

Culture of Services

Session 6-1 Asceticism

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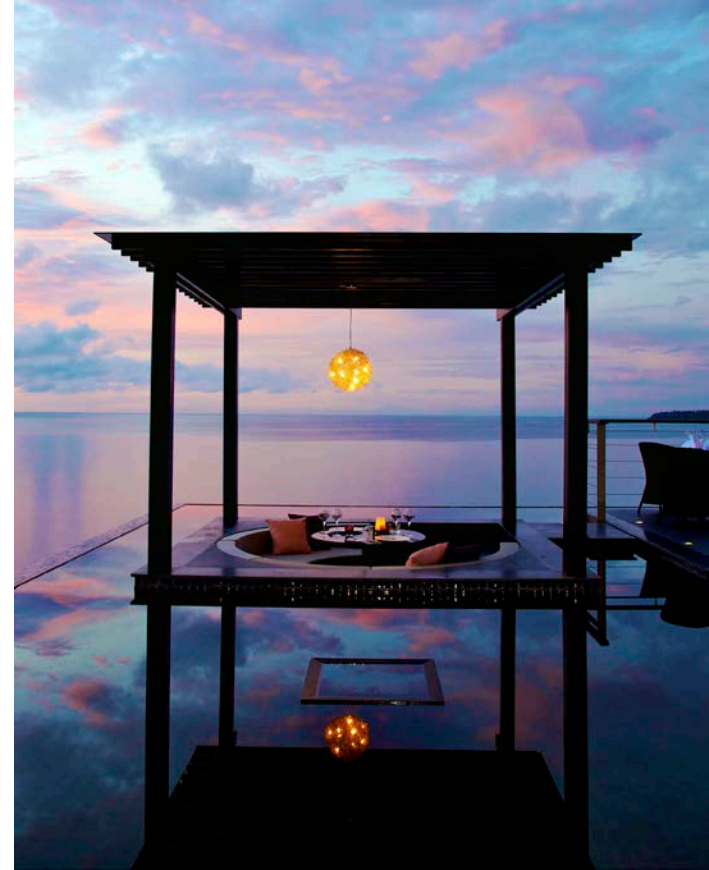
Relaxation in service

Hospitality is about making the guest feel at home and relaxed?

- If you want to be relaxed, you should just stay home and lie on your couch.

What is relaxation in service?

- You feel relaxed when hospitality is extended to you.
- But hospitality is a power struggle.



Relaxation in tension

“ the dominant aesthetic ... proposes **the combination of ease and asceticism**, i.e., self-imposed austerity, restraint, reserve, which are affirmed in that absolute manifestation of excellence, **relaxation in tension**. (p. 176)

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*. (R. Nice). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.



Pierre Bourdieu
(work by Alicia Gaudi CC BY)

An upscale apparel store

A store employee stands still and continues to look at the customer,

- without doing anything else.

This is far from relaxing!

- Every action is watched carefully.



A popular apparel store

A store employee looks at the customer without showing that she is doing so,

- showing instead that she is busy with some other work.

- Looking from the side or back
- Working on the clothes
- Speaking to the air

Looking but not staring.



A popular restaurant

Customers are given ample time to choose their drinks and dishes.

- And as soon as the customers have decided, an employee rushes and takes an order —no waiting.



An upscale restaurant

When an employee comes with a menu, he stands by and takes an order.

- No time is given for customers to discuss and choose their orders.
- But otherwise, customers need to wait long—until the employee comes.



Relaxation in tension

The more expensive the service is,
the more pressure is added on customers.

In high-end services, customers need to
behave with ease, elegance and confidence
under the pressure.

- In popular services, customers are left
alone to behave more freely and casually
while being attended to.