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MODERN CENTRAL EUROPEAN HOTELS AND SPAS IN CULTURAL CRITICISM

GRAND HOTEL NOSTALGIA: AN INTRODUCTION

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Exclusive hotels are commonplaces, or *topoi*, of twentieth-century cultural criticism. Speaking in 1967, Michel Foucault suggested that the hotel is a 'heterotopia': a social counter-site designated for ritualistic behaviour, or the limited subversion of cultural convention. He gave the example of sex in a honeymoon suite. Foucault mentioned Scandinavian saunas, too, as a further type of heterotopian scenario, in which civilized norms are exchanged for rituals of hygiene. And so we might introduce the grand hotels and spas of Central Europe – the subject of the subsequent pages – as such 'effectively enacted utopia' in the real world.[1] However, this Foucauldian understanding of hotel space is best applied historically, and above all before the mid-twentieth century. For Foucault concluded that the cultural prominence of these sorts of 'crisis heterotopias', as he called them – or exceptional retreats from the norms of quotidian life – had given way, by the middle of the century, to heterotopias of deviance, in which specific social groups (convicted criminals, or even the elderly) are placed in circumscribed institutions of care. Foucault thus hints at a loss of, or at least a reduction in, a certain kind of freer, oppositional social space, in the face of the ever-increasing institutionalisation of society.

Foucault's lecture was finally published in 1984, at a juncture of critical pessimism about the state of Western culture. That same year, Fredric Jameson also proposed that hotels, among 'the masterworks and monuments of high modernism', had once been places which aspired to 'protopolitical Utopian transformation'.[2] But he argued that postmodernism razed such grand ambitions to the ground. Instead, architectural showpieces of late capitalism like John Portman's Westin Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles – which opened in 1977, and was first analysed by Jameson in 1982, at a convention of the Modern Language Association of America in the city – represented a new category of closure. If Foucault's conception of the 'honeymoon hotel' as a heterotopia relies on a porous interface with regulative, everyday society, Jameson's critique of the hotel as 'hyperspace' posits that newer luxury residences have been sealed off from the world: as its 'replacement or substitute'.[3] He noted that there was no grand entrance to the Bonaventure that might have been visible from the street and

designed to make the hotel stand apart from other landmark buildings, throwing them into relief. In stark contrast to high modernist vision, the edifice of the Bonaventure was constructed to fit in with the city's fabric; and in lieu of a signature lobby, a series of almost hidden alleyways led to an inner sanctum. For Jameson, the Bonaventure thereby sought to be 'a total space';[4] yet it constituted a hollow utopia in the here and now, devoid of any transformative potential or critical content. It seems that since the late twentieth century, the grand hotel in general is no longer the lodging of cultural optimism – however flawed those erstwhile hopes may have been. Rather, the luxury hotel of the last four decades has become the resting place of critical nostalgia.

Employing Foucault and Jameson as bookends for the twentieth century's cultural criticism of hotels in this way might suggest a narrative of rise and fall. Admittedly, such a representation is an oversimplification of Critical Theory, and already demands correction. Foucault and Jameson embed their relatively cursory discussions of hotels – Foucault merely mentions hotels in passing – into much wider cultural critiques. And other critics stake out more subtle positions on hotels specifically. Peter Sloterdijk's two-volume *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft* (1983) finishes with an excursus on hotels in the early twentieth century. They are used as a shorthand for evoking an image of modernity: concrete instantiations of ephemeral existence, rendered ritzy in establishments dedicated to luxury and to leading an exciting life. Sloterdijk here confirms the hotel as an aesthetic idea central to the modern era and as utopian at that time, insofar as worldly goods were still inaccessible to many, but became visible and tangible in hotel lobbies and rooms. The grand hotel of Germany's Weimar era especially turned world chaos into a dazzling, inclusive cosmos, and a Noah's Arc of individual difference.[5] Crucially, however, Sloterdijk notes that literature in German of or about that age – alongside Christopher Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin* (1939) in English – adopted a critical perspective. Writers of fiction saw the idea that hotels were utopia in the real world as a myth, as a story from the bourgeois Bible. They were not blinded by glamour, but these authors agreed that by the 1920s the hotel had become symbolic of modernisation. Whether that meant societal progress or decay was a matter for debate. Sloterdijk later described the very conception of modern life in the interwar years as the 'Hotelisierung' of humankind.[6]

