

THE U.S. DISCOVERS EUROPE: *LIFE MAGAZINE* AND THE INVENTION OF THE “ATLANTIC COMMUNITY” IN THE 1940s

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In its July 19, 1943 issue, *Life* magazine carried an ad for Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation, popularly known as Convair, one of the major American producers of military aircrafts during World War Two. The ad was centered on a map, a north-polar projection of the world that strongly emphasized the northern hemisphere and focused on the position of North America amid the other five continents. Shadows cast by airplanes hovering over the earth visually suggested to *Life* readers that the progress in aviation was the key to a new global era, and the text stressed that “maps like this show us the world as it really is – a world without fences or protective barriers, a world in which nations once remote are now clustered together in one global community ... No matter whether it fits in with our idea of geography or not, this startling truth cannot be brushed aside: *Today, because of the plane, no spot on earth is more than 60 hours flying time from your local airport.*” The ad also made it clear to the American public that this new scenario entailed geo-political challenges and military dangers as well as economic and cultural opportunities: “Our new maps, if they are honest maps, will clearly tell us we can no longer cling to the old-fashioned ‘two-hemisphere’ idea of geography. For now we know that was the kind of thinking which lulled us into a sense of security before Pearl Harbor.” Finally, while the polar projection and the planes introduced a sense of proximity between America and the world which explicitly evoked Wendell Willkie’s “one-worldism,” the comment made it clear that some places were still much closer than others from a U.S.-based vantage point: “such maps as this emphasize that the broad Atlantic – formerly a 6-day ocean voyage – has become a millpond. ‘Breakfast in New York, dinner in London’ is no longer the fantastic idea that it used to be.”¹

Ads like this were quite common in large-circulation American magazines of the early 1940s. They show how the war literally and metaphorically recast the place of the United States within the world by putting an end to its hemispheric isolation and relative lack of responsibility in the world order. They also point to the sudden rise of elite as well as popular interest in geography and cartography in wartime America, which has been oddly underestimated by scholars of diplomatic history and U.S. foreign policy.² Finally, the Convair ad exemplifies what geographer and historian Neil Smith has defined as the paradox of the American Century, that is, the contradiction between “a spaceless and a spatially constituted American globalism.” Especially in wartime, “geography was profoundly important to the methodical construction of an American Empire that did indeed [see] itself beyond geography.”³

I believe that the current emphasis on the American global reach, both among historians and in the public arena, has obscured, to borrow again from Smith, “the lost geography of the American Century.” If the network of American interests and influence across the twentieth century acquired a truly global dimension, borders separating America from the Other, the West from the rest, still informed America’s vision of itself and the world. This is especially true of the 1940s, a decade in which two key moments that marked the unprecedented U.S. commitment in the international arena – the Atlantic Charter (1941) and the Atlantic Alliance (1949) – were defined in geographical, as opposed to historical or abstract, terms. While it is obvious that World War Two and the beginning of the Cold War accelerated the advent of an era of American global influence, the emphasis on globalization should not lead us to downplay the fact that the cultural, political, and strategic recasting of the U.S. in an *Atlantic* context during this decade was a major turning point in twentieth-century American history. At that time, the U.S. became part of an “entangling alliance” with western European countries, and Americans further developed a dense network of economic and intellectual exchanges with Europeans. More importantly, America redefined itself as the leader of “the West,” a metageographical entity which was re-conceptualized as a transatlantic, Christian, and white world whose appeal was supposed to be universal but whose membership was restricted to what Walter Lippmann defined as the “Atlantic Community.”⁴ Such recasting of the U.S. in a transatlantic space had obvious consequences regarding the place of Europe in American history.

I. HENRY LUCE, LIFE, AND THE ATLANTIC “IMAGINED COMMUNITY”

This essay focuses on the role that Life Magazine played in the invention, or cultural construction, of the Atlantic Community as the ideological framework for the U.S.’s rise to global dominance in the 1940s. “Ideology” is meant here in value-free terms as “an interrelated set of convictions or assumptions that reduces the complexities of a particular slice of reality to easily comprehensible terms and suggests appropriate ways of dealing with that reality.”⁵ The transformation of the international setting that was underway in the 1940s made ideological synthesis and simplification necessary: the rise of the U.S. to global power had to be framed and sold to the American public in accessible, if not familiar, terms. While Atlanticism was only one of the competing geo-historical assumptions in the foreign policy establishment during the war, and gradually emerged as set of policies due to the challenges posed by the postwar world, the idea of an Atlantic Community was crucial, I argue, to make the full involvement of the U.S. in world affairs understandable and acceptable to the American public from the outset of the Second World War in Europe. The Atlantic Community framework situated the U.S. on the world map as the leader of a transatlantic space that included North America, western European countries, and the dominions of the southern hemisphere of the “white settlers.” This was because

they all supposedly shared political and economic principles and institutions (liberal democracy, individual rights and the rule of law, free market and free trade), cultural traditions (Christianity and, more generally, the legacy of “western civilization”) and, consequently, national interests. Such a framework, in the end, provided the Atlantic Alliance with respectable cultural foundations; however, it is studied here as a reflection of deeper shifts in the historic and geographic imagination of Americans.

Several reasons account for my choice of Life Magazine as a major vehicle for the construction and popularization of the Atlantic Community. Life was founded in 1936, as the third pillar of Time Inc., the publishing empire of Henry Luce. Unlike the sober newsmagazine Time, started in 1923, and the business monthly Fortune, started in 1930, it was meant to be an all-around popular magazine providing news and amusement, history and science, and self-conscious editorials and pictures of Hollywood starlets to a mostly middle-class and overwhelmingly white readership. Within a few years, it came to be by far the best selling of the Time Inc. publications. Its circulation grew dramatically in the war years and after, from 2.86 million in 1940 to 5.45 million in 1948; as the magazine with the highest “pass-along factor”⁶ in the late 1940s, it reached more than twenty-two million people – around twenty-one percent of the American population over ten years old. However, these remarkable numbers were hardly extraordinary; in the 1940s and 1950s, the golden age of popular magazines, rivals like Collier’s, Saturday Evening Post, and especially Reader’s Digest equaled or surpassed Life’s circulation.

Other factors made Life unique at that time and make it now a revealing source for a study of the ideology of U.S. foreign policy. “America’s favorite magazine” was first and foremost a picture magazine. Its editors believed that pictures had the power to inform, entertain, impress, and convey to the American public the new sense of direction that they deemed necessary in times of national crisis and international turmoil. In 1936, Luce envisioned the mission of the forthcoming magazine in his characteristic high-sounding prose:

To see life, to see the world; to eyewitness great events; to watch the faces of the poor and the gestures of the proud; to see strange things – machines, armies, multitudes, shadows in the jungle and on the moon; to see man’s work – his paintings, towers, and discoveries; to see things thousands of miles away, things hidden behind walls and within rooms, things dangerous to come to; the women that men love and many children; *to see and take pleasure in seeing; to see and be amazed; to see and be instructed.*⁷

The quality of the photographs was one of the major concerns of publisher-editor Luce and his staff. In a September 1946 memo calling for an improvement of the magazine, Luce wrote: “The basic point of LIFE is pictures ... The first rule of reform is that the quality of the pictures must be stepped up ... LIFE has got to have the best pictures. LIFE has got to have a certain number of great pictures.”⁸ Other Life editors saw photographs as “the most effective and direct way of getting something from the printed page into

the mind of a reader”⁹ and cameras as “a powerful instrument for teaching.”¹⁰ They were probably naïve in their assumptions about the straightforward, univocal messages that images conveyed to the readers, as well as the readers’ response to them. As Erika Doss points out, “they tended to assume that the magazine’s photographs could be quickly and easily understood, and that they demonstrated a single point of view. The diverse responses each week in the ‘Letters to the editor’ should have persuaded them otherwise. [They] recognized ... their instructive potential, but they ignored their ambiguities and seemed unaware of the individual agency of its own readers.”¹¹ However, both Time Inc. and its readers shared the assumption that photographs were to be considered as truthful and objective depictions of reality – a legacy established in previous decades by government agencies and social reformers who relied on photography as “evidence” for purposes of documentation.¹²

