

Mainstream Magazines: Home and Mobility

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Mainstream magazines were at their height in Canada in the early and mid-twentieth century, peaking in both popularity and diversity of titles between the late 1920s and late 1950s. Their rise kept pace with the growing urban, White professional middle class that sought out such magazines for advice, news, and entertainment. The topics broached were typically inflected with an appeal to readers' patriotism, not least because this was a reliable means of distinguishing Canadian periodicals from their American competitors.¹ The magazines' efforts to articulate a coherent Canadian and/or Québécois identity are legible not only in the editorial material but also in the advertisements which increasingly funded these publications. Periodicals such as *Canadian Home Journal*, *La Revue Populaire*, *Maclean's* and others therefore illuminate the relationships amongst nationalism, consumerism, and print culture — three defining features of the last century. At the same time, a shared and central theme running across the most successful titles is mobility, by which we mean representations of economic and social mobility, as well as fantasies of geographic mobility. By focusing on the ways in which the magazines balanced images of mobility and travel against ideals of home, nation, and domesticity, this chapter aims to open up vital new ways of interpreting the mainstream magazine as a textual genre in itself. We also seek to understand how this type of periodical functioned as a cultural and commercial force in twentieth-century Canada.

Key Titles

We take “mainstream” to mean magazines that targeted a general audience and published a miscellany of contents, including articles, fiction, poetry, illustrations, and columns on a range of topics (book and cultural reviews, recipes, child-rearing advice, fashion, travel).

Physically, mainstream magazines announced themselves on newsstands through a common

format: 11x14 inch folio pages, generally with a full-colour cover. Length ranged from 48 pages to 120. The magazines usually addressed readers in a friendly, intimate tone, and they attracted advertisers of consumer goods that ranged from prosaic household items to grand purchases, such as cars or luxury cruises.

The key anglophone monthly and bimonthly magazines consisted of *Canadian Magazine* (1895-1939), *Canadian Home Journal* (1905-1958), *Maclean's* (1911-, published as *The Busy Man's Magazine*, 1896-1911), *Canadian Homes and Gardens* (1924-60, published as *Canadian Homes* 1960-62), *Mayfair* (1927-59), *Chatelaine* (1928-), and *National Home Monthly* (1932-51, published as *Western Home Monthly*, 1899-32). The major francophone monthlies were *La Revue Populaire* (1907-63), *La Revue Moderne* (1919-60), and *Châteline* (1960-).² A single company, Maclean-Hunter of Toronto, owned *Maclean's*, *Chatelaine* and *Châteline*, *Mayfair*, and *Canadian Homes and Gardens*.³ The *Canadian Home Journal* was also based in Toronto, *La Revue Populaire* and *La Revue Moderne* in Montreal, and the *National Home Monthly* in Winnipeg. Comparisons of the French- and English-language titles reveal many divergences, but also some key similarities. Most obviously, companies ranging from Canadian Pacific to Magic Baking Powder used identical advertisements in the different magazines, while all the magazines appealed to Canadian or Québécois patriotism as they negotiated the complex terrain of Canada's colonial history and contemporary role. Certainly, the francophone titles looked to France, and the Anglophone ones to Britain, for a sense of cultural heritage. Nevertheless, there is an important crossover in that magazines in both languages traded in nostalgia for the Old World, while marketing a modern North American lifestyle to a readership addressed as middle class.

Circulation, Pricing, Audience

Throughout the 1930s, the nationally oriented magazines (*Maclean's*, *Chatelaine*, *Canadian Home Journal*) each proclaimed, on their front covers, a net paid circulation of about 130,000. This number rose to approximately 250,000 per title in the 1940s, and rose again to just under half a million in the 1950s. *La Revue Populaire's* circulation increased from 5,000 to 125,000 over the period of its existence, while *La Revue Moderne's* circulation stood at 23,000 in the early 1920s, and had grown by 50% by the end of the 1930s (Sarfati and Martin; Beaulieu and Hamelin 294-95).⁴ Towards the end of the 1950s, however, mainstream magazines went into a steep decline: the *Journal* was sold to Maclean-Hunter Publishing, which merged it with *Chatelaine*, and *La Revue Moderne* was also purchased by Maclean-Hunter and turned into the French-language *Châtelaine*. Meanwhile, *Mayfair*, *Canadian Homes and Gardens*, and *La Revue Populaire* went out of print. There are several possible explanations for this decline, most notably the availability of other forms of mass culture such as television and cheap paperbacks, the growing fragmentation of periodical publishing into niche markets, and the migration of advertising to other venues, such as television and newspaper colour supplements (see Vipond, especially 65-67).