For all the importance of critical nuance, however, the opening storyline of a rise and fall of grand hotels and spas will likely sound familiar to readers, since it persists in the contemporary popular imagination. And so it is a good place to start. Filmmakers, literary writers, and journalists could fill our figurative shelf with hotels as settings for cultural critique

that sets up late capitalist society in opposition to the early twentieth century. Wes Anderson's *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014) harks back to the glory years of grand hotels throughout Central Europe, on the eve of the historical darkness of the Second World War. The film is presented as a homage to early twentieth-century Austrian writer Stefan Zweig, and is but a recent example of cultural nostalgia for the suites and service of a more colourful age. The potency of this picture of a previously quasi-utopian period for the hotel is by now thirty-odd years old, as the critical works of Jameson and Sloterdijk indicate. In literature, a less glitzy example than Anderson's film, yet equally nostalgic and evocative, is Dante Andrea Franzetti's *Die Versammlung der Engel im Grand Hotel Excelsior* (1990). The Swiss novel is a portrait of a dilapidated grand hotel on the point of sale, and a monument to a bygone era synonymous with César Ritz — the émigré whose accomplishments abroad defined his homeland as a nation of hoteliers and high-end hospitality. In 2006, John von Düffel published *Hotel Angst* (2006), in which the narrator visits a grand hotel in the Italian town of Bordighera that is a shadow of its former self and a means to remember his deceased father. Grand hotels are outpaced as time rushes by. In 2016, moreover, Amor Towles's hotel novel *A Gentleman in Moscow* hit the shelves, was well received by critics, and is soon to appear on television screens. The story tells of a Russian Count who is sentenced to house arrest in the grand Hotel Metropol, in 1922. The protagonist observes the emergent Soviet regime with wistful sentiment, but adapts to the new order thanks to his wits and Old World charm. Here – but only here, in the historic hotel – the Count can survive the newly enforced Socialist worldview. Reviewing the work for the *New York Times*, Craig Taylor wrote: 'Listen closely and you might hear a Wes Anderson soundtrack playing down the hall. We're not in the Grand Budapest, but more than once I imagined F. Murray Abraham narrating a long, panning shot.'[7] What is more, an Anderson-style cultural yearning for the time around 1900 and its leading hotels is also discernible in contemporary travel writing. In spring 2015, the *New York Times* ran a tribute to the Grand Waldhaus Hotel in the Swiss Alps — an establishment of historic and intellectual vintage, now charmingly familial and down at heel.[8]

The *New York Times* feature must have been inspired by Anderson's blockbuster. But since the 1980s a steady stream of cultural representations of hotels and spas, which explicitly or implicitly idealise these spaces as they are imagined for the earlier half of the twentieth century, surely confirms that Anderson's cinematic rendition was more a symptom of a cultural phenomenon than its cause. Not all examples are as prominently about hotels or spas as *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, yet the nostalgia seeps in all the same. Another recent, if more indirectly relevant work, is Rose Tremain's novel *The Gustav Sonata*, published in the same

year as Towles's *A Gentleman in Moscow* (2016). Tremain's story about modern Switzerland does critical justice to the country's complicated cultural politics during the Second World War, which are so often obscured by cultural myth. In the process, Tremain sets scenes of naïve love and sexual experimentation in and around the hotels of Davos, during the first half of the twentieth century. She thereby gestures to the grand hotel novels of the 1920s, and falls in line with the 2006 novel *Der perfekte Kellner* by Alain Claude Sulzer, in which grand hotels, not least in Switzerland, house homosexual desire. Tremain presents other Swiss hotels beyond Davos prosaically in *The Gustav Sonata*, as typical workplaces and small businesses. It is only the culturally prominent high Alpine region – a setting so connotative of the grand hotel era – that is honoured with those moments in the narrative which must occur outside of mundane, everyday, norm-governed life.

The latest and most provocative work in a tradition that portrays a pan-continental grand hotel nostalgia is Ilja Leonard Pfeijffer's novel *Grand Hotel Europa*, published this year (2019) in Dutch. The authorial protagonist reckons with an age of tourism, and looks back longingly to better, apparently more elegant decades. The novel's cover, marketing and success among early reviewers obviously owe a debt to the storyline and popularity of Anderson's hit film. But Pfeijffer's protagonist takes precisely this fashion for nostalgia to task: 'I do not want to reach the same conclusion as the hotel I'm staying in or the continent after which it is named: that the best times are behind me and that I cannot expect much more from the future than drawing on my past'.[9] The Old Continent is sick, to be sure. Yet it is nostalgia that is the disease which must be cured. In this spirit, *Grand Hotel Europa* is reminiscent of hotel novels in German from the 1920s in an intellectual sense, insofar as Pfeijffer's is more cultural critique than homage. The present collection of essays, like Pfeijffer's work, examines such grand hotel nostalgia critically, and is prompted to do so because of its contemporary currency.