Although Life editors were not trained experts in photography, they believed that pictures were the core while the text played an auxiliary, if relevant, role in photojournalism: “The picture became the main matter of the publication,” said Daniel Longwell, one of the founding editors of Life, as he recalled the inception and early years of the magazine, “the words ‘illuminated’ the pictures.”¹³ Such an emphasis on visual imagery came to influence the very definition of news: the magazine, as Luce wrote in his “Prospectus” for Life in 1936, “is not obligated to report on all the significant news: its obligation is to report in pictures all the significant news which the camera has succeeded in making a pictorial record of.”¹⁴ In a few years, Time Inc. would assemble an all-star staff of photographers composed of, among others, Margareth Bourke-White, Eugene Smith, Alfred Eisenstaedt, and Robert Capa. Thanks to the quality of its photo-essays and the accuracy of its print, Life acquired a unique cultural prestige and iconic status in American newsstands and households, and set the blueprint for other successful picture magazines like *Look* (1937).

With the outbreak of the war in Europe, “to see the world” became a priority for many Americans and Life added another dimension to its visual impact through the publication of maps aimed at familiarizing its readers with the remote places that Time Inc. pro-war agenda was suddenly turning into crucial spots for American security. At a time when the popular interest in geography greatly increased, magazines were among the major suppliers of maps and atlases that, while claiming to be “true” and “honest,” deliberately sought to distance themselves from the aura of objectivity associated with academic and official cartography. “I try to dramatize the news of the week, not just produce a reference map like those in an atlas,” said a Time Inc. mapmaker.¹⁵ While such dramatization responded to the publishers’ need to captivate the readers, and the advertisers’ need for simplification, it also allowed magazines to convey specific visions of the place of the U.S. in the world war and to shape a new “geographic imagination” among the American public. On the contrary, the radio obviously lacked the visual ap-

peal of the popular press, while the daily press still relied mostly on text and was unable to match the quality of the visual material available in magazines.

Furthermore, virtually all major American newspapers also lacked the truly national readership of popular weeklies. I believe that the ability of mass circulation weeklies like *Life* to reach a nation-wide audience is all the more significant in a study of the 1940s, a decade that, in the words of Alan Brinkley, witnessed the effort of American leaders – among them Henry Luce – “to redefine the nation’s relationship to the world and, in the process, to redefine America’s sense of itself.”¹⁶ In his work on national identity Benedict Anderson argues that print capitalism – the novel, the newspaper – “provided the technical means for ‘re-presenting’ the kind of imagined community that is the nation.” The photojournalism of the 1940s and 1950s, due to its emotionally charged visual impact, seems to provide a powerful instrument with which to construct the national community as a “deep, horizontal comradeship.” While photographs are widely regarded as a guarantee of detached, factual objectivity, their success in journalism, and especially the popular press, from the early twentieth century on is in fact largely due to their ability to satisfy the emotional needs of a significant sector of the public opinion displaced by the decline of traditional community ties, challenged by modernization and, from the late 1930s, puzzled by the sudden advent of international issues in the domestic realm. As Wendy Kozol points out in her study of *Life* as a vehicle of patriotism in post-war America, “visual media have even greater capacities to visualize social norms and ideals that form national identities ... They construct an imagined community of the ‘free’ and ‘Western’ world with shared concerns about the cold war.”¹⁷

In his own way, Luce was extremely confident about the ability of Time Inc. to provide its readership with a sense of identity and direction. The media mogul and Presbyterian layman sought to restore through his publications a shared view of the mission of America, which in the late 1930s he saw as endangered first by Roosevelt’s anti-business orientation and later by the events on the European front. His search for national cohesion originated from his organic view of society, and was made more urgent by the crisis of liberal democracy in Europe, which he interpreted as a sign of the more general crisis of “western civilization.” To rescue and lead the West was now America’s mission; in the process, American interests and the American model of free enterprise would expand overseas as never before but, “despite the ostensible universalism of his global pronouncements, any reader during this period would have understood Luce’s ... defense of the civilizing project of the ‘West’ as constituting a distinct political identity.”¹⁸

Life came to be a major tool in the pursuit of this ambitious agenda, a fact alone that sets it apart as an engaged proponent of a specific, coherent vision of the U.S.’s place in the world from other successful periodicals like George H. Lorimer’s *Saturday Evening Post*, John and Gardner Cowles’ *Look*, or DeWitt Wallace’s *Reader’s Digest*. However, it was still primarily a publication that had to compete with its rivals to increase its share of

readers and advertising. Luce the businessman firmly believed that “an editor’s job is to stay ahead of his readers by three weeks, not ten years,” as he told William Schlamm, one of his foreign policy advisers, in 1944 about the U.S. attitude toward the Soviet Union.¹⁹ Moreover, the magazine as an instrument of hegemony aimed at a broad national consensus put forth not a systematic doctrine, but a wide array of different voices that shared the basic view of the U.S. as the coming global power and leader of the West. Walter Lippmann’s advocacy for American activism within the framework of what he defined as the “Atlantic Community” was the most effective of these voices because, I argue, he was able to articulate the quest for a new *place* for the U.S. in the world, and for an assertive American foreign policy, by relying on widely shared beliefs about national interest, as well as history, geography, religion, and race.

2. NEW JERUSALEM OR NEW ROME? WALTER LIPPMANN’S ATLANTIC VISION

In April 1941, one month after Congress had passed the Lend-Lease Act to support Great Britain, *Life* published “The Atlantic . . . and America,”²⁰ a long article in which Lippmann analyzed the growing American involvement in the ongoing European war in light of the precedent of World War One. He presented the American “second intervention” as a fact: America was now at war for the same reason that brought her to enter the war in 1917, that is, to counter the threat posed by Germany to security in the Atlantic Ocean. Just like during World War One, American security was now in peril if Britain was unable to control “the other shore.” In essence, events in Europe were crucial to U.S. interests.

Lippmann credited Woodrow Wilson for acting under the assumption that “the control of the Atlantic Ocean is vital to the defense of the United States and of the whole Western Hemisphere” – a reality that “the great majority of Americans know by instinct and by reason.” Interestingly, the *New York Herald Tribune* columnist and reigning pundit chose an article that he himself had written for the *New Republic* in 1917 to argue that hard-nosed realism, as opposed to naïve idealism, was Wilson’s original inspiration. In that article, Lippmann articulated the idea of an “Atlantic Community” for the first time and accused Germany of disrupting the “Atlantic highway” connecting “Pan-America” to the European side of the “Western world,” thus making American intervention inevitable: “Now that [Germany] is seeking to cut the vital highways of our world we can no longer stand by. We cannot betray the Atlantic community by submitting. If not civilization, at least our civilization is at stake.”²¹ Now, by referring to his old *New Republic* piece, Lippmann indicted not only commentators and historians who had misled the American public about the supposedly true spirit of Wilsonianism, but also Wilson himself, who in his public addresses became so fascinated by his vision of future peace that he neglected to explain why America had intervened in the war. He talked of American ideals to the exclusion of American interests and thus led the country to regard

as a philanthropic crusade what was in fact a defensive intervention for the preservation of American security.

