

## **Hospitality in Rural Environments: a reflection on its symbolic reconstruction**

*Hospitalidade Sob a Vertente Rural: uma reflexão acerca de sua reconstituição simbólica*

*Hospitalidad Bajo el Tematica Rural: una reflexión acerca de su reconstrucción simbólica*

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### **Abstract**

This article aims to discuss rural tourism and its implications to the essence of hospitality. It seeks to reflect on a preliminary understanding of tourism in rural environments, as this topic requires a deeper analysis of conceptual environments that are broader than the ones which study rural tourism in Brazil. Some of the considerations in this article arise from a doctor's thesis named "*Análise da relação simbólica da hospitalidade: desdobramentos e apropriações em fazendas históricas inseridas em espaços rurais*" ("Analysis of the symbolic relationship of hospitality: outcomes and appropriations in historical farms inserted in rural spaces"), whose main objective was to analyze the controversial relationship that is established between the domestic hospitality of yesterday and the today's commercial hospitality, based on the study of historical farms in São Paulo state, which nowadays focus on tourism - they were adapted in order to better fit customer's expectations. In this article, the aim was to discuss the symbolic reconstruction of hospitality, interpreting it as a product and reflecting on the marketing of rustic and rural impressions, of simplicity and the ideas revolving around "hillbilly" environments, and how that is dealt in a sophisticated, luxurious, and salable way, according to quality and service criteria, pursuant to the rules in hospitality. The domestic family environment and its characteristics were the object of discussion, in order to better understand this topic, seeking to comprehend which characteristics are representative of the future development of a tourist activity and its respective motivations.

**Keywords:** Rural Tourism; Hospitality; Rural Space; Rurality.

### **Resumo**

*O presente artigo visa discutir a atividade turística rural e suas implicações à essência da hospitalidade. Busca refletir acerca de uma compreensão preliminar do turismo no meio ru-*

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*ral, visto que esse assunto demanda uma abordagem um pouco mais profunda em ambientes conceituais mais amplos do que aqueles em que se estudam o turismo rural no Brasil. Algumas das considerações apresentadas neste artigo são fruto da tese de doutorado intitulada “Análise da relação simbólica da hospitalidade: desdobramentos e apropriações em fazendas históricas inseridas em espaços rurais” cujo objetivo principal foi analisar a relação contraditória estabelecida entre a hospitalidade doméstica de outrora e a hospitalidade comercial da contemporaneidade, tendo como objeto de estudo fazendas históricas paulistas, que hoje se comportam como turísticas, tendo sido adaptadas com vistas a um atendimento voltado para a qualidade e o serviço. No presente artigo, objetivou-se discutir a reconstituição simbólica da hospitalidade, interpretando-a enquanto produto e refletindo sobre a comercialização do rústico e da ruralidade, da simplicidade e do “caipira”, que vem a ser trabalhada de uma forma requintada, luxuosa e comercializável, segundo critérios de qualidade e serviço, em atendimento às regras da hospitalidade. Para um melhor entendimento temático, discutiu-se a respeito do ambiente doméstico familiar e suas características, buscando compreender quais características são representativas para o desenvolvimento futuro de uma atividade turística e suas respectivas motivações.*

**Palavras-chave:** Turismo Rural; Hospitalidade; Espaço Rural; Ruralidade.

## Resumen

*Este artículo discute acerca de las influencias en el proceso del turismo rural y de sus implicaciones para la esencia de la hospitalidad. Tiene como objetivo reflexionar sobre una comprensión del turismo en las zonas rurales, ya que este tema requiere un enfoque algo más profundo en termos conceptuales que aquellos en los que están estudiando el turismo rural en Brasil. Algunas de las consideraciones presentadas en este artículo resultan de tesis doctoral titulada Análisis de la relación simbólica de la hospitalidad: los desarrollos y créditos consignados en finca histórica en el medio rural, cuyo objetivo principal fue analizar la relación contradictoria entre la hospitalidad domestica del pasado y la hospitalidad comercial hoy en día, teniendo como objeto de estudio las fincas históricas de São Paulo, que ahora se comportan como turísticas, habiendo sido adaptadas para un servicio centrado en la calidad. El presente artículo tiene como objetivo discutir sobre la reconstrucción simbólica de la hospitalidad, interpretándola como un producto y pensando en la comercialización de la vida campestre y rural, la sencillez y lo “rústico”, que pasa a ser visto en una forma refinada, de lujo comercial, segundo criterios de calidad y de servicio, de acuerdo con las reglas de la hospitalidad. Por una mejor comprensión, se discutió sobre el entorno familiar y sus características, tratando de entender qué características son representativas para el futuro desarrollo de las actividades turísticas y sus motivaciones.*

**Palabras clave:** Turismo Rural; Hospitalidad; Espacio Rural; Ruralidad.

## 1. Introduction

This article aims to discuss rural tourism and its implications to the essence of hospitality, a topic which demands a broader conceptual approach than the usual ones in Brazil. Regarding



the topic, the objective was a systemic approach of the specific aspects and vicissitudes of the various parts of Brazil's rural environment, once these vary according to the contexts they are inserted in. The information and considerations herein represent excerpts of a broader study, which resulted in a doctor's thesis named "*Análise da relação simbólica da hospitalidade: desdobramentos e apropriações em fazendas históricas inseridas em espaços rurais*" ("Analysis of the symbolic relationship of hospitality: outcomes and appropriations in historical farms inserted in rural spaces"), whose main objective was to analyze the controversial relationship that is established between the domestic hospitality of yesterday and today's commercial hospitality, based on the study of historical farms in São Paulo state, which nowadays focus on tourism - they were adapted in order to better fit customer's expectations regarding quality and service.