The surviving titles, *Maclean's*, *Chatelaine*, and *Châtelaine*, are all owned by the Rogers Media conglomerate. They no longer publish fiction or poetry, and they devote a higher proportion of space to advertising than they did in earlier decades. *Chatelaine* has become a much more frothy production, heavily focused on cooking, health, and beauty, while *Châtelaine* offers a slightly different mix of content, including coverage of cultural events. Both titles run a book club. *Maclean's* maintains a strong nationalist agenda and an emphasis on in-depth investigative reporting, and is complemented by *L'actualité*, a Québécois current affairs magazine, also owned by Rogers. All four titles have a strong online presence.

Deducing the meaning of magazine pricing is complex: there is no direct correlation between price and production quality, format, cultural value, or audience appeal. In the late 1920s, for example, *Mayfair*, *Maclean's*, and *La Revue Moderne* all commanded an annual subscription fee of \$3.00, but this price was attached to three very different magazines. *Mayfair* was the glossiest among them, with its hundred-page issues filled with advertisements, illustrations, and photographs. It was unabashedly upward-looking, frequently profiling diplomats, industry leaders, and socialites, and offering coverage of topics (sports, fashions, society gossip) thought to reflect the interests of this group. *La Revue Moderne*, at only fifty pages per issue, was not glossy at all, had an intellectual slant, and gave less space to advertising. *Maclean's* came in between in terms of production quality, and its scope was general-interest, with an abundance of advertisements. A typical issue was seventy pages long, but it was published semi-monthly, so that an annual subscription included twenty-four issues. At this period, *Chatelaine* and the *Journal* each asked for \$1 per year, while *La Revue Populaire*, which was essentially a pulp magazine in the 1920s, surprises with its relatively high annual subscription price of \$1.50. *La Revue Populaire* maintained this price for the rest of its print run, even though it changed in 1932 to a slick-magazine format resembling the other titles discussed here.⁵ Subscription fees dropped for *Mayfair*, *Maclean's*, and *La Revue Moderne* in the 1930s and 40s, but remained the same for the lower-priced titles. This was presumably because the more expensively produced titles were increasingly able to finance their production via advertising and wished to maintain subscriber numbers through the period of the Depression in order to continue to attract advertising. Prices begin to climb in the 1950s (\$2.50 for *Mayfair*, \$2 for *Maclean's*, \$1.50 for all the others), but this postwar prosperity was quickly diverted into other media, forcing magazines into collapse or re-design. *Maclean's*, for instance, reverted to monthly publication during the period from 1967 to 1975, due to financial pressures and competition

from Canadian editions of American weeklies such as *Time* and *Newsweek*, but reinvented itself as a weekly newsmagazine in 1978.⁶

The general magazine contained an assortment of loosely connected items, offering readers endless possibilities for the active generation of meaning. Richard Ohmann notes that popular American monthlies at the turn of the twentieth century “included an astonishing potpourri of material, but organised explicitly and tacitly into categories that implied the diversity and individuality of taste among the readership” (224-25). Similarly, Canadian titles were addressed to a broad audience — for instance, women of several different generations, or all the members of the middle-class family. *La Revue Populaire* presented itself as a family magazine, while *La Revue Moderne*, *Chatelaine*, and *Canadian Home Journal* appealed to a specifically feminine readership. All four titles sometimes featured material for children. *Mayfair* was the most sophisticated of the Canadian magazine: its coverage of both motor shows and dress shows, horse racing and hairstyling, indicates a balanced cross-gender appeal. The legacy of *The Busy Man’s Magazine* was evident in *Maclean’s* primarily masculine focus, although it had a separate department entitled “Women and Their Work.”⁷ This gendering of the different titles continued into the later twentieth century, and is legible in editor Blair Fraser’s evidence to the 1960 Royal Commission on Publications: “We think of a *Maclean’s* reader as a serious person in a relaxed mood, and much of what we offer is intended only for his entertainment and not for his improvement. However, we have serious purposes. We want to report Canada and the world through the eyes of Canadians” (“Joint Submission” 16). Fraser’s comment is also illuminating in other ways: the blend of entertainment and education, inflected by patriotism, defined all the magazines discussed in this essay. The keynote of self-improvement aligned them closely with the middlebrow cultural formations taking shape in North America in the earlier and mid-twentieth century.

