

# Designing for Participation: Dignity and Autonomy of Service (Part 2)

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## The Problem of Service Indignity

Service is everywhere. People hardly go a day without relying on the vast network of services in our society, and service organizations have enormous impact on the customers and workers within their systems. The idea of designing for service has been increasingly accepted; still, the principle of service design is often grounded on theories from business, from which service is understood as a mass-produced commercial entity. Although this heritage is valuable, existing frameworks can be limited in addressing the social and cultural subtlety of service as a system of participation. There is a need to explore in depth how we could design the service system to serve people instead of having people serve the system. What might be a humanistic framework of service that could provide guidance for designers to explore the rich relationships that constitute a service?

To investigate this question, I highlight a problematic phenomenon. Everyone has a story about a bad service experience. People seem to forgive bad artifacts rather easily, but they rarely forget a bad service experience. When people share their stories, they are often indignant, as if they were personally insulted. Their emotions are so intense that the bad experiences seem to have left psychic scars. Ordinary though it may be, service indignity can accumulate little by little in everyday lives, becoming an expected reality and source of stress in our society.

Sometimes it explodes as a social issue, like in the case of Steve Valdez. In 2010 Valdez was rejected from cashing a check at Bank of America because he could not provide a thumbprint: he had prosthetic arms. Later the bank apologized, saying that the service representative should have offered an alternative solution.<sup>1</sup> However, shortly after the news broke, Bank of America's ranking in the annual "Customer Service Hall of Shame" survey rose from number nine to number two,<sup>2</sup> ultimately taking first place from 2011 to 2014.<sup>3</sup> This result suggests first that once a service indignity becomes serious, its impact on reputation is unrecoverable; second, that the bank's response was inadequate—they either failed to understand the real reason for this problematic occurrence, or they based their problem-solving efforts on the wrong assumptions.

1 CBS News, "Bank Tells Armless Man: No Thumb, No Cash," *CBS News*, September 2, 2009, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/bank-tells-armless-man-no-thumb-no-cash/> (accessed February 6, 2017).

2 "AOL and Comcast Top the MSN Money 2009 Customer Service Hall of Shame," Microsoft News Center, June 10, 2009, <http://news.microsoft.com/2009/06/10/aol-and-comcast-top-the-msn-money-2009-customer-service-hall-of-shame/> (accessed February 6, 2017).

3 Douglas A. McIntyre, Alexander Kent, Alexander E. M. Hess, Thomas C. Frohlich, and Ashley C. Allen, 24/7 Wall St., "The 2014 Customer Service Hall of Fame," *USA Today*, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2014/07/19/customer-service-hall-of-fame/12690983/> (accessed February 6, 2017).

The root of the indignity problem goes beyond superficial issues like unresponsive service representatives. It originates from structural problems, such as a bank's strategy for manipulating new customers into opening accounts, and a culture in which people are given regulations but not a service principle by which they can make autonomous decisions. Service is generally seen as a product, and relationships between people are characterized by regulations for product quality control. These principles determine our attitudes. The fundamental cause of Valdez's service indignity was that the bank cared more about its rules than its people. The bank mixed up means and ends, revealing a paradox in which the service organization attempts to control the customers so as to serve them.

### Dignity and Autonomy

What, then, is the principle of dignity? A philosophical survey reveals that the basis of dignity is autonomy—the capacity of an agent to act in accordance with free will rather than external pressure. The root of the word *dignity* goes back to the Latin word *dignitas* in the Roman Republic. In Cicero's works, *dignitas* appears in diverse contexts as a complicated concept, a combination of the achievements that a public person has built up throughout one's life, the honor and influence following those achievements, a correct manner, a social virtue of public contribution,<sup>4</sup> and the innate moral value of humanity.<sup>5</sup> Whichever meaning was used, *dignitas* always required the ability to control oneself. Roman *dignitas* came from the action of continuously polishing oneself and fulfilling duties, improving one's social status, and thereby ultimately benefiting society. Cicero thought that such self-control leads to harmony between what is right and expedient and, thereby, to philosophical truth.<sup>6</sup>

*Dignitas* later became one of the key concepts in Renaissance humanism. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola added another perspective that the dignity of humanity emerges from our capacities for self-decision and metamorphosis. Humans have the seeds of angel and animal together inside them, that they may become whatever they want—from inanimate plants to sublime beings. Pico della Mirandola explains that humans have an ethical responsibility to elevate themselves to a godlike state. However, his main point was that the dignity of humans comes from the fact that they have the freedom to make decisions about what they want to be, regardless of the outcome. Dignity lies in the autonomy of choice—the freedom to create and change oneself.<sup>7</sup>

4 Warren Stone Gordis, *The Estimates of Moral Values Expressed in Cicero's Letters: A Study of the Motives Professed or Approved* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1905).

