'Dwelling at Peace': Europeanisation and the Marketing of Alpine Tourism in Postwar Britain.

Abstract

The Alps were a prominent feature in postwar British consumer culture and one of the key tourist destinations in the years leading up to 1975's European Communities membership referendum. Through an analysis of holiday company Thomas Cook's promotional materials, this article demonstrates how the Alps were represented as a region free from conflict, in which different groups lived in harmony and which offered a healthy, community-based way of life. These images not only offered a sense of an alternative to perceived deficiencies in postwar British society but also offered a sense of the possibilities of being at home in Europe.

Keywords:

Alps, Tourism, Postwar Britain, Europeanization, Nation, Cultural History, British Popular Culture.

The Alps are a surprisingly prominent feature of postwar[1] British consumer culture. The 1970s bestselling car was the Ford Cortina (1962-82), named after Cortina D'Ampezzo, the Dolomite town that hosted the 1956 Winter Olympics. The same area also inspired the Triumph Dolomite. Alpine dishes such as apple strudel, goulash and fondue became popular and Alpine themes were used to brand new food products such as Alpen muesli, Ski yoghurt and chocolates such as Sharp's Swisskit and Thornton's Alpini. The interwar Chalet School series by Elinor Brent-Dyer became some of the most popular children's books of the period (Sandbrook 2005: 419). Alpine imagery was also a more widespread feature of postwar film - for example, *The Sound of Music* (1965) and *The Last Valley* (1971) - and TV in series such as *Heidi* (UK, 1959) and *Belle and Sebastian* (France, 1965-1970; first UK broadcast, 1967). *The Italian Job* (1969) even ends with its characters stuck on a bus on an Alpine pass, 'suspended between an imperial identity and a European one' (Weight, 2002: 468). This article will explore the meanings of this Alpine imagery in Britain through an analysis of promotional materials that sold the region to potential tourists during this period.

These images circulated in a postwar British culture that has been more frequently discussed in terms of Americanization. However, as Dick Hebdige (1988: 75) observes, Europe had a more profound effect on British cultural sensibilities in the 1960s: 'the most startling and significant revolution in British "popular" taste in

the early 1960s involved the domestication… of the subtle "cool" Continental style'. This appropriation of a cool Europe could be seen in the ways Mods 'venerated' Italian and French style, from clothes and hairstyles to coffee machines and scooters (Weight, 2013). However, the continent also influenced postwar British culture in other ways: the 'urban pastoralism' of Habitat and the rustic Mediterranean of food writers like Elizabeth David helped to reshape British middle-class culture (Highmore, 2016; Moran, 2007).

While numerous critics note these influences, there has been little attention to the meaning of Europeanisation in postwar Britain. Reflections on Britain's application to enter the European community and 1975's European Communities membership referendum often highlight the public's indifference to Europe and economic motivations for joining Europe, as well as a long British history of Euroscepticism (Weight, 2002; Sandbrook, 2010; Spiering 2014). However, as the debates about Brexit make clear, there is also a long history of British identifications with Europe, although this has received far less attention that motivations for voting to leave the EU. Back in 1975, however, some critics observed the appeals of Europe. For example, in the *Sunday Times,* E.P. Thompson (1980: 85) denounced the middle classes who succumbed to the appeal of European consumer culture, 'a haze of remembered vacations, beaches, bougainvillea, business jaunts, vintage wines.' More recently, Margaret O'Brien's (2018: 222) study of European art films in postwar Britain demonstrates how these movies acted as a 'magic carpet' and fostered European identifications: as one of her respondents put it, 'those of us who enjoyed a diet of European films were well primed to give a 'yes' vote to the Common Market in 1975.' There is scope, therefore, for much more research on processes of identification, disidentification and non-identification (Rose, 1995) with Europe at the level of everyday life.

Moving beyond British relationships to the EU, debates about the wider process of Europeanisation tend to elide these cultural processes. For example, while Delanty and Rumford (2005: 1) argue that 'Europe must become not just useful, but also meaningful', and Shore (2000) stresses that the process of Europeanisation needs to be understood as a cultural process, they remain preoccupied with the bureaucracy of the EU. If this is partly explained by the absence of 'a theory of society beyond national societies' (Delanty and Rumford 2005: 1), even modern European nation states were the product of a long cultural process that involved arts and ideas. As

Gramsci (1977: 12) observed of the bourgeois revolution that created the modern nation state, 'every revolution has been preceded by an intense labour of criticism, by the diffusion of culture and the spread of ideas amongst masses'.

Furthermore, Europeanisation cannot be understood as a singular process but has a range of meanings. 'The interplay of myth and memory' through which a common sense of European identity has been constructed (Bottici and Challand, 2013: 9) has not always spoken to the British, including more recent attempts by the EU to promote a sense of shared 'cultural roots and heritage' (Lähdesmäki, 2018). However, even within popular culture, there are a range of Europes. While critics in the UK have noted the influence of the 'urban, secular and cosmopolitan' Continent of youth culture (Weight, 2013) and 'urban pastoralism' of Habitat and David (Highmore, 2016), other Europes also had an appeal.

