be tipped by the guest. As part of the chain of events, the waiter will distrust the kitchen staff, and internal service dissatisfaction will also occur.

Solutions to the problems associated with trust are necessary in order to further build social order. Shapin suggests these solutions build social and cognitive order, two elements that are intertwined. How people act depends on what they know, so anything known may affect how they act. Thus, what people know helps build their existence as a society. Simply put, Shapin suggests that our social relationships are built on knowledge which comes from knowledge of other people and knowledge of what the world is like. In the same way, knowledge of what the world is like draws on knowledge about other people. When we gain this knowledge, we ask ourselves about the people the knowledge came from as sources of testimony, and whether and in what circumstances those people can be trusted.

From a hospitality perspective, it is constructive to think of departments in the hotel as being micro societies (departments might include front office, housekeeping, food and beverage, maintenance, laundry, sales and marketing, finance, human resources among others). While the hotel itself may be considered a society, and hotels in general a macro society, departments within a hotel share common knowledge, both technical (a skill society), and more general as a department (a cognitive society). In a very simple situation, restaurant employees would share knowledge across different circumstances, knowledge that may migrate or change as food service moves from the beginning to the end of a meal. Employees
may choose to share technical knowledge relating to their skills, a particular way a dish may be served, or specific knowledge about a dining patron, their likes or dislikes, their behaviour, or their status. Restaurant employees may also share knowledge about the quality of a raw product, a particular cooking process, or the need to dispel a myth about an ingredient. For example, the recent rain may have affected oyster quality, but only oysters from a particular location may have the problem. Alternatively, a particular guest may have chosen to eat anonymously in the restaurant so the employees, while aware of the status of the guest, continue with the booking under a pseudonym thus giving protection from other hotel employees. When this sharing of knowledge takes place, it may depend on the culture of the ‘society’ in determining how the knowledge is shared; nevertheless, common knowledge would exist and the culture of the group would influence how knowledge was distributed and shared.

If society is to be considered as a distribution of knowledge, then Shapin asks how that network of distribution will occur. When and if the knowledge is generated and agreed upon by a moral ordering within society, what do we have to suppose about ourselves and about the world for the social order and commonly held knowledge to be possible. In a hotel, employees will listen to requests by management for them to undertake certain tasks, thereby constructing a micro level of social order. Likewise, commonly held knowledge in a hotel might be the unwritten code of behaviour for employees while on the job; no stealing of property, either a guest or the hotel’s, for example. Phenomenological tradition (Shapin, 1994:29) has raised two assumptions set in everyday life:
everyday thought and action is based upon vigorous and confident commonsense realism and; everyday action supposes that the everyday world is available to the perceptions of us all and we all see the same thing.

These two presuppositions combined have been termed the natural attitude. So social interaction is based on an informal view of our world, while our sense of what exists in the world is based on our moral value and belief systems. The natural attitude serves a very significant role because it allows us to combine ‘the real’ and the perceived to produce our truth. Our communication is reliant upon our beliefs about the external independent world. And while we do not constantly reference the world in our conversation, such beliefs are the basis of our communication, and assume all others, with whom we might communicate, have the same reference point regardless of our respective locations.

When the natural attitude phenomena is applied within a hospitality service setting, then it would be expected that the service communication (as part of the service transaction) will be an honest service offering, and thus would assume the front line employee is not deliberately constructing an alternative view of the truth for a guest. According to Shapin, reports may vary when individuals are situated differently from each other. In the service offering example above, this might lead to discrepancies. Early on in this essay, I highlighted Shapin’s suggestion that a truth may be mobile or might move over time. Reasons for the discrepancy may be related to how the employee perceives the service delivery standard. They may have been trained by a different person and therefore the brand standard was varied. The coffee maker is self taught as opposed to the ‘other waitress’
who is a trained barista. The housekeeper is a casual (their normal occupation is university student) so a time limit is put in place for each room make up, while the corresponding housekeeper, also casual, is a mother of children and ‘whips round the room’ because she is accustomed to doing it at home. Shapin terms this variation as occurring because individuals are differently situated in time and space. Secondly, the same perception may exist, but a varying interpretation of the perception creates differences. Thirdly, Shapin suggests discrepancies exist because there may be a variance between perception and cognition and representation and reporting. Buffet meals provide an example: the sign above the buffet states one plate per person. The sign could be interpreted as a person takes one plate and fills it once. It might mean you have one plate but you can fill it many times. It might mean for some that every time you return to the buffet you take a clean plate. Corkage is another fine hospitality example. If corkage charge is fifty cents per person, for some that means fifty cents per clean glass. For some it means fifty cents is added to the bill for every person at the table. For others it means who ever drinks wine will be charged fifty cents per clean glass used by the table. However, these discrepancies do not necessarily mean fatal flaws exist in the service offering; each of the participants are interpreting the direction from a differing perspective and on face value, none are operating dishonestly. Each of them has read the instruction, but has not interpreted the instruction in the same way as another’s interpretation. If we agree with Shapin that trust is the great civility; a set of practices which inform our view of the external world, then, in the example above, reading the instructions by the participants will be related to the participants’ views of the world, how their everyday experiences inform their views and so the
way they behave, and finally, how the acceptance of similar behaviour previously has reinforced their current interpretation of the instructions.

There is a relationship between trust and morality. The role of trust in social order can be so routine that some commentators suggest it may be almost automatic. Conversely, it is notable that decisions can be made about who to trust, when and maybe even how. In the service setting, this has important implications for both guest and employee behaviours. While the impacts of dealing with a stranger will require a separate set of reactions, if trust can be almost automatic, and employees report reactions such as ‘I just did it’ when referring to guest service salvaging, trust is being automatically engaged to harmonise encounter transactions. The issue of automatic reactions to evoke trust in the service transaction extends further than a physical reaction. Front line employees report reacting to emotional reactions in guests. In the same way, guests react to employees and evoke sufficient trust for employees to undertake significant errands. They report running errands that have significant consequences, such as collecting briefcases left in taxis, having a medical script filled, or attending to matters inside a hotel room. All these instances or variations on themes are commonly reported dialogues with front line employees. So, trust has consequences. If participants in service transactions are in agreement, then routine trust mechanisms will be the likely outcome. However, distrust may also feature in service scenarios.

Distrust, Shapin explains, has power. If and when distrust is activated, two outcomes are possible: the person who is distrusted is tainted and considered unreliable, and based on the notion of social order, decreases in
standing among those in their community of discourse; secondly, when we distrust a member of our community through unreliability in their conversation (reporting), we not only disagree with them, we actively prohibit them from being able to converse by withdrawing availability for them to inhabit our conversations. This great incivility preserves the external determinate world, but fractures the group where the distrust has occurred. Conversely, civility and good manners are the outcome of sincere and competent realistic reporting. In trusting our fellow society members, a common global knowing is created. Through these civilized conversations with trusted people, the properties of our ‘world’ are decided.

In the world of hotels, where customer satisfaction may lead to competitive advantage, and the internal reward system is based on the public acknowledgement of having won customer praise, the stakes for shifting blame are high. Through a complex set of circumstances which are particular to hotel operations, and because the front line employees are the contact points between customers and the hotel, they are often the recipients of misguided customer anger. The following example, cited during the interviews done for this thesis, makes the point.

First, let me introduce the context. Resorts are holiday destinations and guest expectations are associated with a holiday experience. As a reminder for the reader, in Essay Five I explained the guest’s assessment of service quality as relating to their overall experience. In the guest’s mind their holiday has commenced when they go to the airport (Jafari, 2002). Resort guest check-in time is commonly 2 pm. However, because many resorts are
accessed by air travellers, as a service to guests check-in occurs when the guests arrive from the airport. Meanwhile in the rooms division, housekeeping is under pressure to get all vacated rooms ready as quickly as possible for re-occupation. If a vacuum cleaning machine malfunctions and maintenance is doing routine repairs (maintenance are always under pressure), then the vacuum cleaning is going to be delayed. Room cleaning has not been completed and guests will be unable to access their rooms on check-in.

So, in this scenario, due to vacuum malfunction there has been a delay. Housekeeping notifies front office of the delay in rooms. The front office manager is very annoyed because of the chaos this will cause at check-in and because front office will be subject to complaints (service dissatisfaction) from guests. Maintenance, to placate front office, tells its office manager the vacuum cleaner will be operational by 1 pm. The front office manager reports the revised time line to check-in, so they make preparation to compensate the guests (a complimentary lunch voucher). The bistro manager complains to the duty manager because the unexpected addition of three or four tables at lunch will require another staff member for service in the restaurant, and preparation underway for dinner service may have to be utilised for the lunch service. Meanwhile, in maintenance, the vacuum cleaner repair is delayed by further emergency work considered by the maintenance manager as more significant than vacuum cleaner repairs. By 2.30 pm guests’ dissatisfaction has come to the attention of the resort manager. At 3.30 pm the problem is solved and the resort manager calls a meeting to debrief. This is what was told to me by the people involved. Where I have ‘reflects’ depicts what each person told.
me they were thinking, even though they did not say these things at the time to each other.

Housekeeping (HK) to Front Office (FO):
You had no right to ring maintenance, which is my job, you’ve done it before and I’m sick of it.
(HK reflects: you don’t think I’m competent, don’t trust I can handle the problems, you have cut me out of the communication, treated me uncivilly, and because you don’t trust me you re-route the conversation, leaving me out of it).

FO to HK:
I’m only thinking of the guests.
(FO reflects: the organisation trusts me to ensure the guest is satisfied and my reward is linked to guest satisfaction)

FO to Maintenance:
Why did you tell me the wrong time for the completion of the repair?
(FO reflects: they always lie, they are incompetent, and they can’t be trusted to ever tell the truth)

Maintenance to FO:
We schedule jobs according to their priority.
(Maintenance don’t interact with the customers directly so are not concerned about getting reports of external customer service)
General Manager (GM) to all:

Customers are our bread and butter and their satisfaction is the team’s priority.
We must all work (we are a society) together to ensure their stay meets their expectations.

(FO and GM consider the guest as the most important aspect)

The dialogue demonstrates the constant pressure front line employees are under when customer satisfaction is the primary objective of the hotel. The need for trust is great in hotel operations; hotels are microcosms of larger society, and so it might be said that trust harmonises hotel team work and inter employee relations.

Free Action

When we accept knowledge from another person, we are allowing that person to affect the way we think, and what information we store and use. Effectively, we have judged the other person as being acceptable to us (their information is acceptable to a range of our beliefs and values), and we demonstrate that by using the information. The action of acknowledgement is to trust. By actioning the information in this way, we are satisfying ourselves about the other person, which involves knowledge of who they are and what characteristics they might have, and in a service setting, what their circumstances are. In a specific case, we might ask if these circumstances and characteristics testify about the likely reliability of what they say. So, we are making an assessment based on criteria set by us, or acceptable to our community. Knowledge of people and their nature, individually and collectively, contributes significantly to our culture,
however, there may be specific instances where assessment may require complex and subtle judgements of what characteristics are relevant to a particular case. Assessment is made across as diverse a range of characteristics as is possible based on the assumption that all types of knowledge are relevant to the character assessment. Shapin, however, argues that one particular type of characteristic is very significant when assessing credibility of knowledge: this he terms free action.

Free action (Shapin, 1994) can be described as an activity undertaken in pursuit of action. However, free action has an opposing action, called unfree or controlled action and, further, action is also described by Shapin as being associated with promise, where the future action of a person is disclosed by their admission of intent. Hence, in Shapin’s telling, free action as an activity by a person in undertaken by the participant with themselves as the focus.

Free action has no regard for the other members affected by such an activity, so it is action related solely to the actor. However, it should be noted that free action as described by Shapin, is not a purposely negative act against others; it is simply the action which the actor deemed to be best (most natural, most right, most pleasing) action for the circumstance. Also of note is the opposite action; actions which are controlled, or unfree, and limited by the circumstances or consequences of what the free action actors do.

This controlled, or unfree, action is of interest when considering trust in service settings. Service scripts are an illustration of a controlled service
encounter. The front line employee follows a direction which has been recognised as the best way of conducting a routine service transaction. The role of the employee is to be a vehicle which carries out the company’s directions. In the fast food industry where the product is very defined and the essence of the service means there can be no individual input from either the employee or the guest, then controlled service transactions may be desirable. However, in less rigid hospitality settings (a five star hotel, for example), where the essence of the service is focused on analysing and interpreting guests’ needs and wants, then controlled action is likely to result in guest dissatisfaction.

Guest dissatisfaction is related to the guest and the employee not being in agreement about the service offering. Such a circumstance is common in everyday service transactions in many hospitality service settings. In most circumstances, the employee would initially enter a transaction with some format or structure to work within, otherwise all service would be in free fall, employees would not understand the organisation’s limitations and employees would be at the mercy of every guest. So, employees have an understanding of the service offering in general terms. This is a controlled environment which calls for a controlled action. But, at some point in the transaction when the employee recognises the guests’ needs are at odds with the service offering, experienced employees alter their course of action. This change would slip the transaction out of controlled into *free action*. However, it is significant to recognise the employee remains inside the work environment so takes *free action* within a known limitation. This action might be called service salvaging (Lovell, 2005). So the guest is not dissatisfied as an outcome from the service, the employee uses *free action* to
regroup and find a solution to the guest’s needs, wants or expectations (or a combination of these three). Shapin’s free action has occurred as the employee has saved their self from guest dissatisfaction (and the awful consequences: disgruntled guests or being cautioned by a manager, for example), and saved the guest from being dissatisfied. However, the employee has gone beyond the organisation’s service protocols to achieve such an outcome. Hence, employee free action could be taken up another level, into a situation where the employee goes beyond the confines of the organisation and acts entirely as an individual to interpret the guests’ needs or expectations. Arendt (1958), in discussing humanity, describes such an activity.

So if free action is exercised, then Barnes (in Shapin, 1994) argues it is about power; social power. Barnes suggests social power is enabled because a person feels they have the capacity for action in a society. In a service ‘society’, the employee might create a power play and tip the service transaction in their favour. An example here might be a sommelier (a specialised wine waitperson) who displays arrogance.

A promise involves a person disclosing an intended action they will take some time in the future. Shapin explains why people who give their word (as in a hotel commits to delivering a specific service to a guest) are linking themselves to the person to whom they have made the promise and secondly, by committing to a promise discloses their future action. In so doing, free action may be cancelled out. An example of a service promise might be that a hotel promises it will respond to a guest request within five minutes of the request being made. If the hotel does not keep their
promise, the hotel will give the guest a night’s free accommodation. The hotel leaves no room to manoeuvre; the hotel has disclosed its future action and cancels out the opportunity to make good the promise (for example, with a free dinner) if the request time is not kept. In this way, *free action* and trust are co-dependent, and when free action is a problem, trust can salvage the situation.

**Summary**

In this section of the thesis, I have explored how trust is developed and so underpins civil society, and how this trust is used by us. In relating trust to the service setting, I have explored how trust is an essential quality in reaching a satisfactory service outcome, and how front line employees use trust to advance the service delivery. A summary of the main points of Shapin’s theory of trust are:

1. Social order is trust dependent
2. Trust underpins the possibility of social interaction
3. Relationships are trust dependent
4. Trust is a moral choice
5. Trust creates a sense of community
6. Trust makes it easier for people to work together

Section Three contributes some vital aspects to the overall thesis. In this essay I have examined trust as a way of explaining how social order works in society and how trust gives society the basis to develop and grow the relationships we form (most transactions are based around a relationship).
Further, trust provides the confidence to depend and rely on knowledge and information from others, to feel able to execute work practices in a competent manner using skills and other qualities learnt by employees, but discovered by others, so that employees can build on already existing knowledge. Trust enables humanity to move forward in their endeavours as individuals and in relationships in both private and commercial circumstances. Finally, trust creates a subconsciously trusting environment, where employees can perform their role in an organisational context, delivering service and serving strangers. It became evident from within this that trust was a vital aspect of the service transaction. However, this theory of trust has brought the question of action into the light. So, it could be seen in the service setting, that front line employees undertaking their role in transacting service while making choices as free individuals to be generous and kind (among other things), were behaving as actioning beings.
Essay Eight

Arendt’s theory of *actioning beings* and the practice of hospitality

My approach in this essay

In this essay, I use Arendt’s theory of humans as *actioning beings* as an investigative tool. I explore the notion of *actioning beings* in a service setting, namely the hospitality industry. Arendt’s construction of *actioning beings* has helped me formulate a story of what front line employees do when they transact the service encounter. I take this pathway to uncover the final piece of the story of hospitality front line employees and their responses to guests.

As stated previously, this research is driven by my observations and reflections on the way employees generously responded to guests. Front line employees, who are considered by many as dull and low skilled, (Martin, 2004) can often be seen to have taken action which has set off a chain of events surrounding the action that have made another person *feel good all day*. Were the actions of a trained person? Were these the actions of a very hospitable person, and if they were, what does it mean to be hospitable? Or was I observing a combination of these and other things? In Essay Six I critically reflected on skills, and while I was partially satisfied that what I had observed were skilled employees, there were actions and
responses still unaccounted for. In this essay, I discuss and explore Arendt’s argument of humans as actioning beings within her philosophical analysis of ‘the human condition.’ I find this completes the explanation for the personal employee response to guests, after skills and training were taken into account. In this essay, I apply Arendt’s argument to front line employees’ service delivery actions in the hospitality industry.