5 Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Officiis I*, 130, trans. Project Gutenberg, <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/47001/pg47001.txt> (accessed February 6, 2017).

6 Cicero.

7 Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (Washington, DC.: Regnery Publishing, 1996).

The modern notion of dignity as a universal value was expressed by Immanuel Kant in the Age of Enlightenment. Kant states that people are an “end in themselves” whose value cannot be measured or replaced and who therefore can be said to have dignity. Everything in this world has either value or dignity. Humans go beyond relative value because they can set up pure objectives that are free from external influence, instead of serving as means to external objectives. This ability to set up rules and act according to those rules is called *autonomy*. The rules originate from the reason within us. When a person acts toward externally imposed ends, that person becomes a means. But when a person acts according to self-imposed rules and the ethic of reason, that person is an end, and as such, has dignity.<sup>8</sup>

Roman dignity was a social virtue gained from fulfilling duty. Renaissance dignity was the capacity to choose. The dignity of the Enlightenment was to act in accordance with ethical reason. All of these definitions highlight autonomy as a central condition. For Cicero, autonomy comes from self-control. Pico della Mirandola sees autonomy as freedom of self-creation. Kant discusses autonomy as right action according to self-imposed law. In sum, autonomy is setting up self-governing rules, which are the beginning of action. A person with self-control can conduct useful actions that contribute to society. A person with creative freedom can make oneself a godlike creature. Human beings have reason to take ethical actions that elevate all humanity. These responsible, uncoerced, and logical actions lead to dignity. People find dignity when they act as autonomous agents of their own doing and being. Dignity is in action.

### The Paradox of Action and Passion in Service

However, current frameworks of service often attempt to control people rather than supporting their autonomous action. Existing approaches effectively improve productivity and enhance the overall physical components of service, but the problem of indignity has never been made the focus of an approach. Instead, current frameworks of service, typically grounded on the logic of mass production and information control, exasperate the paradox of action and passion.

Theodor Levitt is one of the first scholars to introduce the service-centric perspective by stating that people purchase objects not for the physical artifacts but for the services they provide. He is also the first scholar to mention the need to “design” service, suggesting that fast-food restaurants are ideal models of service design for their efficient production and reliable quality. He proposes that designers should think like a “factory engineer” to design the process to maximize automation and “control” people’s behavior.<sup>9</sup>

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8 Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993).

9 Theodore Levitt, “Production-Line Approach to Service,” *Harvard Business Review* 50, no. 5 (1972): 41–52.

Figure 1  
Mass production model of artifact. Created  
by the author.

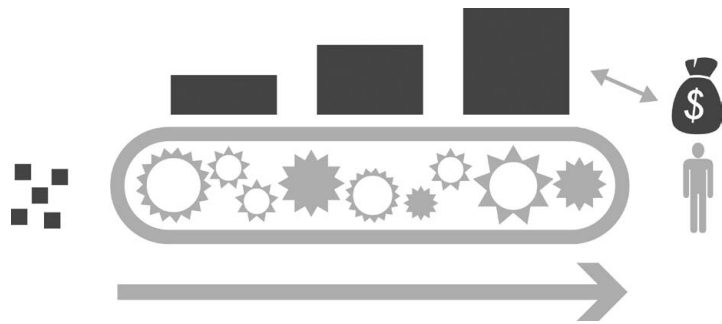
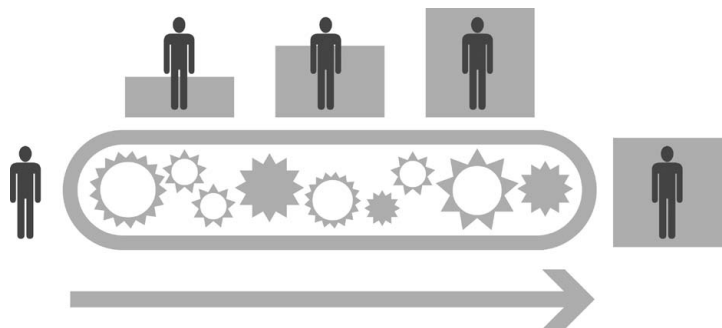


Figure 2  
Mass production model of service. Created  
by the author.