Our research aims to address some of these gaps by examining the meaning of Alpine imagery in the period between the end of the Second World War and the referendum on Britain's membership of the European Community in 1975. Although, as we show below, there is a substantial body of research documenting the British fascination with the Alps in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries, there has been little interest in the meaning of the Alps in postwar Britain. This article focuses on the meaning of the Alps in postwar tourist promotional materials. Drawing on Laurent Tissot (2011), we show how, despite some distinctions between holiday experiences offered in different nations, the Alps were represented as a region united by common landscapes, qualities and values, i.e. a region that that was not just geographical but a cultural one, too.[2] Our analysis highlights how the Alps were represented both as a site of identification and otherness. While critics such as John Urry (2002: 12) argue that 'Tourism results from a basic binary division between the ordinary/everyday and the extraordinary', we demonstrate how Alpine destinations were characterized by their ability to articulate the ordinary *with* the extraordinary. We analyze how the Alps were represented as a space in which one could not only have a feeling of belonging away from home, but also offered a sense of how one could live differently on one's return.

Our analysis focuses on Thomas Cook's promotional literature for their Alpine summer holidays. The Alps – and Switzerland in particular – played an important role in the development of the travel company from the mid-nineteenth century onwards and, despite the rising popularity of other destinations, remained

central to their range in the 1950s and early 1960s. Although Alpine resorts were challenged by the rise of increasingly affordable charter flights to Southern European beach resorts in the 1960s, Switzerland was still one of Thomas Cook's top five destinations in 1967 (*Holidaymaking*, 1967: 3). Furthermore, of the five million British people who travelled abroad in 1965, 700,000 of them went to Switzerland (Ring, 2000: 265). This market for outdoors holidays may have been stimulated by a growing British interest in the countryside in the 1950s (Weight, 2002: 155-6) and by the popularity of walking as pastime – membership of the Ramblers Association doubled between 1965 and 1973 (Sandbrook, 2006: 603).

Our analysis centres on *Holidaymaking*, an annual Thomas Cook brochure in the 1950s and 1960s that used a magazine format to invite readers to sample a range of highlights from the company's repertoire. In places, this is supplemented by material from other Thomas Cook holiday brochures from the period.[3] Because *Holidaymaking* highlighted summer holiday destinations, we do not include materials promoting the Alps as a winter sports destination. Although Thomas Cook offered a range of winter sports holidays in the late 1940s and the 1950s, this market did not grow significantly until the 1960s. However, an analysis of the promotion of winter sports tourism would demonstrate a range of other meanings that were attached to the Alps, including ski experiences, youth and continental sophistication.

The first section examines the British relationship to the Alps before World War II. The second moves on to explore how, in the period after the Second World War, the region was imagined as peaceful, democratic and beyond the struggles between different nations, religious or linguistic groups, as a harmonious to a Britain and Europe still recovering from more than half a century of violent conflict. The third section analyses the Alps' association with mental and physical health - and intense and invigorating experiences – contrasted with the condition of Britain at the time. Finally, the article explores how the region was presented as being *both* familiar *and* strange, ordinary *and* extraordinary. Rather than simply a spectacle to be looked at from a distance, the region was presented as an immersive experience, something to become part *of* but also transformed *by*. It offered a sense of community and belonging but also something with which to identify, an alternative to the deficiencies of everyday life before the 1975 referendum.

Domesticating the Alps? Histories of the British visitors to the Alps

British travelers have a longstanding attraction to the Alps, and the British played a key role in shaping the meaning of the Alps and the region's tourist infrastructure (Ring, 2000), from the taming of challenging mountain peaks to the installation of British toilets. These representational and material transformations made the Alps feel homely and hospitable to British tourists, a space that was both British and European. This process began during the eighteenth century, when the reputation of the Alps was transformed from that of a wilderness that elicited terror and horror (Colley, 2016; della Dora, 2016; Ring, 2000). Instead the Alps became a site for scientific discovery for mountaineers; and offered opportunities for 'inspiration and enlightenment' (Ring 2000: 25) for poets, artists and philosophers, who responded to the region with 'astonishment and awe' (Bernard, 1978: 15). This also led to a profusion of representation of the region that made it increasingly familiar within British culture. Further domestication accompanied the growth of 'scenic tourism' in which wild spaces were transformed into 'what Raymond Williams terms "scenery, landscape, image, fresh air", places waiting at a distance for virtual consumption.' (Urry, 2002: 147) Many visitors enjoyed 'looking upon the mountains' (Bernard, 1978: 88) and, by the mid-nineteenth century, mountaineering was transformed into a 'spectator sport' (Colley, 2016).