Introduction to Arendt’s phenomenological analysis of the human condition

In her book, The Human Condition (first published in 1958), social theorist and philosopher Hannah Arendt undertakes a phenomenological analysis of what she calls the human condition. For Arendt, there are three forms of activity that fundamentally constitute the human condition: labor (corresponding to the biological life of humans as animals), work (corresponding to the artificial world of objects made by human beings) and action (corresponding to the plurality of human beings as distinct individual selves). Arendt frames her phenomenological analysis of these three major forms of human activity within what she sees as a troublesome dichotomy, that:

1. Human beings, in demonstrating their capacity to transcend nature (seen, for example, with the dawn of the space age), show that the human capacity to start new things extends beyond natural limits, so creating an alarmingly open future;

2. As modern societies become increasingly focused on production and consumption, we are encouraged to think of ourselves as mere
animals governed by natural laws, rather than as conscious, self responsible people.

Arendt is concerned to provoke thought and discussion to stimulate people into more thoughtfully taking responsibility for their actions in creating the world.

**My choice of Arendt’s theory of actioning beings**

Different approaches distinguish action as: physical movements or non-physical movements; simple single or complex multi dimensional acts; or voluntary acts with some specific purpose in view. Actions can be explained as caused by, and manifest as, a physical action or mental activity. In Arendt’s telling, action is an essential element in the human condition. She suggests that a condition of our humanity is the predisposition for action:

> the capacity to act even in the most unlikely circumstances and in doing so, creating an environment for the purpose of sheer human togetherness; a space where humanity can be in a relationship with one another (p.181).

This essay explores how service in hospitality industries might be explained by Arendt’s philosophy of humans as actioning beings. I do this because ‘action’, for Arendt, relates to relationships between people and how those relationships are operationalised. For her, action goes on directly between [people] without the intermediary of things or matter (p.7). For the
hospitality industry, service is a relationship between people, guests and hosts, without the intermediary of things. It is a service transaction.

Action, as suggested, is the activity through which people create and develop relationships. Relationships are operationalised through verbal communication and in the hospitality setting, employees verbally offer service to guests. Arendt argues that whatever (men) humans do or know or experience can make sense only to the extent that it can be spoken about (p.4). Thus, it is through speech that employees reveal themselves to guests in developing hospitable relationships.

Both action and speech show those around us who we are. Self-disclosure is not a deliberate and self-seeking form of activity but rather, it stems from within a person and is unknowingly manifested to others as we go about our daily lives. For Arendt, disclosure through action and speech takes places in the ‘public realm’ as part of our social lives. The public realm can be thought of as areas where people gather together, as distinct from the privacy of their own households. For her, the public realm constitutes appearance space in a public space, as opposed to a private place, where people are at liberty to participate, engage and contribute in meaningful and equitable ways, in which they thereby appear as who they are.

In the hospitality industry, front line employees are those employees who, as they come into contact with guests, perform an activity called the service transaction, or service encounter. Employees deliver service through the service transaction. They transact to meet the needs, wants
and expectations of guests, the guests’ desires. The transaction, a defining characteristic of the hospitality industry service operation, can be considered a reciprocal one between host and guest where both participants are responsible for the outcome of service. The service transaction starts via a characteristic feature of the hospitality industry: a guest comes into contact with an employee so that service can be transacted. The front line employee, being a representative of the organisation, opens up the access, metaphorically and literally, to the services and the facilities through understanding the guest’s requirements. This activity may occur via several pathways; however, the process always begins via the service transaction.

This essay highlights the action of employees as actioning beings. I do this by using examples which show how the argument outlined by Arendt can be used to inform our understanding of service transaction processes. In my telling, I consider this as a valid method for inquiring into employees’ actions because Arendt suggests it is necessary to clarify human activities and to separate action conceptually from other human activities with which it is usually confounded, such as labor and work (p.ix). This essay thus consists as a narrative journey that unpacks the activity of actioning beings and explores the implications this way of seeing action has for the way the actions of employees (people) in hospitality service settings may be understood.

I have identified Arendt’s conceptualisation of action as being applicable to the front line employees’ activity because of their capacity to act even in the most unlikely circumstances (p.viii), thus disclosing who they are. It is
who these employees are that may have been overlooked by their employers in the quest to control business protocols.

Hospitableness, as I have stated earlier in the thesis, is an action which may include, but is not limited to, generosity, compassion, empathy and sheer human togetherness, where one is doing for another but not as a reward for oneself. Rather, the hospitable action, being a performance and an outcome in itself, is a gift to another person. As Arendt’s theory unfolds, it is clear that the activity of hospitable action (it being self-revelatory) cannot be trained for, cannot be bought or sold, and that the action does not have a commercial value. This, I believe, is hospitableness, conceived by Arendt’s theory of humans as actioning beings.

**A journey through service processes looking for action**

In exploring the implications of Arendt’s theory for explaining the actions of front line employees in hospitality service transactions, I have based my narrative on the structure of her essay, *Action*. I have been faithful to Arendt’s theory construction in using her subheadings as guideposts to apply her theory to hospitality service. I considered a guided journey appropriate for me, whose education in philosophy is sorely lacking, as I have a responsibility not to lie ... and to convey something from the writer’s own perception of things (Grayling, 2007:141). Her eleven points are listed below and then elaborated:
1. The disclosure of the agent in speech and action
2. The web of relationships and the enacted stories
3. The frailty of human affairs
4. The Greek solution
5. Power and the space of appearance
6. Homer Faber and the space of appearance
7. The labor movement
8. The traditional substitution of making for acting
9. The process character of action
10. Irreversibility and the power to forgive
11. Unpredictability and the power of promise

1. The disclosure of the agent in speech and action

Arendt argues that a basic condition for action is human plurality. Arendt describes people as inherently exhibiting plurality. For Arendt, plurality means that people are not all exactly the same, but rather are individuals with their own internal lives, purposes and concerns. As individuals, people are capable of new perspectives and new actions and they will not fit a tidy predictable model (p.xii) unless their capacities to live and speak freely are crushed. Two characteristics of human plurality may be discerned: equality and distinction. Being equal means people can understand each other, that is, we are born free from external, distinguishable features, neither rich nor poor, trained nor untrained, for example. Humans distinguish themselves by speech and action which show how we are all different from each other. This difference could be evidenced by a nurturing person compared to a less caring person, or someone being
gregarious while another being more reflective. Identical humans, as opposed to distinct, would have identical needs and wants, so speaking and action would not be necessary—we could just indicate our needs. Our speaking and actions occur because we are human and these actions create a distinction between us. We therefore inherently exhibit plurality.

Recognition of our individuality is seen through our actions. Whenever humans undertake a similar action (the service encounter, for example), it will be different every time. Likewise, recognition of plurality can be understood as distinctiveness and uniqueness. This is found throughout the service literature. Heterogeneity, for example, is discussed in service literature (Armstrong Mok Go and Chan, 1997; Becker and Olsen, 1995; Guerrier and Deery, 1998; Kandampully, 2002), where Kandampully gives an explanation for the lack of standardisation that arises in service and why, when a service script for a service delivery is pragmatically defined, many people will still receive a different service offering. The literature recognises that all people are unique and distinct, and so service delivery will be a unique event every time an employee transacts service. Likewise, when an employee serves two customers, one after another, neither service delivery nor offering will be the same. The combination of the employee, their distinctness and uniqueness, the guest, their distinctness and uniqueness, and the changing time, will all contribute to a different service experience.

For Arendt, speech and action reveal our distinctness. As humans, we speak and act, and in doing so we draw attention to, and display, our uniqueness. Speech reveals who we are. Our actions start a new process
The use of speech and action is about taking initiative, a characteristic capability of all human beings. Arendt reminds us that to take action is an act of bravery because we are opening ourselves up to the scrutiny of others.

Action and speech are linked in Arendt’s framework. These human elements are closely related because action must contain the answer to the question asked of all newcomers: *Who are you?* (p.178). Arendt suggests that this disclosure of someone’s identity is implicit in their actions and in their words.

Speech gives us the opportunity to identify ourselves, declaring what we do, have done, and intend to do. When strangers come together for the first time, it is often the spoken word announcing their name that gives them the opportunity to distinguish themselves. By announcing our name, we are creating the first rung of difference between ourselves and others. Hence, calling a guest their name becomes an important feature in service. By referring to a guest by name, the host is recognising the guest’s importance, their uniqueness distinguishing them from other guests, and giving the guest a sign that the hospitality establishment recognises them as an individual person—in the myriad of guests who are all strangers. If we consider the role of service delivery scripts and how they might impact a service transaction, it is of note that people could read from an identical script. Reflecting on a hotel check-in: ‘Good Morning. May I have your name please, or the name of the booking’, sounds like a service check-in script which would be extremely difficult for any guest to find offensive, or perhaps, as a familiar guest, I’d be insulted to be met with this request, as
being familiar to the hotel, the expectation is the guest’s name would be known. However, the action accompanying such a salutation may reveal a bored, disinterested, distracted person, or someone following a service script. I contrast this to a person who is concerned with guests feeling important and individual. Alternatively, the frequent guest might be greeted in such a way as to exclude fellow guests and make the excluded guests feel unimportant by comparison, and therefore rejected.

Arendt argues that human performance of ‘action’ is greatly enhanced by speech. *Speechless action fails to recognise the actor as the doer of the deed* (p.178), as it is only when the actor identifies himself *through the spoken word* (p.179) and the role that he is playing that we, the audience, can comprehend the actor’s part *without speech the revelatory character of our actions would be lost* (p.179). Without speech, the revelatory character of our actions would be lost. Without revealing ourselves we would all just be a group of people moving through life’s journey, unable to distinguish ourselves except by physical appearance. Physical appearance can be an unreliable, distinguishable feature, particularly among people who are not familiar with one another.

While acting and speaking shows who we are, our physical identity, body shape and sound of voice, for example, may identify us without any deliberate action on our behalf. Some people are known for their body shape (Mr Universe, for example) but identifying a person in this way means the identification is based on recognition rather than who the person is. It is not a person’s action so much as what physically distinguishes the person that can be identifiable. It is not uncommon for a
guest to describe the appearance of an employee (a tall person with red curly hair, for example), because they cannot identify an individual by an action that occurred without a witness and only the guest knows the action. For example, if a waitperson provides a guest with a special request, and the guest is relaying the service story to the restaurant manager, the guest will describe the physical features of the waitperson as opposed to the deed, in this way allowing the manager to identify who the employee is; the one with red hair, the very tall fellow, and so on.

For Arendt, *speechless action* (p.178) does not disclose anything about the person because humanity is based on a person signifying who they are by what they say. In her telling, neither can speechless action be really considered action: *action requires an actor, and speech is the mode of communication used to indicate what the actor is doing* (p.179). Arendt further suggests that speech, as an accessory to action, may have further significance. Physical action without speech is known, such as in sign language and in some modalities, such as maths and science, where sign language, as opposed to speech, may be considered more efficient; chemical charts, mathematical equations, for example. However, as I later point out, this is not without problems. Sign language may create a family of specific users and so a form of isolation results from the speechless action. Sign language, for example, can only be understood by those who have learnt signing.

For Arendt, when we are in the company of other people we speak as a way of indicating our presence. The ability of front line employees to insert themselves into the service environment is significant in that it begins the
relationship between employee and guest. There are many elements which may encourage the employee to be at ease in commencing the process: the surroundings of the hospitality environment; their being a member of the organisation; and the guest who comes into the facility requiring service. Another example is the employee uniform, whereby their uniform is a physical manifestation of credibility and organisational recognition. However, physical manifestations are only capable of bringing the employee to the point of engagement; at some point in the process, the employee must take the initiative and insert themselves into the service process. Thus, all participants take initiative inserting (Arendt’s word) themselves into the transaction. There will be other organisational factors that influence and encourage the employee to take initiative: training may play some role in these circumstances, and skills related to operationalising service delivery would hopefully give the employees some strategies and practice in taking initiative. However, if the employee does not take service initiative by responding to the guest’s service request, then service delivery will not take place.

Arendt argues that to act means to begin. She proposes that with our birth, the possibility of something new came—ourselves. In this way, our beginning, our newness, meant we were unencumbered, hence totally free. The newness of our being signals unexpectedness. For Arendt, this is because when something new starts (begins is the word she uses) it cannot have happened before. Because we are capable of action (and speech), our actions continually create new opportunities.
When the service delivery process begins, the guest or customer expects service will be delivered. From the guest’s perspective, there are two elements of this beginning: one is that a service will be delivered; the second is that their expectations will be met. From the employees’ perspectives, they likewise have expectations at the beginning of a new transaction: they will deliver the service required and they will perform the task in an efficient and productive manner.

However, service protocols may be rigid because management has made a directive: what service will be offered for an applied price point, and how service will be delivered. From this perspective, service delivery objectives are static constructs. In contrast, the employee’s and guest’s individualism and uniqueness, as well as their capacity to begin, suggest the service will be dynamic: people are driving the process and anything can happen. For the participants in the transaction, the process is a new transaction, and the transaction process is a new beginning, unexpected actions may occur. Meanwhile, management have set the delivery objectives based around resource constraints, employee capability and lawfulness. Despite this, employees have the capacity to produce the unexpected.

The employee’s role is to deliver service. The guest expects to receive service, and the organisation expects the employee to meet the need of the guest. The employee is aware of the constraints placed on the service delivery objective in regard to costs yet, being human, that employee will take action to meet the needs of the guest. Meanwhile the guest’s preconceived expectations lead them to believe they can have whatever
they want within some boundary set by the guest. What this means is the guest’s notion of value may be unreliable.

So, the beginning of the service process is laced with expectations where the most desirable outcome is the managed and standardised behaviour of the employee. In contrast, Arendt’s theory of actioning beings suggests the most desirable outcome of service may be the improvised behaviour of the employee, and it is this unexpected behaviour which will meet the desires of the guest.

The who of somebody is revealed by their actions, allowing others to know who a person is. The what of a person can be hidden—gifts, talents and shortcomings, for example. However, if a person wishes to hide who they are, they are forced into total silence and passivity. As Arendt argues, if they remain that way, then in biblical terms they are dead to the world and do not exist. So, a person cannot hide to the world and play an active role in the world.

Not all employees are the same in disposition and personality. Some employees are exuberant, some quiet, some observant, some bright and happy; however, all disclose themselves by the way they serve and react to customer requests. On the basis of employees’ actions, some employees are placed in positions where their exuberance, for example, may be more acceptable than a quiet person. So in many ways, the diversity of the hospitality industry provides for a wide spectrum of personalities, allowing people to be who they are.
A person’s identity is represented by their actions, but that disclosure is not the essence of the person. What is being disclosed is the humanity of the person. Their humanity is unable to be hidden, because their actions are declaring to others who they are. We are unaware of how much information our actions are revealing.

In the case of the front line employee, it is often the who and their interpretation of hospitableness which leads to excellence in customer service. Some employees who are trained for a specific role, and who interpret their role in a pragmatic and narrow way, will offer service excellence according to the organisation’s protocols. An example might be the guest relations employee on the executive floor of a hotel who carries out their duties by offering the guests the service outlined for executive class floors. Many guests appreciate such professionalism. However, weary after a tiresome day at work, an executive floor guest wants his dinner shirt to be pressed. This action might be outside service protocols. The hospitable guest relations employee will iron the shirt because the guest’s weariness is being recognised. The service-orientated, professional guest relations employee may choose to follow service protocols as written by the hotel, where such an action would not be required of the employee. In the latter case, the employee would not be required to press the shirt for the guest. The question becomes, has the guest had his desires met? Or, has the guest received service? The answer to the question lies with the actions of a hospitable host (Telfer, 2000:40).

People may choose to be in the company of others as part of the way we socialise. Arendt calls this sheer human togetherness; people are living the
way humanity lives. Arendt argues that in doing this, we are being brave as it exposes to others who we are. Conversely, under unusual and differing conditions, a person could be commanded to take action by competing against another group of people. In war, for example, violence is used by humanity, against humanity, so that each side is focused on achieving their own side’s objectives. Such action has no revelatory character, because it discloses nothing of the individual, and so is an exhibition of the action itself. Arendt argues that in these circumstances, action is only an activity used to produce an outcome, and so it is meaningless. When this occurs, action loses the quality of human togetherness and reverts to being an activity for production as in the production process.

In the same way as the example above, might service delivery scripts be used to minimise the impacts of personal engagement? Is the hospitality employee merely going through the motions of service, not engaged in the process on a personal level? It could be said that service, in these circumstances, might sometimes be robotic in its delivery. In the service setting, ‘have a nice day’ is a farewell salutation used by service employees to conclude a service transaction. ‘Have a nice day’ said in monotone voice and without any feeling, is one method to bring a service encounter to an end. It is a service script ending for a service process—ending the service without simply saying ‘next’. ‘Have a nice day’ conveys a message to the guest that the service transaction is now over, and the employee needs the person to physically move so the next person can be accessed physically; the next person in the queue is ready to be engaged in the service process. Nothing has been revealed of the employee and the service has a cold,
empty non-personal feeling. The guest has not experienced hospitableness. In this way, the employee has communicated an instruction to the guest without uttering the actual command and so illustrates the complexity of speech.

In back of house hotel operations, some employees appear not to have an individual profile. Their functions are removed from the team with whom, and from where, they operate. Their actions do not openly contribute to service, but rather, they are a service. Pots and pan scrubbers are a good example. To many, their work seems so meaningless, lacking in importance and significance to the overall operation of the hotel. So, in ways they could be thought of as just a step in the production process which is meal service. Where do the pot scrubbers’ actions belong in the human togetherness theory? Or, is their task a non-individual action merely for the sake of the chef?