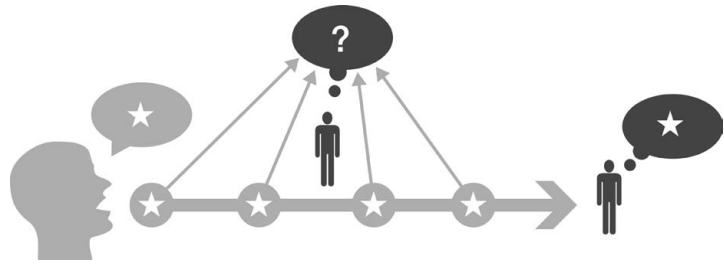


Mass production logic (see Figures 1 and 2) is often reflected in service design approaches that focus on the controlled assembly of components. For example, Bo Edvardsson argues that outcome quality needs to be carefully planned from the beginning of the service process. Mass production is a one-way procedure of plan, production, and consumption. The outcome should be predicted in the planning phase. However, service is co-produced by customers, who are external and unpredictable components. Therefore analyzing and providing “prerequisites of service” as the building blocks of co-production is suggested as the control mechanism of customer action.<sup>10</sup> This logic reveals efforts to enhance the quality of the service through objectification and control.

Compared to mass production logic, which seeks objective quality, information control logic starts with the assumption that service quality is subjective. This view parallels the service marketing model of perceived service quality. According to Christian Grönroos, the subjectivity of process quality is difficult to control, but there are some critical moments at which service providers can influence customer perceptions. Therefore, quality control focuses on these “moments of truth.” He proposes that service marketing provides customers with expectations about service, and those

10 Bo Edvardsson, “Quality in New Service Development: Key Concepts and a Frame of Reference,” *International Journal of Production Economics* 52 (1997): 31–46.

Figure 3  
Information control model. Created by  
the author.



expectations should be met at each moment customers are actually served.<sup>11</sup> Service providers focus on arranging visible evidence to assure customers of the promised quality. In this respect, service design can be seen as an effort to control customers' perceptions.

Information control logic (see Figure 3) often serves as the framework for customer experiences. Leonard Berry and Neeli Bendapudi provide a compelling example of service design that reflects this approach in their case study of Mayo Clinic. The design focus is on "clueing in customers" by demonstrating the message intended by the organization. "Evidences" are strategically mapped to send signals to tell the story that becomes brand recognition in the customer's mind. There is a "line of visibility" that determines what information will be available to customers—positive clues are intentionally presented, and negative clues are hidden.<sup>12</sup> The focus is on turning invisible service into visible evidence by showing and hiding aspects of service for better control of customer perceptions.

These two approaches, both based on the principle of control, generally start with seeing the tangible and the intangible as the core paradox of service. Because service is understood as an artifact to sell, each approach focuses on making service more tangible or visible for better quality. However, this principle of control gives rise to the separate paradox of action and passion—how can people be both agent and agency, beneficiary and material, treated as both humans and things, means and ends at the same time? I argue that the paradox of action and passion is central to the problem of service indignity in our time.

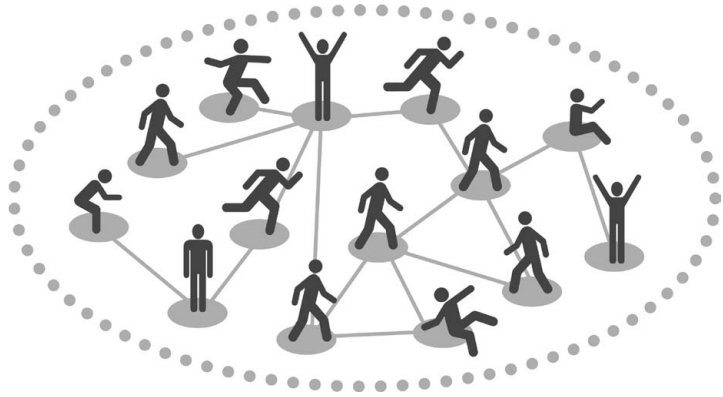
### Participation as the Unifying Idea

To resolve the paradox of action and passion and expand the existing understandings of service, I present an alternative framework of service based on the principle of participation. I define participation as the collective action of parts connected to the whole by varying relationships of action and passion for the purpose of achieving a shared goal (see Figure 4).