Representations of the wondrous 'wild natural environment' of the Alps offered an 'alternative to modernism' (Barton, 2008: 112). The 'transformative power' of the mountains was seen as a cure for urban life as well as specific diseases such as Tuberculosis (Frank, 2012: 191). Yet the ability to experience the 'wild' Alps required a tourist infrastructure that helped to 'tame' them. As Susan Barton (2008: 134) argues, 'any attraction of a life of simplicity in the mountains was soon subsumed by the desire to live with all the comforts modernity could offer the wealthy'. The Alps were not only domesticated through the provision of English bourgeois home comforts but also by creating a sense of a national home for the English abroad. Alpine towns were shaped to suit English tastes: hotels observed English mealtimes, installed English-style toilets and served pots of English mustard and tea (Ring, 2000: 52-3). In some Alpine cure towns, even the local architecture became Anglicized (Ring, 2000: 172). In 1855, Interlaken was described as 'an English boarding house with a street running through it.' (cited in Heafford, 2006: 43) A further growth in Alpine tourism brought middle-class tourists who demanded

'cardinal British institutions – tea, tubs, sanitary appliances, lawn tennis and churches' (Cited in Ring, 2000: 94).

Domestication, combined with increasing number of tourists from more diverse middle-class origins, led many commentators to echo Ruskin's complaints about the 'vulgarization' of the Alps. This was exacerbated by Arthur Smith's spectacular and highly-successful West End show *Ascent of Mont Blanc* (1852-58) which not only brought the Alps 'home' but stimulated further tourism (Colley, 2016). The link between vulgarization, the spread of the middle classes and the aesthetic desecration of the natural landscape of the Alps came together in Ruskin's comment in 1864 that there was 'a consuming white leprosy of new hotels' (cited in Ring, 2000: 145).

Thomas Cook's travel company played a key role in making Alpine travel accessible to a wider audience. Aiming to offer uplifting forms of leisure, Cook's key intervention was to make travel by train more straightforward for British travelers. Cook offered his first trips to Switzerland in 1863 and, despite quickly diversifying, the destination remained a central part of company's image and provision. The Polytechnic Touring Association, which also believed travel provided moral uplift and educational benefits started offering Swiss tours in 1888 (Dominici and Maitland, 2016). Both companies contributed to the increased accessibility of Alpine travel: by the 1880s, there were over a million visitors a year to Switzerland, many of them British (Ring, 2000: 140).

Despite increasing competition from cheaper and warmer destinations, Switzerland was still crucial to the Thomas Cook brand in the period before 1975. The 1963 edition of *Holidaymaking* opened with a celebration of the centenary of Cook's first Swiss tour. Switzerland 'fit' with the values that Cook wanted to promote. Cook saw travel as morally uplifting because it promoted 'a feeling of universal brotherhood; it accelerates the march of peace, and virtue, and love' (cited in Ring, 2000: 85). These values dovetailed with those attached to Switzerland, the Alpine destination par excellence: 'The Helvetic Republic emerged as a carrier of authentic and eternal values such as freedom, democracy, peace, harmony, happiness, and simplicity' (Tissot, 2011: 61).

Certainly, parts of the region, such as the Tyrol, acquired negative meanings for the British in the 1930s through their association with Hitler (Ring, 2000), but Switzerland's diplomatic image and its exceptional position during the Second World

War also provided powerfully different associations. While many British people's first physical contact with Europe and Europeans was under the wartime conditions of the 1940s (Spiering, 2014: 15), Switzerland maintained an image as a 'playground' rather than a 'battlefield', a 'safe harbor away from international confrontations and sheltered from nationalist reflexes.' (Tissot, 2011: 71).

Constructing the Alps

Consequently, the identity of the Alps is not pre-given but a 'material, discursive and historical construction' (Paasi, 2010: 2298; Allen, et al. 1998; Knudson et al., 2008; Barton, 2008; Frank, 2012; Colley 2016), a process that continued into the period after the Second World War, and that we will examine through Thomas Cook's promotional materials. In the 1950s and 1960s, these materials primary consisted of the Country Guides which, as the name suggests, primarily themed holidays along national lines. Therefore, although some Alpine coach tours crossed several national borders, the company did not have summer holiday brochures focusing on the Alps until the introduction of the Lakes and Mountains brochure in the 1970s (although Alpine mountain ranges were central to Winter Sports brochures.) Travelers searching for Alpine holidays before then needed to consult the guides to Austria and Switzerland, and to a lesser extent, Germany, France and Italy.

Despite this national focus, the regional identity of 'the Alps' was central to many descriptions of mountain resorts and destinations, with individual towns and landscapes related back to this greater whole. For example, the 1953 country guide for Italy invited the reader to view Italian mountain destinations within a transnational region beyond frontiers: 'When the winter snows come to North Italy the whole line of the Alps from the French to the Austrian border attracts the visitors, for here… the scenery is irresistible' (Italy, 1953). Often, a common identity for the Alps was established visually through line drawings of a generalized snow-covered Alpine landscape rather than particular peaks. Although there were photographic images of specific locations, they were often small and shared some of the visual characteristics of 'postcard photography' so they produced a general sense of Alpineness rather than a particular sense of place (see Dominici and Maitland, 2016).

