

# Global Media and the Ambiguities of Resonant Americanism

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*Time Life International was started in 1945 because the U.S. was literally the only power in the world capable of restoring some of the continuities of civilization . . . It is this towering uniqueness of power and influence [of the U.S.] that is . . . the factual premise – the existential premise that Time Inc. should do things in the international world.*

Henry Luce, 1965

In February 1941, Henry Luce wrote an editorial in *Life* magazine that was to become a key, if not defining, moment in the modern discourse of Americanization. Responding to the lack of national purpose that Luce saw deriving from the continuation of isolationist policies in the inter-war years, “The American Century” proposed a more expansive role for the United States in world affairs. Luce believed that Americans had been unable “to accommodate themselves spiritually and physically to the fact of power.”<sup>1</sup> The remedy, he argued, was for American people to “accept wholeheartedly our

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duty and our opportunity as the most vital nation in the world and to exert upon the world the full impact of our influence for such purposes as we see fit and by means we see fit." Luce's international impulse can be set within a tradition of liberal-developmental thought that, since the late nineteenth century, had pinned American expansionism to the furtherance of free trade and private enterprise, and "to the belief that other nations should replicate America's own developmental experience."<sup>2</sup> The United States had been exporting its political ideals, economic systems, scientific knowledge and cultural products around the world for decades prior to Luce's missionary statement. However, Luce was perhaps the first person to realise the significance of *the media* in supporting the projection of American power in the postwar diplomatic and economic order.

In the decade following Luce's "American Century" editorial, the American media achieved a world-wide dominance. This was linked to American military strength in conquered nations such as West Germany, Italy and Japan (senior personnel having the power to establish newspapers and licence radio stations), to chronic shortages of materials in media producing countries such as Britain and France, and to a new (American sponsored) system of free communication flow underwritten by the 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and, later, by UNESCO.<sup>3</sup> If Luce's providential vision of national influence coincided with the growth of American media leadership, it should not be surprising - especially considering the proactive role that Luce took as editor-in-chief - that *Time* and *Life* should absorb many of his views regarding America's role as a "powerhouse" from which "the ideals of civilization" should "spread throughout the world." Since Luce's 1941 editorial, every major anniversary of *Time* has witnessed a stolid recapitulation by the current managing editor of the magazine's commitment to particular American "propositions," "values" and "prejudices." At *Time*'s 40th birthday party in 1963, for example, Luce made a speech about the importance of the magazine in upholding the "American proposition." By this, he meant a political commitment to liberty, equality, and constitutionalism, upheld by a free and responsible press. Henry Grunwald continued the rhetoric in 1983 with the magazine's 60th birthday. He said: "As for American and Western values, *Time* very

consciously maintains a faith in them. We believe in freedom, including freedom of conscience and enterprise; in democracy, however imperfect; in a strong and beneficial role in the world, however difficult."<sup>4</sup> In the magazine's 75th birthday issue in 1998, Walter Issacson belied a certain hesitation in the unchecked promotion of American values - calling them "prejudices" - but still glorified the same with a familiar measure of brio, writing unapologetically that "*Time* remains prejudiced toward the value of free minds, free markets, free speech and free choice."<sup>5</sup> Through its history, *Time* has been framed as a carrier and custodian of American liberal commitments, linked intimately to the principle of information flow and a free press.

In the emerging climate of the Cold War, the expansion and sponsorship of liberal capitalist values, especially the linkage of freedom with free trade and communication, became the ideological bedrock upon which Luce sought to base and realise his foretold "American Century." This was reflected in the editorial content of Time Inc.'s various magazines but it also provides some background to the company's strategic operations in the middle of the century, notably Time Inc.'s movement into large-scale international publishing. Luce realised that a developed international communication system was an instrument of considerable power for the United States, and something that could be used to further American foreign policy interests. The establishment of Time Life International in 1945 was, in this context, more than a matter of commercial expansionism. According to one-time Paris news bureau chief Curtis Prendergast, Time Life International was "dictated as much by considerations of national interest as by publishing opportunity."<sup>6</sup> One might argue that Time Inc.'s early venture into the foreign media market was distinguished by an acute sense of, or aspiration towards, hegemonic possibility.