Human togetherness is the important link for this scenario. Arendt suggests our actions will reveal this quality. The pot scrubber has a role in the production of the kitchen and also a role in the process of the chef producing meals. If the scrubbing is done well, with energy and efficiency, then the pot scrubber will have individually contributed to the overall quality of the meal and the meal service. If, however, the pots are scrubbed without pride in one’s job, without the motivation for the overall quality of his craftsmanship, and without recognition by himself and others within the team of the importance of the task, then the conclusion will be that, all factors being normal, the job is about him/her earning money, and not about being part of the team. In this way, the scrubbing of the pots is not
about the person, but a necessary step in the robotic kitchen cleaning process.

2. The web of relationships and the enacted stories

In this section, I follow Arendt’s premise of the revelatory character of humanity as constructed by a web of relationships. We keep company with others because we might share common interests, and as such, declare not only who we are, but some of the areas of life we are interested in. The notion of a web of relationships as discussed by Arendt has resonance with the way I have constructed a multi-layered service encounter transaction. It may be that the revelatory character (p.182) of people reveals hospitableness (a characteristic) in hospitality front line employees.

Arendt reminds us that, as people, we struggle with who a person is. So we identify with the type of person someone is. This means we tend to group people by type; front line employees, for example. Secondly, worldly interests relate and bind (p.182) a group of people. So, from this perspective, the group, consisting of those who share common interests, can now be considered as revealing the character of each member and something else about each person, an interest they share. When a group forms in this way (a book club, for example), each person speaks to another about their interest. The subject matter not only creates relationships but also adds an intangible layer into the web.

The web of human relationships is bound to a world where human interaction exists—Arendt suggests that as speech belongs to humanity,
the web of human relationships belongs to people’s use of speech and action. It is noteworthy that these interactions, while about a particular subject matter and interests, continue to reveal the distinctiveness and uniqueness of those involved. Employees form part of this web.

When hospitableness is said to be about generosity and helpfulness, among other qualities, it is interesting to note this aspect of Arendt’s framework. Two thoughts are important:

a. the customer, when engaged with the front line employee, has the capacity and the humanity to see the revelatory who of the employee; and

b. the interest of the participants in the service transaction is focused on achieving an outcome for all members of the encounter; the guest has an objective as does the employee, and so the intangible element of the interaction occurs as the guest and the employee form a web within which they can interact.

So the realm of human affairs consists of the web of human relationships whenever people interact. As with any new person coming into a group, change occurs when new people become part of the web of relationships. The change occurs because the new person brings another set of revealing characteristics into the group, and because the existing members change and adapt to accommodate the new person. This change starts a new process, and Arendt reminds the reader that the (new) process is the unique life story of the newcomer. Moreover, the new person in the web (group) affects the life stories of all those involved in the interaction.
Imagine the impact of a front line employee being hospitable to an irate customer. The hospitableness—whether it is an act of kindness, generosity, helpfulness or compassion—of the front line employee changes the service scenario from guest anger to guest contentedness, transforming that guest’s interactions with others for the rest of the day, or their stay. Secondly, such hospitableness has the capacity to change the way guests feels about themselves: anger is diffused and replaced by a feeling of calm, resulting in service satisfaction and corresponding quality rating of the facility by the guest.

Arendt’s framework encourages us to consider each individual’s life as a story with a beginning and an end. Because individuals’ actions are impacting on the web, individuals are contributing to the relationship and bringing differing agendas, stories and expectations, among other things. So into the web’s dynamic pulse, humans are releasing their own wills and intentions, and stories are being emitted from the pulse. It is instructive to note that, according to Arendt, the stories which emerge become stand alone objects. They may become art works … documents … told and retold and worked into all kinds of material (p.184).

Currently, service is theorised as intangible in the hospitality industry. However, I suggest that under some conditions, hospitality service is tangible. When a service transaction can be recorded, spoken about and recounted, then the record of the service is documented, and might be ‘worked into all types of material’. When the transaction is recounted by a guest to an employee by way of a complaint or compliment, the service
could be on its way to becoming written into organisational cultural folklore. For example, stories exist of a concierge who took a plane ride to deliver a forgotten briefcase. Moreover, I am currently recounting service events in this thesis and in so doing, render these a certain tangible quality.

The stories, accounts of people’s lives, are being recounted about the essence of a person’s life, and are of a different nature than the concepts that are being developed into the story lines or artworks, documents, and so on. The accounts might be described as a diarised moment by moment account of the activities and daily undertakings of a person. So, as the person acts, an account is unfolding: the story of their life. This realistic account of the person can be considered as secondary material, however, as it reveals little about the producer. We do not know who is telling our story: while we live the story through our daily lives, an observer is recounting our activities, thus our lives become a story. While this story process started by the action of us inserting ourselves into the human web and revealing who we are, we are not the producers of this particular story. The story reveals an agent—we began the story and are the story’s actor and sufferer, but we are not the producer. However, as I recount in Essay Two on the arts, we know and can identify the producers of a fictional story. The difference between these two cases is that our life stories recount daily living; however, the arts are fictional stories conjured up by the storyteller.

If we think about a front line employee in this context, we can understand the role of the employee who inserts their hospitable ethic and value belief system into a context bound scenario. They are the person who offers the
hospitableness and the story of their hospitableness will be recounted by guests and customers. However, nobody is really the author if we agree with Arendt, that ‘action’ is the author of people’s history. History becomes a logged document of the stories of people. Every life has a log book and the collective of the log books are the recording of life on earth.

While service in the hospitality industry has no author because service is the action of the front line employee, a hotel (the organisation in this case) does have a service reputation. Disneyland in America is presented as an organisation which models service excellence, and a model of how this is done can be found in the academic literature. In this way, the Disneyland front line employees have been grouped into a web by their common employment, and have been further grouped (webbed) as offering service excellence.

Arendt suggests in the history log of mankind there is no author. Arendt, influenced by Heidegger’s writing, and her lack of respect for traditional texts, turns her attention to Plato’s contempt for human affairs. History, she reflects, encounters its subject, mankind, as an abstraction (p.184) because humans are not the authors of their stories. The intangible, authorless historical account of mankind has no active agent, and while we can recognise him as the hero (p.185) who has set the events in motion, we cannot isolate him as the author of the story (p.185). Plato, Arendt suggests, relegated human affairs to somewhat doubtful undertakings, based on his understanding that humans were led into action by the invisible hand behind the scene, with humans a kind of plaything of a god (p.185).
When interviewing employees prior to this thesis, I found that they spoke about their actions during the service encounter process. When asked why they assisted a guest, the employees often replied, *I just knew they needed help.* It is likely that this impetus is a correlation to instinct. So what is instinct? Is it the invisible hand of nature, Christian ethics, providence or some other unseen force at work leading front line employees to provide hospitableness? In Arendt’s telling, *daimon, an invisible life force that directs people, much as if we had a hand on our shoulder showing us a path we should take* (p.185), it is this guiding of humanity she envisaged.

A second parallel to the front line employee’s instinct is the early instruction by the Christian church for all members of society who were able, to extend hospitality to those in need as part of their Christian duty (Heal, 1990, for example). So, considering Arendt’s argument in this context, that *the Platonic god is but a symbol for the fact that these real stories have no author* (p.185) it is clear that it is difficult to comprehend that history is written by the action of humanity, as opposed to the more modern concept that the author composed the story.

So, to revisit the view that action creates a person’s story, it is possible to understand the difficulty humanity has in accepting such a thought. When we read a story, whether fact or fiction we can usually nominate the person or persons who composed it. When a child invents an invisible friend, we accept the action as that of a child, and as such, make little of it. However, for many, the ‘invisible hand behind the scenes’ does not relate to a real experience, and while some can recount stories where they have done something based on their instinct (not taken a flight, not gone to a
party), many would find such stories hard to accept. However, if we continue to promulgate the invisible hand mythology, then we denigrate the story from ‘action’ to a fictional one where an author, some writer, creates puppetry.

In a sense, when we consider service, if we reframe service excellence as competency and therefore due to successful training, we deny the employee of their story, put an invisible hand behind their back, convert them to a puppet and pull a few strings, responding to the customer exactly as has been designed by the authors upstairs in the management office. As long as we cannot give the employee credit for their hospitableness and their story, and choose instead to tell it as a production/consumption event, we deny them the role of direct agent, and create a fictional story with an author. Here also is an issue of trust: the management does not trust the employee to have been hospitable, so the employer takes control and credit for the successful transaction.

A fictional story is made up, while our real story is concerned with how we are engaged in relationships in the world. The person revealed in the story is the hero (p.187) manifested by the story. All other facets of the somebody that we know are produced through works the person has left behind, and so we also know what the person was.

Arendt qualifies the ‘hero’: she suggests the hero needs no heroic qualities (p.186) because we have given ‘hero’ a modern connotation and so changed the hero into a star. (Hero was the name given to the free man (Homer cited in Arendt, 1958) who participated in the Trojan enterprise.)
However, Arendt suggests our modern interpretation of hero already exists within the who of the story: the man who engages in the web of human relationships and begins a new journey, has courage to seek the company of others and declare himself to the world. Courage to undertake a task usually includes the knowledge that for one’s actions there is a consequence; however, the courage referred to here, is courage where the consequence may not be considered. The courage referred to arises simply because the person took the action of leaving their privacy and declaring who they are by exposing themselves to those with whom they will have a relationship. As Arendt suggests, courage under these conditions may include those who are not so brave, and so the story’s hero may well be displaying greater courage than most.

This raises the topic of the characteristics of the hospitality workforce. Society is aware of marginalised groups in society. When the first competency training packages were introduced by the Australian Government, hospitality was chosen as one of the sample industries to trial the training. The reason behind such a suggestion was the vast number and diverse range of employees required to keep the industry afloat; hospitality is a high contact service industry. Springing from within this reasoning, a second characteristic of the hospitality industry is the diverse demographic categories from which employees may be drawn. Under some circumstances, a person required to wash up dishes and clean the kitchen may be devoid of some traits required to serve guests. So, marginalised groups within society can be productively employed in the hospitality industry. Thirdly, the frequently heard catch cry of ‘anyone can be a waitress’ suggests that being a waiter or a waitress is an easily
obtained employment category (and this is true in some circumstances), and so those who have had difficulty in gaining employment in other sectors will find employment in the hospitality sector. The inference is that those who may have trouble integrating into society can be employed in this industry. So when Arendt refers to courage, imagine the courage required by some that have been marginalised to face the public on a regular person to person basis.

3. The frailty of human affairs

The frailty of human affairs is about our vulnerability as entrenched in the human condition of dependence on others, and with the unpredictability and irreversibility of our actions. We cannot undo our actions, and we cannot predict what the outcome of our actions will be. Such a conception of vulnerable humanity prompts us to search for control mechanisms to reduce the vulnerability. Trust, the topic of Essay Seven, and promise and forgiveness discussed in the latter part of this essay, present control mechanisms in defence of our vulnerability.

In the hospitality industry, ‘frailty of human affairs’ can be explained by considering employees as humans, and as employees; front line employees must take action to deliver service to a guest. When and whatever action an employee takes in these circumstances, and in the general situation of service, means their actions are, in Arendt’s telling, subjecting themselves and their organisation to vulnerability; the vulnerability of the employee’s actions toward the guest, where the action will lead to the lack of control that results from the employee acting as a human being. Frailty can be
further explained by suggesting that when front line employees insert themselves into an action that results in them giving hospitableness to guests, then that action will result in going outside the conditions of the organisational service script. Secondly, as actions can have unexpected implications, it is unknown where employee actions would place the organisation. So, the organisation becomes vulnerable.

For Arendt, acting is always related to, and always among, others with whom we are engaging. She argues all actions have reactions, and reactions create chain reactions, and as we cannot undo our actions we become vulnerable. As the actor mixes with and moves among others, he is not only the doer, but is also the sufferer (p.190). This occurs because we, as actioning beings, are the recipients of others’ actions. The chain reaction is the initiator of new processes because apart from being a response, the reaction starts a new process. This means that the reaction can spread to a wider group than the primary web relationship, and hence creates boundlessness (p.190) because one deed, and sometimes one word, suffices to change every constellation (p.190).

In addition, action, always dependent on the web of human relationships for its existence, establishes relationships and so dispels limitations and breaks down boundaries. However, new generations do not necessarily have the same vulnerabilities. In creating boundlessness, action also creates conditions conducive for a rising tide of relationships to develop. In this way, Arendt suggests the old virtue of moderation (p.191) be evoked to keep some boundaries in place and for power to be curtailed.
Arendt argues that the concept of the leader as a strong man impacts the frailty of society. Our vulnerability, frailty, presents someone with initiative the opportunity to assume control. When a leader, isolated from his fellow humans by his rise in status, assumes a commander role, it is because of his initiative in assuming the role, rather than by force. In the circumstance, the leader does not undertake execution of the activities. He does, however, claim the achievement of having done the activity. Thus the delusion of extraordinary strength (p.128), Arendt suggests, comes about because of the mythology of a strong man, who is powerful because he is alone.

In regard to this understanding I would initially like to address the role of the supervisor or manager, as it relates to the capacity of the front line employee to execute their duties. Noteworthy is the manner in which Arendt addresses the role of the ‘strong man’ in the execution of an action. Noteworthy also, is the role of a supervisor or manager in the execution of service in the hospitality industry. Service, which is defined loosely as delivering the guest their perceived wishes, is commonly the domain of management. Management design the service delivery process and then instruct or train the employee in the method they should undertake to deliver the designed service. This process suggests that someone demonstrates, using a script, how the service is to be delivered, and the employee is expected thereafter to execute the service by mimicking the demonstration. The implication here is that service is a process which has a leader, and then execution of the service process follows where the masses execute service delivery. Having completed the task, the supervisor then takes the accolades from further up the management chain for the
execution of service excellence. What has not been recognised is the role which the masses (in this circumstance, the front line employee) have played in carrying out the process. It is interesting to reflect here on the management style typical of modern organisations and the impact the management style has on the outcome of the service process. It is common in the hospitality industry to have a direct control management style as the financial metrics of the organisation are a priority (as opposed to their employees and their well being).

The hospitality industry operation can be depicted as a series of crisis tasks responding to the immediate demands of guests. Often in such a circumstance, someone within the work team will assume the role of leader of the team. Not long after, when a second crisis presents, the team leader again assumes control. The person is considered as having initiative!

Arendt suggests while some limitations and boundaries are put into place to curtail the boundlessness of action, such measures do not act to prevent the second characteristic of action: *its inherent unpredictability* (p.191). She suggests this is not about being aware of the consequences of our action, but rather, it arises because the story of our lives is being written, and so the moment the action moves into past tense, the story has been recorded. The participant will be less aware of how history interprets the action than the storyteller, who will have full knowledge as they look back on the event and its consequences.
Much has been written about the ‘moment of truth’ in the hospitality industry (Buttle 1996; Callan 1998 and Johns 1999). This event is described as the point at which the customer and the guest come into contact with each other to transact service. In the industry literature, this is referred to as simultaneous consumption and production. However, my point is, it is called a moment as it passes into history in a moment. Once transacted, we know the moment to showcase the establishment’s service image has passed, and perhaps the aftermath will be relegated to history as either service success or failure.

An interesting way to consider the unpredictability of our actions is in the light of hospitality and hospitality service. The employee is the doer of the action (execution of the activity by the masses, in Arendt’s terms), and so it will fall upon the guest to consider the story as it relates to their interpretation of satisfaction. This means when the guest tells the story of the service they have received, the story will be about the organisation’s service culture.

However, another way of looking at this would be to look at both the guest and the host as the doers of the story (the service encounter is a dual action, reciprocal in nature), and so one questions who will act as the historian or the reader of the story.

It might be the management of the organisation who inadvertently becomes the historian, then where does that place the host, as an employee of the organisation? The employee might create a service story by the guest recounting service that has been received from a singled out employee.
Such stories do occur as the earlier story of the concierge catching the plane to return the briefcase illustrates. However, if we consider the story as belonging to the society within which the organisation is situated, then we will have an entirely independent outsider interpreting the action and creating mythology which the organisation may own and claim as its own.

Arendt explains *all accounts told by the actor themselves … become mere useful source material in the historian’s hands and can never match [his] the story in significance and truthfulness* (p.192). She goes on to say that what *the storyteller narrates must necessarily be hidden from the actor himself, because the meaningfulness of his act is not in the story that follows* (p.192). It is the storyteller who perceives and makes much of the story.

The front line employee, in taking action, is required to follow the service protocols as laid down by the organisation; however, taking into account the notion of unpredictability as a result of their action, might allow us to consider service differently. The service protocol is a static document or script. The delivery of the service protocol is a dynamic action by the employee. The unpredictability in this circumstance is two-pronged: firstly as related to the manner in which the front line employee delivered the service; and secondly, the unpredictability is related to the guest and their interpretation of the service they have received from the employee.
4. The Greek solution

In considering our vulnerability (for Arendt, the frailty of human affairs) associated with our action (irreversibility and unpredictability of action), Arendt considers what solutions might be considered appropriate within the human condition.

Arendt found Ancient Greek society an appropriate model to frame her solution to the frailty of human affairs. She starts the journey for a solution to our vulnerability to action, by suggesting the lawmakers in Ancient Greece built specially constructed spaces the walls around the city (p.194) where the (public) action could take place. This bounded the space in a physical sense, and so Arendt considers this, in light of modern society. In Arendt’s argument, these walls are like a promise.