Indeed, this interpretation of American intervention in World War One tells less about Wilson's motives than about Lippmann's move from Wilsonianism to *realpolitik* after the mid-1930s.²² His aim was to make the war in Europe understandable and American mobilization in favor of Britain acceptable to Life readers by abandoning the abstract and unpopular jargon of Wilsonianism, as well as by rooting American internationalism in time and space, in history and geography: "for a century the nations, from Scandinavia to Argentine, which face the Atlantic Ocean have had an unparalleled opportunity to develop in freedom. Under the protection of sea power in the hand of free governments the shores and the waters of the Atlantic have been the geographic center of human liberty." Now that liberty was again under attack, "the English-speaking peoples" had to take the lead to stop Nazi Germany, "the leader of the East against the West, the leader ultimately of a German-Russian-Japanese coalition against the Atlantic world."

This article was part of Lippmann's effort to educate the American public to the challenges and responsibilities of world affairs that he had been carrying on for years in his Herald Tribune column "Today and Tomorrow," which was syndicated to as many as two hundred newspapers with a combined readership of more than ten million.²³ After 1939, his efforts found another outlet in Life, another major foe of isolationism, whose large circulation and visual appeal he greatly valued. Back in 1924, he had written to Isaiah Bowman, the influential dean of American geographers, "I think my association with you infected me with an incurable desire to look at a map before writing an editorial. The trouble is that very often the maps aren't ready in time, and I wish some way could be found by which a graphic method of explaining political and economic questions could be brought into use by newspapers."²⁴ Fifteen years later he would find an answer in Life, as he wrote a staff member that the magazine "had given the most useful and original treatment to the war news of any periodical. Your strategic maps and your articles about tactics have been immensely clarifying to me and, I imagine, to many others who had found these things difficult to visualize through their own imaginations."²⁵

Lippmann articulated his vision of the internal and international issues facing the U.S. for Life readers from 1939 on. His article on "The American Destiny" was an exposé on what he saw as the lack of direction of Americans in dealing with unsolved economic problems at home and looming dangers abroad. It was also a restatement of the turn-of-the-century view of America as the "new Rome" – the latest stage in the historical development of western civilization – put forward by Herbert Croly and Theodore Roosevelt, as opposed to Wilson's view of America as the "new Jerusalem," destined to redeem Europe from its sins.²⁶ "What Rome was to the ancient world, what Great Britain has been to the modern world, America is to be to the world of tomorrow ... the geographic and the economic and the political center of the Occident," he wrote in order to summon

the readers to fulfill America's "mission," thus paving the way, in many respects, for the nationalist outlook and the very prose of Luce's manifesto.²⁷

Exactly one year later, *Life* featured yet another of Lippmann's articles meant as a contribution to the shaping of an internationalist and realist consensus among Americans. "America and the World" was an all-out attack against the isolationist-hemispheric assumption that geography had guaranteed American security and would continue to do so. Peace, he argued, had not been secured by the natural barriers provided by the oceans, because oceans "are not a barrier. They are a highway." The Monroe Doctrine had been effective because "though not an alliance with Great Britain, [it] was a joint parallel policy," based on Anglo-American "common interest." World War Two was now confirming that the two shores of the Atlantic were inextricably bound together: "it is manifest that in seeking to separate ourselves from the great wars of Europe, we cannot rely upon the Atlantic Ocean. It has never been a barrier in the involvement in wars. Our geography books are as misleading as our history books,"²⁸ wrote Lippmann, thus contributing to the ongoing controversies about and fascination with geography and geopolitics.

Finally, he would fully articulate his vision of an Atlantic community in *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic* (1943), a successful pamphlet in which he reiterated the familiar arguments about the key role to be played by the wartime alliance between the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain. He also listed the Netherlands, France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Denmark, and Norway as members of the Atlantic Community in continental Europe. Such a "system of security" was based on solid historical grounds, as well as shared strategic interests: "The nations of the New World are still vitally related to precisely those nations of the Old World from which they originated ... The original geographic and historic connections across the Atlantic have persisted. The Atlantic Ocean is not the frontier between Europe and the Americas. It is the inland sea of a community of nations allied with one another by geography, history, and vital necessity."²⁹

Lippmann's Atlantic outlook was part of a wider discussion regarding the reorientation of Americans' mental maps that involved commentators, businessmen, policymakers, and sectors of the public opinion. The Council on Foreign Relations, as the institution embodying the typically north-eastern and pro-British "American foreign policy establishment,"³⁰ was arguably the most authoritative actor in this discussion, with the journal *Foreign Affairs* as its voice. In July 1941, it carried an article by the organizational director of the Council and Rhodes scholar Francis Pickens Miller, later an agent of the Office of Strategic Services and a State Department official, calling for the rejection of hemispherism and a new approach centered on the control of the "Atlantic area." Geography was essential to his argument: "A glance at the map will show the location of control points in this area ... the controlling forces must be in possession of Greenland, Iceland, the British Isles, Gibraltar, the Azores, Cape Verde Islands, and either Dakar or some nearby point on the West Coast of Africa ... Most important of them all, of course, are the British Isles."

However, the Atlantic world, far from being just a physical entity, was a community of nations that shared values and a common history: “The North Atlantic area,” Miller wrote one month before the signing of the Atlantic Charter, “is the cradle of our civilization, and the survival of the American way of life depends upon the survival of this civilization. For more than a thousand years, our fathers have been building a common society around the shores of the North Atlantic. They built it by labor, by faith, and, when necessary, by arms. It is a civilization based upon a belief in the essential dignity of man, as expressed through representative government, limited by a Bill of Rights. The Atlantic Ocean has become the ocean of freedom.”³¹ Finally, a map provided by the American Geographical Society visualized this Atlantic space. The editor’s note explained that it was different from the “more familiar” maps based on the classic equator-based Mercator projection: “the center of the projection is at latitude 20 degrees N., longitude 30 degrees W. By using this center the cartographer has been able to show the entire north polar area with comparatively little distortion.” The emphasis on the North Pole illustrated the proximity between North America and Eurasia, and the correction of the Mercator projection’s emphasis on the oceans as barriers separating the continents strengthened the physical proximity between the two shores of the Atlantic.³²

The great British geographer Halford Mackinder expressed a commonly held view in the circles of the Anglo-American foreign-policy elite when he referred to the Atlantic as the “Midland Ocean” in a Foreign Affairs article of July 1943. However, the consensus on Lippmann’s Atlantic perspective was far from unanimous. The critique of hemisphericism, the elite and popular interest in geography and geopolitics, and the advent of “air power” and technological progress as an argument against isolation and in favor of interdependence fuelled different views of the world and, specifically, the relevance of Europe to the U.S. Roosevelt loved to display his geographic erudition, and one of his most celebrated radio-broadcast “fireside chats” explained the Anglo-American war strategy to the American people by constantly asking them to “look at the map,” in what turned out to be an unprecedented presidential lesson in geography.³³ However, he was certainly no anglophile; he shared some of the “Europhobic-cum-hemispheric” tendencies of men like Adolf Berle and Sumner Welles,³⁴ and his global perspective made him impatient with those who still had the Old World at the center of their strategic and cultural mental maps: “the old term ‘Western civilization’ no longer applies. World events and the common ends of all humanity are joining the culture of Asia with the culture of Europe and of the Americas to form, for the first time, a real world civilization.”³⁵