This essay is not concerned with Luce, specifically, or even with the transnational character of Time Inc. The relationship between Luce as a prime articulator of American global influence, and the international dissemination of Time Inc. products, provides a useful starting point, however, for questions about Americanization and the global media. Luce believed that overseas editions of *Time* and *Life* were a "tool" of great influence, offering "something that the

leading people all over the world can read: one common ground of what is going on in the world.”<sup>7</sup> With the value basis of “common ground” rooted in assumptions of American-led economic and cultural modernization, news currency was disposed towards the post-war liberal order being shaped powerfully by the United States. While different in format and focus, Time Inc. magazines such as *Time*, *Life* and *Fortune* became armatures of American self-projection; invariably celebrating the triumphs of liberal capitalism, they were bound instrumentally in the climate of “capacious Americanization” that Peter J. Taylor associates with the early postwar period.<sup>8</sup> As one *Time* imitator, *Der Spiegel*, wrote in 1961: “No man has more incisively shaped the image of America as seen by the rest of the world, and the Americans’ image of the world, than Henry R. Luce . . . Luceforic printed products are the intellectual supplement of Coca-Cola, Marilyn Monroe and dollar diplomacy.”<sup>9</sup>

In Taylor’s argument, “capacious Americanization” describes the moment of “high hegemony” that the United States experienced between 1945 and 1971: a period when American economic and political dominance was at its peak, the United States was relatively secure in a position of world leadership, and the projection of American civil society had become the basis and ideal of the future for many non-Americans, although typically lived out in varied and hybrid cultural forms. Taylor draws fundamentally upon the world-systems analysis of cultural influence developed by Immanuel Wallerstein. This provides a model of global development where particular states are given a historically specific location in the system of world capitalism. Wallerstein suggests that, since the sixteenth century, this system has had different centres at different times; while states (rather than abstract market forces) have always been the handmaidens of world capitalism, the location of particular states within the system has changed. Replacing Britain, which itself replaced the Netherlands, the United States emerged in the twentieth century as the core society around which particular values attached themselves and have consequently spread. Explaining how the economic and cultural power of hegemonic states define the “prime modernity” of a particular period, Taylor suggests that: “Americanization is the name given to a process of emulation and adaptation under the condition of consumer modernity.”<sup>10</sup> The spread of mass

production, mass consumption and mass mediation – the hallmarks of consumer modernity – are intimately bound with the force and projection of America in the last century. This does not guarantee that the United States can perpetuate its key position in the world system, however, or has even done so in the last three decades. Indeed, within Taylor’s periodizing model of hegemonic influence, “capacious Americanization” gave way in the 1970s to what he calls “resonant Americanization.”

This so-called “resonance” of Americanization suggests a transition less in the quantitative degree of U.S. influence around the world, than in the ideological context of transmission. It describes a situation where American culture is “here, there and everywhere,”<sup>11</sup> but has arguably, at some level, lost the foundation of its broad hegemonic legitimacy. Of course, this should not be taken crudely to suggest the unambiguous, unconflicted, experience of American (cultural) influence prior to the 1970s, or any similar uniformity of response afterwards. The reception and local adaptation of American products, commodities and values is a complex and crucial issue that can be addressed in relation to manifold periods and places, and with differing conclusions regarding issues of accommodation, emulation, resistance and fear.<sup>12</sup> Resonant Americanization does not seek to harden the experience and taste of America in foreign contexts, but, rather, to locate the influence of America within a historically broad, and resolutely global, perspective.

While postmodernism may, in Stuart Hall’s view, represent the world dreaming itself to be American, the United States has found itself embroiled in a more complex world scene than Luce could ever imagine. The 1970s were a time when the United States lost much of its moral authority in the wake of Vietnam and the Watergate scandal, and where America became conspicuously engaged in the circuits, and subject to the insecurities, of the global economy. As David Morley and Kevin Robins suggest:

It can be argued that the American Century envisaged by Henry Luce at the end of the Second World War, in fact only lasted until 1973. In the wake of the oil crisis of that year, the dollar was symbolically dethroned in the world currency market and, it can be argued, the postmodern era properly began – a period characterised, not least, by waning American confidence and increasing competition for world dominance from the burgeoning Pacific pow-

ers.<sup>13</sup>

This comment, much like Taylor's world-systems model, is historically schematic but theoretically suggestive. At the very least, they point to revisions within current thinking about Americanization as it negotiates global and postnational paradigms. In this essay, I want to consider these revisions, and go on to examine how in *Time Atlantic* - the international edition of *Time* serving Europe, Africa and the Middle East - the Lucean projection of American power has been refigured in light of the magazine's position in the nexus of the global multi-national media.