Society today also operates with a framework for acknowledging boundaries. In the hospitality industry, for example, one knows when they are in a lobby of a hotel, and further, understands what behaviour is required within the created space. In recent times, lobbies have become a significant public area in a hotel’s repertoire, as the lobby space may present the first image of the hotel to the guest. The bounded space can create a feeling of security for the guest as they enter from the outside open, boundless space, in a bounded, known lobby space. Within the larger internal bounded space, smaller bounded spaces can be contrived to create, for the guest, intimate bounded spaces. The check-in will be a specifically bounded space where the guest understands what is required of them in the space. A seating area in the lobby, bounded by couches and
other seating, a coffee table and a floral arrangement indicates a little
bounded seating area in the larger, more open bounded space. The guest
understands what is required in these spaces and acts appropriately. So, in
the hospitality industry, boundaries are an important tool for informing
guests of certain functions and processes. Such bounded spaces may
contribute to the guest’s feeling of hospitality.

5. Power and the space of appearance

Arendt posits that the appearance space comes about by people speaking
together. The appearance space remains until such time as one of the
speakers physically deconstructs the space by breaking up their group.
Hence, the appearance space does not survive past the coming together; it
disappears when the group disperses. Arendt implies that when people
gather, the space is potentially there, as is power. Arendt’s point is that
when people come together in a group, they have the potential to act in
unison with one another and so have an ability to have influence. In
Arendt’s telling, the group has power, not in strength or force but is when
there is agreement unreliable and only temporary agreement of many wills and
intentions (p.201), by those present of their intentions. Power is potentially
(p.200) there in any space, being created by the people acting together.
However, power cannot be stored, and so has an intangible quality.

An example of this is the way in which people manage an enterprise with
some behaving like a dictator, taking on an autocratic style of
management. I suggest much of the hospitality industry is managed by a
small band of top executives in an autocratic, autonomous way; managers
in an ivory tower. The situation has developed because traditionally, hotel management was about the personality of the hotelier. So, the manager would be known to patrons and would behave as if all patrons were personal guests.

That the customer always being right has customers feeling superior to employees, and management condoning this. Current management trends may be a result of a high casual workforce, where management does not feel confident in their employees’ capabilities (Goldsmith, A. L., Nickson, D., Wood, R. C. and Sloan, D. 1997; Walsh and Deery 1999). If a guest and manager come together because the guest has made demands that a problem be rectified by the manager, then the manager is in an awkward position. This is because such an encounter might be conducted in a public area of a hotel, where other guests and hotel customers can see and hear the incident. Instant solutions are used in hospitality so that other guests do not have their experience affected by the incident. Immediate solutions often mean commanding employees (disempowering the employee to empower the guest) to obey the directive by management: ‘Change Mr Smith’s room!’; or ‘Replace Mr Smith’s meal!’. Such a commanding tone satisfies the guest their request is being taken seriously, meaning the guest is more powerful than others in the interaction.

So, the only material factor in play with power is people being together as groups or tribes. To reiterate, when humans live in close contact with one another there is opportunity for action through the formation of relationships, and at the same time the potential for power exists.
What is of interest here is the lack of power of the front line employee. Here are a group of people being together in very close circumstances and yet they have very little power—why is this the case? I suggest it is because legacies of historical ideas of hospitality as a servant profession linger where employees are considered and so treated as people of lesser status, and this legacy endures in the hospitality industry.

Arendt describes that time when the moment of action has passed, and what is left is the power. Power is maintained through people keeping together. If a person isolates themselves from the nominated group and does not join with the collective, then that person forfeits the potentiality of power and renders themselves impotent.

What does this mean for the service setting and how does power affect the service relationship? It is interesting to note that Korczynski and Ott (2004) suggest that one way management can control the guest is to make them feel as though they are sovereign.

For Arendt, power, like action, is boundless and its only limitation is the necessity of other people. Arendt suggests this is a purposeful design within humanity. Power is dependent on other people for its creation. No individual person is given the gift of power exclusively, because we are all born equal. Power is not diminished by being divided (as in plurality), and it can be increased by interaction, unless a standoff has occurred.

In service settings, power plays are common. Guests believe they have the upper hand in disagreements, because of the perceived status of the
(service) employee, and because some guests have a perception that by paying for something, they own it. The concept this particular group of guests works on, is that money buys services, and this is a constant in the industry. Services have a cost as with all other industries, but ‘the customer is always right’ as opposed to the ‘customers are always first’ has still not taken hold in the hospitality industry. When organisations adopt a culture of employees as important, and as customers as important but not always right, then the implication is that guests will be offered appropriate levels of service by appropriately respected and rewarded employees, and that management will remain loyal to their employees by creating realistic service objectives.

However, for Arendt, power has the potential to corrupt. Trust is a solution to the frailty of human affairs; however, as Arendt suggests, when trust is dislodged by power—*nothing has been as short lived as trust in power* (p.204)—then trust vanishes and people become corrupt. I suggest when management treats employees without respect for their humanity then management is acting in a powerful and corrupt way. While power *preserves the public realm and the space of appearances* (p.204), for Arendt, it feeds human deception.

Interestingly, Aristotle (in Arendt p.206) conceptualised *actuality* to describe that notion whereby people undertake a task for the sake of the task. The tasks do not pursue an end and deliver their full meaning in the performance itself. In this way, doing the task is the same as the task itself, for the task has no exercisable outcome and therefore no saleable value (*material futility*, p.208). The ‘acted deed’ is un tarnished by motivations or
the thoughts of greatness, and becomes an act in itself. The performance is the offering, and is a contained action. It is the end in itself (p.206).

While it is not difficult to conceptualise end in itself action in the service environment, tangible examples are difficult to relate. The service encounter is a process; maybe part of a system, so alluding to a section of the process may seem to indicate an activity where aims and consequences, motivation and intentions, are in existence. Many activities are related to an action that will be taken, but the initiation of the action is an activity related to having no end of itself.

As an example, the following vignette is presented. In hotels, guest check-in is a front desk activity. If, when looking down a check-in queue, the front office employee sees a distressed guest, they can choose to take action. The action might be that by making a mental note of the distressed guest, the front office employee works through the queue more quickly so the guest has less time to wait to check-in. The ‘working quickly’ is related to an activity of ‘seeing’ (a distressed guest) and encourages a further action of hospitableness in the front office employee. So ‘the seeing’ is an activity which does not itself produce a product, but is an activity, a performance, just for the activity itself. Likened to flute playing, actualise (p.208) activities may be precursors to action and speech, but at the point of activity the performance does not produce a product.

Does hospitableness produce a product as an activity which is the end in itself? When the front line employee looks down the queue and notices a distressed guest and then decides to move through the check-in action
more quickly to get to the guest so the distressed guest has less time to wait, can be attended to more quickly, and can share with the employee the cause of the distress, the employee is acting hospitably. This whole process has been activated by an activity where, in the above example, seeing the distressed guest becomes the action. However, in this case, noticing the guest becomes part of the larger cycle into which the employee has added hospitableness through action. Power and appearance in this setting has been realised by the action of the employee, who has come together with the guest, albeit in a contained action, to form a relationship. The employee has power because he/she is managing the queue and uses a contained action to initiate hospitableness which he/she gives to the distressed guest.

6. Homer Faber and the space of appearance

Perhaps, when people acting in their capacity as part of humanity appear and confirm themselves in speech and action, these activities have an enduring quality of their own because they create their own remembrance. In creating a remembrance, they tell their story. So, the public realm where people gather is specifically about the work of people as opposed to either labor (the work of the body) or work (the work of the hands).

The public space, and the activity of speech and action, validates our reality and that of the surrounding physical world. If we do not meet with others, coming together to form relationships and have the input from others into our lives, then we cannot be sure about the world or any of its elements beyond our own closed circle. The reality of who we are, and
what world we live in, is important to our knowing of what we are capable of giving out to others, and for Arendt this means reality demands [that we] actualize the sheer passive givenness of their being (p.208).

An issue in the hospitality industry is the use of common sense. Common sense is a characteristic that is common to us all when we are trying to find a marker that we all understand and is available to us all. Common sense is the one sense that fits with reality, and it is by virtue of common sense (p.209) that the other sense perceptions can reveal to us what is real, and are not just a form of irritation to our nervous systems or resistance sensation to the rest of our bodies (p.209). Front line employees are representing the organisation for which they work and as such, are the contact person, the organisation’s deliverer of service. The service transaction has been established earlier in the thesis as a reciprocal transaction, which has often begun some time before the face to face meeting of the transacting participants. Customer perception has often begun before the customer’s arrival at the physical facility; their perceptions are based on their histories of collectives of services they have previously received. So, the perception of the guest forms part of the transaction, and yet, in real time, will have little currency for the transaction they are about to receive. (In Essay Five, Section Two, I explained that each service transaction is a new transaction, unique and different every time the service is transacted. A service transaction can never be the same.)

Common sense is not a feature of customers’ perceptions of service in many hospitality facilities. A vignette makes the point well: a guest is going to host a luncheon meeting at a city hotel. The hotel is a city venue;
the host (a hotel guest) is arriving by car. As the appointed time for the lunch arrives, the luncheon host has realised he is late. He knows from previous experience that parking in the city at lunch time is difficult. What the luncheon host does is assume, through his previous experience of service establishments, that the hotel will have ample driveway attendants to park the car and ample car parking spaces. He arrives at the hotel and there is no parking available. He is late for the luncheon. When no parking is available the driveway attendant will be blamed. Forgetting the driveway attendant is a front line employee, the luncheon host will demand the car is sorted out by the employee. The employee is simply left to park the car because he is late. So, lateness on the part of the luncheon host is translated into ineffective service by the hotel employee.

However, when the perception is not the reality, negative emotional responses are often directed at hotel employees. Common sense is overruled by emotion, particularly if perception has been evoked to create the imagined scenario. Hospitality literature is filled with statistics indicating service disappointment is prevalent (Berry, Zeithaml and Parasuraman, 1990).

When societies become superstitious and gullible, Arendt suggests they are becoming alienated from the real world. This situation may be magnified by societies where people are dependent on others within a closed private environment, as they are locked from the impact and influence of outsiders by their isolation and them residing in a private realm. An example here might be managing directors of organisations who are organised by others and who have little idea of reality. The above car
parking scenario is one such case. Women who live in male dominated societies might suffer from lack of reality.

If we think of managers and the creation of particular forms of autocratic styles of management as being normal in the hospitality industry, then creating strategies for the service and service delivery in 'their' organisations can be seen as lacking common sense and removed from reality. In this scenario, the manager is always right and takes no input from those below him. Further, when service systems are created by autocratic management structures, the system is undeliverable because management has designed the service protocol based on management's service objectives, which rarely mirror the reality of service delivery from the perspective of front line employees. Moreover, when these protocols are designed, management overlook the employee as a valuable source of material related to their real experiences.

*Exchange itself already belongs in the field of action* (p.209); so we know then, that the field of the service transaction is a field of action. It is an exchange, not so much of products but of themselves as *actioning beings* situated within webs of relationship and possibility.

In the exchange market, people are there with their products but they are also there with the products of others who have contributed to their world. Accordingly, albeit indirectly, people are together with others. Consequently, because each of them has contributed to it, the exchange market represents to them a common public realm. As people in the exchange market, they are producers of products, not persons, and what
they show there is not themselves, not even their skills and qualities, but their products. So they are driven to the market place by a desire for products and not by a desire for people.

Interestingly, when the characteristics of the hospitality industry are examined, one feature that stands out is the type of employee that permeates the industry. Very often these employees are young, mobile, female or mothers, who are attracted to the hospitality market place by the employment conditions. These people are not attracted to the industry because they are service-orientated ‘people persons’. Hospitality-focused employees, those who train for hospitality careers, are often attracted by the glamour and the luxury of hotels (it is that nuisance perception again!). However, their judgement belies jobs with long hours, lowly paid and low status.

The service transaction as a field of exchange is where the employee exchanges service for payment from the guest. However, the problem is that service in this way is intangible so there is no physical product to exchange for the money. The front line employee gave service (an activity) in exchange for money. What activity or activities will the employee exchange for the money? The organisation has designed a service protocol, and the guest has a service desire.

The employee exchanged service for money as required, and may have chosen to also give hospitable. My premise is that the front line employee is an actioning being free to take action as they choose.
So now the relationship between employee and guest is taking on a different perspective, moving from a skills based activity to an activity based on the skills and capacity of an actioning being. The front line employee, initially as a work person, contextually controlled, produces a service which is added to the market place for exchange. However during work and the production of the service, it might be that the employee chooses personal freedom and offers hospitableness, an activity that does not pursue an end, and one that leaves no work behind, but one where they exhaust the full meaning in the performance itself. Within the public appearance space, the employee becomes an actioning person, a free person. What they give is hospitableness. How does it all occur? It occurs because people are free humans and can take action. There are many other elements to be considered in the vortex of action and the freedom the employee exercises, such as their power to choose who they offer hospitableness to, and the consequences of their actions.

To be a person in the commercial environment of service providers and in the world of ‘service producers’, carries some measure of frustration. As ‘service producers’ these employees must embrace management incentives such as reward and recognition for meeting guest needs, and need to be seen by their managers as having achieved service standards set within the organisation. This usually includes adherence to service scripts. Often their photo will be taken and their name and the month of their achievement, for example, is displayed in appropriate hospitality spaces. So, the service provided by the outstanding performer, while it follows rigid standards laid down by the organisation, appears to have absorbed the elements of distinctiveness and uniqueness, which are normally manifested only in
action and speech. This demonstrates the action taken by management in glorifying a person whose service has been noted for its excellence, is showing a preoccupation with elements by which the person transcends his craft and workmanship, somewhat similarly to when a person’s uniqueness transcends the total of his qualities.

Because of the transcendence, this does in fact distinguish great works of creativity from other products of human hands (p.210), this recognition legitimises the conviction of the person, that such work may be greater than he/she is. However, this type of glorification cannot change the fundamental notion of who somebody is, and cannot be told as a story of himself/herself. Such accolades do manifest the outward physical appearance of the person, while the reward is for service that follows the script as outlined in the service delivery objectives, but it may not be an indication of who the person actually is. The representation of ‘great service’ by the performer will be recognised and rewarded; however, the service reward system harbours the same degradation of the human person as the other tenets common in commercial society.

‘Service excellence’ accolades may enslave the human person. Arendt suggests it is human pride that would permit a person to believe that what he can do as work and what he produces may be greater than who he is. Only the vulgar will condescend to derive their pride from what they have done (p.211). What is at stake here is the glorification of themselves and the belief that their greatness marks them and becomes their story. The person, believing they have produced a great service repertoire, assumes a mantle and then is left to live within the cage they have created for themselves.
Trapped inside their own cage of glorification and identity, they now are in competition with themselves. However, the person’s employment continues while his service excellence mantle drops away. On the contrary, for the person who is genuinely hospitable, and who offers hospitable not to receive recognition, but to be in a satisfactory relationship with other people, they remain superior to what they have done—at least as long as conditions for them to offer hospitable lasts. This source springs from who the person is and remains outside the actual work process.

7. The labor movement

The activity of labor is about physicality, production through the physical being of people. Labor is about being alone with the body, where skills are overlooked in favour of the might associated with physical labor. In laboring, people can be treated as one unit, with people working together in unison; for example, multiple people rowing a boat. In a restaurant kitchen, various levels of employees combine to make the kitchen function effectively. At the lowest levels, a brigade of kitchen hands peel, slice, and chop fruit and vegetables; clean fish and seafood; and perform general kitchen duties. The brigade are the manual laborers, where the work is hard and heavy.

The social condition for labor is an important element in laborers working effectively. For example, when people work in close proximity, heating and cooling, good light and fresh air would be recommended. These conditions can only be organised, however, when there is no dissenting voice, and the laborers act in unison—Arendt suggests that when soldiers
march together it eases the effort of a soldier walking alone (p.214). When all behave as one, sameness results, hence for Arendt, laboring does not express individuality. People get strength from working in unison, that is, more can be achieved by the human physical strength of a team of people, in contrast to the actions of individuals.

The creation of equality within public realms exists among people who may not share the same circumstances. However, the smooth running of the public realm needs an equaliser. This might be supplied by some facets of daily life or a bridging element in the commercial structure, where people share common public spaces. Accordingly, money would be an example of an equaliser in the public realm.

In the contemporary hospitality industry, we see employees formed into distinctive groups. One way to achieve distinctiveness is through uniforms and name badges. By putting employees in uniforms, they lose their individuality and sameness is created, while at the same time creating an image for the hotel. Supplying uniforms for employees has multiple functions: by having all wear the same clothing, it creates sameness in the mind of the employee. However, the different status of employees can also be marked by uniform; wait-staff are very often in a different uniform to front office staff, and housekeeping staff are different again. Taking into account the nature of the jobs performed, there is a need for a hotel to present an image to their guests, enabling guests to recognise those who can assist them. It would still seem apparent that uniforms are used as a way of creating sameness in hotel employees, but sameness does not fully stop action.
In the modern world, laborers are no longer outside society—they are job holders just like other members of society. However, in the contemporary hospitality work environment, where autocratic management styles are practiced, many casual employees, while performing roles vital to the day-to-day operational success of the hotel, still have little or no voice. So they are positioned as both inside and outside of the space.