In order to prepare the thesis, the topic of the spectacularization and interpretation of hospitality as a product was discussed in the related farms, which belong to *Associação Roteiros de Charme* (Charming Routes Association) and whose slogan is based on the notion of merchandise; that is, which is apparently viewed as a symbol for all things rustic, simple, and country-like is reworked in a sophisticated, luxurious, and marketable way, meeting quality and service requirements in compliance with the rules of hospitality. Among the farms which belong to the Charming Routes Association, only the ones in São Paulo state met the criteria of having been part of Brazil's coffee production cycle. Among them are Capoaava farm in Itu and Águas Claras farm in Itapira - both of which are the focus of this article. These two farms represent important rural properties that provide hotel accommodation and whose appeal includes the country environment, the history, the cuisine, and the architecture in the region.

This study is justified by the fact these farms are part of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and are the remainders of an important production cycle - such as the coffee cycle was - that is strongly represented by the relationships and family rules in those opulent farm houses. Those rules involved hospitality aspects, which were part of the social and political dynamics at the times. Those were based on family and domestic rules, and women had a major role in them. Those large country houses are nowadays used in tourist activities.

The Lefebvrian method was used in order to conduct such analysis, which includes three investigation moments: the descriptive, the analytical-regressive, and the historical-genetic one. The first moment - the descriptive one - regarded the description of the studied topic - in

this case, hospitality in historical farms in São Paulo and the Charming Routes Association, with the support from systematic observation techniques and exploratory interviews. The second moment was the analytical-regressive one, which included the analysis of the described reality, without totally closing it; that is, the contradictions and the possibilities that were observed in the country environment regarding rural tourism. The third moment in the method was the historical-genetic one, a phase that is also known as regressive-progressive, when we meet again what has already been described and reconsider the modifications that were undertaken by hospitality and its relationships with rural space and time, discussing the symbolic appropriation of rurality aspects focusing on hospitality (ORTIGOZA, 2010)

Besides that, it was necessary to further investigate the context of historical farms, as they are inserted in a symbolic context which refers to rurality, to the result from the man-nature interaction, revealing the identity of a people, its way of life, its economic, domestic, and cultural relationships, which are outlined through its link to earth, ensuring a network of signifieds that are built by history and added to the civilizing culture, producing characteristics that are representative for the future development of a tourist activity, catering for the trends that seek that aspect.

During the Brazilian coffee era, in the 19th and 20th centuries, it was possible to observe the custom of having guests accommodated in the *casa grande* (big house), fostering a space for social exchange and relationship that promoted closer bonds by virtue of friendship and especially business negotiations. That is, there was an implied rule that referred to the related context of civility, resulting in the parties exchanging favors, even though such favors went beyond the subjective context: guests did not have to pay for accommodations per se, but there was a symbolic gentleman's duty of good manners.

It was possible to observe the exchange that was established by hospitality also in regards to receiving immigrants in farms, when those arrived to work and received accommodation and food in addition to the wages they had agreed to. Those accommodations became peasant houses and they are nowadays used as residential units - they are adapted to be and marketed as part of the historical environment these tourist packages offer. It is also possible to observe slave houses (*senzalas*) are paradoxically reconceived, from their original purpose of imprisoning slaves, as comfortable, cozy places. Moreover, there is an option to choose

between standard or loft senzalas, which are left unpartitioned as they originally were, ascribing a sense of sophistication by offering loft versions.<sup>2</sup>

In this article, however, the aim was limited to discussing two important concepts that explicit a condition (rurality) and also a situation (rural space) which seem to be important to generate new points of view on the tourism that is practiced in São Paulo's country environment - which, as observed, is surrounded by very particular and unique issues. A relevant issue that permeates the critical comprehension of the rural space as opposed to the urban one is in the memory of generations that migrated from the countryside to cities as part of the industrialization process that took place in past decades, therein included reminiscence of parties, songs, dances and celebrations, storytelling, cuisines, and knowledge on trades and techniques that are about to become extinct. A peculiar situation is therefore noted: social players who are capable of identifying themselves with the rural universe and its elements live in the urban space, thus increasing the dialecticalization of urban/rural opposites, and constituting a source of essential information to disseminate the knowledge from that past to new generations.

Parallel to that, the study and comprehension of the way of life of rural communities is an essential factor to generate continuity of local traditions, knowledge, procedures, ways to socialize, and establishment of identity bonds. Such cultural universe, which is about to disappear, is perceived by other social agents - especially in the economic context of services - as a potential generator or wealth in a perspective of openness to sustainable models of economic activities. On the other hand, the romantic idealization of country life, as expressed in texts of various theoretical matrices throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as the projection of urban, contemporary values in the agricultural space, reveal themselves

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<sup>2</sup> Lofts are mezzanines, mansard roofs, attics, or similar unpartitioned spaces, which are located immediately below the roofs of houses, factories, barns, or warehouses. Its use in architecture may be found from the 18th century, in the *hayloft* expression, which is a hay warehouse that is located in a barn mezzanine. It was also used as the personal quarters of farm workers. The concept of urban *loft* was consolidated worldwide with the reuse of large industrial spaces in New York. Such was repercussion at that time that many of the people who like living in *lofts*, link their birth place to New York, ignoring their rural origins. Considering their original proportions, *lofts* represented special residential spaces, which could only find a parallel in sophisticated penthouse apartments. Among their characteristics, we may point out that they are often located in mezzanines, have high ceilings (generally twice as tall), open plans, free plans, integrated kitchens and living rooms, and, in most cases, large glass areas and no partitions - either horizontal or vertical ones. The concept of *loft* is still evolving by incorporating new elements such as energy efficiency, sustainability, universal *design*, and accessibility.

as generators of distortions that many time imply in the disappearance of traces that were characteristic of community life outside urban centers.