### **Towards a global theory of Americanization**

If postnational paradigms have challenged one key aspect of Americanization discourse, it is the troublesome concept of cultural (and media) imperialism. Carl Strikwerda suggests that the "globalization debate has enormous implications for the study of the United States."<sup>14</sup> With the shift towards the transnationalization of capital in the 1990s, and the problematizing of national identity in the spatial and imaginative order of the global cultural economy, cultural criticism has in recent years begun to rethink "America" as a coherent identity, and reconsider the place of the United States within a changing international system. In one key sense, essential and exceptionalising notions of American identity have been thrown into question. This bears upon, and has implications for, Americanization theory. Effectively, it shifts the discussion of national influence and power from coercive models of imperial domination (the imposition of a unified "them" on a vulnerable, but equally unified, "us") to the more complex and partial dynamics of the global. As a formation and discourse, globalization has transformed spatial and territorial categories in a way that significantly complicates ideas of sovereignty, cultural flow and the radiation of national influence.

For all its early strategic importance, William Marling suggests that imperialism came theoretically unstuck in the early 1990s.<sup>15</sup> Frequently based on binary assumptions about core and periphery nations, assuming too much (or too little) about the way that cultures and peoples re-inscribe and engage with artefacts of the everyday, and generally implying an overly-coherent and unidirec-

tional process of cultural domination, imperialism has increasingly given way to theories of globalization. John Tomlinson defines the conceptual shift in the following terms:

The idea of globalization suggests interconnection and interdependency of all global areas which happen in a far less purposeful way [than imperialism]. It happens as a result of economic and cultural practices that do not, of themselves, aim at global integration, but which nonetheless produce it. More importantly, the effects of globalization are to weaken the cultural coherence of *all* individual nation-states, including the economically powerful ones – the ‘imperialist powers’ of a previous era.<sup>16</sup>

The last point is significant for it suggests an important strand of globalization theory, developed by critics ranging from Arjun Appadurai to Saskia Sassen, albeit in different ways.<sup>17</sup> This, put simply, is the belief that a transnational, and increasingly deterritorialized, global formation has seen a political, economic and conceptual weakening of national identity. This *includes and involves* the United States. While America is undoubtedly a key geo-political and cultural player in what Sassen calls the “new geography of power,” the global influence of the United States is far from assured, unchallenged, or even the territorial locus of ideological power in contemporary culture.

According to Jonathan Friedman, globalization is not another, more intense, form of Americanization, as some might argue, but is instead suggestive of “changing conditions of world hegemony.” By this, he means the relative decline of Western and U.S. hegemony. Friedman puts forward an interesting argument that suggests the new ideological significance of transnational elites. He argues that the decentralizing of capital (newly figured around the regional poles of the EU, NAFTA and APEC) has entailed the fragmentation of old territorial units and generated the simultaneous formation of global elites enthralled by neo-liberal ideologies and “cosmopolitan internationalism.”<sup>18</sup> The United States is, of course, a major architect of neo-liberal rhetoric, practice and policy in the era of contemporary globalization. The U.S. has been at the heart of the impetus towards deregulation and free international trade; it has been a major propo-

ment and beneficiary of the global restructuring of the media; it has shaped the formation of transnational legal regimes; and it has generally marked the global (cultural) economy with a heavy American input and accent. It would be wrong to suggest that globalization somehow diminishes American influence and power. If "global processes materialise in national territories," as Saskia Sassen suggests, the United States is a key site of economic, military, legal, cultural and ideological capital.<sup>19</sup> However, it would also be wrong to *conflate* globalization with American influence and power. New configurations of identity and hegemony are emerging in the spatial matrix of global capitalism, *transcending* national interests and imperatives. This is represented by the subordination of national power to transnational corporate authority, but also by the development of supranational organizations such as the World Trade Organization and the European Union, and by the emergence of the new global elites that Friedman refers to. If American national power is no longer a radiating source of cultural domination, Americanization theory must account for this conjunctural and discursive transition.