8. The traditional substitution of making for acting

Contemporary society has seen a focus on consumerism: people are consuming more goods and services than previously, which has caused an increase in demand for products and services. In turn, such consumerism has led to people spending more time out and using public spaces as they pursue increasing amounts of goods and services. The outward consequence of such change is that society leads a more public life, away from the privacy of their homes; people are more visible. So people, wishing to be seen as creative and sophisticated, choose a more public approach to life.

Action, characterised by the unpredictability of its outcome; the irreversibility of the process, and; the anonymity of its authors (p.220) has since early times caused great frustration and exasperation. It has always been that the uncontainable outcomes associated with action have resulted in many looking to find a substitute for action. The proposed solution against action, that is, acting as an individual and not only being free to make a choice, but also being able to then carry out the activity, is for each human
to stay in control of their actions from the beginning to the end. As such, when people act in isolation, they do away with the notion of a community of people taking account of, and being accountable for, their collective actions. If humans try to stay in charge of their own affairs, every person becomes an island and reduces the possibility of commonness through their lack of sociability.

One relevant example might be where all front line employees act in isolation from each other and the organisation, each acting entirely as they wish. Chaos would result. Organisations would not be able to survive without cooperation between employees. In some instances, we see competition between employees, especially when large commissions on an individual’s sales are at stake, leading to each person acting in isolation. An example is employees who are vying for individual recognition and reward for service. If a client is known to tip exceedingly well, and if tips are not pooled for distribution among the entire wait staff, then some employees will cross over, out of their allocated section, to wait on the table of these known clients. This causes chaos from an organisational perspective and rivalry among employees.

Plurality recognises the distinctiveness of people while acting as a community. So, if the public space collapses, the society or community of free and distinct individuals collapses, negating plurality by closing down any space where a community of people has the liberty to act as individuals. Arendt suggests the most obvious replacement would be to form a mon-archy, (p.221) the one man rule form of existence. They (those who are ruled) would be pushed exclusively into the private realm where
they would manage only their own affairs. The ruler would manage all the public affairs as a solo action. Such a scheme would eventually lead to a closing down of people’s freedom.

This is a significant point in relation to the manner in which employees deliver service, and offer and deliver hospitableness. When considering those who lead (rule) and are given the power to lead, the role played by hotel general management can be reflected upon. The hospitality industry has an hierarchical structure, such that a general manager is supported by heads of departments, who rely on their managers, who then rely on supervisors to manage employees. The industry is necessarily structured thus because it is a high human contact industry where the layers of management are about managing a diverse dense workforce to deliver service on time and within a specified budget.

Because the hospitality industry is a service industry where employees are delivering leisure to guests predominantly at times designated as outside normal working hours (nine to five), the work practices exhibit two characteristics of note: employees are working when many others are not; and the rostered times offer flexible working hours. Most hospitality employees work in teams led by a team leader. Those who are managed—I do not think ‘ruled’ is appropriate terminology when referring to modern day employees—would be members of the team under the team leadership. The team leader takes responsibility for the smooth running of day-to-day operation of the department, reporting ‘up the line’ to their line manager, through an hierarchical structure of managers, to the top of the hospitality organisation. This means that front line employees are stifled
by a management team whose agenda is to maintain brand standards and manage budgets.

Arendt reflects on the idea that people sometimes wish to escape from action and argues that very often, it is not contempt for humanity that drives people to seek such escape. Rather, they are driven by fear of the possible outcomes that arise as a result of humans being free to respond to situations in their own way.

In hospitality industries, this may not be the case. As indicated above, the employee starts the transaction as someone who is ruled, but in order to offer hospitableness, the employee acts as an actioning being, and so, for a short time, is not ruled by their team leader as they offer hospitableness. So now, context seems as if it might have a part to play in offering hospitableness.

When substituting making for action, the guest comes to the establishment creating in their perceptions their desire for an experience. The guest can understand the concept of a product which can be made through their former experiences, and so relates the perception to the experience they are desiring from the hotel. The guest has come with an expectation. So in this sense, the employee is given to make their experience as a product. This is to treat the guest in a certain way. And because the guest comes with this framing, the employee is bound by the ‘customer is right’ strategy to find a way to respond appropriately. This means actually finding a way to insert themself into the action. So this suggests that the front line employee, is
not merely a ‘making being’ but a fully human actioning being, the same as the guest.

A recent hospitality incident may demonstrate the point: An Australian couple, who are both members of incumbent Australian political parties—one state and the other federal—were guests at a nightclub in the local area where the couple live. The wife became inebriated. However, when she decided she would like another alcoholic drink, the barman, exercising responsible service of alcohol which he is required to do by law, refused her request. The wife demanded the alcoholic drink, threatening to use her position of power if the drink was not given to her. The barman refused. A very ugly scene followed where the wife told the staff, by screaming loudly, they were scum and she would have them fired for their insolent behaviour. The couple were with a party of people, so, fuelled by alcohol and not wanting to lose face in front of her equals, she demanded and commanded ‘the scum’ adhere to her orders. More nastiness and threatening behaviour ensued. Chairs, glasses and punches were thrown as the couple and their parties were asked to leave the nightclub. The employees subsequently called the police and made statements about the damage and the fight. The management of the club fired the barman the next day (the barman had been a faithful employee for six years) and demanded the other staff members, under threat of dismissal, retract their police statements where the staff had accused the couple and their party of inappropriate, abusive behaviour. Sadly, the guests treated staff as if they had no status, and the management also regarded the employees in the same way.
The idea of making (for Arendt, making corresponded to the production of consumerables, fabrication related to products from the natural world and action related to our plurality as distinct and individual beings), as opposed to action, seemed to Plato (in Arendt (p. 225)) a more solid and comprehensible base for understanding how human affairs worked. In Arendt’s telling, making produced a product that had an enduring quality, so had known and finite qualities. Conversely, action was unpredictable and the outcome was unknown, causing action to be feared. Plato had seen some of these calamitous outcomes of action, and so had a suspicion of action, preferring instead the solidity of a fabrication and making framework. Action gave rise to outcomes over which no standards can be applied, while in Plato’s Republic, standards, measurements and rules of behaviour could be applied to eliminate the frailty of human affair (p.225-226).

Service transactions in the hospitality industry might be considered a form of making. The service encounter is a deliberately fabricated transaction in that making complies with standards. Unless standards, measurement and rules of behaviour are applied, the organisation has no way of controlling service delivery protocols or subsequent outcomes. However, in considering the service transaction, attention also needs to focus on employees, their performance, set standards for service and clear evaluation processes. These are ways of holding the front line employee accountable for the transaction outcomes, but they are also management control mechanisms. These elements, however, protect employees from over zealous managers and leaders, who may insist that customer needs and expectations being met are paramount to all employee considerations.
However, employees do sometimes slide into making when standards are not enforced by employer control mechanisms.

The front line employee faces being overlooked in service accolades when the organisation takes the credit for service satisfaction which has been the action of the employee, in the same way as the craftsman who is not considered when the focus is on his object and not him. This is an interesting analogy for the service transaction because most of the time service, through the transaction, is cast in the image of the organisation (a fabrication), as opposed to the employee (personal). This employee, when undertaking the transaction, generates through his/her action an appearance space. Generally the hospitality employee transacting the service encounter would be unnoticed as an individual. The service proceeds in a scripted way, and unless there is some form of service variation, the guest would not consider the employee as a distinct, individual person.

Two points of interest arise here: if a service transaction falls into disarray because of service dissatisfaction or service failure, then, as stated previously, a guest will very often ask to see the manager, because the manager is seen as important and able to salvage the service; secondly, management designs the service delivery scripts for the service offering in an attempt to remove unexplained costs from the system, as well as removing unwanted and wayward human elements from the service transaction. Management’s strategy is to reduce the service delivery protocols to the lowest possible level, seemingly based on the presumption that front line employees have limited capability, and therefore need tight,
controlled and simple protocols. Management’s objective, therefore, is to have employees not behave as *action beings* but merely as ‘making beings’.

Arendt has indicated that, in modern society we have transformed action into making by adopting the attitude of the *means justifying the end* (p.229). She points out the extent to which we have incorporated such thinking into our existence, by proposing we have adopted a linguistic path which uses parables such as *you can’t make an omelette without breaking the eggs* (p.229) in everyday language. Such a parable makes the point that for the change to take place, deconstruction of the original ideas is necessary (that is, breaking the egg).

Through hospitality organisations adopting and interpreting government legislation somewhat freely to achieve an end goal (a means to an end concept in practice), some interesting anomalies are created. One such example might be the legislation enacted around the responsible service of alcohol (RSA). The hospitality industry abounds with mythology of alcohol service to guests who are beyond doubt over the limit, who, because of their status as important guests, are continually sold alcohol well past their limits. Management often denies the guest was past their limit of consumption, with bar staff testifying that they have been told by managers or supervisors to continue to serve that guest. There are consequences: inebriated guests can very quickly turn a public space into a highly charged and potentially negative service experience for others.

Front line employees represent the face and image of the organisation; the organisation depends on them to maintain the organisation’s reputation.
This is a significant role. One wonders then, why any organisation would treat as invisible or insignificant, the very group of people they say represents them. Perhaps the organisation does it because they, the employees, are a means to an end in a high contact, heavily peopled industry. They are vital to the organisation’s success because they are so visible, interacting with guests continually. They are also the highest cost, and thus the largest resource of the organisation (Kandampully, 2002). However, they are treated as an expense, and their potential as a resource from which the organisation can gain excellent service and financial benefits, is largely ignored.

Arendt suggests that, in modern society, we have mainly defined people as ‘making beings’, [a] toolmaker and producer of things (p.229). By defining people as ‘making beings’, we are attaching a label to them which has not always enjoyed reasonable status as a form of employment. In other words, society has looked down on those who were the producers of products. However, Arendt suggests the stigma attached to makers of goods, fabrication (p.229) has been overcome. Now, in contemporary society, the risks associated with causing damage because of our actions, has enhanced the way we see ‘making beings’, and so we have created a consumer society where we place value on, and status to, the ownership of consumerable goods.

Management in hospitality organisations have two agendas in curtailing the individual actions of hospitality employees: one is to stop wayward service delivery and what management see as bad service leading to guest complaints; the other is to curtail costs. It is only by defining the activity
and tightly controlling its mode of delivery, that organisations have some capacity to cost what they are offering to the guest.

9. The process character of action

Action, according to Arendt, is under constant pressure. It is an activity where humans have the capacity to make and carry out decisions. The process character of action suggests our action generates something new when we insert ourselves into a relationship. Others will respond to the new addition and in return we will again respond. So, in that way, there are reverberations and ramifications for the insertion. One pressure is the attempt to make action into fabrication where instead of the activity being the result of decisions of humans who exercise their liberty, it has become an activity where people, under various conditions, fabricate or make objects and products. At stake here is the desire to turn action into an activity so the frailty of human affairs could be countermanded by more certain outcomes. When action becomes fabrication, then the outcome will be less uncertain. Action, if it could be controlled, would not be action at all, but rather an activity where humans produced products according to a known set of standards.

In the hospitality industry, service encounters may be seen as processes (Essay Five). In service encounter processes, the front line employee is following a script based on the service protocols. The service encounter process is designed by management to curtail non-standard outcomes. The organisation designs the process to commodify hospitality so the organisation can produce hospitality and sell it. To do this, the elements
within the process are standardised to prevent uncertain outcomes. Uncertain outcomes might relate to customer dissatisfaction, or perhaps, customer delight.

With fabrication, the employee is sticking to the script. Fabrication means making the service, by using a script to deliver known standards and procedures. This results in service that is finite. In the service encounter, the process of the transaction will cease as the employee and the guest disperse, and bring their service relationship to completion. The service will have been delivered.

Arendt reflects on the processes of action and considers that perhaps action, and the capacity for action, contains within itself some elements that enable it to overcome the difficulties of negative action outcomes. Arendt suggests that unpredictability and irreversibility may redeem some action processes.

10. **Irreversibility and the power to forgive**

Irreversibility arises because in taking action we are not able to undo what we have done, although as Arendt reminds us, we did not know and could not have known what [we were] doing (p.237). Forgiveness releases us from the consequences of what we have done, and if forgiveness was not possible for us, then Arendt suggests we would be confined to one single deed from which we could never recover (p.237). This is because we would forever be victims of the consequences. We need forgiveness so we can progress in society.
Just recently, a friend ordered Thai takeout from an unfamiliar restaurant. I make the point unfamiliar because, as is often the case, restaurants get to know the habits of their regular customers. In this case, the friend was an asthma sufferer, and so the addition of the flavour enhancer, monosodium glutamate (MSG), is potentially dangerous for him as it induces breathing difficulties. When the food was ordered (by telephone), I reiterated the no MSG request several times. When the food was collected, we again checked if this was the correct order with no MSG. I thought we had taken reasonable precautions to prevent a problem. However, it was not the case, and before the meal was finished, it was obvious my friend’s breathing was becoming difficult. The outcome was the friend spent the night in hospital so his breathing could be stabilised.

The next day I visited the restaurant to make a complaint. I recalled for the owners my request for no MSG and it took some time for me to establish that proof of the addition of MSG in their food was available via a hospital report. The owners said how sorry they were for the problem that had been caused.

This is a story of action being taken by people who have no idea what the outcome of their action will be, or where the action will travel. Does an apology help to rectify this situation? The answer is unknown because another action has commenced, and no one is in a position to know where the action and reaction will lead. Actions are not reversible.
In Arendt’s telling, the opposite of forgiveness is vengeance (and is the action of a new beginning). She makes the point that vengeance has the capacity to keep all the players bound into the process, and let the chain reaction contained in the action take its course. However, forgiveness, like the action process itself, cannot be predicted. As a reaction, forgiveness acts in some unexpected ways and retains some of the original character of action. So, unlike vengeance which is a roll over of the original action and which encloses the transgressor and the transgressed, forgiveness creates the capacity, through its unpredictability, to create newness and a new beginning, freeing both the transgressor and the transgressed.

I do not believe that forgiveness exists within the service framework. In Arendt’s terms, there is no such thing as service recovery. This is because for Arendt, service recovery would actually constitute a new transaction. The recovery transaction might be a new transaction, or the transaction might be a new one based on other people being included in the web. Interestingly, the employee might initiate hospitableness as a possible solution. When hospitableness succeeds as a solution, can it be said that those actions have introduced forgiveness or, perhaps, replaced it? So, does this mean that hospitality may be substituted for forgiveness? When the guest detects their needs are not being met, they very likely signal this to the employee. The employee may attempt to rectify the service failure by recovery. However, if the guest continues on after the employee has commenced recovery (they relentlessly continue on the same path, even after the employee has offered gracious service), are they after vengeance because the employee has not met their needs?
The alternative to forgiveness, Arendt suggests, is punishment, and both vengeance and punishment have something in common: they both attempt to bring a potentially endless conflict to a close.

Punishment in the service industry is not uncommon; employees failing to achieve standard service outcomes are punished in several ways by management and by guests. Employees are punished by management by having their shifts taken away from them. An end certainly comes when an employee has no shifts! Another form of punishment used is giving the employees shifts which are very unsocial, resulting in an end to their normal way of life; overnight shifts impact negatively on social life and sleep patterns. Guests punish employees by judging them harshly on evaluation of service cards, naming them and passing these comments on to management. Secondly, guests can punish employees by keeping a crippled service encounter going, and creating an environment of conflict and turmoil. So, in these ways punishment may be a subtle and damaging to the employee.

Arendt reflects on forgiveness by articulating its association with religion—many in contemporary society may associate forgiveness with some form of godliness. Such an association makes forgiveness a difficult issue in the organisational sense. It would be unlikely in the world of business that forgiveness would be embraced if the organisation perceived it as a religious response. Certainly the concept of being promised something by an organisation is not unheard of; however, in the service setting, promise is more likely to be related to a perception—a marketing image the organisation is wishing to portray.
11. Unpredictability and the power of promise

As mentioned previously, there are two possible outcomes from action: irreversibility and unpredictability. Unpredictability comes about because when we start the action process, we cannot know where it will lead. We start the action aware that we do not know of either the path the action will follow, or the outcome which will result from the action.

Unpredictability can be partly dispel[ed] by the act of making a promise (p.244). Arendt suggests unpredictability has a twofold nature (p.244): the unreliability of people to remain constant in who they are; and the impossibility of knowing the consequences of our actions from within our web of relationships.

So, for Arendt, the function of promising as a contract or treaty (p.245), is to overcome the unpredictability of us as actioning beings, otherwise we have to dominate ourselves and others, curtailing our and their freedom.

When a promise is a statement covering the general, rather than the particular, then promise making might lose its integrity and becomes a meaningless, empty statement. When this occurs, the promise loses its power to hold people to the promise, and the entity constructing the promise loses power.

A promise carries the personal message: ‘I promise, you promised …’ Perhaps a new or different service language which did not carry the weight of personal failure may change the course of the guest’s dissatisfaction from a personal experience to a commercial one. If, for
example, the industry ran a public campaign demonstrating visually front line employees assisting guests to achieve their hospitality experiences, and created a dialogue with the same message, then the word ‘service’, as related to one person being in service to another, by acting as their servant, might be eliminated from guests’ minds. People need to see front line employees as people, like minded and equal in every way.