Tellingly, the anglophone magazines proclaimed, in their heyday, that their audience consisted of “the leadership families of the Dominion from coast to coast” [Figure 1]. This phrase appeared in an advertisement for the Maclean publishing company printed in *Chatelaine* in 1928 (“Straight to the Heart”). The magazines constructed their readership as upwardly mobile and able to influence business and society through their buying power. The “coast to coast” national scope was also claimed by *Maclean’s*, the *Canadian Home Journal*, *Canadian Magazine*, and *Canadian Homes and Gardens*, while other magazines targeted more regional audiences. The francophone titles concentrated primarily on Quebec, while *Mayfair* was centred on Toronto and Ottawa, and *National Home Monthly*, despite its change in name, continued to focus largely on the prairies. The contrast between these last two titles pushes the boundaries of what could be encompassed by the mainstream, as *Mayfair* was glibly elitist, while *National Home Monthly* was left-leaning in tone. The range of periodicals intersected, however, in format and type of contents: even though the slant of editorials and articles varied, the topics discussed overlapped, as did the choice of fiction writers published.⁸ In addition, advertisements were often identical across the different titles and consolidated their shared aspirational quality. An advertisement for Canada Dry Ginger Ale, which appeared in the June 1934 issues of several of the magazines, ties together home and mobility with class and consumer desire. Beneath an image of a family dining out, the copy reads:

there scarcely is a place you’ll go where you won’t find Canada Dry waiting to cheer and refresh you. It’s an honored guest at all the better hotels, clubs, and restaurants. On dining cars. On ocean liners. And you can enjoy it in virtually every port and city of the world. . . . And for the home, buy The Champagne of Ginger Ales by the case.

(Canada Dry)

The ad copy suggests a continuity between the private home and the glamorous environments of modern travel. Ginger ale was far more affordable than an ocean cruise or a trip to a hotel, yet it seems to bring the inaccessible prestige of luxury travel into the ordinary household. The visual image of the Canadian leadership family is cheerfully aspirational—comfortable with their everyday lives, they are nonetheless both outward- and upward-looking.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]

Figure 1: Maclean Publishing Company advertisement, *Chatelaine* June 1928 (file CHA_1928-06 63)

Editors and Authors

The most influential magazine editors in early to mid-twentieth century Canada included J. Herbert Hodgins, who oversaw *Mayfair* for its first eighteen years; Anne-Marie Huguenin (“Madeleine”), founding editor of *La Revue Moderne*; Byrne Hope Sanders, who ran *Chatelaine* from 1930 to 1953; and H. Napier Moore and William Arthur Irwin, who each held editorial positions at *Maclean’s* for over two decades. Hodgins reflected on his own work in a July 1927 editorial:

Browsing around is the most delightful of occupations for an editor. I can imagine nothing more joyous in life than to be permitted a never-ending browse — with none of the interludes of routine that fill the usual working hours. But that, it seems, is the exclusive privilege of one’s readers. For the magazine’s readers alone are given the rewards of editorial browsing. . . . Variety is the spice of our publication and the ways for you to secure this month-to-month variety are two-fold. Either you send us your personal cheque to cover one year’s passage through *Mayfair* or you can step up to the nearest

news-stand — as you would to the ticket office at the railway station — and secure your single trip.

Hodgins suggests a consumerist dimension (“browsing”) to his own productivity, and reveals that the imagery of home and mobility was integral to his editorial vision. The world was brought to the reader's door in the form of the magazine, and reading itself, like travel, is presented as a reward, a leisure activity available after the completion of “working hours.”

Anne-Marie Huguenin focuses more on reading and writing as forms of work in themselves. She situated *La Revue Moderne* as an intermediary between home and abroad, between individual heart and national community, and even between English- and French-speaking Canada, writing in her inaugural editorial in 1919:

Nous vous demandons de lui ouvrir vos maisons et vos coeurs. Il faut aimer cette Revue, créée pour vous, pour faire meilleures vos idées, plus justes vos principes, plus meublés vos cerveaux. Elle sera l'oeuvre de talents profonds et sincères, de talents de chez-nous, triés dans toutes nos classes, dans tous nos groupes, talents canadiens-anglais, comme canadiens-français, tous conquis au “motto” qui doit dorénavant presider à nos actes: “*S'unir pour grandir*,” afin de donner à la patrie canadienne la pleine mesure de nos energies et de nos vaillances. (Madeleine 9)