In the remainder of this essay, I want to use *Time Atlantic* to suggest particular transitions that have shaped the mode and discourse of American influence in the international news media. In the post-war period, *Time* magazine played an important role in the dissemination of American values and liberal ideologies. As such, one might ask what effect the increasingly global organization and operation of parent company, AOL/Time-Warner, has had on *Time's* more recent profile and news identity. How, in particular, can *Time Atlantic* be located in the restructuring of the global media and in relation to the globalization of "media forms, firms, flows and effects?"<sup>20</sup> In a recent essay, Dominic Strinati has made attempts to "trace out the links between Americanization, the dominant international role of American money and culture, and the increasingly transnational character of culture and information."<sup>21</sup> Strinati seeks to establish a meaningful framework for Americanization critique, exploring the changing structures of American global cultural power. While rejecting postmodern theories of transnationalism that subscribe to a fragmented global order with no discernible centre, he does acknowledge that the "isolated splendour of American global hegemony is coming to be challenged not only by Europe and Japan, but by an

admittedly embryonic set of cosmopolitan and cross-national relations." I want to examine *Time Atlantic* in this context. In returning to issues of "resonant Americanization," we might pose the following question: how, if at all, has *Time Atlantic* been challenged, changed or forced to refine itself in the context of the global, and what implications might this have for the inherited, Lucean, discourse of American world influence?

### **TIME Atlantic: "Global Reach and Local Touch."**

Time Inc.'s status as a global media player came to the fore in 1989 when, facing a hostile takeover bid from Paramount, the company merged with Warner Brothers in a \$14 billion deal. This became the most widely discussed, and highly trumpeted, merger in a period where global media consolidation was (and is) becoming the quintessence of corporate survival. Since the late 1980s, there has been a spate of mergers and acquisitions that has seen the emergence of several colossal vertically integrated media conglomerates, including the News Corporation, Disney, Bertelsmann, Viacom, Time Warner and TCI. Media commentators have described the 1990s as "an all-out rush to claim global turf"<sup>22</sup> and Time Warner has become the biggest of all media titans. With the merger of Time Warner and Turner Broadcasting in 1996 and the consequent merger with America Online in January 2000 – described by one venture capitalist as the "single most transformational event" in American media history<sup>23</sup> – the market capitalization of Time Warner had reached \$96 billion by the start of 2000. Time Warner has stakes in publishing, cable, music, film, video, television, professional sports teams, retail outlets, studios, cinemas and theme parks. Combined with the massive internet resources of AOL, old media and new media have joined to make a formidable corporate force committed to the creative synergy of its multi-media investments and to ever-deepening global market expansion.

In 1990, Steve Ross, then head of Time Warner, explained in his "Worldview address" (given at the Edinburgh International Television Festival) that: "the new reality of international media is driven more by market opportunity than national identity."<sup>24</sup> In the same

year, Time Warner launched a new logo and motto: "The world is our audience." During the 1990s, Time Warner developed a vision of global connectivity that figured the restructuring of national media industries, and the development of a global media market, in terms of an emerging, portentous, and fundamentally borderless, world order. Ross explained that media corporations have a new and crucial role to play in the emerging global system. Describing a process of "bringing the world closer together," Ross said: "It is up to us, the producers and distributors of ideas, to facilitate this movement and to participate in it with an acute awareness of our responsibilities as citizens of one world . . . We can help to see to it that all peoples of all races, religions, and nationalities have equality and respect."<sup>25</sup> This illustrates the celebratory rhetoric that frequently emanates from global media industries and their corporate executives, a promissory argument that frames the exponential growth of global markets and free trade/communication in terms of *consumer* freedom and the democratic spread of information. The globalization of media firms has brought with it changes in the strategic operations of publishing companies like Time Inc. This has largely become a matter of increased size, scale, and integration. However, it has also become a matter of discourse, meaning the values and attitudes that are used to justify and legitimate dominant interests in the new global economy.

As the largest international edition of Time Warner's flagship publication, *Time Atlantic* has been especially subject to the structural and discursive changes of the last decade. *Time Atlantic* has distilled the body of the parent magazine for international audiences ever since the first issue appeared in July 1946. Since the 1990s, however, there have been significant changes in the way the magazine has been produced and marketed, changes that bear upon the Lucean mood and theoretical mode of "Americanization." Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi has written of particular transformations in the 1990s producing "a more complicated media environment in which western media domination has given way to multiple actors and flows of media products."<sup>26</sup> These changes are rooted in the developing complexity and transnationalization of global media markets and have, she argues, brought into play new and dynamic relations between the global and the local that complicate models of

(American) cultural imperialism. Not only have American media companies been consumed by foreign competitors (such as the buyout of Columbia Pictures by Sony), the popularity of regional programming and local media production in lucrative markets like Asia and Europe, together with the evolution of “reverse media flow” such as that of Spanish-based programming exported from Brazil to Portugal, have challenged (although clearly not undermined) Western and American media power. In a time when international sales are becoming a crucial source of income for American media corporations, new sensitivities have developed towards the local markets in which cultural products circulate and are made to compete. *Time Atlantic* is a useful index of the negotiation of the global-local nexus, meaning in this case a dual orientation towards regional (national, European) identities and transnational political, cultural, economic and technological developments.