The etymology of the word *nostalgia* indicates that the cultural phenomenon is, strictly speaking, misplaced in the context of the history of hotels. To feel pain for home cannot define a desire for a return to the great residences of around 1900, if hotels in their supposedly grander days were the counter-sites to homely domesticity. Even those who lived in hotels permanently had decided against the idea that they should own their own house or apartment, and run a household. And yet, the idea that the imposing structure of a hotel from yesteryear has somehow been flattened in present-day culture is nevertheless compelling. Nostalgia may be mistaken in its belief that because of a negative experience, life must have

been markedly better once; but it is fair to feel that in the history of hotels over the past hundred years or so, something has indeed been lost. For this reason, too, opening with a trajectory from Foucault to Jameson was not about setting up a straw-man argument. For in fact these two critics speak with clarity of an actual cultural change, although a nostalgia can be inferred between the critics' lines nonetheless – and contemporary popular culture has added a glossy veneer that is all the more obvious.

Today's hotel market faces competition from people renting out a 'home from home' on online platforms such as *Airbnb*, and websites such as *booking.com* can be used to advertise privately owned flats for short-term rent — on either a self-catering basis, or as serviced apartments. While such accommodation has always existed, it is no longer the preserve of either the hospitality and tourism sector, or second-home owners seeking additional income during vacant spells. Regular homes have become potential hotels, though perhaps only for a night or two; and in the world's capitals of tourism, guests and permanent residents may share the same lifts and lobbies. They do so within a space that combines home and hotel under the one conceptual roof: as merely someplace to stay. Meanwhile, luxury hotel brands claim that their clients should be able to 'feel at home' — even in a residence that is designed as part of a boutique heritage collection, and modelled to evoke the epoch of grand hotel life.[10] Thus hotels do appear to be more self-consciously *normal* in their cultures of hospitality nowadays, notwithstanding continuing innovation in design and service. The problem with hotel nostalgia, then, is not so much its identification of an historical shift. Jameson's cultural critique *per se* is not contested here, because the change that he observed and criticised is evident. At issue, rather, are the ways in which this transition can be characterised and affectively valorised, as a narrative of rise and fall, within popular culture. As suggested by Sloterdijk, the dynamics of hotel space were not necessarily perceived as any better in the past, even if they are different today and understood as negative developments. Indeed, in summarising the bourgeois ideal of the hotel around 1900, Sloterdijk provocatively portrays those historical establishments as already populated by *nostalgic* individuals.[11]

In truth, the idea that hotels have fallen on relatively hard times (only) after their heyday at the turn of the century belies the consistently contested nature of such places for writers and thinkers over the years. Let us take, like Sloterdijk, the prime example of the booming 1920s, which led to much hotel building in Central Europe. Most histories of individual hotels, commissioned by the institutions themselves, printed on a small scale and sold to today's paying guests eager for history, include architectural plans for extensions or adaptations from precisely this period.[12] Unsurprisingly, the 1920s were the great decade of the grand hotel

novel, especially among Central European authors writing in German; these works complemented the rapid construction and expansion of hotel spaces.[13] After all, there were dramatic stories to tell. In city hotels as at the continent's spas, the clientele was changing. Domestic visitors were now predominantly bourgeois, and the majority of foreign tourists were the newly rich and middle classes from the United States. As David Clay Large points out, '[b]y 1926, more than half the guests staying in Baden-Baden at the luxurious Brenner's Park Hotel were American'.[14] After the First World War, the world order was overhauled. Hence on the face of it, Sloterdijk's depiction of the hotel at this time as a cosmos arising from chaos seems plausible. But so too does Georg Lukács's famous and witty attack on Theodor Adorno appear to be legitimate: that as a bastion of bourgeois idealism, such as he held this thinker of the Frankfurt School to be, Adorno checked into the 'Grand Hotel Abgrund'.[15]