[We ask you to open your hearts and your homes to it. We want you to love this magazine, which was created for you, to improve your knowledge, your ideals and your minds. It will be the work of profound and sincere talent, talent of our own, drawn from all our classes, all our communities, English-Canadian as well as French-Canadian, all won over by the motto which will henceforward guide us: “Unite to grow,” that we may give to the Canadian homeland the full value of our energies and our courage.]⁹

Huguenin strongly emphasized the intellectually “improving” qualities of the new magazine, suggesting that it will equip readers to be better citizens of Québec and of Canada. Three decades later, in another post-war era, Byrne Hope Sanders was equally earnest, and even

more ambitious, about the potential influence of periodical culture on the nation. She wrote in January 1949:

We make our country mean something when we encourage its creative artists with our interest and our dollars. When we take definite action to keep our young people in Canada. When we see that our children know something of the men and women who make Canada great — yesterday and today. When we *use* our vote. When we try to build into our own individual way of life the principles which build the way of life our nation expresses.

Sanders devoted much of her editorial attention to these concerns. She published features and columns on family life, informed readers about volunteer and charity work done by women, and introduced Canadian authors to a wider audience. She advocated that readers see their individual actions as the expression of a way of life particular to Canada, which should be made visible to the outside world.

As these quotations suggest, editors addressed readers in a tone that was personable yet authoritative. Editorials sometimes provided a behind-the-scenes anecdote about how a writer was discovered or a topic for discussion chosen, and were occasionally accompanied by photographs of staff writers and editors. These revelations seemed to invite readers into the magazine's inner circle. Much of what editors engaged in, then, was a pattern of endless introductions, as if they were the hosts at a grand party. Indeed, Hodgins remarked in his inaugural editorial for *Mayfair* in May 1927: "I have the honor to present to you—our first readers — a magazine which will interpret the life and interests of Canadians in their most gracious moods." Similarly, in the first issue of *The Chatelaine* — as it was called until 1932 — Mrs Hilda Pain, winner of Maclean-Hunter's competition to name its new women's magazine, comments: "I pictured, in my mind's eye, the cover of the new women's magazine decorated with the gracious figure of a chatelaine, standing at the head of a flight of steps,

inviting with outstretched hands the women of Canada to enter and enjoy the restful charm of her home” (“Why I Chose” 30). The construction of the magazine in terms of hospitality fitted in with the scenes of socializing and entertainment that appeared in illustrations and advertisements.

Several of the mainstream magazines relied heavily on literary content. *La Revue Populaire* printed a complete romantic novel or novella in each issue, as well as serial fiction, while *La Revue Moderne* published short stories, serials, and sometimes poetry. Although both magazines (and especially *La Revue Moderne*) foregrounded essays and journalism by French-Canadian writers, virtually all their fiction was foreign. The vast majority was by popular French romance writers (such as Magali, Max du Veuzit, or Claude Jaunière),¹⁰ and there were occasional translations of English or American authors. In the anglophone magazines, by contrast, most of the literary contributions were by Canadians.¹¹ *Chatelaine*, the *Canadian Home Journal*, and *Maclean's* published many of the authors who now make up the canon of early and mid-century literature, such as Mazo de la Roche, Dorothy Livesay, Raymond Knister, L.M. Montgomery, Laura Goodman Salverson, Robert Stead, W.O. Mitchell, Martha Ostenso, Charles G.D. Roberts, and Nellie McClung. But none of these were regular contributors. The fiction and poetry sections were primarily sustained by authors who are now forgotten: among them, Madge Macbeth, Louis Arthur Cunningham, Leslie Gordon Barnard, Elsie Fry Laurence, Sir Philip Gibbs, Beryl Gray, Margaret Barnard, Eva Bruce, Ethel Gillespie, Edna Jacques, Ellen Evelyn Mackie, and Janet Erskine Scott.¹²

The purpose of most of the archival work which has so far been carried out on mainstream Canadian magazines has been to locate contributions by major authors. Scholarship on the magazines themselves, in the context of periodical studies, has been extremely limited, though it has expanded somewhat in the past decade. Groundbreaking research on *Chatelaine* and *Châtelaine* in the post-World War II era has been conducted by