There is, of course, nothing new about international media operations and regional marketing. The media history of *Time Atlantic* is linked to the growth of Time Life International, the corporate body responsible for co-ordinating all of the company’s foreign activities in the postwar period. European headquarters were established in London in 1953 and in Paris in 1960. This reflected charged efforts, in the words of *Life* publisher Andrew Heiskell in 1961, to make “the maximum effort to establish as many beachheads as possible.”<sup>27</sup> This not only involved corporate diversification into broadcast television and book publishing, it also meant expanding Time Inc.’s international magazine base. During the 1950s and 1960s, renewed editorial efforts were given to international and foreign language editions of the company’s flagship magazines, including *Time Atlantic*, *Time Pacific*, *Time Canada*, *Time Latin America*, *Life International*, *Life en Espanol*, and *Life Asia*. This was supported by joint ventures with foreign publishers, producing magazines such as the general interest *Panorama*, launched in Italy and Argentina in 1962. By 1968, Time Life International was responsible for 10 percent of total corporate revenues. Foreign media markets were rarely free of difficulty, however. Confronting issues of censorship, erratic delivery, and uneven audience figures, the decision was taken in 1968 to disband Time Life International. This did not mean sacrificing international interests but in restructuring operations on the basis that Time

Inc was "a 'world' corporation rather than a U.S. corporation with an export division."<sup>28</sup> This was an early move towards a more general industrial tendency in the 1960s: an increasing drive towards multinational corporate organization that involved utilizing factors of production, distribution and marketing on a global basis.

Until 1996, *Time Atlantic* was produced in New York City. With transnational media corporations becoming evermore sensitive to the relation between global organization and local marketing and presence – what European editor of *Time Atlantic*, Chris Redman, described as "having global reach and local touch"<sup>29</sup> – the production of *Time Atlantic* moved entirely to London in the 1990s. While the magazine had been printed in Europe since the 1940s, and European stories had been edited from offices in London and Paris for much of the postwar period, never before had an entire staff of writers, designers, photo editors, researchers and production experts worked outside of New York. One of the "fruits of decentralization," according to Redman, was the development of a magazine "that is global yet attuned to our regional readers." This marked a discreet change of emphasis. In editorial terms, *Time Atlantic* was no longer the simple journalistic offspring of an American parent but more of an expatriate relative, regionally embedded and savvy of local quirks and concerns. The magazine was less a media "beachhead," deepening the penetration of American corporate presence and national values, than a knowledgeable and curious beachcomber of Atlantic shores.

Describing a redefinition of the relationship and power balance between the traditional mass media industries and their consumers, J. Michael Jaffe and Gabriel Weimann suggest: "Mass media domination based on ideological imperialism is shifting in favour of an information market dominance based on cultural recruitment and segmentation."<sup>30</sup> Their argument is linked to new forms of media domination being hatched in response to new communication technologies and decentralized networks like the Internet. They point to a transition in the configuration of media power, however, that is useful in theorising a change in the international profile of *Time Atlantic*. While the missionary effort of Henry Luce to spread the powerhouse of American values may once have shaped *Time's* identity abroad, this has given way to more focused, and regionally inflected,

niche marketing. Special projects editor of *Time Atlantic*, James Geary, explains that decentralization in 1996 saw the convergence of commercial and editorial imperatives: the desire to make the international edition of the magazine more profitable and to make it more relevant to its regional audience.<sup>31</sup> With the increasing globalization of media markets and the transition of operations to London in 1996, *Time Atlantic* has placed greater emphasis on its European coverage and news orientation, although not without also recognizing how its American style and disposition becomes a differentiating hook in a highly competitive marketplace of magazine weeklies and general-interest news products. According to its own advertising, *Time Atlantic* provides European readers with “the most thorough and thoughtful coverage of international news and a *different perspective* on the news events in their own communities” (my italics).<sup>32</sup> For Geary, this difference in perspective is rooted fundamentally in the fact that *Time* is “in Europe but not of Europe.” By March 2001, under the new editorial helm of Ann and Donald Morrison, *Time* made its regional focus explicit by launching itself boldly as “Europe’s newsmagazine.”

