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### Hotels Versus Humans: A Battle for Comfort

Have you ever felt as though your hotel check-in process takes longer than it should? Well, you are in luck because the authors at *Saturday Night Live* seem to agree and have produced the video “Hotel Check-In.” This piece was produced in 2017 and satirizes a few distinct aspects of the hotel check-in process. During 2017, there was not a major hotel crisis; however, the lodging industry of the United States had underperformed in terms of revenue in comparison to forecasts for the year (Mandelbaum). As a result, the aggressive advertising which hotels employ was even stronger to recoup the revenue which was lost in comparison to the forecast. This advertising, although it may seem beneficial to the consumer as it informs them, can be counter-effective and in fact can even hinder the consumer’s experience. This is primarily because many of the advertisements have different marketing methods employed within them that oftentimes can prove to be annoying and redundant. These marketing methods also create an environment within the hotel which is not consumer friendly. Due to this, the hotels of the modern day have a reputation for being very financially focused rather than consumer experience focused, which paved the path a *Saturday Night Live* episode. In this episode the hotel front desk manager, Kumail, is aggressively advertising to Mikey, a guest at the hotel. The *Saturday Night Live* episode “*Hotel Check-In*” satirizes the consumer unfriendliness and aggressive advertising

involved in the Hotel Check-In process using a plethora of satirical devices as well as ethos and logos.

“Hotel Check-In” satirizes the consumer unfriendliness involved in the Hotel Check-In process by exemplifying the frustration displayed by Mikey and issues with the hotel experience using paradoxes, irony, and caricatures. At one point in the video, Kumail offers Mikey a free champagne on behalf of the hotel, and Mikey accepts. However, in order to obtain this offer Kumail explains that he would need to claim it in the Stargazer Lounge, which Mikey has been reluctant to go to. As a result, Mikey declines the offer (“Hotel Check-In” 2:41-2:51). This is a prime example of a consumer-unfriendly environment as the offer by the hotel is beneficial to the consumer however, the process to obtain it is purposely made unfriendly by ensuring that the champagne is unavailable at the front desk, where check-in occurs. This example is also a situational irony as the Kumail specifically states “Can I offer you a complimentary glass of champagne” (“Hotel Check-In” 2:41). Yet as soon as Mikey answers he reveals that he cannot give the champagne and instead it will be available in the Stargazer lounge. This is ironic as by this point in the skit Mikey has clearly stated more than once that he has no intention of visiting the Stargazer lounge, yet Kumail proceeds to tell him that he needs to go there to redeem a free offer. In an analogous manner, a little earlier in the skit, Mikey clearly states a few times that wants a good night’s rest. As a result, Kumail offers him a complimentary hot stone massage with Carly. Immediately after Mikey agrees, Kumail immediately books a time without asking Mikey. Thereafter Kumail proceeds to tell Mikey that his appointment is at 5:15 A.M. in the morning. However, Mikey thinks that this is far too early and wants to cancel it. Kumail states that the company policy requires 24 hours of notice in order to cancel (“Hotel Check-In” 2:05-2:32). This is a caricature, situational irony, and a paradox. It is a caricature as it creates an

unfriendly impression of Kumail and his negative attitude towards any input which the consumer may have about their own choices. Although this seems to criticize Kumail, in the larger picture it is criticizing the entire hotel industry for the same reason. It is also situational irony as Mikey has specifically stated multiple times that he is too tired to enjoy the amenities offered and needs to rest properly. However, Kumail books one of the earliest possible times, completely disregarding Mikey's comments. It is also a paradox which criticizes the company's consumer unfriendliness as the consumers can book a massage within 24 hours, yet they cannot cancel a reservation within 24 hours.