The problem is that while guests pay for a service, mutuality and reciprocity are in play, and the guests feel entitled to get what they are expecting, as opposed to getting what can be deemed as reasonable value for their money (a commercially viable service objective). The hospitality industry has not been assertive in creating the message of costs associated with operating differing levels of service, but instead, hide the realistic costs of service in other well utilised and popular services. Guests perceive what equates to value (Essay Five) from their own experiences. The industry has created a rating system for hotels; however, ratings have come to be used competitively, whereas ratings were conceived as an information tool, as a method of categorisation. So now, guests shop around to achieve the lowest priced hospitality services that have the highest ratings.

Hospitality organisations give service promises in several ways including qualifying their brand standards and by their ratings. By giving service promises, they are theoretically guaranteeing guests minimum standards of service and products and offering alternative services if the promise is not kept. Realistically, however, in hospitality organisations, much might be implied in advertising and marketing, but rarely is there a direct
promise. In the contemporary world, such an exercise as a promise would only be made if the organisation went to extraordinary lengths to qualify their promise.

If the organisation makes a promise, there is an obligation to fulfil the promise. When we promise, we are promising to someone beyond ourselves, and because of this, we are involving ourselves with others. This situates the promise in the public realm; we have involved another and so it is brought into the web of human relationships. Hence, relationships are a further condition of promises and forgiveness. Our personal values and the respect we have for harmony within relationships is part of the forgiving and promise-making sense we have. People’s promises revolve around the web of relationships they have, and others being present to substantiate their actions. Arendt suggests that how we treat our promises reflects how we treat others.

Is it necessary to operationalise forgiveness in the hospitality industry? The organisations do not offer to seek the forgiveness of the guest if the service offered does not meet the guest’s expectations. Hospitality organisations have set up a situation where service irregularity (Essay Five) is primarily targeted by the organisation as failure by front line employees to deliver standard business service protocols as outlined in hospitality organisations’ service objectives.

However, when giving service promises (and guarantees) to guests, service organisations are setting up ‘islands of security’—the organisation
is luring guests into their facilities by creating service conditions that effectively out manoeuvre their competitors.

In summary, when morality is based on a set of standards and conditions of behaviour, *cemented within our societies by tradition* (p.245) and valid only because humanity agrees to them, then the support for such a condition is based on the same goodwill we display in accepting the risks associated with action; by *the readiness we show to forgive and be forgiven and to make and keep promise* (p.245). These moral conditions are not applied to action from outside, but exist *directly out of the will to live together with others in the mode of speaking and acting* (p.246). They are the control mechanisms built into our life systems to start new and never ending processes.

**A summary of the implications of Arendt’s theory of actioning beings for the practice of hospitality**

I conclude this exploration into Arendt’s theory of humans as *actioning beings* with a brief summary of her major points, illustrating the relevance of each for hospitality practice. This way of concluding gives me the opportunity to remind the reader of the implications of seeing hospitality front line employees as *actioning beings* and further, to give the reader a concise summary of Arendt’s complex argument. Her eleven points are:

1. **The disclosure of the agent in speech and action**
   A basic condition for action is human plurality. This means we are all individual, distinct humans who are born equal. In the hospitality industry, each front line employee is an individual and distinct human
being, and so their delivery of service will reflect their individuality. This means every service transaction will be a unique hospitality experience.

2. **The web of relationships and the enacted stories**
   As individuals, we form relationships through our actions. We create a web of relationships through our associations and our interests. In the hospitality industry, front line employees create a web of relationships when they deliver service and further, the web grows wider as the infinite and irreversible outcomes of their actions continue.

3. **The frailty of human affairs**
   The frailty of human affairs is about our vulnerability as entrenched in the human condition of dependence on others, and with the unpredictability and irreversibility of our actions. We cannot undo our actions, and we cannot predict what the outcome of our actions will be. In hospitality, when the front line employee transacts service, and becomes immersed into the transaction as an *actioning being*, then the outcomes of the transaction and the organisation becomes vulnerable to the employee’s actions which are both unpredictable and irreversible.

4. **The Greek solution**
   In considering the vulnerability of our actions, a solution is to create people spaces by setting conditions to maintain set boundaries. In the hospitality industry we experience boundaries of control in areas such as service scripts, and physical entities such as lobby spaces and contained seating areas. The service script is a (verbally constructed) conditional space of the service that can be offered to guests, while physical spaces are
bounded real spaces. The bounded spaces may act as protection of the front line employee from the vulnerability of their own unknown actions.

5. **Power and the space of appearance**
Arendt posits that the appearance space comes about by people speaking together. So when people cluster, a dynamic is constructed by the presence of people. The appearance space remains until such time as one of the speakers physically deconstructs the space by breaking up their group. In hospitality organisations, whenever people group together, employee and guests in all combinations, spaces are formed and relationships are created. A cluster of people acting in unison have the power to create.

6. **Homer Faber and the space of appearance**
When people acting in their capacity as part of humanity appear in action, the enduring nature of the action creates remembrance. In creating a remembrance, they tell their story. In hospitality, guests tell stories of service satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and employees tell stories of service experiences. So the public realm where people gather is specifically about the work of people.

7. **The labor movement**
Labor is about physical work. When people are laborers, the emphasis is not on learnt skills but on bodily capacity, hence the physicality of work. Essentially, labor is a lonely task. Hence, it is easy to group such laborers together. In contemporary society, laboring is considered mass labor. Arendt suggests the social condition of labor is an important element in laborers working effectively. When people labor, nothing is produced, except that which we consume instantly, so no product is left for
consumption beyond our basic needs. People get strength from working as one but the strength is a collective one and does not belong to an individual.

8. The traditional substitution of making for acting
Contemporary society has seen a focus on consumerism: people are consuming more goods and services than previously, which has caused an increase in demand. In turn, such consumerism has led to people spending more time out and about using public spaces as they pursue increasing amounts of goods and services. The outward consequence of such change is that society leads a more public life, away from the privacy of their homes; people are more visible. The hospitality industry is the recipient of this change in society as people pursue leisure activities in hospitality facilities. As the change bites deeper into greater levels of society, the hospitality industry will continue to develop.

9. The process character of action
Action is under constant pressure and, according to Arendt, is an activity where humans have the capacity to make and carry out decisions. When front line employees transact service, their capacity to make decisions and to action those decisions creates an opportunity for them to offer guests hospitableness.

10. Irreversibility and the power to forgive
Irreversibility arises because in taking action we are not able to undo what we have done, although as Arendt reminds us, we did not know and could not have known what [we were] doing (p.237). An organisation does not admit it is wrong, so the employee has to find a way to overcome a
disappointed guest. In the hospitality industry, forgiveness is not a common occurrence. Organisations make blanket promises with little specific details; however, when the promise disappoints, the employee might give hospitableness to the guest as a way to overcome the failed promise.

11. Unpredictability and the power of promise
Unpredictability can be partly dispelled by the act of making a promise. In these circumstances, the brand standards are the organisation’s promise across a range of goods and services. Rooms will be clean, cool and safe (among others). However, if these standards do not materialise then the employee attempts to make good the guest’s expectation by offering them hospitality. Hospitality and the giving of hospitableness is a gift from the front line employee to a guest because as free individuals, the employee has the capacity to act. In doing this, front line employees do have power, but the power is used to create a gift for the guest, the gift of hospitableness. As free actioning beings, front line employees have the capacity to make a guest feel as though they have received hospitality. Such a perception will enhance the guest’s experience.

The summary has outlined Arendt’s major guideposts for constructing a theory of actioning beings, and the application to hospitality practice shows the implications of such a construction. Such a telling enables me to conclude that front line employees are actioning beings and so have the capacity and the humanity necessary to offer hospitableness to guests in hospitality service settings.
The journey so far: summary reflection and cumulative interpretation of critical elements

As outlined in the introduction, the purpose of this thesis, was to find an explanation for the generous, extra attention front line employees showed toward guests during the delivery of service in hospitality organisations. As with any service industry, one would expect to find service in a hospitality organisation, however, what I was noting were employees being ‘especially personable’. The example of the porter and the inebriated guest, cited earlier in Essay Seven is a good example. The warm hospitableness I observed was not confined to just one employee and one set of guests. I pondered the reason why these employees were so genuinely generous with their time and effort toward customers, particularly, when they were often berated for sub-standard service from a number of sources, including their own management. Management chorused (and continues to do so) that the failure rate of service is unacceptably high (see, for example, Bitner et al., 1990; Hoffman et al., 1995; Kelley et al., 1993), and blames the employee for this problem. The public perception of hospitality employees is of a disinterested bunch of transient workers who have little genuine interest in customers and are in the industry simply because they can combine this type of employment (beyond nine to five work hours, casual, overnight, and so on) with other significant aspects of their lives (Bitner et al., 1995; Martin, 2004). Even if this can be the case for some, while doing my research I questioned this
perspective with what I had observed: a category of employees who are not highly regarded, doing a wonderful job out of the public gaze, in meeting the requirements of guests who often have high, unrealistic expectations of the hospitality experience. I asked the question: what was it that made employees so willing to be pleasant and ‘without boundaries’ in their extraordinary efforts to keep guests contented and satisfied.

Section One of the thesis explored different theories of the origins of the hospitality industry, ranging from accounts of hospitable agreements written on ancient stone tablets to presentation of hospitable actions as portrayed in the creative arts. I noted how the seeds of hospitableness can be seen to some extent, to lie within the various antecedence of the contemporary hospitality industry. In Essays Five and Six of Section Two, I looked at operational aspects of the contemporary hospitality industry and how these are foundational for the current operating methods within the modern industry. At the conclusion of Essay Six, while I recognised that service skills were integral to delivering hospitality service, I considered some employee actions were still unaccounted. I wanted to understand where qualities like generosity stemmed from, and further, how and why such qualities played a role in a service delivery system practiced by front line employees.

Essays Seven and Eight of Section Three of the thesis, in exploring philosophical perspectives of humanness, brought a different way of viewing service in the hospitality industry. Hence, Essay Seven considered the theoretical foundation of trust and Essay Eight, considered the actions of human beings as distinct and unique individuals.
Essay Nine is the final essay. In it I bring a practical application of the theories of trust and actioning beings to the hospitality service transaction. I explain how front line employees are free to take action, and for them, transact the service encounter in such a way to generate hospitableness. Hospitableness is given to guests by employees as a gift; their giving is a one way linear action from employee to guest; it is the practice of an actioning being, choosing to do something for another person as an expression of the giver’s humanity. Essay Nine is thus a construction of employees as action beings, and so is also a deconstruction of ‘action’ in hospitality service encounters.
Essay Nine

Analysis of the service transaction drawing on the theories of Shapin and Arendt

Introduction

As discussed in Essay Eight, through speech and actions humans reveal who they are (Arendt, 1958). This revelatory quality demonstrates our individuality, revealing to others our identity. Our speech and actions constitute our human condition. They are the manifestation of us as unique human beings; hence, all our actions are a disclosure of our image (Dante cited in Arendt, 1958:75). When hospitality front line employees act, they unfurl themselves and disclose who they are.

The hospitality employee’s role is to offer service. Often considered a straight forward transaction (for example, Mattsson, 1994) between the organisation and the guest (Svensson, 2001), I suggest the hospitality service transaction is a multi directional, multi layered transaction. The transaction is an exchange process where three participants, the organisation, the guest and the employee come together in an organisational system to achieve a desired outcome. The employee, as a human, is capable of and does make directional shifts in the service
process as they encounter guest responses and reactions. In this way, they transcend the limiting nature of the service scripts.

Subsequently, employees delve into their own life experiences, personal values and belief systems to make directional shifts in the service transaction, and so create their own answers to guests’ service queries. This builds a multi directional and layered service encounter.

The core work task of hospitality front line employees is the service encounter, a transaction between the employer, the guest and the employee. However, behind the employee mask are people, everyday human beings, and so in the service encounter transaction we can expect to find the humanity of employees. Arendt (1958) argues in her theory of *actioning beings* (the focus of Essay Eight) that, as humans, we are all capable of action: the essence of our humanity is to be a doer, take action as we choose and decide, which, as people, we are free to do.

Within the hospitality industry, service is transacted. The unfolding process that encapsulates the service encounter revolves around employees’ actions. To commence the service transaction, the employee comes into contact with the guest through their task role as an employee to deliver service. During the service transaction, the employee has the choice to stay entirely in their role as an employee and to conduct the transaction based on organisational service delivery protocols, or to sideline their employee mask for a while and to be themselves. When they remove their employee mask and act from within their own capacities, the employee creates an hospitable relationship space where they offer hospableness.
During the service encounter process, the employee might migrate back and forwards into and out of the relationship space as they search for and create opportunities to meet the guests’ needs. To close the transaction, the employee can again make a choice: to come back under the covering of the organisation as an employee, closing the encounter in an employee-centric way, or close the relationship space while remaining their own person. The employee may choose to affect their humanity as a way of meeting and resolving a guest’s expectation, need or want.

The service encounter, from an organisational perspective, is a business transaction. However, this seemingly simple business process is inputted by employees who bring to the transaction their own individuality. As a service transaction is an industry process, commodification of service is necessary. Thus, service as a commercial undertaking must generate profit which becomes the primary motive for doing business. Nevertheless, hospitality is a service industry based on notions of hospitableness, where the industry’s success is contingent on pleasing a guest by meeting the guest’s needs. As a business therefore, offering service that meets the guest needs is management’s objective.

From a guest’s perspective, service becomes the vehicle through which the organisation will meet their needs. The guest, unaware of the role they will play in meeting their own needs, is focused on the organisation supplying service. However, the guest, as co-producer of the service transaction, brings into the process their own humanity. While recognising the contribution of the guest in the transaction process, this thesis is focused
on the role of the employee in meeting the service desires as required of them by both the organisation and the guest.

The guest has a set of preconceived notions about the service they will receive from the organisation. Some of these considerations might include: what service is; how they will be served; what the outcome of a particular service experience will be; how they will feel at the conclusion of the experience; and whether they received value for their money.

Theoretically, if the industry knew what each of the answers to these questions were, and what each of the guests’ answers to each question were, then they would know (on paper) how to please the guest by meeting the guest’s needs. Such an ideal could have two solutions: robotic front line employees; and personal customisation of service.

1. Robotic front line employees

To manage idealistic service, delivery scripts could be specifically written in answer to guests’ desires. Employees, like robots, would regurgitate scripted material.

2. Personal customisation of service

This would require highly customised guest service, where employees were allocated by the organisation devoted to meeting individual guest service requirements. There is such a circumstance available to guests, where butler service is provided. However, in keeping with the
commodification of service, the provision is highly stylised and transparent so the provision can be financially accountable.

However, my premise is that while guest customisation does occur regularly in the hospitality industry, it is not as either of the above, robotic or commodified, stylised, ritualised offering by the organisation, but as an act of humanity shown by front line employees. This customisation is the action of *actioning beings*.

I include vignette to show how difficult it would be to commodify ‘pleasing a guest’, and why, without either robotic employees or a personal butler devoted to the individual service desires of a guest, meeting guests’ needs is beyond commodification of stylised, ritualised, scripted service.

**The simple act of pleasing the guest**

The following vignette is about pleasing the guest. The service transaction outcome is the focus of the guest, and as I have stated previously, the guest comes expecting service. Here I create a fictitious example built around the fast food segment within the hospitality industry. In this industry, the customer’s purchase intention (service) is product specific, that is, fast food from the fast food industry.

It sounds easy: fast food is food that is fast; serve the food ... fast! But there is ambiguity! There are three elements which contribute to ‘pleasing the guest’: the preconception of the guest, the service the guest receives, and the price they have paid for their experience.
1. Preconception of the guest

The belief is that if the food is fast, it must be cheaper than normal food. This is because the perception is cheap food is easy to prepare, so less time is required, so less wages are involved. Secondly, fast food is made from less gourmet ingredients. So the fast food will be fast and cheap. Why do hamburger joints, chicken shops and pizza places all strategise around price? Because they believe that customers assume fast food is associated with cheap prices. This is not always the case; however, the problem is people’s perception of the price. So the problem becomes people. People are heterogeneous: sometimes we feel one way, another time we do not. Even with the same person, we feel differently about the same product from experience to experience. So sometimes it will be about how fast the food is, and then the second visit to the fast food shop may be about how fast the food is, as well as its taste. The focus of our third visit may be the taste and appearance of the food. These differences in how we feel mean we can change our mind about our order.

Why do we stand at the hot chicken counter and wait impatiently while the person in front wants the chicken over in the corner, then, ‘No … I’ll have the one at the front near the side as it looks nicer.’ However, the fourth visit to the fast food shop may have a health focus, with attention being given to oils, calories and carbs. So, maybe in four visits we may expect different qualities of the ‘fast food’.
2. The service the guest receives

In the fast food industry, a disgruntled customer could be seen as less significant because we are dealing with a $10.00 experience, rather than a $2,000.00 (hotel bill) experience. Perhaps this should not be the case, with judgements about service delivery less related to the size of the bill and more about the design of service delivery systems corresponding to what the service is really about. Transactions without physical products leading to outcomes that correspond to customers’ perceptions—that is what service protocols are about. Real service is not a selective criterion based on the value of the experience received by the guest; yet hospitality industry practices would indicate that as the service dollar value increases, service transactions improve. Guests’ perceptions of value, addressed in Section Two, Essay Five, suggests that in the hospitality industry guests sum up their satisfaction with the service, based around their perceptions of value. Such an issue may be indicative of the culture of the industry, where the price the guest pays is related to the status of the product. For example, the rack rate of a five star rated hotel would be in line with the physical facilities offered, and not with the hospitableness offered by the employees. Management is happy to accept guests comment cards regaling service excellence, and these customer judgements are often based around the employee engaging in hospitableness. If management chose to understand and engage with a deeper understanding of hospitableness, thus changing their financial focus, then it would be possible to promote practices which recognises employees as people.
For Arendt (Essay Eight), the equality of people was important because while there might be inequality in rank, people as human beings are equal and so have the same capacity for action. This means the action ‘content’ may not be the same for everyone, but the capacity to act, the impetus for action, is the same for all. So, in the fast food example, the employee has the same impetus to be hospitable (to act) as the employee in the five star hotel and the waiter at El Bulli, an exclusive restaurant in Spain.