Valerie Korinek, Marie-José Des Rivières, Jocelyne Mathieu, and Eva-Marie Kröller. Michelle Smith has compared *Chatelaine* and the *Canadian Home Journal*, while John Potvin has studied images of masculinity in *Mayfair*. Recent large-scale projects in Canadian book history and literary history have included chapters on periodicals or journalism (Gerson and Michon; Saint-Jacques and Robert), and new projects have been launched on *Western Home Monthly* (Hannah McGregor), on *La Revue Populaire* (Chantal Savoie), and on Canadian magazines and middlebrow culture.¹³ Yet, these magazines have as yet been neither digitized nor indexed, and they represent a largely untapped resource, offering extensive possibilities for future research.

What makes mainstream magazines important? The ways in which they addressed their intended audience tell us about an emerging demographic that still defines the norm in Canada: White, middle-class, and aspirational. Their contents tell us about gender divisions that continue to determine contemporary social structures, and their advertisements tell us about the development of consumer culture. The fiction they circulated tells us about shared ideals and value systems, while the disappearance of many of these authors from literary history hints at cultural hierarchies that came into play as the magazines went into decline. The middlebrow magazines sold themselves on the basis of the expert knowledge of their contributors in areas such as dress, interiors, health and beauty, cookery, domestic economy, travel, reading, and shopping. The guidance of magazine editors, authors, and advertisers was welcomed by readers and consumers faced with an increasingly wide array of choices, and the magazines offered fantasies of mobility—both geographical and economic—that speak to the material and social aspirations of the era.

Home and Mobility

In *La Revue Moderne*'s July 1932 issue, an anonymous columnist remarks: "En vacances, il faut savoir *flâner* sans perdre son temps. . . . il faut savoir profiter de ces jours [sic] *physiquement et moralement*" ("Simples"). [On holiday, it is essential to know how to relax without wasting one's time . . . how to profit from the days away, both physically and mentally.] This is a perfect summary of the middlebrow ethos of enjoyable self-improvement. The same idea is elaborated in H. Napier Moore's editorial, entitled "Holiday Dividends," in the July 1934 *Chatelaine*:¹⁴ "Money spent in travel is a sound investment. Nothing can take from you the returns it guarantees—broadmindedness, pleasant education, relaxation, recreation and lasting memories." In these lines, the mainstream magazines' dominant attitude to tourism seems to crystallize. They often raise questions about whether leisure time and income should be used for relaxation or for personal development, and Moore's editorial is typical in its attempt to balance these competing demands and to incorporate them into its strategic construction of its audience as patriots. It invokes the reader's sense of duty both as a parent and as a Canadian: "You can render no greater service to your children, derive no greater pleasure yourself, than to enlarge knowledge of your own country." This connection between travel, good citizenship, and self-development, already prominent in the interwar years, was consolidated as the century progressed.¹⁵

Moore goes on to survey the attractions of each province, celebrating Canada's modern railways and roads as much as the beauties of its landscape:

Have you . . . followed the Trail of '98 from the observation platform of the train that climbs over the White Pass and into the Yukon? Or driven over the spectacular highways of Vancouver Island from Victoria the Beautiful?

Have you basked in the Okanagan; followed in retrospect the gold seekers plodding the Cariboo trail? (You motor over a smooth road now.)

The editorial suggests that the national past — the romance of Canadian history — is available as an accessible, “smooth” experience for middle-class families. Furthermore, in his gestures of surveying and enumerating, Moore performs the function identified by Ohmann in his analysis of American mass-market magazines: “The editor or his implied persona . . . was like a tour guide, pointing to this thing as interesting, that as notable, another as worrisome, still another as curious” (230). If the editor is positioned as a guide, then the reader becomes a tourist, collecting impressions, and there is a suggestive parallel between the repetitive itineraries of the tourist circuit and the repeating structures of periodical publishing. The experience of reading the magazine, like the experience of visiting scenic or historic sites, is constructed as both pleasurable and profitable, while the metaphor of reading as a tour through a periodical resonates with the magazines’ provision of vicarious experiences of travel, for those without the means or leisure to embark on actual journeys. Foreign and transatlantic travel, in particular, would almost certainly have been beyond the reach of a majority of readers, especially during the Depression years. Overseas tourism is, nevertheless, extensively advertised and reported on — particularly in *Mayfair*. It presented foreign travel as an ideal to aspire to through its regular “Globe-Trotting Canadians” feature, which reported on the tours and journeys undertaken by the anglophone elite. Images of the foreign — especially of Europe — are evoked in visual and verbal form in all the magazines, most frequently in order to associate particular products or fashion trends with cosmopolitan sophistication.