11 Christian Grönroos, *Service Management and Marketing: Customer Management in Service Competition* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2007), 36–44.

12 Leonard L. Berry and Neeli Bendapudi, "Clueing in Customers," *Harvard Business Review* 81, no. 2 (2003): 100–06.

Figure 4  
Service as system of participation. Created  
by the author.



People become part of services. In contrast to a physical artifact that becomes part of a user's life, people go into a service ecology and participate in the service production. As the parts join together and create the whole, the focus shifts from one-on-one interaction to collective action. Collective action is composed of multiple interactions between parts and, more important, interactions between parts and whole—in other words, participation. The rich interactions of participation are mediated by varying relationships of action and passion.

The complexity of collective action within the whole poses the need to explore service as a totality of several layers of interaction. The economic interpretation of service and the necessity of control serve as one layer of service participation; more layers are revealed as the diverse relationships of action and passion are explored in depth.

### Layers of Participation

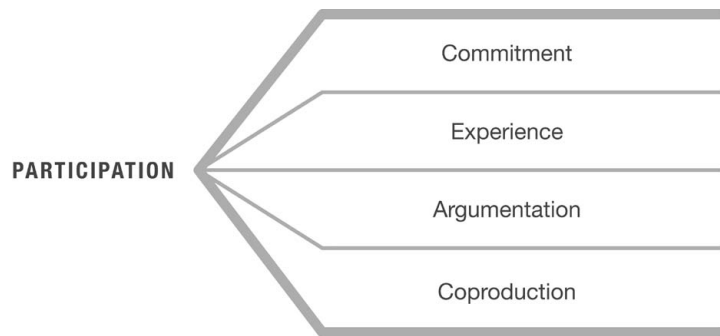
The origin of the word *participation* dates back to the Latin word *participare*, which means “shared in.” The roots of *participare* are *part* and *capere*, meaning “to take.”<sup>13</sup> If we see the “part” as a human, there can be diverse perspectives on which whole the person is passively “shared in” and how to actively “take part.” Based on different perspectives of part, whole, action, and passion, I present four layers of participation: co-production, argumentation, experience, and commitment (see Figure 5). Each dimension reveals a new interpretation of autonomy based on the varying relationships of action and passion in service.

#### *Participation as Co-production*

Co-production is participation explored from a material perspective. This concept dates back to 1970s customer involvement studies, when the focus was on increasing productivity by incorporating customer labor as part of service production. Mary Jo Bitner et al.'s review on co-production literatures proposes three levels of

13 Definition from Oxford Dictionaries, [http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american\\_english/participate](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/participate) (accessed February 6, 2017).

Figure 5  
Layers of participation. Created by the author.



customer participation: customers participate by mere physical presence, by providing essential input such as information, or by taking partial action such as doing homework for a class.<sup>14</sup> In other words, customers invest assets such as time, effort, and in some cases even themselves. The outcome is not a tangible artifact but a change in the customer. “Co-production” indicates the necessity of customer involvement in service production.

From this material perspective, people are viewed as “resources” participating in the “service factory” as a whole. Action is interpreted as investing a unit of productive assets often physical presence or labor. If we take restaurant service as an example, one might say that the server who delivers food is actively participating, and the customer who receives the food is passive. In fact, customers participate just by sitting in a restaurant. Their co-production is not very different from how the chairs are participating. A passive customer just invests less labor, relying on the server to move between the table and the kitchen. If customers do not mind investing more labor, they can go to a self-service restaurant to decrease service cost or increase service quality.

Here, action is reduced to a passive unit of production. The strategy for designing co-production often involves dividing up the process and assigning certain parts to the customer. Action is understood as an entity that can be broken down, analyzed, and assembled into sets of precontrolled activities. In this process, the autonomy of the parts are lost. Components are bound to a mechanical aggregation by the controlling force of the factory. If not directed by the regulative force of the whole, entities will not yield productivity and may even break down the whole system. Therefore autonomy is given to the service organization, which draws the boundaries of participation. Customer participation is often restricted to superficial activities that are subject to the regulative force.