Especially after the German invasion of the Soviet Union turned the London-Washington partnership between the “English-speaking peoples” into a tripartite, East-West alliance, a stream of global humanitarian internationalism ensued. Welles’ *Time for Decision* (1944), which called for the establishment of a new League of Nations in order to guarantee the principles of the Atlantic Charter “to the world as a whole – in all the

oceans and all the continents,” was an instant success. Republican rising star and Luce’s protégée Wendell Willkie, upon his return from a trip to China and the Soviet Union, further popularized this brand of Wilsonian universalism in *One World* (1943), a plea for an inspirational internationalism crossing national and racial barriers and unifying “the people of the earth in the human quest for freedom and justice” that sold one million copies.³⁶ Finally, Luce himself was attuned to the globalist notion of a borderless world, although with distinctive nationalist and imperialist undertones that did not go unnoticed among his contemporaries. Critics like Norman Thomas and Freda Kirchwey denounced his “American Century” editorial for bringing Kipling’s “white man’s burden”³⁷ back to life, only with reversed roles between the U.S. and Britain, while on the other hand New York Herald Tribune star columnist Dorothy Thompson praised him for “outlining new Anglo-Saxon free world order.”³⁸ Lippmann’s Atlantic outlook, on the contrary, combined on the one hand an update and a rather significant revision of Americans’ reassuring, deep-rooted assumptions about themselves and the world – reminiscent of what Michael Hunt has defined as “the ideology of U.S. foreign policy”³⁹ – with on the other hand the quest for a realistic and spatially limited involvement in world affairs. In the words of Robert Divine, “Lippmann had helped clarify the debate on the post-war world. Americans who wanted to abandon isolationism yet were not attracted by the Wilsonian slogans now had a respectable program to embrace.”⁴⁰ This combination was particularly influential at specific junctures, such as the campaign to support the British war effort before Pearl Harbor and, after the war, the process that led to the founding of the Atlantic Alliance. However, the contribution of the Atlantic Community framework in shaping a consensus around American internationalism is not solely contingent upon either the political and military twists and turns of the 1940s or Lippmann’s influence in Washington, which soon declined when he turned into a “Cold War critic,”⁴¹ opposing containment and the Truman doctrine. Its ability to reduce complex international issues to understandable, somewhat familiar terms made it a useful instrument for the reorientation of the worldview of the American public throughout the 1940s. Once this reorientation was completed, the Russian atomic bomb and the “loss” of China led to a truly global national security state.

3. AN ENGLISH-SPEAKING ATLANTICISM?

American views of and relations with Britain played a crucial role in the discovery of Europe entailed in the rise of the Atlantic Community framework. Life’s early interventionism and support of military aid to Britain triggered a constant interest in and coverage of things British, ranging from history and political affairs to entertainment and everyday life throughout the 1940s. Starting after the war, Luce tried to lure Winston Churchill into being added to the all-star list of contributors to the magazine with extremely generous offers, and his efforts finally led to the publication of excerpts

of Churchill's war memoirs from 1948 to 1953 and his *History of the English-Speaking Peoples* from 1956 to 1958.⁴²

A January 1945 photo-essay featured an "Anglo American Romance," where the encounter between an American soldier and a young British woman is re-enacted by Life photographer Ralph Morse. The first, full-page photograph showed a couple walking hand in hand in a park, with the man wearing a uniform; the caption provided more information to the American readers: "Hand in hand America's Sgt. Kenneth Nahan and Scotland's Jean Angus stroll down the famed 2 ¾ mile 'long walk' at Windsor castle on their honey moon."⁴³ Stories appealing to the readers' interest in inspirational romance were a fixture of picture magazines. In wartime, the private sphere of sentiments and the public sphere of international politics merged easily, and images made this interaction more compelling. Whether or not and to what extent images can be considered a language comparable to written text and studied as such remains an open question. In photojournalism, however, photographs have a high degree of intentionality: they are deliberately aimed at conveying a message to the public unlike, for example, photographs destined for family albums, whose main functions (personal memory, the strengthening of family ties) are limited to the private sphere. From the 1960s on, semiologists like Roland Barthes have studied photography in journalism and advertising as a form of communication that utilizes the same rhetorical mechanisms as the written text. Barthes has emphasized that, for all the autonomous communicative power of visual sources, the understanding of the relation between image and text is vital: "at the level of mass communications it appears that the linguistic message is indeed present in every image: as title, caption, accompanying press article, film dialogue, comic strip balloon. Which shows that it is not very accurate to talk of a civilization of the image – we are still, and more than ever, a civilization of writing ... the text directs the reader through the signifiers of the image, causing him to avoid some and receive others."⁴⁴

According to Barthes' semiotic approach, the text guides the reader through both the denotative, or descriptive, and the connotative, or symbolic, meaning of the image. Here, as is often the case in picture magazines, the relationship between the text and the image is one of *anchorage*, directing the viewer toward one of the many possible meanings of the photograph: the couple is composed of an American soldier and a British civilian; American readers, who might not recognize the majestic setting, are also informed that the couple is strolling along the "famed long walk" at Windsor castle.

In the following two pages, the photo-essay re-enacts the couple's romance: "how it all began" in an Edinburgh cafeteria, their honeymoon in London, and finally their new life in Millville, New Jersey, "a home in the U.S." Here Jean "coos at a baby encountered while shopping ... She ate the first steak of her life in the U.S." In another picture, she makes breakfast while Kenneth sits at the kitchen table reading the morning paper. Finally, she is shown wearing a black gown – "her first sophisticated evening dress" – while

her husband is gazing at her; she “can’t wait for a chance to wear it to a party. She thinks America is wonderful.”

This photo-essay offers a poignant metaphor of the relationships between the U.S. and Britain by the end of the war, as it evokes *natural* family ties between the two nations and, at the same time, it makes it clear that the hierarchy between “the English speaking peoples” in the international arena had changed. Scholars have pointed out that the power of photography in shaping ideology lies exactly in its ability to naturalize what is indeed historical, to construct as inevitable what is artificially created within a given social and political context. The mechanical nature of photography seems to provide a guarantee of objectivity; “the photograph,” Barthes wrote, “by virtue of its absolutely analogical nature, seems to constitute a message without a code ... Of all kinds of images only the photograph is able to transmit the (literal) information without forming it by means of discontinuous signs and rules of transformation.” The consequence is “the myth of photographic naturalness,”⁴⁵ which in this specific case acts through the reference to traditional gender roles: America, the new world power, is coded as male, while the subtitle – “A Yank sergeant woos a lassie in Edinburgh, weds her near London and settles in New Jersey, U.S.A.” – emphasizes male/American agency, and the accompanying photographs announce the post-war model of suburban, affluent life and female domesticity.

Life’s “Anglo-American Romance” photo-essay has to be situated in a context in which family metaphors were common currency among members of the foreign policy establishment of the two countries. Dean Acheson, the “Victorian for all seasons,” who was often accused by his detractors of being “an imitation Englishman” and was one of the most influential members of the “ultra-British party” which championed U.S. aid to Britain starting in 1940, often resorted to such images. He compared Anglo-American relations to a “common law marriage;” in August 1949, he described the upcoming Anglo-American-Canadian talks in Washington as “the rare, inevitable and very difficult evenings when husband and wife had to go into their mutual way of life and after about three hours one felt that it was too dreadful for anything. Nevertheless it had to be done.”⁴⁶ On the other shore of the Atlantic, British statesmen were even more eager to play on an Anglo-American, Burkean, and organic kinship because they saw it as a foundation of the “special relationship” which they hoped would limit international British decline.

If Winston Churchill was, as John Harper put it, “the pontiff” of the creed of Anglo-Saxonism and Acheson a faithful disciple, Luce was certainly no atheist. Born in China, he grew up in the white, Christian enclaves of walled American and British missionary compounds, with virtually no contacts with Chinese people⁴⁷ – an experience which arguably contributed to his view of the civilizing mission of “the West.” After he left China, he graduated from Yale, where he had been admitted to the exclusive Skulls and Bones Club, and later studied at Oxford.