In 2001, *Time Atlantic* was the biggest selling international edition of the parent magazine (and of any international newsmagazine) with a circulation base of 627,000.<sup>33</sup> Published in American English throughout Europe, Africa and the Middle East (the same issue is produced for each region), the highest subscription rates for *Time Atlantic* are in the British Isles (120,000), Germany (95,000) and France (95,000). Accounting for people reading (rather than buying) copies of the magazine, the estimated weekly audience for the magazine is 2.1 million. This compares with *Time Asia* with a circulation base of 312,000 (audience, 1.9 million), *Time Latin America* (circulation base 106,000, audience 350,000) and *Time South Pacific* (circulation base 140,000, audience 614,000). Including the domestic issue of *Time* with an American circulation base of 4.1 million, the worldwide circulation of all editions is 5.6 million, with an estimated audience of 28 million people. The audience for the domestic issue of *Time* is largely made up of middle to high income professionals (median salary among the US readership is \$55,000) mostly college-educated (67%) largely middle-aged (median age is 43.4), and predominantly male (male/female ratio is 54/47). The international editions have simi-

lar demographic profiles but tend more towards elite audiences within media, business, government and academia. According to Belinda Baker, marketing director for *Time Atlantic*, the magazine's target audience is made up of affluent world travellers, leaders and opinion makers.<sup>34</sup> Taken from a ranging set of details about the magazine's readership (produced by *Time* for the attention of advertisers), 57% of subscribers come from business and industry, 75% are male, 69% frequently or occasionally drink champagne, 57% spend hotel nights on business, and 73% travelled abroad in the last year. While the domestic issue is likely to advertise automobiles and life insurance, appealing to its substantial middle class readership, *Time Atlantic* contains more ads for first class air travel, mobile phones, Rolex watches and other designer apparel. That a recent *Time* reader survey asked a number of classificatory questions about "the principal activity of your company and your organisation" and "the number of employees in your entire organisation worldwide," suggests from the outset a market interest in a wealthy professional and business strata.

A demographic sense of *Time's* international readership is critically significant on a number of levels, but not least for the reason that it points towards the magazine's particular interpretation of local-global concerns. Indeed, regional identities and issues addressed by the magazine are often framed with an affluent, globally disposed, readership in mind; *Time Atlantic's* internationalism is geared towards brokering local (specifically European) identities through transnational frameworks that support what Jonathan Friedman calls the "cosmopolitan-capitalist experience of the world." The emergence of a global elite formation has significance for critical theories of Americanization. According to Friedman, the "new age of imperial reason" is related to "the emergence of a hegemonic neo-liberalism and an array of discourses of globalization, multiculturalism, border-crossing hybridity and transnationalism . . . that is not simply a US export."<sup>35</sup> This orientation is given some reflection by an April 2001 editorial in *Time Atlantic*. Heralding the launch of a "refreshed" magazine, Ann and Donald Morrison explained that "the definition of news is changing in this globalized, post-cold war world, when political divides are being replaced with concerns about prosperity, its pursuit and consequences."<sup>36</sup> Acknowl-

edging the “growing debates about the distribution of health and wealth,” the magazine staked its new European identity on key constituents of neo-liberal globalism, dutifully expanding its sections on business and technology. Since decentralization, the United States no longer provides the determining focus of the magazine, but America is still, I would say, given an anchoring power and status within the climate of contemporary globalization.

Critics have argued that transnational corporate interests have increasingly disassembled the imperatives of national ideology. This does not mean to say, however, that national interests and identities have been discursively renounced in favour of corporate authority. Clearly, multinational media conglomerates have strong national affiliations in terms of their business origins and organization. In this context, one might argue that *Time* magazine has a vested interest in the form and fashioning of American international power, especially in terms of legitimating transnational systems and regimes (legal, economic, political, cultural) that are based on U.S. models and experience and that may ease or benefit the global operations of Time Warner. The question of “Europe” as a market and geo-political entity is a case in point. John Dunning suggests that the completion of the internal European market in 1992 has revitalized U.S. direct investment in the region across the board of manufacturing, financial, construction and consumer industries.<sup>37</sup> In the sphere of communications, Time Warner has taken various steps to enlarge and preserve its stake in the region. This has involved direct resistance to attempts by the European Union in 1992 to create a continental policy that would establish trade barriers to American media products, especially imported television programming. However, it can also be observed in such as the geographical relocation of *Time Atlantic* to London and, more discreetly, in the interpretive frameworks proffered by the magazine. Of course, *Time Atlantic* is no simple mouthpiece for Time Warner and employees for *Time* that I have interviewed – from the publisher and editor to production and sales directors – all strenuously deny the conflation of “church and state,” or business operations and news production. One cannot assume that any particular chain of media ownership will guarantee a determined ideological position. The magazine does invest in a certain idea of Europe, however, that constructs the region in a way

commensurate with the liberal/corporate platform of "bringing the world closer together." In short, Europe is figured in terms of openness, transnational commonality, and with rhetoric of the regional "new."

