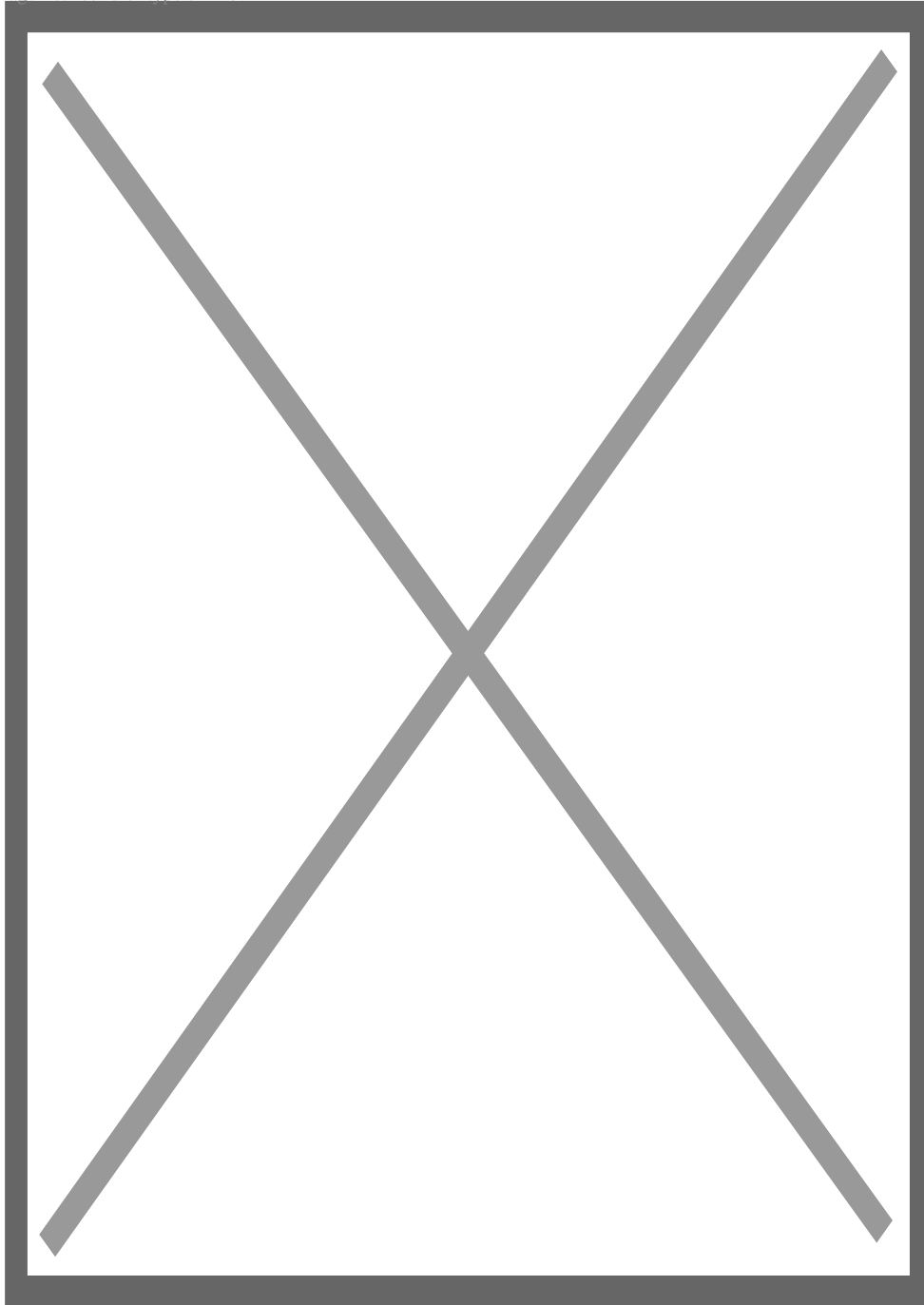


Magazines, Travel and Middlebrow Culture in Canada 1925-1960

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Travel-themed cover of Maclean's magazine. Source:
<https://tinyurl.com/yans266k>

Magazines, Travel and Middlebrow Culture in Canada 1925-1960. University of Strathclyde: 2011.
<<http://www.middlebrowcanada.org/>>

The establishment of [Magazines, Travel and Middlebrow Culture in Canada 1925-1960](http://www.middlebrowcanada.org/), as a web-

based resource emerged from a research project of the same name by Faye Hammill and Michelle Smith at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. In 2015, they also published a monograph on this topic.