In both the Country Guides and *Holidaymaking,* text and image frequently combine to reinforce key elements of Alpineness. As well as mountain peaks, flowers were a key motif in a period during which gardening was most popular hobby in

Britain (Taylor 2008: 27). Visitors were invited to: 'Wander ankle-deep through flower-thronged meadows' in Garmisch-Partenkirchen (*Holidaymaking*,1958). Lugano was described as a spectacle, 'sunk in a riotous carpet of rhododendrons, camellias, oleanders, palms and cypresses' (*Holidaymaking*, 1958: 6). Claims that 'pastures are covered with Alpine flowers' (*Holidaymaking*, 1955: 7) were a recurring feature across Alpine destinations, and sometimes this theme was reinforced through page borders constructed of simple and folksy drawings of flowers.

Other tropes recurred: the sound of cowbells and Alpen horns; the crystal clear blue waters of lakes and waterfalls; green pine-clad slopes; and invigorating air. Indeed, *Holidaymaking* in 1953 seemed to parody the use of these stock images which created a common Alpine experience:

Well tried holiday recipes. Ingredients: 1 blue lake – assorted mountains – Snow dressing for tops of mountains – Green valleys – Flowers (of all colours) – 1 good hotel. To make: Bake in sunshine and add… yourself! (4)

The unity of the region was sometimes emphasized through the physical proximity of different Alpine destinations. For example, Garmisch Partenkirchen not only gave access to the Bavarian Alps but also offered access to the Austrian Alps: 'Berchtesgaden, Innsbruck, [and] Salzburg … are all quite easily reached.' (*Holidaymaking*, 1956: 31) For Thomas Cook, this also performed a marketing function, enabling them sell new destinations by associating them with the pleasures of more famous Alpine resorts.

Furthermore, Switzerland remained Thomas Cook's most popular Alpine destination and it operated as an 'ideal type' of an Alpine nation; the 'concepts and sensibilities' associated with Switzerland were transferred on to the regional identity of the Alps as a whole (Tissot, 2011: 61, 68). In many ways, Switzerland's association with unity, democracy and freedom –combined with its linguistic and religious diversity - operated as a model for the transnational community of the Alps. The nation's reputation for cosmopolitanism established in the nineteenth century was accentuated as new settlers, drawn by the promise of healthy and peaceful lifestyles, formed 'cosmopolitan communities' (Barton, 2008). Likewise, by the late nineteenth century, the transnational Alps had a 'cosmopolitan allure' (Denning 2014: 84) that was still reproduced in the postwar period: for example, 'cosmopolitan' Montreux had a 'Gallic… air of joie de vivre' and 'the gaiety of Paris with the majesty of the Alps' (*Holidaymaking*, 1957: 7).

Yet Thomas Cook's promotional copy goes further than merely selling cosmopolitanism. In a postwar context in which Europe could easily be associated with war, violence, horror and Fascism, Switzerland promised a different vision of Europeanness.

> Yes, a Shangri-la indeed – a phenomenon of unity, for here is a nation of varied tongues and varied traditions all owing allegiance to one flag and living in perfect harmony. Switzerland, the oldest democracy in the world, has gathered together French, German and Italian – with their own atmosphere, their own architecture, their own language and customs – into one people, separated from the outside world by the magnificent Alps, dwelling at peace in a land of happy contentment. (Southdown Continental Tours, 1950: 5).[4]

The ability of Switzerland to stand in for – and shape the meaning of – the Alps in general had a particular resonance in the period after the Second World War. It enabled qualities such as peacefulness, harmony, tolerance and democracy to be transferred onto nations such as Germany, Italy and Austria. While this no doubt helped Thomas Cook to sell holidays, it also enabled readers and customers to imagine themselves as part of a democratic Europe characterized by unity and togetherness, as members of some form of European community.

The cultural difference between 'the Alps' and the battlefields of wartime Europe was reinforced through images of physical distance. The high Alps were represented as a space above the turmoil of the rest of Europe which enjoyed a sense of Olympian detachment, where people enjoyed peace and were 'utterly careless of the fate of empires, and the change of dynasties.' (Forbes, 1843/2011, 267) Similarly, *Holidaymaking* promised 'dozens of secluded little villages' (*Holidaymaking*, 1954: 4), while the country guides describe the 'aloof Alpine grandeur' of the region (France, 1949).

This Europe was repeatedly associated with a peace and tranquility far removed from both bombed out landscapes and urban soundscapes. *Holidaymaking* offered German holidays with 'peaceful pinewoods' in Garmisch-Partenkirchen (1957: 27) and a 'peaceful and relaxed' Oberammergau (1961: 44). A Swiss holiday in Grindelwald allowed visitors to share 'the solitude of high places with the timid chamois and the lonely eagle' (*Holidaymaking*, 1958: 7) while an Austrian holiday in Mutters and Natters was ideal 'for those seeking peace and quiet' (*Holidaymaking*,

1958: 37). These images of peace and relaxation also invoked longstanding associations between the Alps and health.