Writers gave a voice both to enthusiastic hotel guests, and to those who objected to the pace of change. In the second essay of the following collection, I consider the Swiss-German author Meinrad Inglin and his fourth novel, *Grand Hotel Excelsior* (1928). In the same vein as Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (1924), Inglin's work is set in an Alpine retreat, and portrays a culture clash. It is a less intellectual and more social novel, however, and presents a struggle between two brothers: one is an hotelier who embraces ambitious speculation with, and the bourgeoisification of, the family business, all in pursuit of American tourists; the other is impassioned by revolutionary antagonism, and aghast at the decimation of Swiss natural beauty. Despite the attempted centrist position adopted by the author – which is in part aided by the novel's opposing caricatures – a yearning for a lost age of greater simplicity and an older, aristocratic, perhaps even ostensibly natural order remains palpable between the lines. In other words, some cultural nostalgia is at play (although it is also ironized). Thus representations of hotels and spas in the 1920s were less clear-cut than their invocation in popular culture of more recent decades might suggest; and among the early twentieth-century public, the jury was out on whether grand hotels were a net benefit to society. The positions in the cultural debate were often polarised, but the majority of writers studied here were in fact of two minds. The hotel in most self-consciously literary works was not harnessed to obviously conservative, liberal or socialist political thought (although the Swiss archives evidence at least one exception), but to some critical place in between – a characteristic that is still the rule for hotel novels today. For a good number of authors around 1900 had a personal connection to the hotel industry, and experienced the changing situation first hand: Meinrad Inglin came from a family of hoteliers, and trained as a hotel waiter; Vicki Baum, who wrote the internationally acclaimed novel *Menschen im Hotel* (1929), worked as a hotel chamber-

maid; and Siegfried Kracauer, who theorised about the hotel lobby in an essay on detective fiction between 1922 and 1925, was an architect of public spaces.[16]

Hotels, then as ever, elicited critical ambivalence among authors. Such is the response investigated by the essays collected here. Their purpose is to uncover an enduring cultural unease with Central European hotels and spas in the lead-up to, and over the course of, the twentieth century. As a collection, they disrupt hotel nostalgia not by negating its historical differentiation, which has some validity; nor do these articles offer a critique of the phenomenon's errant, affective assumptions. Instead, the following contributions emphasise surprising continuities in the ways in which critics feel about hotels and spas, notwithstanding historical specificity. The four essays are written by literary scholars and historians, and build upon two of the authors' recent contributions to scholarship: Marina Soroka's *The Summer Capitals of Europe: 1814 – 1919* (2017) and Ulrike Zitzlsperger's *Topografien des Transits. Die Fiktionalisierung von Bahnhöfen, Hotels und Cafes im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert* (2013). The research was originally presented at a conference at Sheffield University in 2018, funded by The Prokhorov Centre for the Study of Central and Eastern European Intellectual and Cultural History;[17] and it arose from my own work for a documentary on luxury for BBC Radio 3.[18] The collection comprises two articles on spas and two on hotels. The temporal and geographical scope of the essays is broad, with analyses ranging from late nineteenth-century Russians visiting spas in towns of today's Germany and the Czech Republic, to Switzerland in the 1920s, through to international critics convening, mid-twentieth century, on the Dalmatian coast. The collection travels, too, across the Atlantic to The Chelsea Hotel in New York. But all four of the articles focus on works that were written, or lectures which were held, in continental Europe, and they engage with a European tradition of critical thought. Material is examined in Russian, German, Serbian, Croatian, Slovene and English.

The noteworthy hotels of Central Europe were the jewels in the crown at the continent's spas, before they stood out among the cityscapes. A large number of the guests residing at early wellness resorts were Russian. Peter the Great had visited Karlsbad in 1711, and his people followed. But for reasons Marina Soroka explores in her essay that opens this collection, the proportion of Russian visitors dramatically increased in the late nineteenth century. Soroka identifies a form of functional unease about spas among the canonical Russian authors of that period. The anecdotes from these writers' time at Baden-Baden and Baden Ems, among other resorts, are legendary, and summarised at length in David Clay Large's *The Grand Spas of Central Europe* (2015).[19] Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and their literary peers all found some enjoyment in their summer residences, but their novels and stories would suggest

otherwise. Soroka compares these authors' private and public responses to spas, and considers the purpose of their literary representations. In writing for a Russian readership at remove, in the context of substantial social reforms taking place at home, authors worried that their compatriots at Europe's spas showed their native country in a bad light, and they thought that leisure time and travel should be put to better use. Russian novelists of the late nineteenth century called to mind more edifying, historical examples of time spent at spas — specifically, the Enlightenment-style journeys extolled by Peter the Great. In time, they were heralded in similar fashion, as contributors to an idealised cultural tradition of travel that lasted into twentieth-century Russia, and the Soviet era specifically.

