

Jordan Stump's translation of *Hôtel Splendid* by Marie Redonnet. University of Nebraska Press : Lincoln (1994)

Grandmother didn't like the theater, but movies appealed to her. She subscribed to all the movie magazines. Her favorite movie, one that she saw several times when she was young, was *Hôtel Splendid*. That was what gave her the idea of naming her Hôtel Splendid. In the movie, the hotel was not on the edge of a swamp, it was in the middle of the desert. The wind never stopped blowing. The oasis was slowly becoming choked with sand, and so was the hotel. Grandmother often told me the story of the Hôtel Splendid buried under the desert sand. There is no danger of that happening at the edge of the swamp. That's what grandmother must have said to herself when she chose his spot for her hotel. (74-75)

Everything in the Hôtel Splendid rests on my shoulders. I cannot allow myself the least little slip-up. Looking after the Splendid takes up all my time. Grandmother was right. Little by little, she even stopped thinking about the movies. In the end, she never paged through her magazines anymore. The Splendid was the only thing left. She succeeded in life. It's harder for me than for her, because the hotel is old and falling apart everywhere. Grandmother had all the right conditions for success. Her great merit was to have built the Splendid where no one else would ever have built it. I have great admiration for my grandmother. She was the one who shaped my character. Mother should never have left the Hôtel Splendid. I can thank grandmother for the gift she gave me in leaving the Splendid to me alone. (84-85)

### **Questions :**

1. In your opinion, how does the narrator feel about her grandmother ? What parts of the passage support your answer ?
2. Why did the grandmother choose Splendid Hotel as the name of her brand new hotel ?
3. To what extent does the grandmother's hotel resemble and/or differ from the hotel in the film ?
4. What is your favorite film and why ? How many times have you seen that movie ?
5. The narrator's grandmother prefers the cinema to the theater. Do you prefer one over the other ? In your opinion, what is the difference between the two ? Or do you think the cinema and the theater are basically the same ? Explain your answer.
6. When critics discuss Redonnet's style, they frequently note her use of repetition. Describe your reaction to the above text. What is the effect of repeating certain words ? Which words repeat and why ?

7. Why could one call this text minimalist ?