Health, and the Senses

The promise of peace and quiet was therefore associated with healthy and invigorating leisure rather than idleness. The Alps offered opportunities for *both* relaxation and exertion, *both* of which offered 'a mental as well as a physical tonic' (*Holidaymaking*, 1954) that promised to effect 'an extraordinary sense of freshness and well-being' (*Holidaymaking*, 1958: 10). Resort information implied that even those looking for 'peace and tranquility' (*Switzerland*, 1962) would want to go as boating or fishing or on gentle rambles through the countryside (*Switzerland*, 1948). The combination of vigorous exercise and recuperative relaxation promised to induce 'a feeling of lightness and exhilaration [that] make you feel ready for anything.' (*Holidaymaking*, 1961: 8).

These images of the 'transformative power' of the Alps drew on the reputation of nineteenth-century Alpine cure towns which marketed their 'fine air' as the route to good health (Frank, 2012; Barton, 2008). Thomas Cook made few explicit references to cure towns or spa facilities, although *Holidaymaking* noted that 'Innsbruck is a health resort known throughout the world' (*Holidaymak*ing, 1956: 21). However, there were repeated references to the healing power of Alpine air. The 'stimulating and clear' air of St Moritz offered 'an extraordinary sense of freshness and well-being' (*Holidaymaking*, 1958: 10) while the 'crisp and clear' mountain air of Zermatt was 'a tonic that will last the whole year round' (*Holidaymaking*, 1959: 9). Rather than simply passively inhaling the health-giving properties of the Alps, travelers were invited to gain a greater sense of energy by expending it. On the opening page of the first edition of *Holidaymaking*, Thomas Cook customer and shorthand-typist Sheila Scott recalled how she 'walked for miles without getting the least bit tired' during her holiday in Interlaken (1953: 2). In contrast to the exhaustion of life in 1950s Britain (see discussion of Dyer below), going walking in Austria not only offers a sense of energy but will 'help you find out for yourself what it means to be alive' (*Holidaymaking*, 1968: 24-5).

Therefore, the health-giving properties of the Alps were directly associated with the stimulation of the whole body. The region was frequently represented as offering an intense experience for the senses, rather than one in which, as Urry

implies, the visual was necessarily privileged (Urry, 2002). Certainly, the visual was important but, as Tim Edensor (2006: 23) argues, tourism is not just organized around looking but is made up of embodied practices including 'sensory experience'. This was a period in which bright colours became an aspirational element of consumer culture and images of everyday life, from food to fridges, were depicted in vivid colours (Faire and McHugh, 2018). Similarly, colour is a prominent feature in *Holidaymaking*, which presents the Alps in terms of their dazzling brilliance and vibrancy, as if the process of travel involved a shift from black and white to colour. For example, in *Italy 1955*, the Italian Alps are characterized by their 'purplish-grey rocks',

> sometimes like lofty Cathedral domes, glittering with ice and snow. No two mountains are similar, and each vies with the other in splendor, their colours rapidly changing – from daffodil yellow to buttercup gold; from pastel pink to flaming red, to orange and dusky mauve…. Here, were the sun makes the mountains blush and the grapes mature in its warmth, you will find a magical holiday land. (Italy, 1955: 23)

With 'a sun that adds brilliance and colour to life' (*Holidaymaking*, 1957: 3*)*, visitors were not only offered the opportunity to experience life in colour but to be literally colourized by the experience: 'you can acquire a golden rich tan in just a few hours' (*Holidaymaking*, 1958: 10).

However, the visual experience of the Alps was part of a wider bodily experience that involved all the senses. If flowers repeatedly add colour to Alpine landscapes, 'the scent of the bright flowers which grow right up to the ice-floe' also adds to the intensity of the Alpine experience. Switzerland offers 'wild pink cyclamen scents' (*Holidaymaking*, 1963: 5) and the Alps are 'up where the air is sweet with the scent of flowers and hay' (*Holidaymaking*, 1963: 8).

Holidaymaking also describes sounds as another way of communicating the appeals of an Alpine holiday and the intensity of the experiences on offer. Germany's Garmisch-Partenkirchen offers 'the music of the cowbells, the twang of the zither, the sophistication of ballroom tunes' and 'exuberant yodelling' (*Holidaymaking*, 1956: 31). Switzerland is alive with the sounds of 'the accordion band playing folk tunes, the yodelers, flag swingers and alpenhorn blowers dressed in local costumes' (*Holidaymaking*, 1953: 1). However, if music is a quality of Alpine cultures in general, it is a particular feature of Austria where music is even represented as a

natural quality with the 'sounds of the countryside' and 'where there's music in the mountains' (*Holidaymaking*, 1953: 9). In Austria, there is

> Music, music, music everywhere! It's the land of Lehar and Strauss, Schubert and Mozart; of Salzburg symphonies, Viennese waltzes, Tyrolean yodel and the musical comedy and gaiety of the Salzkammergut. Life in Austria is like a lilting operetta… You can't help being happy. (*Holidaymaking*, 1958: 35)

While the sounds of Austria add to the intensity of the holiday experience, it is worth noting that the 'lilting operetta' refers to the musical comedy *The White Horse Inn* (*Im weißen Rössl*). With a number of film and stage versions – and the song 'Goodbye' released in 1947 by popular tenor Joseph Locke - this would have been familiar to many people in the period. There are numerous references to Austria as 'the land of the White Horse Inn' in Thomas Cook brochures and the association with the operetta strengthened the sense of Austria as a land of gaiety and hospitality.