In analysing Meinrad Inglin in the second article, as my own contribution to the collection, the discussion turns to a Swiss author who was inspired by reading nineteenth-century Russian novels, and Dostoyevsky's and Tolstoy's works in particular. With this essay, we move into the early twentieth century. Switzerland and its Alpine, high-end hotels or sanatoria was a setting for a number of novels in the 1920s: not only Inglin's *Grand Hotel Excelsior* (1928), following Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (1924), but also Zofia Nałkowska's novel in Polish, *Choucas* (1927). Both Mann's and Nałkowska's works are concerned with cultural problems of European, epochal significance. Inglin's, by contrast, is specifically about the ills of Swiss society and the decade's domestic political struggles. But Inglin was no reactionary or revolutionary writer. Nor was he a liberal advocating the rampant growth of modern culture and a celebration of the refashioned, post-war grand hotel as its centrepiece. Rather, he adopts a centrist position and closes *Grand Hotel Excelsior* by suggesting the virtues of familial inheritance and education in order to balance competing ideas for a collective future. Inheritance and education might safeguard tradition, give historical perspective, and ensure some form of shared responsibility in adapting to changing times. This pragmatic and perhaps culturally conservative sort of response in a Swiss novel could be seen as complementing an emergent national self-image, which Inglin's later *magnum opus* especially, *Der Schweizerspiegel* (1938), helped construct.

Inheritance is predicated on the single event that should remain hidden from hotels: death. A discomfort around death in such a space is in fact the start of Inglin's *Grand Hotel Excelsior.* As the hotelier and patriarch Peter Sigwart lies on his deathbed in hospital, he desires to be returned to his own hotel, or *Kurhaus* — but encounters the silent resistance of his business-minded son. The father calls out Eugen's objection by declaring: 'Es ist mir gleichgültig, ob du das Haus voll hast oder nicht, ganz gleichgültig, verstehst du! Ich will sterben, wo ich gelebt habe. Meinetwegen mögen sie dann abreisen.'[20] Eugen pleads that it is

high season. Death in hotels pushes the inherent transitory nature of these institutions to its limit — to the brink of life itself. Ulrike Zitzlsperger's third essay in the following collection demonstrates this ultimate taboo for hotels in depth. Zitzlsperger explores high-profile cases of hotel deaths within European literature and American pop culture, ranging from literary classics of the 1920s in German to contemporary society. She begins her reflections with guests who stayed — and died — at The Chelsea Hotel in New York.

The Chelsea Hotel is a textbook example of a grand hotel around 1900. It opened its doors in 1904, having been built at a cost of $6 million and with 70,000 electric lights to show off its class. It was soon overshadowed by London's Ritz, though, which in 1906 offered guests their own bathrooms.[21] Today, The Chelsea remains closed for refurbishment after eight years of building works, initiated in an effort to compete in the luxury marketplace. The establishment's re-opening has been stalled by investor concerns and delayed by resident lawsuits, and so might be seen as symbolic of the grand hotel's fall in general as much as it represents the grand hotel's earlier, historic rise. But Zitzlsperger is interested in The Chelsea because its brand recognition derives from a notable hotel death, which in her analysis has been a continuous source of cultural unease since stories of grand hotels began.

The final article returns to spas and their suitability for thinkers. While Soroka's opening essay is concerned with authors who visited spas, wrote in them and said that they felt out of place there, Kaitlyn Tucker Sorenson considers an academic convention that was conceived from the outset as a sort of spa. She recalls the intellectual tradition of Central European spas, and argues that this cultural space was recreated in a post-war, socialist context in Yugoslavia. The Korčula Summer School for international intellectuals of the left was not wholly without precedent. In interwar Davos, falling tuberculosis rates led the Swiss town to launch a summer school that hosted Europe's leading speakers and attracted students from far and wide who could be housed in the vacant hotels. The *Internationale Davoser Hochschulkurse* ran from 1928 to 1931 and were billed as fostering intercultural understanding. But as Peter E. Gordon notes, '[i]n the 1930s appeals to international reconciliation would soon be lost in the din of conflicting national claims.'[22] The Korčula academic *Kurort* similarly closed its doors because of political events on the continent — this time, the crises of late socialism. Yet in Tucker Sorenson's telling, there had long lingered the sense among participants that the leisurely conversations, spa-like context and intellectual idyll were in any case too good to last.