While not a typical member of the patrician north-eastern elite, his mother Elizabeth Middleton Root was a descendant of Elihu Root, the revered mentor of the American foreign policy establishment, and since his days at Yale had voiced his support for an activist American foreign policy. Twenty years later, he became a member of the Century Group, a small organization coordinated by Francis Pickens Miller of the Council on Foreign Relations. That, together with William Allen White's Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, turned out to be among the most effective in the interventionist camp as a pressure group on the White House. The "Centurions" were especially active in their favor of the notorious "bases for destroyers deal" of the summer of 1940. After the fall of France, Britain intensified its diplomatic efforts to obtain military aid from the U.S., and talks between British ambassador Lord Lothian and Lippmann worked out this quid pro quo aimed at providing Britain with fifty rather obsolete warships in exchange for British bases in the western hemisphere – a solution which allowed Roosevelt to support Britain with weaponry, just short of blatantly violating the neutrality laws and further reinforcing the anti-interventionist front.⁴⁸

Luce urged Lippmann to release a public statement supporting the deal and promised to mobilize Time Inc. publications: "I believe this would be front-paged on nearly every newspaper ... Incidentally, if you were to issue this week, LIFE would be only too delighted to republish it in full next week – and TIME would carry an extensive story on it." He also reminded him that "incidentally, again, TIME on August 1st and LIFE on August 2nd both carry fairly strong references to this subject."⁴⁹ Indeed, the weekly news overview for that issue of Life focused on the "widely overlooked problem of British defense" in the eventuality of a German attack and called Roosevelt to action: "Many responsible and informed Americans believe that fifty of those destroyers sent to Britain now might tip the balance against German invasion ... Yet Americans at large have heard almost nothing about it. In a matter that may so vitally affect their national future, they should hear, and from the one man equipped to tell them with authority: the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Navy & President of the U.S."⁵⁰

Finally, Luce's pro-British stance was not limited to the contingency of the interventionist campaign before Pearl Harbor. What is often missed in accounts of his nationalist foreign policy outlook emphasizing American leadership vis-à-vis the decline of the Old World is that Britain and its empire played a crucial role in his vision of the American Century. In an essay that he wrote after his return from England in March 1942 and confidentially circulated among Time Inc. editors, he reaffirmed his vision of world affairs as follows: "A victorious America, counter-thrusting against the enemies of mankind, must inevitably seek to establish a world wide influence. In effect America will be inviting England to validate the supremacy of an international law based on Anglo-American power and ideas of justice." To this end England was still an indispensable ally to the U.S.: "Her supremacy is over but she may largely determine what and who comes

after ... Just as it was at the beginning of England's triumphal centuries, so it is at the end – England holds the balance of power.”

More specifically, Henry Luce admired the British Empire as the major instrument for the expansion of “civilization,” and blamed his “distant cousins ... the Englishmen” for not being “proud” of its achievements: “In particular they are not proud of India as they ought to be ... If there has been dishonor in India, so also there has been honor – great honor, none greater in the dealings of one triumphant civilization with a civilization decayed and rotten.” Luce especially valued the Empire as the major outpost of white civilization in the nonwhite world, as he criticized Britain for placing too much emphasis on its “European connection” and overlooking “the white-man's countries:” Rhodesia, Australia, and Canada. While the days of the British Empire might be counted, he believed that “what happens to it ... will largely determine what ‘Empires’ and what kind of ‘Empires’ shall come after.”⁵¹

It comes as no surprise, then, that *Life* featured several stories introducing to its readers, and casting in a favorable light, either single British dominions like Australia and South Africa, or the Empire as such. In early December 1942, Daniel Longwell drafted a letter to Thomas Lamont of J.P. Morgan for Luce, asking him to approach the prime minister of South Africa, Jan Smuts, and have him write an article that “should explain the modern political composition of the British Empire” to Americans, who “may fail to realize what a very great and powerful ally we have” in the Empire-turned-Commonwealth-of-Nations, both in wartime and in the coming international order.⁵² In “The British Colonial Empire,” Smuts – introduced as “Soldier, Scholar, Statesman” – pointed out that the term ‘Empire’ was now misleading considering that its goal was “full freedom for all;” “British Commonwealth” was more appropriate, as “it consisted of a vast congeries of states and territories in all stages of development, some free and fully self-governing, some in the process of attaining full freedom and others in various stages along the road to freedom.”⁵³

However, the ideological underpinnings of this imperial outlook were more evident in less ambitious articles. A brief photo-essay on Australian preparedness of March 1941 featured four photographs showing, respectively: Australian women marching and wearing an unspecified uniform; a veteran nurse with decorations from World War One; a statue of Bellona, the goddess of war; and a World War One memorial with Kipling's inscription “Lest We Forget.” The accompanying text described the Australians in familiar, sympathetic terms – “big consumers ... the Australians have developed into a race of self-respecting, unaffected, brawny believers in direct action,” living in a white outpost in the far eastern and Pacific front, they are the “sole lords of a continent far from other white continents ... these faraway people were last week in the hot spot of being the nearest white men to the scene of Japanese expansion toward Singapore.”⁵⁴ One month later the magazine reported on how U.S. sailors in Sidney got “an amazing welcome

from lonely white men of Australia.”⁵⁵ Strategic and racial considerations reinforced each other in these seemingly casual remarks, which indeed contributed to popularizing the discussion underway in elite circles about the Anglo-American partnership in the Pacific. Again, it was Lippmann who weaved that discussion in his Atlantic outlook, when he wrote in *U.S. Foreign Policy* that it was “undeniable that American commitments in the Atlantic and the Pacific dictate the need for an alliance with the British Commonwealth of Nations and with the Empire.”⁵⁶

4. “WESTERN CIVILIZATION” GOES ATLANTIC

The Atlantic Community framework, however, was not limited to the reformulation of old assumptions concerning Anglo-American common interests in world affairs and Anglo-Saxon historical, cultural, and racial homogeneity. Its influence, I argue, lies in its ability to combine such orientations with a discourse on the leadership and contours of “western civilization.” Such a discourse again implied a reconsideration of the cultural and political significance of Europe to the U.S.

Life’s discovery of Britain was part of the process of the American rediscovery of a western legacy originating in classical Greece and Rome, moving through the centuries from the Mediterranean to the North Atlantic, and now crossing the ocean to the United States. British policy makers like Harold Macmillan often utilized the analogy of Britain acting as Greeks to America’s Romans in an attempt to provide a historical background to the “special relationship” and revive their hopes for a “non-European home” for Britain.⁵⁷ In American hands, however, these analogies – the Atlantic as the new Mediterranean, the British and Americans as the Greeks and Romans of the twentieth century – acquired a different meaning. After the war, when tensions with the Soviet Union and British decline led to the long-term U.S. overall involvement in Europe, many feared that anti-communist sentiments alone would not guarantee a solid Cold War consensus at home and abroad. Packaging America as the new leader and full embodiment of western civilization would provide a positive rationale behind internationalism and, consequently, ease the worries of American taxpayers and sustain the battle for the heart and minds of Europeans.