3. The price they have paid for their experience

So, the fast food shop is dealing with fast food which the customer understands is cheap because it is fast, standardised product, small variety. An overview of the commerciality of fast food shows pricing might include: the cost of the goods (raw product, cooking ingredients, packaging); the employee time to serve a guest; how many people will be needed to serve the expected crowd over a set period of time; rent for the premises; institutional costs like taxes; associated food costs like equipment, maintenance of the equipment and the shop premises; and costs for ‘services’, such as gas or phones, to the premises. As well, there are the management costs, such as accountants’ fees.

It would be remiss not to acknowledge the vast number of factors I have overlooked in the example above, including the status of the employee, the quality of the food outlet, the buying patterns of the customer, among others. However, what the example does highlight is the enormously difficult task the hospitality industry faces in their struggle to find the balance between pleasing the customer and the financial objectives of the
hospitality business enterprise. I have referred previously to the importance customers place on value (Essay Five) and on their desire to have their service requirements met, however, now the focus becomes the internal working of the service encounter.

In my telling of the service encounter, I consider it as a multi layered and multi dimensional process (figure 3). It is within this multi dimensional layering that I suggest a second layer exists as a hospitable space. I suggest it is within this layer that hospitableness exists, and suggest it is a construction of the employee, as they present themselves as an actioning being, demonstrating generosity of spirit and human kindness (qualities of humanity), which may be shown toward fellow human beings in hospitality service settings. I conclude the essay with an account of the service encounter from this new perspective.

Figure 3 is my construction of the hospitality service encounter transaction. I suggest that the encounter moves through a series of specified layers: the top layer where employee and guest engage, and within which the front
line employee offers service. The second layer is the hospitable space, a construction of the front line employee as they offer the guest a resolution to the guest’s service desires. This is an unbounded space, which may not always be present in the service encounter process. The employee does not routinely offer hospitableness to a guest, but may just deliver service. As an *actioning being* the employee will offer hospitableness as a personal gift to guests. The final layer in the service encounter process is the closure of the service.

As indicated, the encounter process is multi dimensional. The guest and the employee exchange information to fulfil the guest’s service expectations and desires, and because the employee has the capacity to offer hospitableness, as apart from service, the process will consist of different stages. However, it is the hospitable space, the second stage of the encounter process where the encounter becomes momentarily linear and one directional, as hospitableness is a gift from the front line employee to the guest.

As previously discussed, customers come into contact with the front line employee knowing some service action will take place. In the literature and in industry, much attention is given to the customer’s desires at the inception of the transaction. However, what is automatically assumed, but rarely theorised, is that service must occur at this point. This is a meeting point, a beginning, a new beginning. Arendt reminds the reader of the importance of the capacity of *actioning beings* to begin, to start something new. However, the guest comes with a preconception of the service, so
perhaps for them, as actioning beings, their new action has already commenced before the meeting point.

The guest as an actioning being in the service transaction

From a guest’s perspective, the action may have commenced when they first considered what the service might look like. In this telling, the front line employee enters the guest’s web of relationships as part of a chain reaction, as the guest, through their perception, has already commenced the action. This scenario has two consequences: (i) when the service is highly ritualised, stylised and formatted, a clearer picture is available to the guest of what they can expect to receive so their perceptions may be more in line with reality; and (ii) how the guest receives the service can be partly known by the organisation declaring their service scripts. A service promise would suffice here. However, by offering a service promise, unless the promise is centered around a physical product as designed by the organisation with a specific script designed to give clear delivery instructions (robot), then the organisation is considering the transaction as one directional: the employee serves the guest. Such a scenario with the guest as an actioning being suggests the transaction will have a different starting point for both employee and guest, and if the starting points are different then the stories will be different stories. The only similarity between two such stories would be the actors and even those would be differently represented in the two stories.
The creation of and action in hospitable spaces

Previously in Essay Five, I have established the concept of the guest as expecting service. I have also established that in serving the guest, the action by the employee is in response to an action already underway by the guest. What the employee response action looks like is the focus of the next section of the essay.

From an employee’s perspective, service will commence when the guest and the employee come into contact. The first layer in this transaction is the service contact, based around a trust relationship that extends from the trust the employee has in themselves and their competence to transact service, to trust in the organisation, and trust in aspects of host-stranger relations. The employee and the guest interact to co-produce the contact, and for the employee to make an initial diagnosis of the service requirement; that is, the desire of the guest. For the employee, this is initiating a new service transaction. However, a second layer may be added as a result of the employee taking action to meet the needs of the guest. An example might be centered around me ordering my coffee. When I enter into the coffee shop I am expecting to have a coffee and so for me, I have already commenced the transaction; I have decided to have a coffee. However, for the employee, the transaction commences as the employee and I engage. I continue with the transaction by ordering a coffee, asking the employee for the type of coffee I want. The employee now has the basic information for the first level of the transaction. If nothing more was required then the transaction would remain as a one layer service transaction. If, however, I require some additional input into
my coffee order, the employee is more than likely to move into unscripted territory. I have my sugar put in my short black double espresso prior to the coffee going into the cup, as I do not like to stir my coffee. So when the employee takes the coffee order, the transaction is multi layered as we interact. I am often asked to give the order more than once and then during the preparation of the product, I am asked to confirm parts of my request. I also have a glass of water with my coffee, so more interaction of instructions takes place. I have been the recipient of real impatience as the employee has to go outside a standard coffee order. I have also been the recipient of hospitableness, as a genuinely interested employee would enquire about my choice of coffee (and so engaging me personally in conversation). Having a coffee is a common experience, but the manner of the service still applies whether the transaction is a long and complicated one, or a short exchange such as the coffee example demonstrates.

Front line employees take action in response to a need or request for service. This is the beginning of the service transaction from the employee’s perspective. For the transaction to ignite, the employee and the guest create the environment for a relationship. This employee action, with the guest-stranger, is an action which has its roots in both skills and the humanity of those involved. Two fundamental modes are intertwined in the steps taken by the employee: the necessity to offer service and the transition into the initiative to action.
Service to action

The employee dialogue in the initial stages of this first organisational layer of the service transaction is likely to be a scripted one. Based around organisational trust which has been previously established, familiarity with the service type, and being skilled with the product gives the employee an opportunity to develop their contact in the relationship in a trusting, comfortable and open way. Other physical elements of the organisation may act as aides and cues in this initial contact, including a hotel uniform, a name badge, and maybe a product artifact such as a glasses tray, or a menu. Further, the employee exudes a confidence with being comfortable with their surroundings.

The dynamic nature of the exchange process generates an opportunity for the front line employee to grasp the expectation desires of the guest and subsequently, a transitional avenue into hospitableness. The employee, on the cusp of their transition, may momentarily consider how the desire of the guest will be met, and further, so the relationship can be progressed, design an action which many not be sanctioned by the organisation. The employee’s judgement of what is accepted commercial practice and what is beyond the service objectives is arbitrary. However, as discussed earlier, hospitality literature suggests job satisfaction is positively related to guest satisfaction (Heskett et al., 1994), and so the employee’s action will result in the employee being satisfied with the role they have played in meeting the guest’s desires.
Accordingly, while the primary function of the employee is the service encounter, the initiation of subsequent actions by the employee in response to guest responses and reactions means the service encounter process may be better described as a series of actions and reactions, which can be broken down into a series of secondary transactions, or reactions to the initial action.

Arendt’s theory of actioning beings argues that an action, once initiated, is continuous; it cannot be stopped, reversed, or have a boundary. Hence, service encounter processes might be described as a series of human interactions and process layers, where some layers may be ‘flavoured’ with hospitableness.

**Action in the hospitable space**

I have previously argued, in Essay Five, that hospitableness stems from good hosts who are hospitable to their guests (Telfer, 2002). As Telfer (2002:40) suggests, being a good host involves skills as well as effort. In creating the hospitable space in the service encounter, the front line employee (a host) uses skills to understand the nature of the guest’s request and to create an atmosphere for the guest where their service experience will result in their expectations being met. However, as the front line employee, they are moving into a space where they are able to offer their generosity to the guest. As the employee offers hospitableness to the guest, they have created a space within the service relationship which has come about by their actions. Such a space, the hospitable space, exists if the employee had
the freedom, beyond the service script, to extend themselves in their relationship.

Hospitableness can be viewed as generosity, where the generosity involves one person giving to another. Derrida, (cited in O’Gorman, 2007) contends that absolute unconditional hospitableness cannot exist because that would require the host to give without limitation or condition, and that the giving to a stranger is impossible considering that in our contemporary society the stranger is often connected to the giver. Such connectedness exists because, as people, we are informed of and about not only people, but cultures and geographical locations and professions and the like. Very often we have some recognition about another person. However, this shift in inference moves hospitableness onto the condition of there being a stranger in the relationship, as opposed to the earlier contention that hospitableness was/is about giving.

However, for Arendt (1958), assuming action is boundless, the giving (action), once initiated by the employee, is boundless. The intangible aspect of giving (hospitableness to others) is created by the action in a hospitable space, and so generosity exists among and within hospitality industries.

Hospitableness can be understood as an action initiated by the good host (Telfer, 2002) and given to the guest. In this telling of hospitableness, the giving action is not a multi directional construct. The action is possible for the employee because they are human beings who have the capacity to take initiative and start a new beginning. The good host understands the
desire of the guest to have their expectations met, and further, understands the organisation’s viability (their employer) is sustained through them delivering customer satisfaction.

The good front line employee sensing their own spirit of generosity is an imperative in offering hospitableness. They are aware their skills are about tasks and activities, and their skill competency ranges from what they can to what they cannot do. But beyond skill, which has definable boundaries, is their capacity as humans to initiate something new, and so take action. Action is as a result of their humanity and so is not limiting.

The action which for the hospitable host is hospitableness is given by the employee to the guest and so moves in a forward direction. As hospitableness is a continuous action, many of the recipients may be unknown to the initiator, making the hospitable spaces, created for the hospitable action of the employee, an open ended layer. Once initiated, the giving cannot be undone (Arendt, 1958).

The employee takes action to meet the guest’s needs. To do this, the employee may transition from service, initiating a dynamic open ended layer where hospitableness, through their spirit of generosity, may be revealed.
The motivation for hospitableness

In her theory of action, Arendt writes of the bravery humans show as they ‘expose’ themselves by taking action where their actions can be noted by others. And in noting the actions, ‘others’ often blanket their judgement about that person’s qualities (Arendt, 158:181) because as humans we are often incapable of distinguishing who somebody is as opposed to what their qualities are. Further, in failing to be able to describe who a person is, we make general statements about those with whom we come into contact.

Identification of hospitableness in the hospitality industry context is dependent on a judgement by a guest. The words ‘warm and hospitable’ are often connected to a guest’s evaluation post their service experience. Hence, it might be suggested hospitableness is connected to a guest’s expectations and needs being satisfied. However, a broader view relates hospitableness to the human capacity to contribute to a hospitable space.

Previously, in Essay Six I have suggested that for an employee to create the environment for an hospitable space to come into being skill sets commensurate with hospitality, competency will be required by the employee. This should include physical skills so that an employee can perform hospitality tasks with confidence. An example may be guest check-in, where knowing the computer systems, being efficient, polite and timely in the operation would be required. So being skilled is an essential criterion for the smooth and efficient operation of service tasks.
Beyond skill requirements however, hospitableness may reside within the essence of who we are and the things we do, and the reason this is apparent is because we do things within the boundary of a relationship. Our actions affect others. In this way, viewing the characteristics in what I term ‘the hospitable space’ in a service transaction may create another view of hospitality as hospitableness.

The hospitable space is inhabited by human beings who have service needs. The employee has a need to complete a service task as required by their employment conditions, while the guest has a service need so their expectations can be met. So, a motivation for hospitableness may be needed, and may be considered as a driver in the construction of a hospitable space.

The aroma of the hospitable space

Not infused with commercialism or the commodification of hospitality, the hospitable space has the aroma of a good host (Telfer, 2002). The guest might savour such a moment, as the niceties of life are in this space: the spirit of generosity. There is no time pressure as the guests’ needs are the focus. Gentleness exists. The host prepares the hospitable gesture. In that moment of time, the space is infused with goodwill, and generosity has been extended. Helpfulness, empathy, understanding, kindness and trust—all are there. A confidence exists. The solution is declared, the action is complete, and the relationship dissolves. Hospitableness has been fleeting.
DÉNOUEMENT

The unfurling of hospitableness: Implications of my findings

Having considered the question of generosity as occurring as a move from service to hospitableness, (the good front line employee offers hospitableness to the guest via the service encounter process), in the Dénouement, I will consider the relevance of my journey. In this section, I explain how describing the employees as *actioning beings* contributes to the evolving discourse among hospitality scholars and practitioners regarding the development of a philosophical foundation for the emerging paradigm of hospitality studies. Further, as I would like to contribute to an industry based discussion about hospitality, I conclude the thesis with a letter to my fellow practitioners, in which I appeal to my fellow practitioners to show humanity in their management. I consider that such a move will perhaps elevate the status of our field to a position were the hospitality industry might be considered as a significant contributor in global discussions about employee conditions at the levels of mass employment.
A contribution to developing philosophical foundations for hospitality studies.

In the case of the front line employee, trust means they can come to work contented; they are safe and, in the most likely set of circumstances, competent to do their job. Most of their undertakings to get to work will have been based on a society that runs on trust. A superficial overview of how trust governs the employee’s main role activity is helpful as a way of establishing the employee’s performance. The role of the employee is to transact service. Service, as previously stated, is an exchange process between the guest and the employee. In this telling, the guest will operate on trust to come in to the relationship with the employee, although from the front line employee’s perspective the guest is a stranger and wants service. So, in this way the employee will meet with a stranger and have the capacity to offer the stranger-guest their service desires. This, on a superficial level, is the process for the progress of service. The employee will undertake this transaction countless times in every shift. Trust underpins their action, however, from an employee’s perspective, unless confronted by the guest with the accusation of distrustful behaviour, it is unlikely the front line employee will acknowledge that trust is the basis of progress in their daily and work lives. Hence, it is unlikely that the employee ever consciously considers the bravery necessary to continually confront strangers throughout their shift. What is evident, however, is the constant energy required on the part of the employee to continually engage with the guest.
Service transaction participants and processes contribute to hospitableness. Many of us would experience personal contact with employees when we experience the hospitality industry; staying at a hotel, for example. The transaction process commences as the guest and the employee come into contact within the context of the organisation, a bounded physical space. The guest comes wanting their service desires met by the employee, whose role it is to deliver service.

The organisation sets their service objectives for the service transaction, and to deliver these objectives in a commercial way, the organisation expects the employee to follow the deliverable guidelines in a standardised process. At this point, the script is static and bounded.

The front line employee’s function is to transact service via the organisation’s service delivery protocols. To carry out their role, they begin the service transaction by following the script. However, the employee is a human being capable of action. As a condition of his/her humanity, the front line employee has freedom to choose to complete the service as per the organisation’s service objectives, or as a person, making their own decisions and creating their own processes. The employee brings a dynamic element to the process when they act in a hospitable way. So, while service may be construed as static when it is tied to following the service script, through the employee transcending this and acting with hospitableness, it becomes a dynamic process.

The guest, also a participant in the service transaction, comes expecting service. From the guest’s perspective, their service desires are the reason
they are transacting, and so the guest has their own process objectives. Because the guest pays for the service, they come focused on their objectives and needs and are not aware of either the employee or others in the process. So, as previously discussed, the guest applies the concept of being served to the employee, and expects to be served. However, guests are also actioning beings. In this way, the guest brings a dynamic capacity to the transaction, and a self-focused desire to achieve their own goals. However, while not reflected on as part of this research, guests as actioning beings might also be considered as capable of acts of generosity.

When I observed the front line employees being generous and kind beyond what seemed an organisational contextual contribution, I investigated skills as a way of explaining their action. When I did not find a complete answer to the query through the exploration of the qualities inherent in skilled employees, I searched further a field. In trust and ‘actioning beings’ I was able to find satisfactory explanations for the employees’ actions. However, the enquiry raised many issues about the role of service in the hospitality industry, and secondly, about the actions of front line employees. The enquiry exposed many contra positions within service encounter processes. I have outlined these positions with the desire that a discussion of these will rally the hospitality industry to review its service education and training protocols and processes. However, my greatest desire and hopefully the contribution of this thesis is that the industry reconsiders the status of the front line employees, and begins to elevate them to a position of respect. After all, these lowly paid and low status employees represent their organisations to the guests, often offering

Comment [d1]: ? Through trust and actioning beings?
guests wonderful, generous service experiences, entirely of their own volition.

The journey of my research has answered my question so that I am able to explain, in my way, the actions of the front line employees as generous, warm, kind people. However, in so doing, my research has revealed a set of essential difficulties at the heart of the industry. As shown, the difficulties exist because of the tension created by humans as actioning beings. However, in the hospitality industry, there is a sense in which the freedom of an actioning being is not recognised and is actually stifled. But you cannot stifle an actioning being!