Food had long been associated with the health giving properties of the region, and much was made of this by Thomas Cook, which presented the Alps of a place that would excite one's taste and satisfy one's appetite. In the 1955 edition of *Holidaymaking*, a double-page spread – 'Eat, drink and be merry in beautiful Austria' (20-21) – centered on a photo of a huge spread of food and drink including bread, ham, sausages, grapes and wine. This visual representation of bounty is backed up by the accompanying text:

> Patisseries are beckoning everywhere and vast trays of delectable cakes are displayed – sachertorte and mandelborgen – smothered in cream and tremendously rich. You must try a wedge of that strawberry flan; the wild wood fruit is unusually good. (*Holidaymaking*, 1955: 20-21).

In the context of Britain after the Second World War, during which food rationing only ended in July 1954, this emphasis on bounty and choice – 'Will you have trout or goulash today?' (*Holidaymaking*, 1955, 20) – contrasted with everyday experience. The preoccupation with cakes lasted well beyond this period: in *Holidaymaking* 1966, Austria was still represented as a land of 'huge cream cakes' (22-3). Rather than being treated as an unhealthy indulgence, these rich foods are part of the health-giving properties of the region that invigorated and refreshed the tourist. However, as distance from rationing increased, the offer of abundance could be seen as a contrast to the everyday struggles of making ends meet. The 1957 *Holidaymaking* promised that 'For a modest outlay, you will live like a lord at St Moritz' (10).

The Alps are therefore represented in terms of an immersive experience of sensory stimulation. They offer a heightened experience of the world, a sense of intensity that is a source of excitement and pleasure and contrasts with both the general monotony of everyday life and the grey landscape of Britain in the period. Although this emphasized the 'escapist' qualities of holidays, tourist brochures – read by a much wider readership that those who actually booked holidays – also worked to not just associate these qualities with Thomas Cook holidays but the promise of Europe more generally. Alpine Europe offered a life lived in colour.

The sense of exhilaration also offered the promise of energy, a counter to the exhaustion of work and urban life (Dyer, 1981: 184). As we have seen, Zermatt offers 'the feeling of lightness and exhilaration [that] makes you ready for anything' (*Holidaymaking*, 1961: 8). The health-giving properties of the high Alpine Swiss resorts were therefore in sharp contrast to everyday life in Britain: 'The invigorating air, the flowers everywhere and the strong hot sunshine are just the antidote you need for the long tiring months in the city.' (*Holidaymaking*, 1959: 28) In the 1950s, Britain was the most overcrowded and urbanized country in Europe and working-class life was still 'a struggle against… darkness, cold and dirt'. (Sandbrook, 2005: 31,104) This sense of exhilaration is also articulated with the intensity of the Alpine experiences so that the very act of breathing becomes exciting. The 'exhilarating, bracing air' (*Holidaymaking*, 1956: 11) is so 'stimulating' (*Holidaymaking*, 1958: 10) that there is a sense given that the experience is intoxicating: the air is not only 'clear and crisp' (*Holidaymaking*, 1958: 9) but is also described as being 'like wine' (*Holidaymaking*, 1960: 28) or even 'champagne' (*Holidaymaking*, 1955: 20).

The association with mental and physical health meant that the Alps were presented as a place where the self could not only be transformed but reclaimed, and in a way that was clearly presented as an antidote to the problems of everyday life in Britain. In the process, it also offered an image of the good life that was not simply an alternative to everyday life in Britain but also a sense of what a better life in British might feel like.

The Ordinary and the Extraordinary

If the Alps offered a contrast to the drabness and exhaustion of British life, they were also seen as an antidote to an increasing social fragmentation associated with geographical mobility, suburbanization, privatization, and urban development

programs that broke up 'traditional' working class communities (see, for example, Willmott and Young, 1960 and 1965) Although a holiday might be brief, Thomas Cook's brochures promised that vistors would feel part of a community while in the Alps. Although Innsbruck had 'all the attractions of a metropolis' (*Holidaymaking*, 1954: 26), the Tyrol was characterized in terms of traditional forms of pre-modern community. Towns had a 'medieval atmosphere' and the 'whole Austrian scene – customs, costumes, festivals and way of life – is rooted in the past' (*Holidaymaking*, 1953: 9). This was reinforced by frequent use of folksy hand drawn images and borders and photographs featuring local people in a range of Alpine destinations in traditional dress.