Under that approach, the distinctions between city and country fall apart, as each space in itself has contradictions, ambiguities, and conflicts that result from the interaction between systems with different interests and values. Rural and urban categories do not designate empirically observed spaces or property, but social representations. Also, aspects to value the rural landscape. When we mention the urban man, it is important to point out the culture construction process through which he went through from such individual and collective construction, in order to verify which associations that man is used to doing; that is, which retrieved environmental, sentimental, and social stories will get that man attracted and driven to the movement for seeking something that regards to the rural environment in that context.

Thus, in this article, we will seek to understand the reason for the rising man's migration from the country to the city; his motivations, perspectives, and associations; that is, what makes him get interested in seeking the country rather than the city, investigating why aspects from the family environment and its (oftentimes) symbolic reconstruction in tourist business that are inserted in rural spaces may influence tourists' choices.

## **2. The Rural Space, Rurality, Social Relationships: describing and discussing hospitality**

The country and its rural estate are taken as a reference for hospitality, as well as small towns "in which tourists can experience a closer contact with bucolic environments, as well as with local costumes and daily routines of country life" (PORTUGUEZ, 2002, p.30). The identification of that identity and cultural potential is indeed a great strategy to foster hospitality.

Regarding that matter, Baptista (2002) calls the attention to the need for hospitality ethics that makes places more humane. As pointed out by the same author, the towns are losing their sense of common spaces and collecting non-places - anthropologically empty spaces - leading to weakened social bonds, which may negatively affect hospitality, reinforcing the search for rural environments. Several tourist spaces evolve through occupation waves, by following trends, or by being produced through the consumption of space, leading to the destruction,

loss of identity, and loss of cultural/social resources of a community, population, thus damaging hospitality, reminding us of its fragile nature as a highly specialized performance.

However, singularities aside, in rural hospitality or tourism in small towns, we may observe some peculiar characteristics such as: higher expressiveness of private hospitality compared to the commercial one, with closer relationships and receiving of people in the residential spaces both serving as restaurants and hotels, as people tend to be less suspicious of others, because they are not as exposed to violence as inhabitants of big cities are. That is, that space keeps being essential as a concrete reference of social practice, which is filled with symbols that access individual records of the human being, according to the each person's personal experience.

A symbol that is very characteristic of rural hospitality is the offer of homemade products such as sweets, cakes, teas, coffee, cookies, natural juices, among others. Paraphrasing Freyre (1997, p. 23), "there is life in cake or candy recipes", which leads us to understand how important is offering food in the construction of the guest-host relationships, and to take back discussions regarding gender relationships and the role of women in household chores. As an icon of the social and historical representation of rural hospitality, we have the work of Monteiro Lobato, *O Sítio do Pica Pau Amarelo* (Yellow Woodpecker farm), in which Mrs. Benta always offered cake, a snack, or a beverage that were prepared by Aunt Anastacia to her guests, besides affectionately receiving unusual characters from fables and other stories, who were always welcome to the farm.

In the case of *Águas Claras* farm, guest are received by an employee who takes care of the whole farm, including all tasks from the responsibility of hiring workers to the organization of the kitchen and routinely tasks in the farm. Furthermore, the whole ambiance of space takes us back to the country, to a simple lifestyle, from floors to lights and to a wood-fired oven. There is always cake and coffee on the table. The reception is formatted in a customized way, where guests get to choose what they want to do; that is, there is flexibility in the service, in order to better suit guests' needs.

The arrangement of the furniture, the atmosphere in the place, and the closeness between employees and tourists cause the family issue to emerge. It is possible to recreate situations that are similar to the ones that happen in a family environment, with people who are dear and intimate to them. Family ends up being reproduced spontaneously and naturally, and the effects are felt



by all. There is therefore an expression of the domestic hospitality, even if it is in an environment in which commercial hospitality also prevails - in the latter, the exchange is financial. There are several other employees in the farm, who are always eager to accompany guests in visits to the facilities. They claim guests like to interact with the employees and the atmosphere in the place.

Almeida and Rield (2004) summarize in a very proper way the motivations of a tourist, in a way to corroborate with Rodrigues (1996), emphasizing the visit or stay in the rural environment as the search for the life experiences of simple people, as opposed to the urban behavioral patterns, which are considered cold, distant, and detached. Understanding such motivations is important to encourage the rural population better appreciate the differences between the city and the country.

In order to illustrate the exchange and possibilities for socialization experienced, there are several testimonies from Capoava farm website that reflect the guests' satisfaction and their feeling of being welcomed:

Capoava gathers nice people, good conversation, cold beer, natural beauty, and first-class Brazilian food. Its hospitality and welcoming gestures are ingredients that set it apart from any other hotel of its type. You feel at home there... or better said, in your own farm!!!! Congratulations to everyone who is responsible for making Capoava what it is!!! (ZÉ DIOGO, 2014).

Capoava Farm Hotel is indeed all that: a sophisticated hotel, part of the Charming Route, with magnificent food, a striking natural landscape, and plenty of activities. However, Capoava Farm Hotel is above all an extension of our house, due to the quality customer service and the rich details that are evident everywhere. Nothing compares to sunset at Capoava after a busy day. (ZÉ BOURBON, 2014).

Capoava is synonym to joy for me and for my daughter! We had and still keep having unforgettable times at Capoava! (FERNANDA MASCIGRANDE, 2014).

Capoava Farm only makes me think of: friends, good food, leisure, plenty of Sun, bike rides, walking, coconut cocktails with little coconut pieces by the pool, besides much fun and wonderful nature! It is a place I always intend to come back to, it is already part of my life. (FERNANDA VILLELA, 2014).