The essential difficulties that I found to be at the heart of the industry are as follows:

1. A bounded organisation and an unbounded delivery agent

This conflict exists because of boundedness. Organisations are bounded, physically and metaphorically, by their need to operate in a standardised and formatted way with designed processes. Arendt’s Greek Solution (Essay Eight, Point Four) suggests ‘walls’ are built to create a known space; in this case an organisation. Conversely, the agent—in this case, the employee—is unbounded because they are human beings as actioning beings, that is, they are free (Essay Eight).

This conflict results in the employee having the capacity and often the need to go outside the organisation’s protocols thus producing their own form of hospitableness. The organisation cannot cost such an action, so the
organisation has no financial control over the transaction from the point of employee deviation. However, inadvertently, the organisation would condone such an action as this because the organisation is focused on the guest’s expectations being met. This might produce customer loyalty, which competitively is advantageous.

2. **Human to human interaction, so the action outcome is infinite and irreversible; trust will be required**

Both employees and guests are actioning beings. The interaction is described in the hospitality literature as a reciprocal exchange, where money is exchanged for service. While this is the case in many circumstances, the interaction is more than that. The interaction is between two actioning beings. While the employee is offering hospitableness, the guest is taking it and the organisation is being paid. The employee is unreciprocated in this process. I acknowledge that employee satisfaction may result at the completion of the process, but only from within their own values and beliefs; that is, they have offered hospitableness and it has been received. In this way, the transaction is no longer an exchange (Essay Five). Reputed to be an exchange, that is, bi directional, the transaction at the point of hospitableness is unidirectional. As there is no reciprocity in the hospitable space, the guest receives the hospitableness from another human being as a gift.

When an employee is involved in giving throughout their entire work shift and receives money as wages but no essence of humanity in return, then maybe they eventually ‘run out of giving’. This may result in a sense of depletion from always giving and never receiving. This has implications
for employee burnout and potential failure for the organisation to deliver satisfactory service.

3. *A bounded powerful organisation and an isolated, powerless employee*

In service, the organisation exercises a form of control over the employee by creating ‘walls’ to stifle their individuality. In this way, the organisation becomes powerful. The walls in this scenario are service protocols and scripts. Stifling the individuality of the front line employee would appear to render them powerless. In this context, true empowerment is not possible because brand standards are in operation.

Arendt depicts the human condition of labor as being about the physicality of our bodies. In Essay Three, cattlemen work their cattle through hosts’ land, and they are depicted as laborers who receive hospitality. In Essay Four, apprentices are depicted as laborers on their way to becoming craftsmen. Employees might also be depicted as a labor gang; they are the mass workers within the organisation who work in unison to achieve the manual physical outcomes. The employee may be considered powerless as they are isolated from their gang, and transact manually, on a one to one basis. So, in this way, the powerful organisation stands opposed to the powerless employees. By continually making the employee feel powerless, employees may need to create other ways to make themselves feel powerful, such as upgrading rooms beyond their levels of jurisdiction, giving away meals and stealing products from the organisation.
4. **A servant-master historical legacy, producing guest masters and employee slaves**

In Essay Five, I discussed the word ‘service’. Previously, I have suggested that the historical legacy of the word ‘servant’ is associated with guests’ understanding of service, and hence their perception of what role front line employees play in hospitality organisations. Organisations have not placed a framework in place to alter this perception. By perpetuating the master-slave relationship, the organisation denigrates the status of the employee, and so, among other issues, bright capable individuals will not consider the industry for a long term career.

5. **The service language: guests first and employee last**

Throughout Essay Five, I highlighted the language used in the hospitality industry. As Arendt demonstrates, through speech and action we reveal who we are; however, if employees are coerced into taking sides, for example, by abiding rigidly to the organisation’s service protocols against the express desires of guests, then one side becomes wrong and the other side is right. In the mindset of the organisation, this will mean the employee is blamed for the service failure. However, for Arendt, such coerced action gives a false impression of who we are, as our speech reveals nothing of the employee. If employees are forced to constantly back away from establishing themselves as equals, then in this practice, and in Arendt’s telling, their acting and speaking is not genuinely revealing who they are.
In the hospitality industry, when an employee is bounded by service scripts and protocols, then service could be perceived as role playing, and a non-genuine transaction experience will result. Two problems may result: the employee spends their shift being someone else, and that adds stress to their task; secondly, to offer hospitableness to the guest, the employee must draw on their capacity for original and authentic human engagement. When hospitableness is desirable, employees can offer genuine authentic service in the same transaction.

A further issue with the service language is the way employees relate and speak to each other. By speaking to employees the way the industry and management does (command and control), and by using old fashioned language to describe how people relate to each other, people are constructed as not equal in Arendt’s terms. Yet, as Arendt shows, all humans are equal in that they are born alone with their bodies, thus share a common humanity.

6. "The service script is static and hospitableness as the action of an actioning being is dynamic"

Service scripts and protocols are static as they are written objectives designed by management to achieve economic objectives for the organisation (shareholder focus). Actioning beings are dynamic people whose interactions with others create dynamic relationships. The conflict this creates is enormous as transactions will place the employee in conflict with their own values. The high level of service failure might be as a result of this constant conflict.
7. A self-focused guest, wanting to achieve their expectations within their concept of value, and the organisation wanting to maximise profit

In Essay Five, I suggested the guest comes expecting service. This has financial implications for the industry and service failure issues for management. It suggests the organisation will manipulate the guest into complying with the service offered by the organisation. In such a scenario, first time round service failure will be high, and the employee will be blamed.

Historically, examples exist where partners in the hospitable exchange can be seen to conduct their selves harmoniously, where both parties can be treated with respect. For example, we see in Essay Two the historical account of the measures put in place to enable cattlemen to drive their cattle across another man’s land.

8. The employee is torn between their instinct to be an ‘actioning being’, or to represent the organisation by delivering standardised commercial processes

As highlighted earlier, having the employee in constant turmoil results in people not giving of themselves to the best of their ability. However, as front line employees are actioning beings and their human spirit of generosity exists through them being able to exercise freedom, then they have the capability to make decisions and act on them. It may be counter to the culture or directives of the organisation.
9. **Power and equality between the players**

The organisation over-powers the employee in many ways: the blame for failure, the accusation of lack of skills; the denigration of their status. If the power equality struggle could be highlighted and aired, resolution might be possible. For Arendt, all people are born equal. By this, Arendt means when we are born, we are alone with our bodies. However, power exercised over others, that is, domination, means one group is disenfranchised while another group exercises power. Such an arrangement results in the powerful group denigrating the less powerful group. Employees are dominated by management and guests.

10. **Forgiving a guest and blaming the employee for service failure**

Guests and employees are co-producers of the service transaction and so both are complicit in executing the service transaction and arriving at an outcome. However, when service fails as it often does, the organisation does not hold the guest responsible, but holds the employee entirely responsible for the failure. So in Arendt’s terms, forgiveness is offered and given to the guest and punishment and blame are directed at the employee.

11. **A promise to a guest then requiring the front line employee to execute the promise (and expecting the employee to take the blame when the organisational promise does not come to pass)**

As highlighted, the notion of the organisation using a promise to counteract service failure is problematical because the organisation rarely would make a direct and specific promise, and secondly, would expect the
employee to execute the promise. The front line employee is then held accountable for the delivery of the implied promise, and would then be subjected to the blame for failure.

The beginnings that are nested in conclusions

*We shall not cease from exploration*
*And the end of all our exploring*
*Will be to arrive where we started*
*And know the place for the first time.*

T. S. Eliot

The insert above from poet T. S. Eliot sums up for me the place I now find myself in. Having spent many of the past years on this research and more latterly this thesis, I am fully convinced that Eliot’s words apply to my work.

Hospitableness matters because much of what humans do in their lives are about giving and receiving hospitableness. We find hospitableness in so many of our relationships that we can sense it as a factor in the harmonising of the relationships we form, whether it be a fleeting relationship or one of longer duration. Hospitableness is seen in our daily lives by the development of these relationships and our providing for others, sharing of what we have, whether that be our humanity, knowledge, ideas or provisions. Moreover, hospitableness is shown to us by people with whom we may only act momentarily, when others share what they have, and are generous and kind to us.
This thesis is about hospitableness. The journey of the research, recalled for the reader in early sections of the thesis, came by way of my observations of hospitality front line employees in their work place, practicing hospitality. My observations left me contemplating the actions of the employee. I, as an hospitality educator of more than ten years, could see behaviour in employees that could not be accounted for in the curriculum that was being taught at any of the hospitality teaching institutions I had either been involved with or undertaken unit analysis on. If the employees were not being taught this action then where did such a quality come from? So, my research journey began.

In the thesis, I have recounted stories of hospitable acts and hospitableness, ranging across early histories and teachings about hospitable behaviour to the way hospitableness was portrayed when addressed to audiences in film, play, song and poetry. I had a picture of hospitable behaviour. I could reflect on early hospitable practices as unpolluted by consumerism, alongside modern interpretations of hospitableness where human behaviour tangled host-guest delineations. But I still could not reconcile the employees’ actions.

I continued my search by focusing within contemporary industry practices. I considered what the literature said about service and the way organisations practice hospitality service. I trekked through service jargon and practices, looking around the bounded walls of service spaces where employees hung out, and under service protocol stones which I interpreted as static organisational practices laid down by management. Such a
journey revealed the significance of skills in delivering efficiency and productivity, but nothing more. The employee’s role as a transaction partner needed further exploring.

Continuing, I focused on the areas which could be directly attributable to the employee as a transaction contributor but removed from their role as an employee. I explored their humanity. I realised employees’ humanity could not be extinguished by their being in their work context, however it might enhance their roles as employees in high human to human contact relationships. I incorporated two theories into service transaction processes: the role of trust, and the capacity of employees as humans to take action.

Trust harmonises societies and for hospitality employees, trust is a significant factor in executing their roles. Trust permeates our lives and underpins much of what we do. We need to trust others at a local level to offer service to them: as strangers their unknowingness could bring harm to us. However, employees trust the organisation to have practices in place to minimise the possibility of strangers causing them harm. In my construction, I considered it was trust that underpinned the harmonisation of the hospitality stranger-host interactions. Moreover, trust underpins societal relationships, so employees use trust to engage with guests and form relationships with them. It is trust that is embraced so the relationship can progress.

As the employee guest relationship progresses, employees, as seen through Arendt’s theory of actioning beings, have the capacity for action
and so immerses themselves and create a hospitable action space, the place where employees offer hospitableness to the guests. I describe such a transitional space as aromatic.

And so I felt elation at being able to satisfy myself that hospitality front line employees often gave guests a wonderful guest experience by showing humanity toward them, thus creating a hospitable space. The employees’ actions in offering hospitableness were as a result of them being people, members of humanity. I had showed it was plausible and possible for an individual, in their work context, to create a hospitable space, and from within this space, offer guests hospitableness.

However, what I had not bargained for was discovering a raft of hospitality workplace difficulties and tensions from within my analysis. These tensions presented themselves as I unraveled the employee guest organisation triad, which is the scaffolding structure of the hospitality service transaction. Eleven factors illustrate the range and diverse nature of the difficulties that exist in the hospitality industry and that create tensions that have to be counteracted and manoeuvred by employees so they can undertake their work roles.

I reflected on these things and concluded that this enormous global industry, which is a large employer of a diverse range of people, has the capacity to be so much greater. What Lashley and Morrison (eds) did in In Search of Hospitality was give a nod of credibility for others to examine what the host-guest relationship was about and open the door for all levels
of academics to reflect and consider a wide range of applications of hospitality, which over time may permeate the industry.

The Dénouement in presenting a set of difficulties and tensions, hints at why front line employees might have a stressful time at work. These difficulties are of grave concern for me. They add further complex dimensions to the front line employees’ positions by showing that as well as being the visible image of the organisation, they are regularly coping with organisational tensions and are the recipients of frustration and anger from both guests and management as these tensions interfere with delivering efficient and productive service. My reaction at this junction, the end of the thesis, but really the beginning of further research, is to implore the industry to consider the humanity of this large group of employees.

Within this thesis are a medley of thoughts and reflections—intentionally very various—of remarks on histories, the arts, hospitality practice, hospitality employees and hospitable acts. These are offered to add to the conversations of academics, practitioners and others, as the exploration of hospitality and hospitableness continues.

The infusion of hospitableness into a person’s life has the power to change their world. The gift of hospitableness is an action from one human being to another and so may in part be responsible for the harmonising of society. When such an action occurs, people’s differences are minimised and knowledge and acceptance of otherness increases. That hospitality can effect such an achievement creates a desire in me to continue in the quest for a greater understanding of the concept.
A letter to the hospitality industry

Dear Fellow Practitioners,

This correspondence stems from my passion for the industry which has resulted in me undertaking the research which precedes this letter. I am currently involved in the industry: as a practitioner and as a teacher. I teach students studying in the area of hospitality, many of whom work in the industry. In researching and constructing the argument for the thesis, I have had the opportunity to reflect on industry practices and in particular, how service is operationalised. I would like to share some of my thoughts with you.

As many industries have changed and developed over time, so, too has the hospitality industry. From extensive research on the origins and early practices of hospitality, I can see that the concept has endured from ancient times, and over time has played an important role in the development of societies. Moreover, the development of hospitality into a contemporary industry has been the subject of much discussion and academic writing and has important knowledge to share.

As a fellow practitioner, I encourage you to embrace the contribution made to our industry by academia. I found in academia not only important information for us, they can provide the industry with models and theoretical constructs which may be instructive in our drive to continue with the development of the industry.
The industry is now a significant producer of global GDP (gross domestic product), and is an important contributor in areas such as global employment, education and training. It is because of the important contribution the industry makes and continues to make to areas which impact this island nation’s sustainability that I felt I might take the liberty of outlining some of my thoughts.

Over the last two decades, education and training has been seen by developed and developing nations as important for their citizens. An educated citizenry has greater potential to create opportunities for themselves and, further, to approach their every day lives in a meaningful and fulfilling way. Furthermore, opportunities for employment increase as people gain skills and education. In this regard, I feel the industry has a responsibility to continue to provide a legacy for those who will follow. It would be appropriate if the industry could do this by providing leadership in employment attitudes, where we pay due respect to those who are the image of our industry, our front line employees.

I am aware as an industry we have a responsibility to shareholders. Our shareholders have supported us financially, and so, not only deserve our respect by us ensuring we return their funds on time (and so maintaining the reputation of the hospitality industry as a good investment!), but that also we reward our investors for their trust by increasing their investment. Nonetheless, without our employees, we would not be able to operationalise service, and so we would have no industry for shareholders to invest in.
Our front line employees represent us to our guests, and they assist our guests to achieve their desires. Yet, we treat these employees as if they are less important than the guests or the investors. Let me expand. We hold our employees accountable when things go wrong. We blame employees for service failure, either suggesting they lack skills or they do not have the right attitude toward the guests. We disempower our employees by allowing supervisors to interrupt and take over the service transaction when guests complain. We ask employees to put the guest first. We allocate shifts to employees then change dates and times without consultation with employees and then wonder at their negative attitude and sullen behaviour toward guests. So the employees are considered by us as mere vehicles from which we achieve our service goals. But they are people, and they are our equal.

Secondly, for the industry educators and trainers to provide hospitality organisations with superbly trained and educated potential employees, it would be beneficial for us, the industry, to develop a relationship which is informal, but conducive to information sharing, regularly being in each other’s company and giving this sector of our industry access to our operations. When we can all understand and show awareness toward what sort of training is necessary for our employees, and further recognise our employees once they have been educated and trained, it would provide encouragement for relevant and streamlined education and training to be provided. By using in-house training systems, we are decreasing an outside influence, so beneficial to transacting service. The early craft guilds could see the benefit of sending off their apprentices to get some life experiences and to have outside influences impact their skills. And yet, we in the industry develop our own training departments within our properties and groups, as a way of combating what we consider as misdirected and irrelevant training.
Finally, it might be time for the industry to consider the language we use. By continuing with the word service, implying the ones who deliver it as servants, perpetuating the image that we will serve the guest, put them first and meet their desires, we are reinforcing in the guest’s mind their status as being greater than the status of the front line employee. Our hierarchical management structure is implicated, as is the competitive nature of the industry. Both aspects lend themselves to the employees being bottom of the rung fodder, for being used by us, and thereby creating an environment where boss and employee role differences are magnified.

I recognise the difficulty of instituting a global perception of leadership for our industry. Worldwide, the number of employees working in this industry is significant and the diversity of the demographic which they represent may create further areas of difficulty were these ideas to be addressed. Moreover, such reflections are not applicable to all hospitality industry employers; some employers do show leadership in caring for their employees. However, I feel while the majority of employers continue to have a less than respectful attitude toward our front line employees, we are condoning outdated employee employment paradigms.

For many generations of the development of the industry, we have ‘told’ the guests that employees will serve them. We have likewise ‘told’ the employees they will serve the guests. When guests have not had their desires met, we have continually blamed the employee for the failure, and yet as management we have stood by and let a category of people take the blame for matters which are generally the domain of management.
Our employees are vital to our continued growth and profitability. It is time for hospitality industry management to place their full and open trust in these employees, and place organisations’ functional and operational areas in their capabilities. The harmonising role of trust in societies, and in our society, the hospitality industry, might well take note of these harmonising qualities.

My hope is for your continued success,

Genevieve
REFERENCES