14 Mary Jo Bitner, William T. Faranda, Amy R. Hubbert, and Valarie A. Zeithaml, “Customer Contributions and Roles in Service Delivery,” *International Journal of Service Industry Management* 8, no. 3 (1997): 193–205.

This perspective suggests that customers do not necessarily need to understand how the service works as a whole—the holistic view is the concern of the service organization. Therefore service indignity in this layer often arises from the obscurity of the relationship between an action and its outcome. Disintegrated customer activities can be easily exploited—service organizations can invest fewer assets as customers invest more of their own. One might even argue that co-production in such cases is in fact turning over the service company’s labor to the customer, especially in some self-service areas where the customer benefits are unclear. If other layers of participation are not considered, participation as co-production can lose balance and become a tool of manipulation that reduces people to passive materials on the conveyer belt of the factory.

Despite these limitations, the key features of co-production, including controlling resources and coordinating the production process, are fundamentally important for service design in that co-production serves as a kind of infrastructure for other layers. All services require that material arrangements be considered before they can be implemented and sustained. It is also considered ethical in some cases for service providers to value predictability and stability in service quality and to strive to reduce the proportion of defective outcomes. Still, co-production can further evolve in a more human-centric direction through the decentralization of production control. For example, the emergence of the “sharing economy” in conjunction with new technologies suggests that the future of co-production is moving toward shared autonomy.

#### *Participation as Argumentation*

If we see participation only as co-production, then the restaurant owner and server will always have to do their best to keep their guests passively receiving food. If this view is taken to the extreme and the server treats the customer like a child—for instance, forcing the customer to order certain items—then this is no longer good service. From the perspective of communication, the customer should be in an active position, making choices from the menu and giving directions about how the meat should be cooked. The server is in a passive position, taking the order and carrying it out, though the server can attempt to influence the customer’s decision making by providing information.

This communicative aspect of participation is related to the concept of “service co-creation,” a term proposed in the 1990s, marking a shift in focus from productivity to customer satisfaction. Stephen Vargo and Robert Lusch propose calling customers “co-creators” because the final value of a service is determined by



the customers' perceptions of the service offering. The service provider can only create a value proposition. Service quality is something that needs to be mutually communicated and agreed on, rather than produced and transferred.<sup>15</sup> This process can be viewed as rhetorical argumentation, in which the service provider as the speaker and the customer as the audience co-create the message of the service concept.

Erving Goffman's dramaturgical analysis provides an insightful basis for understanding this layer. When individuals are together, they attempt to define the character of a situation by expressing information about themselves. Goffman describes this process as a "performance" and a communicative action. It is an argument using verbal and nonverbal means. Individuals participate in the performance through "role enactment," in attempts to persuade the audience of their character in such a way that they are best served in the interpersonal interaction. Goffman describes a "role" as a collection of conventions suited to a certain social situation.<sup>16</sup> It is no coincidence that many examples provided are observations on service situations. The patterns of convention are essential to service interactions, in which total strangers meet and work together to co-create service.

When we see the parts as roles and the whole as a service performance, action is not simply physical motion. If a certain movement does not support one's role enactment, then it is not considered action. In contrast, expression or pose without physical motion can be regarded as action if it supports the character. What seems to be passion contains action. The customer who seems to be passive is in fact active—acting out the role of audience. The customer actively interprets the information gained from the service provider in the role of speaker and continuously send signals about whether they approve of the service provider's performance. Performance exists only when there is a tacit agreement on the roles and a working consensus on the situation is maintained. In this sense, passion is a kind of action in that both are forms of acting.

Autonomous action therefore is "persuasive" acting that influences the audience and fosters successful negotiation. Persuasion is not manipulation but in fact an interactive process of informing the community so as to enable a mutual agreement about a particular situation. Autonomy then increases as the agent becomes a better actor with more power to take on the preferred role. This autonomy of persuasive character construction is related to the notion of dignity proposed by Pico della Mirandola. Human dignity comes from freedom of choice to create oneself. In other words, customers gain a sense of dignity when they can become

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15 Stephen L. Vargo and Robert F. Lusch, *The Service-Dominant Logic of Marketing: Dialog, Debate, and Directions* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2006).