From those testimonies, it is possible to notice guests seek the coziness of their houses in the farm, as they report they feel at home and that the people and the place are welcoming. Food, as a token for hospitality, is also mentioned. Its preparation, its seasoning, and its careful, loving cooking process. The Charming Routes Association is also remembered, and its sophistication is something valuable to guests, reflecting its quality service, which is anything but damaged for being rustic; on the contrary, its rustic feel is what makes it attractive. It is also necessary to notice that the farm is considered as a reference for families, especially for children who will most certainly keep the moments and the time they spent in the farm in their memories, motivating them to always come back - in the future with their families and respective children.

Its short distance from São Paulo city is also a strong suit which is mentioned by its guests, as well as its natural environment, filled with green spaces, animal, and fresh air, which contrasts with the frantic dynamics of big cities, which are chaotic, polluted, and fast-paced. That makes people say the farm is already a part of their lives. Another relevant point is the opportunity for meeting people, which something hard to do in big cities, as well as the possibility to tighten one's bonds with their family.

The notion of family heritage is therefore part of both rural properties and the relationships of altruism and affection as variables for the construction of this new rurality; that is to operationalize social practices and transform them into a force of attraction. The valuing of tradition is mixed to the revaluing of nature as a means for leisure and contemplation both in the mobilization of neo-rural layers and in the ones of weekend tourists, which opens up new fields for dispute and conflict with the locals - however, it opens new work perspectives for that same population (CARNEIRO, 2001).

The new experiences created by that process nurture form a cultural and social diversity that fosters exchange, enriching cultural and symbolic assets and increasing the network of social relationships. Social heterogeneity, despite producing a straining situation, promotes the enrichment of the social fabric in the regions, without it necessarily resulting in loss of local cultural identity. Diversity may play a role in consolidating the identities of groups by enabling self-consciousness in the relationship with the other, which may equally contribute to define an urban identity inside a so-called rural location, and vice-versa. (CARNEIRO, 2008, p. 33).



In that context, tourist activity promotes the dissemination of diversity and increases the opportunities for social change, which are the core of the concept of hospitality itself. The rural space is thus, translated in a particular way for use of space and social life that has, as characteristics, a small number of people and buildings, a predominantly agricultural, sylvan, and pastoral economic use, a lifestyle that revolves around collectivity, and a peculiar relationship with space and a clearly peasant identity.

The state of art regarding rurality is broad, and several authors discuss that issue. The rural style is then treated as a specific form of relationship of society with space, which has a peculiar characteristic: its local insertion, where the notion of rural society in the singular becomes empty. Carneiro (2001) leads us to think of rurality as:

A dynamic process being whose local culture elements are constantly being restructured from the incorporation of new values, habits, and techniques. Such process implies a movement towards two direction where, on one side, the reappropriation of the local culture elements is identified to start from a reinterpretation that is made possible by the emergence of new codes, and, on the other side, the appropriation by urban culture of cultural and natural assets from the rural world, thus producing a situation which may contribute to nurture sociability and reinforce its bonds with a location. From that gathering, singular cultural expressions that supposedly represent the synthesis or combination of distinct cultural universes may also arise, supporting, nonetheless, notions of social space and time that are different from each other (Carneiro, 2001, p. 15).

Not only coupled with the survival factor, new proposals and alternatives for using that space arise, other than the specifically agricultural ones; that is, the novelty in the contemporary rural world is supposedly in the combination of activities that until then were typical of the urban environment with the occupations that are characteristic of the rural environment. Out of that, notions that are complementary to the characterization of the rural world, which innovates itself, arise: the one of rural-urban continuum and the pluriactivity one - discussed by Carneiro (2001) - which in that case the exploratory activity of tourism supposedly fits in. Under that approach, the distinctions between city and country fall apart, as each space in itself has contradictions, ambiguities, and conflicts that result from the interaction between

systems with different interests and values. Rural and urban categories do not designate empirically observed spaces or property, but social representations; that is, there are social experiences and relationships that are considered to be rural, but which manifest themselves in spaces that are regarded as urban. That is, we refer to contexts of culturally-built multi-functional landscapes. As interpreted by Carneiro (2001):

The rural world can, in some contexts, be an expression of tradition, authenticity, interpersonal relationships, simple things, of lack of progress, as it also can - through a symbolic recreation by the social players - contain icons of modernity and be an expression of a modernization that is conducted in typically urban contexts. (Carneiro, 2001, p. 2).

In this context, the notion of territory reinforces the idea of a location that is not limited to geographical or political-administrative aspects, and serves as a reference for identities that are built from the intersection of geophysical, economic, and cultural aspects. It refers much more to an image and a representation that are fed by and feed from a network of social relationships, and they may also be configured as a subsidy to increase the development of tourism and all specific aspects required for the attractive component of such activity, such as the social relationships that are established in a location or in a venue and its surroundings, for example.

The problem with the contemporary imagination on the urban versus rural juxtaposition reveals the urgency to understand that is a construct that is formed by 1) fragments of ideas that came from theoreticians that though about nature (understood as a natural environment), even after it was already changed by the human presence; 2) preparation of these theoretical fragments by layman reasoning throughout the decades, this process being intensified and changed when media products are exhibited (soap operas, films, documentaries, etc.) whose ambiance is the rural space. It is important to mention that such screening of what is typical of the rural world by the communication media, generally speaking, would produce a collage of characteristics of landscapes and societies, which would also lead to anachronisms.

Considering that discussion regarding the collective imagination and what can really be considered as being associated with the rural landscape, it is important to consider the discussion

concerning tourism and rural hospitality and the consequent interpretation of that concept, in order to understand the symbolic aspects that are converted in value for tourists. Regarding the valuing of the rural landscape, rural tourism has several positive points, with a special mention to the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, as well as to the promotion of interchange among rural and urban protagonists minimizing the isolation that is inherent to both through that contact that is provided by tourist activity. Also, from the perspective of farmers, rural tourism also works as a search for alternatives regarding economic gain for country people, once the income arising from tourism is better return than the ones from agriculture, becoming a complementary - in some cases, even replacement - income source. Country inhabitants are then only responsible for keeping their farms fit to be used in the tourist activity (ALMEIDA and RIELD, 2004).