Since the early 1990s, *Time Atlantic* has immersed itself in the European "crisis of identity" that David Morley and Kevin Robins suggest has been caused by the pressure exercised on national bounds and sovereignties by the global (media) order. If "sense must be made of the information grids and image spaces that are increasingly creating new transnational communication spheres, markets and communities,"<sup>38</sup> *Time Atlantic* has made a steady contribution to the process of sense-making in the European context. The magazine has done so, however, in a way that adopts the stance of an observing American "other" and that frames a pan-European regionalism in terms of, and in relation to, broader patterns of social experience and historical development that bear upon the emerging global system. Questions of European identity are figured around a cluster of prevailing themes: the relationship between ethnic/regional difference and cultural commonality, the impact of technology and the information age, the historical cleavage/communion between East and West, changing labour markets and divisions of wealth, the prospects and perils of regional integration and of having a single currency. *Time Atlantic* comes to focus on a series of issues that deal centrally, and often adroitly, with the gamut of concerns pre-occupying the national media of various European states. It does so, however, in a way that anchors these issues and identities to the fundamentally portentous nature of contemporary globalization and to the liberatory prose of cosmopolitan internationalism. As a frame of reference, *Time Atlantic* engages key neo-liberal assumptions about the linked benefits of cross-border flexibility, multicultural pluralism and cultural/capital flow.

The "new Europe" has become a staple subject for *Time* special issues since the early 1990s. While certain issues have dealt with the promise and pitfalls of reinventing nationhood in postnational times ("The New France," 15 July, 1991; "The New Reign in Spain," 17 Nov. 1997; "Renewed Britannia" 27 Oct. 1997), other issues have addressed the specificity of European identity as it reaches a turning point "fraught with dangers yet tantalizing rich in promise"

("The New Europe," 9 Dec. 1991). Perhaps the most prospective intervention that *Time Atlantic* has made in the discourse of European identity has come in a number of Winter special issues produced since decentralization. These have included "Europe: 50 Remarkable Years" (1996), "Visions of Europe" (1998) and "Fast Forward Europe" (2000). There is not space to unpack the focus and concern of each issue. In general terms, however, the details and difficulties of European integration and of "forging union" are set, in each issue, within a framework where a re-aligned sense of geopolitical, economic and cultural identity are seen to generate a new and promissory regional strength.

Amidst the range of commissioned essays that detail the nuances of European life in the post Cold War milieu, the cut and thrust of *Time's* coverage is staked on the potential of pan-European regionalism. This, of course, has implications for the United States, and the American multi-nationals that operate in Europe. In a concluding *Time* essay in "Europe: 50 Remarkable Years," Jacques Attali, former President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, considers whether or not a strong Europe would be in the best interests of the U.S. His short answer is yes. He writes: "It is my belief that America's real interest is in the further elaboration of a powerful European Union."<sup>39</sup> Not only would this relieve America of the sole burden of overseeing world affairs, it would give Europe a defining role, through the Euro, of "integrating a significant part of the planet into the world economy." Only with a strong Europe, Attali believes, could the three powerful continents of North America, Europe and Asia, "have the means to set up the real agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: communications and information networks, the battle against the criminal economy, the reduction of atmospheric pollution, and promotion of freedom and culture through a diversity of languages and ideas."<sup>40</sup>

Attali does not speak for *Time* but neither are his views entirely removed from, or inconsistent with, the paradigmatic neo-liberalism that underpins the magazine in a discursive sense. Rhetorically, both Attali and *Time* invest in a discourse that posits a new world order defined by global free markets, the liberating potential of new technologies, and that looks implicitly towards the United States in shaping transnational relations.<sup>41</sup> If, as Attali suggests, "a renewed

United States of Europe awaits the appearance of its Jeffersons, Washingtons and Hamiltons," a renewed global order is, according to *Time* managing editor Walter Isaacson, rooted in the diffusion of American-led free market democracy. Writing of the ascendance of American values in the late twentieth century - encompassing democracy, individual liberty and free markets - Isaacson writes: "To the degree that America remains an avatar of freedom, the Global Century about to dawn will be, in Luce's terminology, another American Century."<sup>42</sup> In discursive terms, the United States becomes (and in this sense remains) a developmental model both in terms of the pedigree of its political vision and the basis of its liberal capitalist value system.