The usual perception of women's magazines is that they address readers primarily as homemakers and mothers, directing their attention inwards to the domestic realm. Yet Moore’s “Holiday Dividends” piece directly invites women to move outside the home, and this invitation is frequently reiterated in the magazines. Even the masthead above the editorial evokes *Chatelaine*’s ambition to combine modern mobility with traditional wisdom. It shows

two hand-drawn figures: one wears seventeenth-century dress and holds a large key to the castle which stands behind her; the other is a highly modern figure wearing trousers, beret, and bobbed hair, who stands with her hands on her hips in front of a car. The emphasis on female mobility, communicated without words in the drawing of the modern woman, is made explicit in many advertisements in *Chatelaine*. For example, a full-page ad for Ford cars appeared in the July 1934 issue, opposite Moore's editorial. It shows an elegant lady in the driving seat of a V-8, and endorses this model with a customer quotation: "I used to be afraid of traffic," one woman writes, "but now I go everywhere" (Ford). The advert draws on a discourse of upward mobility — the phrase "go everywhere" hints at access to the best social circles, and the text also suggests that the owner of a new Ford will be able, quite literally, to get ahead: "Its quick acceleration enables you to get out in front and escape the jam at every traffic light—its instant, eager speed helps you to pass other cars with greater safety." The magazines frequently construct travel in this way, as an expression of individual distinction, as well as a mode of escape.

Across the mainstream Canadian magazines, the rhetoric of travel is intertwined with a middlebrow emphasis on accumulation — whether of knowledge, experience, or material resources.¹⁶ Yet travel is also, as Thorstein Veblen points out in *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), invested in conspicuous consumption; it is a status marker.¹⁷ Advertisers and journalists throughout the twentieth century highlighted opportunities for experiencing luxury and also for networking whilst travelling. Canadian Pacific was one of the most prominent advertisers across the magazines, presenting an array of promotions for both overseas travel aboard steamships such as the *Empress of Britain* and domestic travel centred on the company's railways and hotels. The first two hotels to be constructed were the Banff Springs, built between 1886 and 1888, and the Chateau Frontenac in Québec City, built between 1892 and 1893. These remained the flagship resorts, and from the 1920s through to the 1950s an ad

for at least one of them appeared in every issue of *Mayfair* and *Chatelaine*. The copy invited readers into a world of pleasure and prestige, amid scenic surroundings. As one ad from a May 1940 issue of *Mayfair* stressed, travellers could “enjoy mile-high golf at Banff, tennis, climbing, trail riding, hiking, motor trips in Alpine grandeur! Thrilling fishing in lakes and streams. Swimming in cool and warm sulphur water pools. Dance and concert orchestras. You’ll enjoy the sense of exhilaration and high peaks — the association with people whose names make news” (Banff Springs) [Figure 2]. The advertising campaigns capitalized on fantasies of upward mobility, and also of cosmopolitanism. The architecture of the hotels borrows from European models: the Banff Springs was styled after a Scottish baronial manor, and the Frontenac evoked a French chateau. Canadian Pacific had designs on a tourist market that wanted a vicarious experience of Europe — its music, its leisure activities, its cuisine — without the trouble or expense of an overseas journey to a land that might be inconveniently historic and lacking in modern amenities. During the Second World War, when travel to Europe was not an option, the only way to access a version of Old-World culture was through North American replicas. Canadian Pacific’s nostalgic advertizing campaign stripped out the realities of European history, as well as the contemporary crisis of the War, offering instead an escapist dream of fairy-tale castles and lavish entertainment. For those unable to afford a stay in the hotels, the magazines — commercial products in themselves — presented the images for consumption.

[INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE]

Figure 2: Banff Springs Hotel advertisement, *Mayfair* May 1940 (file MFR_1950-05_002)

Canadian Pacific offered free trips to journalists, and this no doubt explains why so many magazine articles describing cross-continental rail journeys appeared. A 1925 example,

in *La Revue Moderne*, was contributed by Charles Heidsieck, whose very name connoted luxury consumption. Arriving in the Rockies, he enthuses:

Ces montagnes énormes ont des arrêtes tourmentées, sombres et terribles. . . . C'est un spectacle désordonné mais magnifique. Le tout est grand et immense et l'homme se sent petit et étouffé sous cette atmosphère écrasante.