For all his exceptionalism, Luce was sensitive to the idea of America as the leader, benefactor, prophet, and warrior of “the West.” “In addition to ideals and notions which are especially American,” he wrote in “The American Century,” “we are the inheritors of all the great principles of western civilization – above all Justice, the love of Truth, the ideal of Charity.” These ideals were often presented in Life as a common legacy shared by Americans and western Europeans through lavishly illustrated, serialized histories of European history and art. A few days before the announcement of the Truman doctrine in March 1947, the magazine launched an ambitious series on “The History of Western Culture” carried on under the supervision of Columbia historian Jacques Barzun. Its introduction stated that:

the spirit of this series will be the spirit which has moved American universities more and more to teach history not in narrow courses but in comprehensive surveys of civilization ... Our modern civilization, which owes much to classical Greece and Rome, had its roots in the Middle Ages and grew most directly out of the Renaissance ... In this way LIFE will try to give Americans a perspective on History. Americans need perspective on their past so that they can determine their future.⁵⁸

Here, as in several Life editorials and articles, (western) European history, far from being just the object of American tourists' gaze, is meant as a pillar of a new, transatlantic national identity. The reference to the teaching of history in higher education is not accidental, as these were the years when the idea of an Atlantic Community became, as Peter Novick put it, "the appropriate framework for both North American and western European history." On the teaching side, the massive introduction of "western civilization" courses in American colleges and universities – again in the words of Peter Novick – was supposed to trace, to some extent, "the prehistory of the Free World," and "bring Americans and their European allies closer together." Allan Nevins saw a "nationalist" view of United States history replaced by an "international view, treating America as part of a great historical civilization with the Atlantic its center, as the Mediterranean was the center of the ancient world."⁵⁹ In early 1950, Henry Steele Commager and Lippmann began to work on a joint project on "The Formation of the Atlantic Community," which was aborted in the end mostly due to different approaches to research and writing.⁶⁰

American Europeanists were particularly inclined to frame U.S. history in a "western" context. Charles H. Haskins, president of the American Historical Association (AHA) for 1921, had warned against the rising tide of Europhobia by stating that "Whether we look at Europe genetically as a source of our civilization, or pragmatically as a large part of the world in which we live, we cannot ignore the vital connections between Europe and America, their histories ultimately being one."⁶¹

In the aftermath of World War Two the historian who most forcefully advocated an Atlantic outlook on U.S. history was Columbia Europeanist Carlton J.H. Hayes. A Catholic convert, Hayes had been elected AHA president for 1945 after a bitter controversy concerning his supposedly pro-Franco line during his tenure as U.S. ambassador to Spain, from spring 1942 to January 1945. In his presidential address, Hayes called for an Atlantic approach to American history as a much-needed remedy vis-à-vis the "intellectual isolationism" which he saw as "the result of ignorance, of self-centered absorption in local or sectional concerns, and of nationalist propaganda." U.S. history was to be studied as part of "western civilization, which, taking its rise around the Mediterranean, has long since embraced the Atlantic." In Hayes' view, Lippmann's Atlantic Community framework provided a solution to the opposing dangers of "myopic nationalism" and "starry-eyed universalism."⁶²

Hayes' formulation of "western civilization" had a particularly strong religious tinge. Among its constitutive elements, along with the "Greco-Roman tradition" and the Judeo-Christian tradition," he mentioned "a Christian tradition ... of expansiveness, of missionary and crusading zeal, which has inspired not merely a spasmodic but a steady pushing outward of European frontiers." Such a connotation might have been controversial among sectors of academia, but it certainly anticipated the religious overtones that public discourse would soon acquire when it constructed the Cold War as a feud between western Christianity and godless communism.

From its earliest years, *Life* had extensively covered religious events and characters. Religion struck a deep chord in Luce, a committed Presbyterian who firmly believed that a "spiritual re-birth" was crucial to the restoration of Americans' confidence in the mission of their country at home and abroad. Furthermore, the rituals of religious pageantry provided excellent material for the visual spectacle that the magazine assembled each week: Catholic ceremonies in particular had an exotic twist that fit very well with *Life* editors' goal to explain the world to its readers through captivating images.⁶³ During and after World War Two the treatment of religion acquired a more tangible political connotation, as it was frequently associated with patriotism and singled out as the moral foundation of America and the West, with Protestantism mostly treated in a national context and Catholicism, opposing nazi-fascism and communism in Europe, usually framed in an international setting.

Again, the magazine reflected and at the same time strengthened broader tendencies already underway in the public arena. Lippmann himself, certainly not a champion of zealotry, defined the Atlantic Community in 1944 as "the extension of Western or Latin Christendom from the Western Mediterranean into the whole basin of the Atlantic Ocean ... Beyond the Atlantic Community lies a world which is still the heir of Byzantium. Beyond them both lie the Moslem, the Hindu, and the Chinese communities."⁶⁴ Among frequent *Life* contributors, a strong advocate for an American "spiritual revival" was John Foster Dulles, the chairman of the Commission to Study the Bases of a Just and Durable Peace, set up by the Federal Council of Churches in 1941 and, like Luce, a republican, an internationalist, and a fervent Presbyterian. During the war, Dulles, notwithstanding his exceptionalist faith in America's peculiar political and moral mission, came to see Christianity in a transatlantic perspective as the ultimate foundation for the international "leadership" exerted by France, Britain, and later the U.S. from the eighteenth century on: "We were great because our three people were imbued with and radiated great faiths," he wrote in an essay for the Christmas 1942 issue.⁶⁵

At a time when Europe was a crucial military and ideological battleground, the Roman Catholic Church emerged in *Life* as one of the pillars of the Atlantic world. At the diplomatic level, an unprecedented shift in the relations between America and the Catholic world had been underway since 1939 when Roosevelt appointed Myron Taylor as

his “personal representative” in the Vatican, thus putting an end to the long-lasting, deep distrust between Washington and Rome.⁶⁶ Roosevelt’s move, which caused widespread outcry in the U.S., was basically aimed at securing a source of information in a sensitive listening post for international diplomacy. When Allied victory was approaching and it gradually became clear that the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union would soon come to an end, cooperative relations with the Vatican became an asset for American foreign policy and post-war planning, while the mobilization of religious organizations and the use of Christian symbols and rhetoric came to be part and parcel of Cold War ideological warfare at home and abroad. Christianity came to be regularly associated with democracy, and American Catholics would turn out to be enthusiastic participants in the anti-communist crusade, thus partially overcoming decades of religious, and ethnic, prejudice.⁶⁷

Life was among the early advocates of Christian unity against “the scandal of divided Christendom” vis-à-vis the threat that atheism posed to western civilization. An editorial for the Christmas issue of 1943 stated that “Of all the institutions of Europe, [the Catholic and Protestant Churches] alone have survived unamended and uncompromised.”⁶⁸ Three years later the magazine published a report on “organized Christianity abroad” by Paul Hutchinson, editor of the leading Protestant magazine, *The Christian Century*, which emphasized the crucial role of Christian socialist parties in Europe as anti-communist bulwarks and bearers of fundamental values “which must be preserved at all costs if western civilization is not to lapse into slavery.”⁶⁹

Since the war years Life had regularly featured Pope Pious XII as a spokesman for traditional values and an ally in world politics. The pompous ceremonies in St. Peter’s were featured in photo-essays that magnified the Vatican’s grandeur as well as its increasing openness to America and the Anglo-Saxon world. Margaret Bourke-White was assigned to cover the 1944 Christmas mass in St. Peter’s basilica; in March 1946, a story on the creation of new cardinals opened with a picture of Pious XII hearing “the pleas to canonize new saints, including Mother Cabrini of Chicago,” while the text informed that the ceremony “was given modern staging amid Renaissance grandeur” through a “triple microphone” and “dazzling floodlight.” A frequent protagonist of Life stories was Cardinal Spellman of New York, a key figure in the shaping of an ethnic/ideological Cold War coalition in post-war America.⁷⁰

The liberation of Rome in June 1944 provided the American media with an ideal opportunity to celebrate the definitive reconciliation between America and the Catholic world, notwithstanding the obvious differences between the two regarding individual rights, capitalism, and representative democracy, let alone the Vatican’s all-out, enduring opposition to the penetration of a secularized, consumer-oriented American way of life in Europe and especially Italy. It also disclosed a unique repository of symbols in which the myths of Christianity and ancient Rome blended in a powerful visual experience that a picture magazine like Life was ready to capture. A photo-essay on “The Taking of

Rome” is a telling example of such juxtaposition: the front page featured a photograph of General Clark in a jeep with St. Peter’s in the background, while the accompanying text described “the strange sight of the Americans capturing the city that was once the center of the world, the *Caput Mundi*.” In the following pages, pictures by Life photographers John Phillips, Carl Mydans, and George Silk showed, respectively, the Colosseum looming over “the new conquerors,” and finally, on the same page, American soldiers entering the city through the Greater Gate along the *Via Casilina*, and Sherman tanks in front of St. Paul-Outside-the-Walls.⁷¹