The concept of a critical discomfort about spas and hotels alike that emerges from the four articles as a whole is distinct from cultural concerns about similar modern – or for that

matter, postmodern – spaces. Zitzlsperger aligns the hotel, as it is discussed in criticism, with the railway station as another site of transition. But hotels and railway stations are also different. Robert A. Davidson begins *The Hotel: Occupied Space* (2019) by arguing that 'decompression' is an 'overlooked element of cosmopolitanism' that is facilitated by the hotel. Travel, for Davidson, entails 'the tension inherent in the modern subject's experience of time-space condensing', which is relieved at a destination by relaxation in a hotel.[23] Forms of holiday-making such as point-to-point cruising or slow-travel call this distinction between the journey and the final resting place into doubt. So too does the marketing of airline flat-beds and the availability of individual compartments on aircraft for high-end travellers, or the attraction of luxury rail tours in an Old World style. In all of these spaces, travel may be the main attraction, and is sold as decompression — means of transportation can become places to unwind. Nevertheless, a basic function of hotels and spas compared to train stations, airports, vehicles or craft is surely that they are places where comfort is assumed as standard and is not an optional extra. For sceptical critics, perhaps that is the grand hotel's problem.

Silence, solitude and inspiring scenery (or people-watching) are all justifiable in the name of greater intellectual or artistic productivity, and contradict the adage that pressure brings out the best in people. But comfort keeps precarious company with idleness, decadence and the comic — and comedy, in contrast to biting satire, can be but a gentle form of cultural criticism. Worst of all, comfort shares semantic space with the cozy. Comfort may enable a thinker to clear their mind, but equally it might dull their senses. That contrast is at home in the hotel. Caroline Field Levander and Matthew Pratt Guterl sum up the hotel's problematic paradox for criticism in *Hotel Life* (2015): 'Hotel space can, on the one hand, enable imaginative leaps unprecedented in individual guests' lived experiences and, on the other hand, deliver pre-digested temporary spaces both mind-numbingly canned and familiar. It can, too, make it impossible to tell the difference.'[24] And yet, it is likely that a fair number of inspirational conference papers and articles have been written in a Travelodge. Nell Frizzell implied on the company's thirtieth anniversary that in contemporary society precisely an unspecial space such as a roadside Travelodge is best suited to counter-cultural literature, or at least to critical irony. In *The Guardian*, she quipped: 'If I ever get round to writing a great novel, I will do so sitting in an airless magnolia room in a Travelodge on the outskirts of Huddersfield, with nothing but a maroon strip of wallpaper and a nylon carpet. I cannot think of anywhere more inspiring, more electrifying, more ripe with possibility.'[25]

Vladimir Nabokov (1899 — 1977) never owned his own home, and lived out his final years overlooking Lake Geneva in Switzerland's Montreux Palace. Day-to-day life included

two-hour afternoon naps and evening Scrabble, but in these years Nabokov was still productive. His ostensible reasons for a hotel life – that it made dealing with his post easier, or that he could spend more time in the mountains catching butterflies – are lost on our present-day sensibilities, and either amuse, appal or reinforce a nostalgia for a simpler, former era. We ascribe Nabokov's habits to those of an ageing, essentially nineteenth-century literary man. Yet they were just as laughable or seemed just as foreign to many of his contemporaries. In actual fact, Nabokov was well aware of how his lifestyle was received by others, and he tempered their impressions of his living arrangements with self-irony and witty exaggeration.[26] Teasing out such cultural unease, as the articles presented here attempt to do, reveals that it is a recurring mode of response. We are reminded that even an unease about hotel nostalgia can be traced back to the very eras so many cultural texts of contemporary society suggest we might long for: the early days of the Central European grand spas and hotels. Thus the following four essays are striking in the core and consistent ambivalence about hotels and spas that they study — despite spanning over a century, and notwithstanding the radical cultural changes that have shaped these spaces during that time.

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NOTES

[1] Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', trans. by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16.1 (1986), 22 — 27 (p. 24 and passim).