L'arrivée à Banff, la fameuse station d'été créée par le "Canadian Pacific" vous tire de votre muette admiration. La vie semble reprendre tout à coup et c'est un village coquet et élégant qui vous accueille. . . . Dès l'arrivée à l'hôtel, le touriste bien impressionné est saisi par l'atmosphère de luxe qui y régné et c'est l'existence des palaces qui vous attend. Les relations mondaines se nouent vite et bientôt ce ne sont plus que parties joyeuses. (18)

[These enormous mountains have tortured peaks, sombre and awe-inspiring . . . It is a wild but magnificent spectacle. Everything is on an immense scale, while humans feel dwarfed and suffocated in the overpowering atmosphere.

Reaching Banff, the famous summer resort created by Canadian Pacific, you will emerge from your speechless admiration. Life suddenly seems to start up again, as the charming, elegant village welcomes you. . . . Immediately on arriving at the hotel, the impressionable tourist is struck by the atmosphere of luxury which prevails. Social relationships are quickly formed, and life soon becomes a continual party of pleasure.]

The discourse of the Romantic picturesque here modulates abruptly into that of contemporary worldliness. The promotion of Canada to Canadians by means of a European writer, who refers to the Rockies as 'cette Suisse merveilleuse' (18), reinforces the notion that domestic travel could offer a simulated experience of Europe.

The resort hotels offered a comfortable, leisurely experience of the grandeur of the natural world. An entirely different experience of Canadian nature is promoted in *Maclean's*, in its numerous articles on canoeing, hiking, and camping. These pieces present visions of unspoilt wilderness as a reward for physical exertion, rather than as part of an indulgent holiday experience. For example, James Harman's 1938 feature on hostelling evokes "the

romance of travelling inexpensively, the thrill of undergoing a Spartan routine, of physical hardship or at least the absence of luxury, the lure of movement” and so on (16). The Canadian Youth Hostel Association had been in existence only five years and was, to some extent, a nostalgic or antimodern movement, seeking to discover the untouched natural world of pre-contact North America, and to escape the effects of urban modernity.¹⁸ At the same time, and paradoxically, the promise of the C.Y.H. was associated with the progress of a youthful nation — Harman quotes one of its founders, who argues that “the better understanding of each other’s problems, and the exchange of ideas which inevitably comes with travel, will do much to consolidate the national and political life of the Dominion” (35). From the 1950s onwards, features on remote destinations were increasingly associated with antimodernism. Fred Bodsworth, in his 1951 piece “The Fight to Keep the Wilderness Wild,” deplored the planned road access to Quetico in northwestern Ontario: “In Quetico Park a canoeist can sometimes slap a moose on the rump with his paddle. And deep in the lake-and-forest fastness he can forget the civilized world and its worries. Trying to keep this piece of nature in the raw, an ardent band of wilderness lovers are fighting off the speedboats, dance halls and hamburger stands” (12). This presents an interesting inversion of the colonial project of importing civilisation to the wilderness. Bodsworth writes of “the restful soul-cleansing sense of escape that only the wilderness traveler can know,” and claims that Canadians owe their grandchildren “at least one unspoiled fragment of the primitive mid-continental America that is now all but gone” (13). Insisting on the distinction between wilderness *travel* and commercial *tourism*, magazine pieces such as Bodsworth’s attempt to detach themselves from the consumer-based context of their own publication.

The construction of the Canadian wilderness in antimodern terms, as a place of escape and respite from modern capitalist culture, is in tension with the consumer-oriented travel writing and advertizing which *Maclean’s* also published. This should not surprise us: as

scholars of print culture have long recognized, contradictory discourses frequently coexist within a single periodical.¹⁹ The magazine is a multivocal form, and the relationship between editorial and commercial material is complex and cannot be fully controlled, even by an editor. Nevertheless, wilderness travel pieces represent a minority point of view in the mainstream magazines, and are more difficult to align with the priorities of advertisers. The dominant presentation of travel was as an opportunity for luxury consumption and the accumulation of social and cultural capital, and these practices were bound up with the idea of the magazine itself as a site of both entertainment and improvement. As a marketplace, the magazine offered a vicarious experience of mobility and freedom, while also emphasizing the primacy of home, family, and nation.