The goal of the website is to provide historical information and images as well as cultural context for six Canadian periodicals published between 1925 and 1960: *Mayfair*, *La Revue Moderne*, *Canadian Home Journal*, *Chatelaine*, *La Revue Populaire*, and *Maclean's*. These periodicals in particular, the authors argue, were key in the construction of middlebrow culture in Canada in the twentieth century, due to their high circulation rates during this period as well as their "taste-making" content. Establishing a link between social and actual mobility as reflected in the periodicals, Hammill and Smith show how "travel is a part of the middlebrow, aspirant psyche" a symbol of achievement, cultural literacy, savoir-faire and personal means and that magazines are key to creating a link between travel and upward mobility. The website itself offers less context and etymology for the term "middlebrow" than one might hope, especially given Hammill's extensive scholarship on the term.

The authors present their research with images, timelines, maps, bibliographies, and narrative historical descriptions of the magazines in question. The heart of the content can easily be accessed by topics located in a navigation bar on the left. The topic "Magazines", for instance, leads to a menu of each of the six magazines featured with a basic historical description of each magazine (place of publication, print runs, editorship, ownership, etc.), a timeline for each of the magazines, and a "timemap" which contextualizes time periods with travel destinations to provide a helpful visualization of these two data points. This information is also directly accessible from the navigation bar under the "Maps and Timelines" topic. It is worth noting that while each title under the "Magazines" topic contains some digitized samples "covers, table of contents, select advertisements, etc." only in a few cases is an entire issue digitized. Thus, in order to access most of the content one must refer to the "Access" notes on each of the pages. Ultimately, accessing the full magazine content would involve a trip to one of the referenced Toronto-area libraries to view the print or microfilm versions.

Another topic on the navigation bar is "Image Galleries", which is arranged into categories such as: fashion, travel, consumers. This in itself provides a rich resource that would continue to become all the richer as more images are added. If the number of images grows, one could also imagine a different platform which would allow for the addition of metadata so the images themselves could be easily searched and found with key terms and in turn be harvested and incorporated into relevant library catalogs and archival databases.

One can also explore the periodicals via the "Authors" topic. Each author page contains a link to biographical information on the author (though at the time of writing it appears that many of these links would benefit from updating), as well as a bibliography of the author's works listed in chronological order for each author. Additionally, there is space given to pseudonyms or pen names, which is a very convenient cross-reference. One could easily imagine this topic area expanded with a searchable or otherwise indexed bibliography of the works featured as well as an explanation for the inclusion of the "key" authors.

Overall navigation is straightforward with clear type style and font size and the navigation rooted to the left. The upper right corner offers the option to switch between English and French language. The

homepage includes a large background image as well as sample magazine covers, which serve to immediately convey the site's concerns: leisure, fashion, and travel in mid-twentieth-century popular periodicals. The user's experience may be improved by enlarging those featured magazine cover images and by presenting them in a clickable slideshow format, so the user can immediately access content.

Certainly those working in middlebrow culture would find this to be a useful resource, but also those working in Canadian twentieth-century literature and culture. Additionally, those studying design, advertising, travel and fashion history, and even more generally, consumer culture, gender, class, and race could benefit from use of this website. One possible project that could potentially be rooted in the resources presented would be an exploration of race, and in particular whiteness, in Canadian middlebrow culture of the twentieth century. How does middlebrow culture as it manifests in these magazines present and advertise whiteness? What non-white middlebrow cultural representations exist which are not represented by these magazines? Such an analysis might begin by reviewing the covers, table of contents, and other samples available through the website to collect examples of content advertising whiteness. One could also use the website as a jumping-off point for a larger survey of the magazines being published in Canada during this time period in order to have a wider context for understanding the role of the middlebrow magazines, but also as an avenue for content comparison across a broader spectrum of magazines.

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