This folksy aspect of the region also meant that the Alps were repeatedly associated with the magical and non-rational qualities of fairyland, echoing pre-modern representations of the supernatural powers of the mountains (della Dora, 2016). This also partly invoked the ways in which the Romantics viewed the Alps in terms of the sublime which encouraged introspection and challenged perspective. 'Interlaken is truly a wonderland' (*Holidaymaking,* 1957: 8) and Kitzbuhl is 'a fairytale town' (*Holidaymaking*, 1955: 21). The villages were described as 'like toys on a painted landscape' (*Holidaymaking*: 1959: 35), and the region was repeatedly described as having 'a fairytale character' (*Holidaymaking*: 1956: 20) and one that is 'enchanting' (*Holidaymaking,* 1963: 45); has 'a certain magic' (*Holidaymaking*, 1959: 35); and 'really weaves a spell' (*Holidaymaking*, 1955: 7). This association with the fairy story was particularly prominent in relation to Austria: as one headline announced in *Holidaymaking 1958*, 'Austria: friendly folk in a fairyland setting' (35). Yet Thomas Cook still felt the need to assuage any fears about countries that had recently been 'the enemy': 'Austria is irresistible. It's a fairy tale come true; except there aren't any ogres in the castles perched on the mountainside' (*Holidaymaking*, 1958: 35).

However, while representations of fairytale landscapes might encourage travelers to identify 'relevant differences and what is "other"' (Urry, 2002: 145), Thomas Cook were keen to stress the homely qualities of their holidays. This is built into the structure of their brand with 'hostesses' in resorts who provide care and reassurance, a feminine presence domesticating foreign places. But homeliness is also a quality transferred on to Thomas Cook's Alpine destinations. The opposition between otherness and home is made crystal clear in *Holidaymaking* 1957: the

description of Switzerland's Interlaken states 'You want to enjoy your precious leisure in agreeable surroundings, with all the comforts of home and the excitement of strange places' (8). On the one hand, this can be seen as an example of the 'home plus' formula that Ulf Hannerz (1990: 241) disdainfully associates with the tourist who has no interest in engaging with the other: 'Spain is home plus sunshine, India is home plus servants, Africa is home plus elephants and tigers' and, presumably, the Alps is home plus snow-capped mountains. However, the continual emphasis on hospitable, homely and friendly Alpine destinations could be seen to offer the British a vision of being *at home* in the Alps – *at home* in Europe – and even as presenting Alpine Europe as offering something that might be brought home to improve everyday life in Britain.

As we discussed earlier, tourist facilities and infrastructure in Alpine destinations in the nineteenth century were often shaped to meet the tastes and preferences of their primary clientele, the English. This longer history finds echoes in *Holidaymaking*. The Swiss lakeside resorts 'might have been specifically created for people from this country' (*Holidaymaking*, 1954: 3). More generally in Switzerland, the copy boldly claims, 'English is spoken as the second language everywhere' (1955: 5). The hospitable Austrians also welcome the English: 'How these people have always loved to entertain English visitors with their songs, their music and dancing' (*Holidaymaking*, 1953: 9). By 1955, the welcome had become more inclusive: the Austrians are 'charming hospitable folk eager to please and welcome the British' (*Holidaymaking*, 1955: 20-21).

However, this promise of hospitality went further. It offered a sense of the region that not only enjoyed a sense of community but that provided the opportunity to become *part of* that community. If Britain was increasingly presented as a place that celebrated surfaces and where advertising increasingly manipulated people, many expressed a strong desire for transparency, for social interactions and communication that was sincere, genuine and open (Dyer, 1981; see also Geraghty, 1991). Thomas Cook represents Alpine populations as simple and hospitable folk who not only warmly welcome travelers but made those travelers feel part of their communities. *Holidaymaking 1958* tells readers that 'the ordinary folk of Austria are the friendliest folk on earth: everyone says 'Grüss Gott', and they have the 'courtesy' and 'naturally gay spirits' 'that make you feel you belong' (35). In contrast to the frequent claims that Britain was increasingly becoming a place of alienation (Hill, 1986), the Alps

were not presented as a place of otherness but rather as a place of community where one could feel a sense of belonging.

Therefore, while hospitality is generally associated with the Alps –Thomas Cook highlighted Germany's 'proverbial hospitality' (*Holidays in Germany*, 1950: 3) and Switzerland's excellent reputation in the hospitality industry and its friendliness – this hospitality was presented as something authentic and sincere, not simply the professionalism of the hospitality industry. For example, under the headline 'In Austria they call it Gemütlichkeit', *Holidaymaking 1957* explained that: 'It's a word with no real translation. It means good fellowship, hospitality, courtesy, understanding and plain "pleased-to-meet-you-ship" all in one.' (24) While this might have partly been a way of reassuring any potential customers who might associate Austria with hostility, war and Fascism, these images also conjure up a world of emotional transparency - where people are welcoming, life is joyful and there is an 'infectious gaiety' (*Holidaymaking*, 1966: 24-5).

The Alps, therefore, were presented as a magical realm which operated as a counter to modern life in Britain. The region was not simply represented as other or as a spectacle to be gazed at by the tourist, but as offering a sense of community and belonging in which the tourist could feel a sense of belonging. The Alps offered an image of what life in Britain *could* (and probably *should*) feel like.