In the same issue, the editorial made the connection between Roman past and American present explicit. After pointing out that “the Rome that speaks more clearly to Americans today is the golden age of the ancient republic,” a chapter of the editorial under the title “Roman Law and American Freedom” singled out “the ideas of justice under the law” as Rome’s most precious legacy. Americans, “heirs of the Roman law,” had to build on that legacy in order to secure for all mankind “the idea of freedom as a natural right of all men.” This was the aim that now inspired the American leadership of the western world: just as Caesar’s Rome had ruled the Mediterranean world, after World War Two “the ‘Atlantic Community’ may be similarly united under the sway of Great Britain and the U.S., which are at least as akin as Greece and Rome. As Rome transmitted Greek culture to the barbarians of Europe, so may America be destined to be the bridge between Europe and the emerging civilizations of Asia.”⁷²

Finally, in September 1944 Luce’s picture magazine published “The World from Rome,” a long article by William Bullitt, former U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union and France and a long-time critic of U.S. cooperation with Stalin. The article purportedly outlined the unofficial views of the Catholic hierarchy – although Bullitt referred to them as “the Romans” – on the unfolding of the war, and was a major all-out attack against Roosevelt, as it denounced Soviet expansionism and American naiveté.⁷³ Pious XII emerged here as the only leader Italians could count on in order to escape the fate of Russian domination, that is, the same domination that would extend to eastern Europe if the U.S. continued to be soft with Moscow. Appealing to deep-rooted western fears regarding the barbarian Orient, Bullitt wrote that “Today, when the moral unity of western civilization has been shattered by the crimes of the Germans ... Rome sees again approaching from the East a wave of conquerors.” The influence of the Catholic Church was clearly not limited to the Italian situation; as the Cold War reconfigured and dramatized the centuries-old East/West divide, “Rome” – whatever that meant – was hailed again as a constitutive element of “the West,” except that the latter was now a transatlantic entity under American leadership.

The U.S. has long constructed its relationship with Europe in oppositional terms. From the colonial era to Wilsonianism, which aimed at redeeming the Old World from its self-destructive balance of power politics, transatlantic relations were based on dichotomies: liberty vs. tyranny, prosperity vs. poverty etc. By the end of the nineteenth century, this scenario came to be questioned because of two factors that gradually concurred to define what Daniel Rodgers has called an “Atlantic landscape:” the discovery of European culture by American intellectuals and scions of patrician families through, among other things, the literary experience of the Grand Tour, and, more importantly, the development of a close-knit network of commercial and financial exchanges across the Atlantic following the industrial growth which took place in the U.S. after the civil war.⁷⁴

The 1940s brought about a turnaround, after the premonitions of the “first intervention” of World War One. World War Two and the Cold War led to an American discovery of Europe, as the Old World came to be not only the ideological battleground where “the West” and its enemies faced each other, but also an arsenal of myths, traditions, and symbols to be used in the domestic and global war for “the hearts and minds” of the western public opinion. Such a war required the ability to exert hegemonic power as well as military force, and could hardly be won by relying exclusively on the negative appeal of anti-communism.

Many scholars agree that at this point in time, Europe and America ceased to see and define each other according to the old oppositional pattern. Now the Old and the New World embodied different stages in the genealogy of western civilization, the former being simply the past, that “foreign country,” while the latter was finally free to exert its global leadership. However, I argue that an excessive emphasis on the American “romanticization” of Europe as an historical theme park readily available for Americans’ leisure ends up conveying a limitative picture of the cultural and political transatlantic relations of the 1940s.

If every nation is, to some extent, an “imagined community,” the U.S. is the quintessential imagined community, that is, a nation whose identity heavily depends on practices of cultural representation.⁷⁵ The media are of course major producers of such practices. In this essay, I have tried to outline how the Atlantic Community framework – a loose, heterogeneous, at times even contradictory vision of the place of America in the global arena – took shape and was popularized through *Life*, a medium whose influence rested on its massive circulation, the personal influence and forceful foreign policy outlook of its editor-publisher, and finally its visual impact on readers.

By relying heavily on photographs and maps, “America’s favorite magazine” was especially equipped to be an active player in the discussion over the role and *place* of America in the world during the 1940s, a decade which marked the end of the illusion

of America's security as a *natural* consequence of its physical separation from the world. Such a discussion, especially in its popularized form, entailed considerations pertaining to history and geography, as well as national interest, and it necessarily affected not only Americans' attitudes toward the Other, but also their self-image and their idea of national identity.

The construction of the Atlantic Community framework reveals both the ability and the *power* of the U.S. to construct an idea of Europe that was consistent with and instrumental to its pursuit of global primacy. According to Edward Said, "ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied."⁷⁶ Ideas are generated and circulated in civil society, where they compete for influence and consent; Life, as a voice of civil society with deep connections to economic and political power, is an intriguing source for a study in cultural hegemony.

Just as "the Orient [had] helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience,"⁷⁷ so had Europe helped the U.S. to define itself as the senior partner of a "community" rooted in shared political institutions, economic practices, religion, and race at the specific juncture of the 1940s. Life's maps and pictures, mediated by and anchored to captions and accompanying texts, contributed to the shaping of Americans' "geographical imagination," that is, "the mechanism by which people come to know the world and situate themselves in space and time."⁷⁸ At a time of swift transition from "isolation" and "innocence" to global power and responsibilities for the U.S., many Americans found it comfortable to imagine themselves physically and ideologically within an Atlantic space. The Atlantic Community framework as a truly hegemonic discourse was able to reformulate pre-existing assumptions about America's mission of world leadership and Anglo-American kinship, reflect mainstream views on race and religion, and express a genuine commitment to liberalism and democracy. In the process, it led to a discovery of Europe percolating from elite circles to the public opinion which, although limited in time and depth, should not be dismissed as a mere epiphenomenon of NATO.

1. *Life* (July 19, 1943): 8-9.
2. Notable exceptions are Alan K. Henrickson, "The Map as an 'Idea': The Role of Cartographic Imagery during the Second World War," *The American Cartographer* 2 (1975): 19-53; Mark Polelle, *Raising Cartographic Consciousness: The Social and Foreign Policy Vision of Geopolitics in the Twentieth Century* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 1999); Joanne P. Sharp, *Condensing the Cold War: Reader's Digest and American Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); and Susan Scuhlten, *The Geographical Imagination in America, 1880-1950* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001).
3. Neil Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 7, 4.
4. Martin Lewis, Karen Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 49-51.
5. Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), xi.
6. The pass-along rate indicates the number of people who browsed a single copy of the magazine in addition to the subscriber; see Erika Doss, "Looking at *Life*: Rethinking America's Favourite Magazine, 1936-1972" in Doss, ed., *Looking at Life Magazine* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 2-3. On *Life* readership, see James L. Baughman, "Who Read *Life*? The Circulation of America's Favourite Magazine," in the same volume.
7. Quoted in Doss, "Looking at *Life*," 2 (emphasis added).
8. Luce to Heiskell, September 25, 1946, Daniel Longwell Papers (DL), Butler Library, Columbia University, Time-Life file, box 29.
9. Longwell to Luce, July 1, 1948, DL, Time-Life file, box 29.
10. Undated memo, DL, Time-Life file, box 26.
11. Doss, "Looking at *Life*," 16.
12. Wendy Kozol, *Life's America. Family and Nation in Postwar Photojournalism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 23.
13. Longwell to Billings, February 7, 1946, DL, Time-Life file, box 27.
14. Quoted in Baughman, *Henry R. Luce and the Rise of the American News Media* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001) (1987), 90.
15. Robert T. Elson, *The World of Time Inc.: The Intimate History of a Publishing Enterprise. Vol II 1941-1960* (New York: Athenaeum, 1973), 51-52.
16. Alan Brinkley, "The Concept of an American Century," in R. Laurence Moore and Maurizio Vaudagna, eds, *The American Century in Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 13.
17. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 25; Kozol, *Life's America*, 55.
18. Nikhil Pal Singh, "Culture/Wars: Recoding Empire in an Age of Democracy," *American Quarterly* 50 (September 1998): 479-480.
19. Quoted in Baughman, *Henry R. Luce and the Rise of the American News Media*, 146.
20. Walter Lippmann, "The Atlantic... and America: The Why and When of Intervention," *Life* (April 7, 1941).
21. Walter Lippmann, "The Defense of the Atlantic World," *The New Republic* (February 17, 1917).
22. Ronald Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 404-17.