Through that contact from urban man with his rural counterpart, the possibility for one's to return to their origins may be very likely to take place through the experiences they may be exposed to and through the strong bond between those venues with earth and with history - thus reflecting, in an even more genuine form, the aspects of hospitality, as the place is the basis for the reproduction of life and can be analyzed by the triad between the inhabitant, his identity, and his surroundings. Hospitality, according to Cruz (2002), is a result from a construction that is not only social-spatial of the place, but also from the cultural, political, and professional construction.

In the cases of both farms analyzed, it was possible to observe an intersection point between different guests, specifically the past they lived and experienced, and the environment and atmosphere that are found in big country house facilities, besides the relationship that is easily established between employees and guests, between unknown guests, between guests, nature, and animals, regardless of that relationship and this environment being reconstructed. The fact is this moment takes place in a natural way, due to previous personal references that surface spontaneously.

Tuan (1980, p. 106), uses the term *Topophilia* to describe "the affective bond between a person and their place or physical environment". Recently, the term *Biophilia*, which was described by Wilson (1984 *apud* STRUMINSKI, 2003, p. 121), expresses the "idea from the intrinsic human need to get in touch with nature".

Stephen Kellert (1993 *apud* STRUMINSKI, 2003) grouped, in nine biophilic types, what the individual or collective values demonstrate, as certain opinions and values can only be in the interest of a single individual or group. These basic values guide the relationship from human beings to the natural world. They could serve as elements in the understanding of different conceptions and proposals for intervention on the natural environment, as described in Box 1.

Term	Definition	Function
Utilitarianism	Practical and material exploitation of nature	Physical standing and safety
Moralist	Affinity, spirituality, ethics, altruism,	Protection
Negativist	Fear, aversion, alienation	Safety, protection, phobias
Symbolic	Use of nature for metaphorical expressions	Mental development, communication
Aesthetics	Physical beauty (ideal) of nature	Inspiration, harmony, peace, safety, model
Dominionism	Dominion of nature	Achievement, physical control, courage, skills to subjugate
Naturalism	Satisfaction with direct contact with nature	Physical and mental development, curiosity, activities in nature
Humanist	Deep emotional feelings for individual natural elements (tree, animals)	Cooperation, altruism, strengthening of relationships between groups, people, and animals
Ecological-scientific	Systematic studies of nature	Seeking of knowledge and understanding

**Box 1 – Types of Biophilic Values**

Source: adapted from Kellert (1993 *apud* STRUMINSKI, 2003)

In order to analyze the interactions that exist between human beings and their environment it is required that three areas are known: they are cognition (procedures for perceiving, knowing, and thinking); affectivity (which is related to feelings, sensations, and emotions) and the connection between the human action on the environment, as a response to cognition and affectivity. Understanding the cognitions of the perception and affectivity of the human being is fundamental in order to plan actions and policies that involve work in rural tourism, focusing its needs, past records, and an intrinsic desire for the search of the self, to the analyze properly the symbolic appropriation from which managers will resort to in order to reach success in a venture.

### 3. Contradictions and possibilities in the Rural Space

At this time we will seek to understand the reason for the rising man's migration from the country to the city; his motivations, perspectives, and associations; that is, what makes him get interested in seeking the country rather than the city, in the urban environment. When we mention the urban man, it is important to point out the culture construction process through which he went through from such individual and collective construction, in order to verify which associations that man is used to doing; that is, which retrieved environmental, sentimental, and social stories will get that man attracted and driven to the movement for seeking something that regards to the rural environment in that context.

Geertz (1989) states man needs symbols to reconnect to the world, as it is not possible to make associations without symbolic representations; that is:

Not guided by cultural standards - organized systems of signifying symbols - the behavior of man would be virtually uncontrollable, a simple chaos of meaningless acts and emotional explosions, and his experience would not have any form, practically. (GEERTZ, 1989, p. 33).

It is important to consider that time and space will inevitably influence affective life which will consequently dictate the dynamics of internal and external distancing regarding the impersonal contacts life in cities imposes. The aggrandizement of the calculability principle, indifference, and the *blasé* feeling as typical emotions from the qualitative undifferentiation that is operated by money that is transformed in an universal means for exchange are problems in the social dynamics of metropolises. From that premise, the constant search for the rural, bucolic world may also be ascribed to the constant movement of dehumanization of cities by the time of merchandise and the financial capital, denying its community heritage of place for meetings and struggles. According to the author, "cities become privileged centers of consumption in spite of their meanings as political stages" (MARQUES, 2002, p. 207).

The claiming of nature and the wish to enjoy it is directly announced as a trend to escape the run-down city, the alienated urban life. That claim is a deviation from the wish of a life mediated by use value, from the utopia of a full life in which we may fulfill our needs for activities of creation, art, information, collective imagination, and playfulness met, besides the

socially-created basic needs. Cavaco (1996) calls our attention to the fact that the rural space does not correspond, however, to a truly new tourist destination. According to the author, vacation migrations translated, for a long time, the city/field relationships, through the rising urbanization of the former country nobility and by the territorialization of urban bourgeoisie. For many, it did not regard to pauses at work and in the routine of their daily lives for the recovery of physical and mental forces, but rather to a change of environment and routine, whether it is an idle one or not. Seasonal or periodical visits, which are many times linked to harvest times, did not have any commercial dimension or trigger change processes in the local socioeconomic structures.