[2] Frederic Jameson, 'Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', *New Left Review* 146 (July — August 1984), 59 — 92, (p. 81). The analysis of the Bonaventure also appears in Jameson's *Postmodernism, Or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991) pp. 38 — 4.

[3] Jameson, 'Postmodernism' (1984), p. 81.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Peter Sloterdijk, *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), pp. 898 — 900.

[6] Peter Sloterdijk, 'Weltanschauungsessayistik und Zeitdiagnostik', in *Literatur der Weimarer Republik, 1918—1933*, ed. by Bernhard Weyergraf (Munich: Hanser, 1995), pp. 309—339 (p. p. 315).

[7] Craig Taylor, 'A Count Becomes a Waiter in a Novel of Soviet Supremacy', *The New York Times*, 23 September 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/25/books/review/amor-towles-gentleman-in-moscow.html> [accessed 1 August 2019].

[8] Richard B. Woodward, 'The Grand Waldhaus Hotel', *The New York Times*, 3 April 2015, <https://tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/04/03/waldhaus-hotel-alps/> [accessed 1 August 2019].

[9] Translated by S. Williams. The original reads: 'Ik wil niet net als het hotel waar ik verblijf en het continent waarnaar het is vernoemd tot de conclusie komen dat de beste tijd achter mij ligt en dat ik van de toekomst weinig meer te verwachten heb dan teren op mijn verleden.' Ilja Leonard Pfeijffer, *Grand Hotel Europa* (Amsterdam and Antwerp: Uitgeverij De Arbeiderspers), p. 56.

[10] See the interview with Michael Bonsor, Managing Director of Rosewood London, in 'Sunday Feature: The Deluxe Edition', Radio 3, 24 March 2019, 6.45pm, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0003rpl> [accessed 1 August 2019]. Rosewood is a newly built hotel on the site of the former Pearl Assurance Company in High Holborn, appropriating architecture from the early twentieth century.

[11] Sloterdijk, *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft*, 898 — 900.

[12] See, for example, plans for works to Vienna's Hotel Stefanie in 1928, in Marion Luger, *Die Geschichte des Hotel Stefanie. Das Älteste Hotel Wiens* (Vienna: Schick Hotels, 2016), p. 52.

[13] See Bettina Matthias, *The Hotel as Setting in Early Twentieth-Century German and Austrian Literature: Checking in to Tell a Story* (Rochester, NY, and Woodbridge: Camden House, 2006). See also the contributions by Seán M. Williams and Ulrike Zitzlsperger to the present Special Section.

[14] David Clay Large, *The Grand Spas of Central Europe: A History of Intrigue, Politics, Art, and Healing* (Lanham, Maryland and London, 2015), p. 290.

[15] This line actually comes from the 1962 preface to *Die Theorie des Romans* (1916). For discussion, see G. Schmid Noerr and Willem van Reijen (eds.), *Grand Hotel Abgrund, Eine Photobiographie der Frankfurter Schule* (Hamburg: Junius, 1988), pp. 10-12. See also Tucker Sorenson in the present Special Section.

[16] See Siegfried Kracauer's chapter on the 'Hotelhalle', in *Der Detektiv-Roman: Ein philosophischer Traktat* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), pp. 38 — 49.

[17] For the conference programme, see < https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.780923!/file/public-lecture-programme.pdf> [accessed 1 August 2019].

[18] 'Sunday Feature: The Deluxe Edition' (see note 9).

[19] Large, *The Grand Spas*, pp. 137 — 179.

[20] Meinrad Inglin, *Gesammelte Werke in zehn Bänden*, ed. by Georg Schoeck (Zurich: Ammann, 1988), vol. 2: *Grand Hotel Excelsior*, p. 6.

[21] See Peter McNeil and Giorgio Aiello, *Luxury: A Rich History* (Oxford: OUP, 2016), p. 143.

[22] Peter E. Gorgon, *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 94.

[23] Robert A Davidson, *The Hotel: Occupied Space* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), p. 5.

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[25] Nell Frizzell, 'Why do I love Travelodge? Because it's the great British social leveller', *The Guardian*, 16 November 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/nov/16/travelodge-social-leveller-budget-hotel-30-years> [accessed 1 August 2019].

[26] See Daniela Rippl, 'Alltag im Grand Hotel. Vladimir Nabokov im Montreux Palace', in *Grand Hotel. Bühne der Literatur*, ed. by Cordula Seger and Reinhard G. Wittmann (Munich and Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz, 2007), pp. 136 — 145.