23. Ibid., 279-80.
24. Lippmann to Bowman, April 7, 1924, Walter Lippmann Papers (WL), Sterling Library, Yale University, Correspondence, 1906-1930, box 4. Lippmann and Bowman had worked together in Colonel House's Inquiry during World War One.
25. Lippmann to Rachel Albertson, November 2, 1939; quoted in Baughman, *Henry Luce and the Rise of the American Newsmedia*, 133.
26. Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 114-15.
27. Walter Lippmann, "The American Destiny," *Life* (June 5, 1939).
28. Walter Lippmann, "America in the World," *Life* (June 3, 1940).
29. Walter Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1943), 134-35.
30. On this very notion and the literature on the topic, see, Priscilla Roberts, "'All the Right People': The Historiography of the American Foreign Policy Establishment," *Journal of American Studies* 26 (1992): 409-34. The Council on Foreign Relations was founded in 1921 as a counterpart to the British Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House). The original plan of British and American diplomats at the Versailles Conference of 1919 called for a private Anglo-American research organization aimed at leading public opinion in foreign affairs; see Robert Schulzinger, *The Wise Men of Foreign Affairs: The History of the Council on Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), chapter 1.
31. Francis Pickens Miller, "The Atlantic Area," *Foreign Affairs* 19 (July 1941): 727-28.
32. See Schulten, *The Geographical Imagination in America*, chapter 9, on the eclipse of Mercator's traditional projection in the early 1940s.
33. Franklin D. Roosevelt, "On Progress of the War," February 23, 1942, available at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library website <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/022342.html>.
34. John Harper, *American Visions of Europe: Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan, and Dean G. Acheson* (Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
35. Quoted in Singh, "Culture Wars," 481.
36. Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, 404.
37. W.A. Swamberg, *Luce and His Empire* (New York: Scribner's, 1972), 182.
38. DL, Time-Life file, box 29.
39. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*.
40. Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America during World War II* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), 126.
41. Barton J. Bernstein, "Walter Lippmann and the Early Cold War," in Thomas G. Paterson, ed., *Cold War Critics: Alternatives to American Foreign Policy in the Truman Years* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971).
42. Elson, *The World of Time Inc.*, chapters 11, 14.
43. "Life Records an Anglo American Romance," *Life* (January 1, 1945).
44. Roland Barthes, "Rethoric of the Image," in Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall, eds., *Visual Culture: the Reader* (London: Sage, 1999), 37-38.
45. Barthes, "Rethoric of the Image," 39-40.
46. Harper, *American Visions of Europe*, 285-86.

47. Brinkley, "The Concept of an American Century," 10.
48. Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, 384-86. A photograph of one of these warships crossing the ocean by *Life* photographer Hans Wild opened Lippmann's article "The Atlantic... and America," with a caption that specified: "former American destroyer goes to fight for Britain."
49. Luce to Lippmann, July 29, 1940, WL, Correspondence 1931-1974, box 87.
50. "LIFE on the Newsfront of the World," *Life* (August 5, 1940).
51. Henry Luce, "England Revisited," DL, Time-Life file, box 29.
52. Longwell to Luce, 12.1.1942, DL, box 29.
53. Jan Christiaan Smuts, "The British Colonial Empire," *Life* (December 28, 1942). Smuts, a Boer by birth, had fought against the British during the Boer war. He had been an active supporter of the League of Nations at the end of World War One; he was also very close to Winston Churchill and during the Second World War again emerged as a major figure in fostering Anglo-American cooperation and, later, the United Nations. He was Prime Minister of South Africa from 1939 to 1948.
54. "The Australians Are Ready for the Test," *Life* (March 3, 1941).
55. *Life* (April 21, 1941). See also "The Australian Way of Life," *Life* (February 1, 1943), by Minister of External Affairs Herbert V. Evatt.
56. Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy*, 127.
57. John Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations in the Cold War and After* (London: St. Martin's Press, 2001), 13-14. See also the works of David Reynolds on Anglo-American relations during World War Two.
58. "LIFE Announces a Series of Articles on the History of Western Culture," *Life* (March 3, 1947).
59. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 311.
60. For the details of this joint effort see the correspondence between Commager and Lippmann see WL, Correspondence 1931-1974, box 63.
61. Quoted in Volker Berghahn and Charles Maier, "Modern Europe," in Anthony Molho and Gordon S. Wood (eds.), *Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 395-96. See also the essays by Daniel Rodgers on "Exceptionalism" and Eugen Weber on "Western Civilization" in the same volume.
62. Carlton J.H. Hayes, "The American Frontier-Frontier of What?" *American Historical Review* 51 (January 1946): 199-216. See also John Higham, "The Idea of Atlantic History," *Itinerario* 20 (1996): 19-44.
63. David Morgan, "The Image of Religion in American *Life*, 1936-1951," in Doss, ed., *Looking at Life*, 140.
64. Walter Lippmann, *U.S. War Aims* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1944), 86-87.
65. John Foster Dulles, "A Righteous Faith," *Life* (December 28, 1942). On Luce and Dulles, see Swanberg, *Luce and His Empire*, especially 316-18.
66. Ennio Di Nolfo, *Vaticano e Stati Uniti (1939-1952). Dalle carte di Myron Taylor* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 1978).
67. On American Catholics and the cold war see among others, Alfred Hero, *American Religious Groups View Foreign Policy: Trends in Rank-and-File Opinion, 1937-1969* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1973), and Leo Ribuffo, "Religion and American Foreign Policy," *The National Interest* (Summer 1998).

68. *Life*, "Christmas," December 27, 1943.
69. Quoted in Morgan, "The Image of Religion," 150.
70. "Papal Christmas," *Life* (January 15, 1945); and "The Pope Creates New Cardinals," *Life* (March 11, 1946). On Spellman, see "Archbishop's Travels," *Life* (September 20, 1943); and "The Concistory," *Life* (May 13, 1946). See Vicki Goldberg, *Margareth Bourke-White: A Biography* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1987), chapter 24 on her experience on the Italian front.
71. "The Taking of Rome," *Life* (June 19, 1944).
72. "The Fall of Rome," *Life* (June 19, 1944).
73. William Bullitt, "The World from Rome," *Life*, (September 4, 1944). For the controversies ignited by this article within Time Inc. and in the American public opinion, see Elson, *The World of Time Inc.*, 98-101 and John Lewis L. Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 54-55. On Bullitt's "proto-containment" tendencies see, Harper, *American Visions of Europe*, 51-54.
74. Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998).
75. David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).
76. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 6-7. See also, Andrew J. Rotter, "Saidism without Said: *Orientalism* and U.S. Diplomatic History," *American Historical Review* 105 (October 2000): 1205-217, for penetrating remarks on the relative lack of interest in Said's work among historians of American foreign policy.
77. Said, *Orientalism*, 1-2.
78. Joan M. Schwartz, James R. Ryan, eds., *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* (London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 6. On the concept of "geographic imagination," see David Harvey, "Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80 (September 1990): 418-34.