In other cases, rural spaces were sought after and visited because of climates and quality in their environments. Some of which were chosen due to their healing properties, presence of hot springs, mountains, or plains. Over the last fifty years, looking for the field and traditional rural spaces as vacation places was recorded to have new dynamics and increased need for the creation and development of facilities that are capable of receiving tourists who choose them, thus defining new procedures for work, reception, and hospitality.

Historical farms, however, represent a period of economic apex and, mainly, the beginning of a new cycle when new opportunities and relationships are marked by the presence of foreigners in Brazil. In this environment, domestic hospitality prevailed, and it was marked by the strong female presence and all rituals that accompany the female figure. She used to be in charge of all household chores and also represented men in their communities in case they were out; that is, women represented their husbands publicly when they were absent. Also, in periods of hostility and war, when the communication media were slow, the woman used to take over all responsibilities and obligations. It is possible to observe, though, that the woman used to occupy a noble and decisive role in social life and exercised an effective power in the scenario she acted (BAUER, 2001).

Nowadays, those spaces that are constituted in studied historical farms have been reused and appropriated by the tourist activity, serving accommodation purposes and composing the structure regarding required equipment for tourism. Another interesting factor is that two forms of hospitality coexist in those structures: the domestic and the commercial ones. In

the case of Capoava and Águas Claras farms, their owners spend a great deal of their times in them, residing in them during most days of the week, especially on weekends, in order to supervise their services from closer and to ensure the quality in their guests' experience, many times taking part in to that experience with their visitors.

Hospitality, therefore, in the context of organizations, tends to promote the relationship between the facilities and society. In that perspective, the corporate management dynamics is broadened. Its purpose should not restrict the organization in the sector only for meeting market needs, but go beyond the economic goal and reach the social one, including relationships of trust and altruism, commitment, and reciprocity, in order to reach hospitality. (FONTES and LAGE, 2003).

According to Lefebvre (1974), space cannot only be faced as a place or the social relationships that come from it, as it represents several socio-material concerns. Space is a geographical location where the action is established in combination with all possibilities for social interaction; that is, as a property, social relationships can be considered part of social relationships of production; that is, the economic base. Besides that, space is both a consumption item and a political instrument.

When we observe, for example, the facilities of Capoava Farm, we notice it was necessary that its structure be adapted so it could receive tourists. However, that change is not that significant, as several *casa grande* facilities remained unaltered, as hospitality was already practiced in the golden era of coffee. Furthermore, as guests' needs are properly met in a professional way, and they are treated better than they expected, let us say there is an expression of hospitality, even though the exchange argument is currency, as the represented social exchange may coexist - for example, in a good relationship between a host and a guest, a moment of cultural or historical enjoyment that was not included in the daily accommodation rate.

The farm structures were also designed to receive people, where the dynamics of social, family, or business relationships took place, whose porches, pergolas, big rooms, and even chapels represented the space where by then demands were met, contracts were signed, and the life dynamics of big farms occurred. It is interesting to notice that nowadays needs and purposes are altered, but adapted structures are more than adequate to receive, serve, and, provide hospitality.



Several lines of investigation contributed to the cultural heritage studies as material assets produced, which circumscribed past or present cultures, in a way to give them identity and legitimacy. The intention is to consider not only buildings, but also the symbolic production and non-material assets produced and kept by social groups as cultural heritage, whether it is through rituals or representations; belief of memory systems; through the social practices informed by tradition, as well as the different manifestations of their territorialities.

Such personalism supposedly characterizes our “gentle man”, fostering a kind of sociability that is proper of Brazilians: kindness, hospitality, generosity (HOLANDA, 1997, p. 146), such virtues that, however, instead of expressing civility, are indeed “legitimate expressions of an extremely rich and overflowing emotional background”, (*idem*, p. 147). Thus, Holanda will outline the traces of the national character: the use of diminutives to express familiarity, aversion to distances, religiosity, which makes God and the saints old family members.

It is possible to observe the presence of religious symbols and images in the large farm houses of Capoava and Águas Claras, as well as chapels attached to their main houses, which goes to show owners care about such value and make a point of making those values visible, in order to get people together and strengthen their bonds through shared beliefs. The large living room communicates with the porch and also with the kitchen, as the physical space used to be a single one, where the people entered the house through the porch and walked up to the kitchen in the back. That situation reminds us of Capoava Farm big house, where the main house has a porch in order that the gentlemen be able to receive visitors, talk, deal with business, socialize, exercise hospitality. All of that contradicts the politeness and civility as constituted in Europe, in which it is fundamental to keep a certain social distance as a form of defense against society. Holanda (1997) therefore builds the image of a cordial man, representative of Brazil, and bases him in the family-cultivated personalism that was inherited from new Christians.

While they are in the house, guests may be seen as part of a big family, with the key provider almost being considered as a “motherly” figure. Women and men do not only experience the house in a different way, but there are also good reasons to believe the domestic environment

occupies a more central position in the lives of women than in the ones of men, as a result from the domestic role of women: the household chores:

The very changes in the female condition always conform to the logic of the traditional model between male and female roles. Men kept dominating the public space and the area of power (especially economic and productive), whereas women remained (predominantly) destined to the private space (domestic, a place for reproduction) in which the logic of economy of symbolic assets is perpetuated, or to these types of extensions for that space, which are the social services (especially the hospital-related ones) and the educational ones, or also the universes of symbolic production (literary and artistic fields, journalism, etc). (BOURDIEU, 1999, p. 112).