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Notes

¹ Among the chief competitors for the Canadian magazines were U.S. titles such as *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *McCall's*, and *Cosmopolitan* (see Damon-Moore; Ohmann; Scanlon). The Canadian magazine *Mayfair* bears a striking resemblance to *Vanity Fair* and the American "smart" magazines (see Hammill and Leick), but lacks their intellectual depth.

² The Canadian weeklies, notably *Le Samedi* (1888-1963) and *Saturday Night* (1887-2005), were a different genre of publication, falling between magazines and newspapers in terms of format and mix of content.

³ However, the *Mayfair* office moved to Montreal in 1937.

⁴ Copies of a magazine were shared within and between families, so the number of readers would have exceeded the net paid circulation figure (which covers subscriptions and newsstand sales). *La Revue Moderne*, for instance, claimed to have 100,000 readers by 1930.

⁵ "Pulps" were 7x10 inch pulp paper monthlies consisting of densely packed type with few illustrations, and intended for a wide audience. "Slicks" were so-named because of their glossy paperstock, in 11x14 inch format with different departments and lots of images; they positioned themselves as mainstream and middle class. Little magazines used diverse print formats, published the avant-garde and experimental, and appealed to coterie audiences.

⁶ *Maclean's* started as a monthly, became a semi-monthly in 1920, and a fortnightly in 1955 and again (following its reversion to monthly publication) in 1975.

⁷ According to Korinek, "Within the Maclean Hunter Consumer Magazines Division, *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine* were regarded as sibling publications. Yet all the glamour, prestige, expensive talent, parental encouragement, and pride went to *Maclean's*" (49).

⁸ Better-known writers to be published across titles included Martha Ostenso, who was published in *Maclean's*, *Western Home Monthly*, *Canadian Home Journal*, and *Chatelaine*; L.M. Montgomery and Mazo de la Roche, both published in the *Journal* and *Chatelaine*; and Madge Macbeth in *Mayfair* and *Chatelaine*. Less well-known writers included Leslie Gordon Barnard, Louis Arthur Cunningham, and Martha Banning Thomas, all of whom were routinely published by the *Journal* and *Chatelaine*.

⁹ All translations are our own.

¹⁰ Magali (pseudonym of Jeanne Philbert) was one of the most frequently published novelists in *La Revue Populaire* across its run. Among the very few Québécois literary authors who appeared were Gabrielle Roy and Odette Oligny, a novelist who was also an editor of *La Revue Moderne*.

¹¹ Popular British or American novelists (e.g., Michael Arlen, Warwick Deeping, Stephen Vincent Benet, and Margaret Mitchell) occasionally featured in the anglophone magazines, or in translation in the francophone titles.

¹² Some recovery work has begun on these forgotten authors (see Rifkind; Smith, “Mainstream”). Editor’s note: See Carole Gerson’s chapter on middlebrow modernity and women’s fiction in this volume.

¹³ See McGregor and Smith; Savoie; and the “Magazines, Travel, and Middlebrow Culture in Canada, 1925-60” project website for Hammill and Smith at www.middlebrowcanada.org. See the bibliography on this site for work in other areas of Canadian periodical studies, including little magazines and modernism; pulps; women journalists; and feminist periodicals.

¹⁴ At this period, Moore was editor of *Maclean’s* and editorial director of *Chatelaine*, while Byrne Hope Sanders was *Chatelaine’s* editor. She usually wrote the editorial; Moore occasionally did so.

¹⁵ Kuffert writes that the mid-century period saw an unprecedented “willingness to link self-improvement with a decorous patriotism and, most important, to do so in magazines, on radio, and on television” (230).

¹⁶ The mass-market magazine itself is understood as an ephemeral, disposable form. Yet many subscribers collected and retained their copies, and some existing archives derive from such collections. This practice was encouraged by the editors’ presentation of their publications as repositories of knowledge.

¹⁷ For more recent discussions, building on Veblen, see MacCannell; Rojek and Urry; Urry.

¹⁸ Jessup defines antimodernism as a paradoxical phenomenon. She writes of the “pervasive sense of loss that often coexisted in the decades around the turn of the century along with an enthusiasm for modernization and material progress” (4). On Canadian antimodernism, see Hammill, “Wilderness”; Rifkind.

¹⁹ Beetham, for instance, describes the magazine as “a miscellany, that is a form marked by a variety of tone and constituent parts,” and as “fractured and heterogeneous” (1).