16 Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1959).

the characters they intend to be and lose it when their role enactment breaks down. Goffman writes that the desire to avoid humiliation is a fundamental reason people agreeably participate in performances.

Thus the indignity problem in this layer of participation results from improper support for the customer's role enactment. Failures are bound to happen, especially when it is the customer's first time participating in the service performance. But how the service provider acts to cover up an awkward situation and realign the customer's character makes a difference in whether the customer can fail with dignity. Many designers recognize that service needs a brand identity. However, it should also be noted that the real goal of a customer coming to a high-end restaurant, for example, may be to create an argument for the idea that a person eating in such a sophisticated establishment must be successful. The service setting, props, and brand image directly serve to construct a convincing character. Again, what seems to be passion in fact contains action—people may seem to passively take in the performance, but on a deeper level, the performance should support what they want to become.

#### *Participation as Experience*

Now let's consider the example of a restaurant service from the perspective of an individual's experience. Today when someone is hungry, a smartphone app for a social reputation service—like Yelp—can easily and quickly be used. The hungry person can view the ratings of nearby restaurants, check the reviews, and walk or travel to the restaurant with the help of a real-time map that shows current location in relation to the target. The person may later contribute to the info-scape by adding a personal review. This is an example of another layer of participation as experience, in which an agent interacts with a structural whole.

The idea of experience as the essence of service was introduced around the 2000s with the term "experience economy." Joseph Pine and James Gilmore point out that experience itself is the source of service value, rather than being its by-product.<sup>17</sup> The model of experience proposed by John Dewey provides a compelling ground for understanding this perspective in depth. Dewey proposes that the human being is a living organism actively participating in the environment outside the boundaries of the individual. Experience is how the organism moves through the environment, through interactions that promote mutual adaptation.<sup>18</sup> This environment is different from a factory or performance setting. It is a wholeness made up of causality—a society

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17 B. Joseph Pine and James H. Gilmore, "Welcome to the Experience Economy," *Harvard Business Review* 76 (1998): 97–105.

18 John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 58.

of human relationships, a culture with meanings, or a service system to support needs. Not only the physical space but also the signs that embed meanings and the collaborations with other people all make up the service environment.

In this layer of experience, action and passion are a pair in balance. Action rescues experience from becoming monotonous repetition by giving it the dynamic quality of rhythm. Passion gives unity to the experience by providing places of rest. These passive moments help the agent absorb meaning from the environment's reaction to the previous action. The meaning then gives direction to the actions that follow. This is how every *doing* is accompanied by *undergoing*—passion is not a static state but the process of reacting to the environment to prepare for the next action.<sup>19</sup> In other words, action and passion are conjoined in a causal relationship.

What, then, is autonomy in this layer of experience? Dewey explains that action and passion are interfused in the agent's consciousness while going through the experience. This active state of perception is what creates meaning, bringing together action and passion and past and future. The person with consciousness does not passively wait for the end, but autonomously appreciates every phase of the flow with a clear sense of beginning and completion—perceiving both the individual parts and the unified whole. This perspective resonates with Cicero's concept of dignity as the self-controlled action of cultivating oneself through interactions with society. Consciousness of causality is what allows the part to maintain autonomy in a dynamic whole.

The problem of indignity often arises from a lack of attention to the organic structure of the whole. Some experience flows are aesthetically problematic due to overly obvious marketing intentions. Such designs may be beneficial for co-production or argumentation, but may perpetuate mundane experiences. External control can easily break down experience to mere mechanical connection, deteriorating it into superficial sensations. Experiential satisfaction is not just a stimulus at a touch point. It comes from the flow itself, and how the agent perceives meaning in relation to context. Therefore, the service environment should be designed in a way to support the customer's self-initiated action. For example, it can be embedded with affordances that mediate the causal relationship of the service system and the agent who would use them to fulfill her needs.

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19 Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 45–47.

### *Participation as Commitment*

There is yet another layer of participation that can deepen our understanding of service. Suppose you—a non-Muslim—have dinner plans with Muslim friends, you might thoughtfully suggest going to a restaurant with halal food. Most often used in reference to dietary guidelines, “halal” refers to a broader context of everyday actions that are in accordance with the moral guidelines of Sharia. Halal practice requires a dignified way of taking animal life, with rituals and methods that cause the least pain possible. When your friends order a halal dish, they are participating in an ethical world of thought, which I call the layer of participation as commitment.