Conclusion: 'Shangri-La Indeed' or the Utopian Possibilities of Europe.
The use of the term 'infectious' in Thomas Cook marketing suggested that the Alpine spirit would transform visitors. In some ways, this echoes Thomas Cook's original belief in the transformative power of tourism, the idea that a trip did not just offer rest and recuperation but an experience that could transform the tourist's everyday life. Although initially linked to the temperance movement, Cook also believed that travel would foster international, rather than nationalistic, ways of thinking and so promote peace.

These latter ideas were still active in the mid-twentieth century and *Holidaymaking* continued to encourage tourists to identify with the values of the Alps. While this 'Shangri-La' was clearly a 'utopian' ideal, it would be wrong to dismiss this 'utopianism' too quickly. In his work on film musicals, Richard Dyer (1981: 177, 182) argues that these films were not simply 'escapist' but offered images of 'something better' to escape *into*, 'utopian sensibilities' that 'are related to the

specific inadequacies in society'. Their utopian possibilities – abundance, energy, intensity, transparency, and community – do not tell us what utopias would actually 'be like' but what they would 'feel like'. There is little research that explicitly applies these ideas to holidaymaking, although the idea that tourism involves an escape to an elsewhere that 'contrasts with everyday life' (Urry, 2002: 2-3) is central to how holidays are understood. But the radical potential of these 'utopian' 'elsewheres' is often trivialized in terms similar to those applied to the Hollywood musicals that Dyer defended.

Nonetheless, the five utopian possibilities that Dyer associates with the musical are clearly echoed in the ways that Thomas Cook presented their Alpine holidays in the postwar period. For example, the Alps promised the experience of abundance at a time when scarcity was a real issue, whether as a result of rationing or the persistence of poverty and more widespread economic inequalities. This abundance was also linked to an emphasis on intensity in representations of the Alps that contrasted with the 'dreariness' of everyday life. Intensity was also associated with energy that offered to invigorate people worn down by the experience of work and of urban life (Dyer, 1981: 184). Finally, these regions were seen as providing both transparency and community at a time when there was a concern that Britain was increasingly characterised by social fragmentation and alienation.

Therefore, like musicals, these representations of the Alps imagined magical solutions to 'real needs created by society' (Dyer,1981: 184). Although it obviously made good commercial sense for Thomas Cook to offer their products as a solution to the problems of British postwar society, the utopian promise of Alpine holidays was also attached to the wider idea of Europe and broader processes of Europeanisation. Thomas Cook offered a positive image of what being 'European' might feel like in the crucial years between the end of World War II and the first referendum on Europe.

Furthermore, these promotional materials imagined the Alps as a region that existed beyond national boundaries and exemplified the values of freedom, democracy, tolerance and peace. The Alps were presented as a region beyond the struggles between nations, in which different religious, linguistic and other groups could live together in peace. The Alps appeared to be a space that was both familiar and foreign, that offered a remedy for the problems that afflicted British society; they allowed the reader to imagine that becoming European might offer a sense of

liberation and enable them to realise their dreams. While these images were the product of marketing materials that aimed to stimulate consumption, this does not mean their meanings can be simply reduced to a desire to sell holidays.

These representations of the Alps in postwar British popular culture demonstrate one way in which the idea of Europe became 'meaningful' (Delanty and Rumford, 2005) and processes of Europeanization took place. They may also start to explain more diverse ways in which British people came to identify *with* Europe rather than *against* it, ways that extend beyond Mod style, art cinema and Mediterranean cookery. More research on representations of Europe in the UK - and processes of Europeanisation which have, until now, remained relatively neglected - might provide a sense of how to build positive identifications with Europe, beyond the economic arguments that have repeatedly been shown to fail in recent years. Our findings can also help to counter the dismissive claims of Thompson and others who reduce the meaning of Europe to mere consumerism; consuming Europe may not be as meaningless and lacking in political substance as he implies. Indeed, understanding how an identification with Europe can become part of British culture is crucial in imagining an alternative future in which the UK feels part of European Union.

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[1] In British history, the postwar period refers to the period from the end of the Second World War through until some point in the 1970s. For the purposes of this essay, we use it to refer to the period before the 1975 referendum on Britain's membership of the European Community.

[2] While it is beyond the remit of this article to explore the similarities and differences between representations of the Alps in the UK and in other European countries, British tourist representations certainly drew on understandings of the Alps that were widespread within Europe. In particular, the meanings associated with the 'Helvetic Alpine tradition' such as freedom and peace (meanings transferred to the Alps more generally) were not uniquely British but were part of a more general construction of Switzerland's national identity (Tissot 2011).

[3] All this material was located at the Thomas Cook archive in Peterborough and we are very grateful to archivist Paul Smith for his knowledge and support.

[4] This connection between Switzerland and the mythical Shangri-la was also offered in the ITV adventure series *The Champions* (1968-9) which featured crime-fighting agents based in Geneva who had been given extrasensory powers by the people of a secret civilization in the Tibetan Himalayas.