In order to understand the issue of female submission, it is important to remember that women have always been treated by societies as means of exchange in societies, representing a way through which men accumulate social and symbolic capital, which was obtained through marriage. Nowadays, also, women directly and decisively contribute in the production and reproduction of the symbolic capital of a family, strengthening the domestic core. It is possible to notice the female participation in farms through their presence in business, as kitchens are managed by women, who are wives of employees. They are mixed in management, due to their intrinsic characteristics and aptitude to care, serve, and organize the house, which reminds us again of the essence of hospitality. Abrams (2001) makes a reflection on the possible women's tendency to the "act of serving", seeking to investigate and justify such behavior, which is called "shift". According to the author, women can very easily shift their attention and their focus from themselves to the lives and needs of others, letting others occupy central roles in their lives. To Bourdieu (1999), the role of the woman in the domestic context greatly focuses on creating integration in the family and a relationship with its social surroundings:

Supporting blood-related relationships and all the capital social with the organization of a whole series of ordinary social activities, such as the meals who are shared by the whole family, or extraordinary ones, such as parties and ceremonies to celebrate family bonds and to ensure the maintenance of social relationships and the social projection of the family, or the

exchanges of gifts, visits, letters, postcards, or phone calls. (BOURDIEU, 1999, p. 116).

That analysis by Bordieu (1999) on the role of women within family relationships suggests it is responsible for keeping relationships humane in regards to cultivating family bonds and keeping families in touch with their social environments. Thus, as everything indicates, even when she is restricted to the domestic space, the woman seems to have an aptitude to cultivate relationships, and she does that by not only promoting social events, by bringing people to her space (home), and by keeping bonds with people through communication media (phone calls, letters, etc.).

The course of family life is a useful conceptual tool to understand the dimensions of socially-built gender roles. While studying small enterprises, that tool can be shown to be valuable in order to understand how gender-related roles can support interactions between guests and employees. In this case, the place is configured as the sharpest expression of a local order, which is seen as the one that is especially defined by proximity relationships, by co-presence, by a shared routine, and finally, by a bundle of relationships that are organized in a place, which supposedly corresponds to the scale of residence, shelter, home. Lefèbvre (1974) states space representations have considerable power and influence in the production of such space, especially by taking into account that they correspond to a system of dominant signs, symbols, and representation codes in a society that are related to the exercise of power and to the conformation of the abstract space.

Term *resided*, from *reside*, adds a new element to the idea of space, man. The space gains meaning and value due to the very presence of men, whether it is to physically accommodate him, such as his home, and to serve as stage for his activities. At the moment man is inserted into it, the landscape is transformed into a place. The very presence of man changes and qualifies it, once a place is a space whose a certain value was assigned by man, and this one is included in the former, physically or symbolically.

Tuan (1983) relates time and place in three ways: we grow attached to a place due to the time we live in it; the place is supposedly a pause in the time current of a movement; that is,

a place is supposedly a space for resting, procreating, and defending oneself; and, lastly, a place is supposedly time made visible; that is, a place as a memory of past times, which belongs to memory. Tuan (1983, p. 33) says the meaning of space is often merged with the one of place, once both categories cannot be understood individually. According to him, what starts as an undifferentiated space is transformed into a place as we know it better and assign value to it. “A space is transformed into a place as it gains a definition and meaning. When a space is entirely familiar, it becomes a place (ditto). The author defined places as “centers to which we assign value, and where our biological needs of food, water, rest, and reproduction are met” (ditto); that is, “The way through which you and I are, the way through which us humans are on the land, it is to inhabit” (ditto).

Thus, a discussion about the home is appropriate here. The home, according to Coulanges (1981):

He takes possession of the ground; assumes ownership of this plot of land which then becomes his property. Families are connected to their homes and these, on their turn, are strongly connected to the ground. As its home, the family will always occupy this place. The place belongs to the family, it is its property, a property that does not belong to only one man, but to a family, whose members must come, be born, and die there, one after another (COULANGES, 1981, pp. 64 and 65).

Regarding the host/guest dynamics, it is important to point out that a home can be symbolically used in different ways: as an object of status, an expression of aesthetic taste, comfortable hideaway, place for expressing order and beauty, female coziness, and place where one is embraced by his wife/mother. The home and its contents are identified as symbolic representations of our egos. Insights regarding the reality of family life, as a key attraction to guests, especially the foreign ones, were performed by Stringer (1981) and Pearce (1990), where it was possible to identify that domestic accommodation may work as a cultural need.

#### **4. Meeting again with Present Time: modifications and appropriations assumed by hospitality**

This article intended to discuss the environment in which hospitality may be expressed and how its practices can be conducted in various contexts, with a special mention to the rural space and through rural tourism. It was possible to verify that hospitality resorts to domestic possibilities and large spaces available in large farm houses and historical farms, which are adequate to provide accommodations.

The main strong suit to be mentioned regarding rural hospitality is the simplicity of stimuli, people, and easier reading of its constitutive elements, which, according to Grinover (2002), makes the place more welcoming, and, according to Rodrigues (1996), meets the motivations of tourists visiting rural environments. One should also remember that, the more these genuine elements are conserved, more capable locations will be to face this new tourist trend of searching cultural authenticity.

Regarding symbols and the fact that hospitality is filled with them, resorting to those tools in order to attain commercial hospitality, it is impossible not to associate hospitality with a merchandise. There is the moment where the merchandise totally occupies social life, where not only the relationship with the merchandise is visible, but one cannot see anything beyond it: the world which is seen is its world. Debord (1994) compares that time to the one of the second industrial revolution, whose unconscious consumption, for the masses, becomes a supplementary duty to the unconscious production.

Alienation can be found in hospitality whenever people individually or collectively act in a way to mask the authenticity of facts and events, molding reality and history in a way to attract, impress, and please visitors, for example. Here the contradiction observed in the hospitality universe is observed: its dubious and representative characteristic, even though genuine moments can be observed, of spontaneity of relationships and events between guests and hosts.