Robert Greenleaf provides one view of participation as commitment with his philosophy of servant leadership. Servant and leader are usually considered opposites, one passive and one active. However, these roles merge into one when leadership is dedicated to serving the community. Rather than using force and control, a servant leader supports people by understanding and appropriately fulfilling their needs. This leadership may seem passive, but it transcends to true autonomy by creating a condition in which community members can act autonomously together in a shared vision.<sup>20</sup>

In this layer of participation, every part is a whole in itself, as a synecdoche of the bigger whole. According to Plato, humans are “souls” with their own integrity. He compares the human soul to a charioteer and a pair of winged steeds ever in motion. Both horses represent desire, one noble and the other wild. The natural state of the soul is to fly freely in the world of the idea, which is the whole. Our desire has a tendency to run wild. If reason loses control, the self-moving soul disintegrates and falls down to be caught in the materiality of the body, which is subject to external forces.<sup>21</sup>

How can a human soul regain its state of freedom? Plato explains that freedom can be achieved through the “divine madness” of love. Love is passion for the sublime goods, such as beauty. When the soul sees beauty on Earth that represents the archetype of the ideal, then passion warms the soul, and the soul returns to the state of self-movement with reason’s commitment to the idea. This notion of participation is related to Kant’s view of autonomy as the ability to act in accordance with one’s reason. Participation comes from committing to ethical principles and practicing them.

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20 Robert K. Greenleaf, *The Servant as Leader* (Cambridge, MA: Center for Applied Studies, 1973).

21 Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995).

Autonomous action, or free flight, is founded in the harmony of passion and action merged into one in the pursuit of value. In the end, passion in following the ethical principle of the whole leads to action with true freedom. If the soul is distracted by external forces, then passion (passiveness) becomes passion (suffering). However, when the soul commits to the ideal, passion (passiveness) becomes passion (zeal). Then self-motion naturally emerges from the inside, revealing one's inner autonomy. The truth is already hidden inside us, because it is the human soul that remembers the world of the ideal and seeks to return to that state. The role of service then is not to pose itself as an external force but to provide a system that can help people realize their ethical values in everyday life.

Greenleaf suggests that such systems can be created from our inborn desire to serve each other. The ideal form of community is one in which all people voluntarily become servant leaders. There would be no more distinction between organization, leader, worker, or customer in the pursuit of the common good. In this sense, service itself is the ultimate autonomous action. It is not "perishable," as often described. Physical artifacts wear out, but the changes wrought by service continue to spread because autonomy and dignity are already inside every human being—service just helps bring them out.

### Conclusion

I explored the diverse meanings of participation as "layers" of service. Because these layers coexist interdependently, I propose that designers need to consider them together. From a strategic perspective, indeed, certain layers may be more important in framing a service concept. The layers of participation can be used as a tool to create a new service idea by moving beyond typical categories. By switching up which layer becomes the focus of service design, one could create a sustainable car wash service or a quick wedding service. In addition, matching certain layers to target customer groups could create a sweet spot for service designers. The service preferences of someone who gains autonomy from directly doing physical work will most likely differ from those preferences of someone who decides to rest physically but engage through verbal direction.

In the end, however, a full service needs to consider all the layers. If we take medical service as an example, a hospital requires the co-production of the patients to maintain efficient

procedures. The hospital needs to consider proper role definitions, so that patients feel respected and trust their doctors. Patients need to understand the overall service flow to see where they are in the process and what action they can take next. Moreover, as the foci of medical care moves from the hospital to the everyday lives of the patients, the community around them should be considered as the agents of healing. These layers of participation coexist and support each other, forming a holistic service. Lacking a pluralistic view risks limiting the understanding of people's autonomy and breaks down their dignity.

We live in services. Service is not just an intangible artifact or a memorable luxury, but rather a necessity of modern life. When we think of service as human participation in a bigger whole, we can see that service design is about more than production and delivery. What designers create is a place where possibilities for autonomous decisions, actions, and thoughts are planned and realized. Service is not an end but a means to serve the end—the elevation of people's autonomy and dignity.