However, the unfriendliness is not only limited to awkward amenities, as the video also satirizes the consumer unfriendly environment using the disregard hotel front desk managers have for anything related to the consumer through situational irony and caricature. Immediately after the fighting couple from room 904 leave the front desk Kumail informs Mikey that he will be staying in room 905, which leaves Mikey shocked and annoyed ("Hotel Check-In" 1:21-1:38). This is both situational irony and a caricature of Kumail. It is situational irony as Kumail just saw that there is a fight in room 904 and it will be loud in the surrounding rooms, yet he assigned room 905 to Mikey. It is also a caricature of Kumail as it exaggerates him to be completely disregarding to his surroundings as he is almost oblivious to all of this happening. All of these examples help the SNL skit exemplify how hotel front desk managers make the hotel check-in process for stayers much more difficult than necessary. However, at a deeper level each of these examples is actually criticizing the hotel industry as a whole. The entire hotel industry is contributing to each of these examples, as the front desk manager does not make any major decisions. As a result, beyond just the surface the level of the video, the satire is mainly about criticizing the hotel industry's inability to make the check-in process consumer friendly.

The SNL episode “*Hotel Check-In*” satirizes the aggressive advertising done by hotels to inform customers of their amenities, which in this case is the stargazer lounge, by using violence, caricature, situational irony, and repetition. This starts immediately with the mentioning of the introduction of the stargazer lounge to Mikey by Kumail. As it was the first time, it seemed completely normal, and Mikey declined the offer and said that he wished to rest instead. However, on many separate instances Kumail continued to bombard Mikey with aggressive advertisement regarding the Stargazer lounge. A clear example of this occurs when Kumail once again starts to explain about “[the hotel’s] amenities, such as the Stargazer Lounge” (“Hotel Check-In” 1:45). This represents Kumail’s aggressive targeted advertising towards Mikey, which is even counterproductive as it only annoys Mikey. This situation is also an example of repetition along with the rest of the mentions of the Stargazer lounge. This is especially evident as it is used in the same context, advertising, each time. This is also a very flawed example of logos as Kumail believes that it will entice the customer to use the amenities while it has completely the opposite effect. Later in the same conversation, Kumail also tries to justify his advertising by claiming that “[the spa of the hotel] is featured in *Latitudes*, Southwest Airlines in-flight magazine” (“Hotel Check-In” 1:54-1:58). Kumail tries to justify that he should visit both amenities by using ethos in the form of Southwest airlines inflight magazines. However, this is again flawed ethos as Southwest airlines inflight magazine even discontinued physical editions, and it also holds no merit as the airline has taken a large hit in recent years. Both uses of ethos and logos are purposely flawed as they satirize the advertisements by the hotel front desk managers and the hotel industry in general. Then, towards the end of the video, Kumail once again is directing Mikey to his room using a map and explains the lobby elevator will take him to “[his] room as well as the bar entrance to the Stargazer Lounge.” At hearing this Mikey is completely

fed up and unexpectedly punches Kumail in the face, by which Kumail is unphased (“Hotel Check-In” 3:35-3:47). This is a perfect example of repetition, violence, situational irony, and a caricature. As it is one of the repetitive advertisements of the Stargazer Lounge, it is repetition. It is also an example of violence as Mikey punches Kumail in the face. In a similar manner, it is also situational irony as within the same conversation Mikey had told Kumail to stop mentioning the amenities and that he wanted to go to his room. It also builds a caricature of Kumail as a completely resisting force which is oblivious of what the consumer wants. This caricature is also of the entire hotel industry as a whole, as Kumail is essentially their representative. All of these different different devices used in this example are meant to portray how the buildup of such actions can lead to conflict, often vocal, between the consumers of the hotel industry and the hotel industry businesses.

In conclusion, the satirical episode “Hotel Check-In” from *Saturday Night Live* satirizes the aggressive advertisement and lack of consumer-oriented environment during the hotel check-in process by using a variety of logos, ethos, and satirical devices. The lack of a consumer-oriented environment is particularly displayed through the usage of situational irony, caricature, and paradox. The aggressive advertising by the hotel industry is also shown through situation irony, repetition, violence, and caricature.

Works Cited

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