For the cases of a commercial hospitality, there are those hotels that forge reception situations, reproduce or rebuild family environments for guests to feel really welcomed, and that is nothing but returning to the idea of tourist activity as a merchandise: it is bought, evaluated, exchanged. Bed and breakfast hotels, for example, exemplify the trade of services

which are firstly attributed to the domestic environment, and reinforce the existence of a relationship of hospitality within that commercial activity, once besides involving tasks related to shopping, preparing, and providing food; cleaning and tidying the rooms in the house to provide guests with a clean environment, these business end up enabling the recreation of the home inside an organized, welcoming, and safe environment.

Taking as the starting point the guests' testimonials figuring in Capoava Farm website itself, for example, it is possible to visualize to which extent these people can connect to the country, to the experience, to socialization, to other people, in summary, to the activities farms propose to conduct, and, above all, they are somehow connected to the best aspects of themselves, as they are open to experience true times of exchange, joy, care, being reconnected with a characteristic that is natural and cultural from human beings, which adds sophistication to the provision of care.

The fact is some individuals, as Camargo (2008) reminds us, are guided by rules that have ancestrally dictated the postures of individuals or groups before foreign individuals or groups. That is the gift system, in which exchanges are not balanced as in the commercial system, which has become the tonic of human exchange since the 16th century. However, unlike commercial exchanges which are resolved through payment, the gift system is infinite and is still perceived nowadays. There is a certain recognition of the others in those relationships, a knowledge which is generated from sharing something that is valuable to both parties - which, in this case, could be exemplified through the connection with earth, through a taste for gastronomy, and through one's childhood memories, his past experiences in his grandmother's house, who family bonds are present.

The references which may be mentioned regard everything symbolic that is recognized by a guest; that is, the country cuisine, whose dishes are prepared in wood-fired ovens, where food is not taken from; the grass and the green areas filled with animals, the smell of dirt, the freshness of the grass, the fresh breeze of the country, the children playing in the rain, *moda de viola*, and storytelling, a woodfire and a guitar, the old elements of the coffee planting season, the coffee itself, its aroma, its freshness and heat, drunk as soon it is percolated, still through a cloth strainer. The fact that these symbols make reference to a good period from childhood, both in visitors' and host's minds, also makes farms places that are impregnated by references.

It is therefore possible to notice that the increasing search from large city residents for the field, nature, quality of life, and also a trip back to their roots. However, according to a study conducted by Resende (2007), when some people seek the field (that is, that search is idealized, the place of ease, of green, of “slow time”), they also seek access to urban-industrial consumption assets. For that reason, the author’s study identifies farm hotels that, albeit reproducing a typically rural landscape, seek to offer their guests special services, such as access to Internet, pools, sporting courts, satellite television, among others. Indeed, a network of non-agricultural services or even urban services in a scenario that, for the traditional standards, would be a typically rural area.

In the case of Águas Claras farm, there are rooms with plasma televisions and cable connection with several channels and programs available. There is also Internet connection at certain places in the farm, and the same holds true at Capoa. Nonetheless, it is important to also discuss to which extent a home can be inhabited; that is, to which extent the domestic place is not only presented as an uninhabited space, a store window, which is destined to amaze the guest/visitor. Within that premise, it may be useful and instructive to verify the wish and need of guests regarding these symbolic meanings, once there are businessmen who are interested in that issue.

Debord (1994) ponders the tourist activity is configured as a subproduct of the circulation of merchandise, and it is presented as a human circulation that is considered as consumption, with it being resumed in the leisure of seeing and taking part of something that has become trifling; that is, the alienation per se, the reconfiguration, the reconstruction for selling, makes the tourist activity something trivial. The same modernization that took time away from traveling also took reality away from space, according to the author. The discussion regarding the spectacularization, which is suggested here for future discussions, brings up issues that take into account the reusing of spaces, units, and services, components of the structure and dynamics of farms, submitting this analysis to the critique of the merchandise and the possibility of expressing hospitality.

There is, we can say, a certain finishing for consumption, as farm structures are adapted to better express hospitality, in order that the reception activity indeed take place. Examples from that adaptation may be observed in the storage containers, in the main house, in the former slave houses, and also in the pergola, which we might say about the merchandising of hospitality components: what used to happen is what still happens: exploration that is operationalized into a business strategy. In the past, the *senzala*. Nowadays, the reception desk.



The mediation of market conditions and goes across all sectors of cultural life, and all fields are subordinated to an appeal to pleasure and to playfulness. The transformation of culture into a merchandise and its corresponding massification and consumption as leisure activities, herein represented by the environment of farms and their activities, end up outlining a particularly rich field for the perception of contemporary contradictions and strains, where hospitality is once more found; that is, the interested receiving, the exchanging that is never free from reciprocity, the commercial and the gifted aspects, after all.

It is a space in which the freedom that is inherent to the small political impact in the effective power relationships, with the need for successful sales. Consumption somehow ends up determining leisure and tourism, whose great facilitator of such process is the merchandising of relationships, with the subordination of the invading market. People became consumers of goods in their free time, and they were reinforced by the discursive power of media, which is one of the entities responsible for propagating the illusion that sensations and experiences can also be bought. The practice of consumption is not only carried out through purchasing certain objects, but also symbols, significations, services, and information (symbolic actions and productions), as discussed by Baudrillard (1991).

In the case of farms, therefore, the paradoxical question that was observed in the core of hospitality would not be different, the one through which experiences can be bought and consumption reflects a recreated environment. Nonetheless, the impressions from the guests, as portrayed in the testimonials that were described on Capoava Farm website, reflect a very natural and somehow original environment, where life goes on in its essence, with events being attributed to the dynamics of each relationship and to which it naturally carries in it. Through that contact from urban man with his rural counterpart, the possibility for one to return to their origins may be very likely to take place through the experiences they may be exposed to and through the strong bond between those venues with earth and with history - thus reflecting, in an even more genuine form, the aspects of hospitality.



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