Dominic Strinati suggests that while the political economy of Americanization is undisputed in the global media system - meaning the dominant role of American capital and finance in the industries that produce popular and media culture - analysing discursive processes and consumptive practices can generate more ambiguous conclusions about the process and experience of "Americanization."<sup>43</sup> In this essay, I have argued that *Time Atlantic* - once framed by Henry Luce as a great tool of national influence - is no longer defined in any simple sense by the sponsorship of American values. In its negotiation of the local-global nexus, *Time Atlantic* figures a discourse of America, but in relation to postnational configurations that have seen the increasing emergence of *transnational* elites, agendas and commercial imperatives. Luceforic printed products may once have been the intellectual supplement of Coca-Cola and Marilyn Monroe but, in the global commercial media market, *Time* is no longer the missionary agent of America's "towering uniqueness of power." If the ambiguity of resonant Americanization describes a conjuncture where the ubiquity of U.S. forms and cultural products in the world is matched with the need to renew or reconfigure the hegemonic basis of American power, *Time Atlantic* suggests particular transitions in the mode and marketing of U.S. media/discourse abroad.

## Notes

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*This essay was written as part of a government funded (HEFCE) learning and teaching project on "Americanization and the teaching of American Studies" (AMATAS). Undertaken by the University of Central Lancashire, University of Derby, and King Alfred's College, Winchester, the AMATAS web site can be found at [www.amatas.org](http://www.amatas.org). I would especially like to thank Ann Morrison and the staff of Time Atlantic for allowing me to visit the Time-Life offices in London and for generously giving their time to be interviewed.*

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Luce, "The American Century," reprinted in Michael J. Hogan, ed. *The Ambiguous Legacy: U.S. Foreign Relations in the "American Century,"* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999) 11-29.

<sup>2</sup> Emily Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982) 9.

<sup>3</sup> Jeremy Tunstall relates the "high tide" of American media leadership to the period between 1943 and 1953. See Tunstall, *The Media Are American* (London: Constable, 1977) 137-144.

<sup>4</sup> Cited in Curtis Prendergast, *The World of Time Inc.* (New York: Atheneum, 1986) 552.

<sup>5</sup> Walter Issacson, "Luce's Values – Then and Now," *Time* 9 March, 1998: 103.

<sup>6</sup> Curtis Prendergast, *The World of Time Inc.*, 81.

<sup>7</sup> Cited in Curtis Prendergast, *The World of Time Inc.*, 81.

<sup>8</sup> Peter J. Taylor, "Locating the American Century: A World Systems Analysis," in Peter J. Taylor and David Slater, eds, *The American Century: Consensus and Coercion in the Projection of American Power* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999) 3-16.

<sup>9</sup> Cited in W.A. Swanberg, *Luce and His Empire* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972) 181.

<sup>10</sup> Peter J. Taylor, "Locating the American Century," 6.

<sup>11</sup> See Reinhold Wagnleitner and Elaine Tyler May eds, *Here, There and Everywhere: The Foreign Politics of American Popular Culture* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2000).

<sup>12</sup> See Rob Kroes, *If You've Seen One You've Seen The Mall: Europeans and American Mass Culture* (Urbana and Chicago: Illinois UP, 1996).

<sup>13</sup> David Morley and Kevin Robins, *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Communication and Cultural Boundaries* (London: Routledge, 1995) 198.

<sup>14</sup> Carl Strikwerda, "From World-Systems to Globalization: Theories of Transnational Change and the Place of the United States," *American Studies* 41 2/

3 2000: 333.

<sup>15</sup> William Marling, "Globalisms: Imaginary and Real," *American Studies* 41 2/3 2000: 321-332.

<sup>16</sup> John Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism* (London: Pinter, 1991) 175.

<sup>17</sup> See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); and Saskia Sassen, *Losing Control: Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization*, (New York: Columbia UP, 1996).

<sup>18</sup> See Jonathan Friedman, "Americans Again, or the New Age of Imperial Reason?" *Theory, Culture & Society* 17 (1) 2000: 139-146.

<sup>19</sup> Saskia Sassen, *Losing Control*, xi.

<sup>20</sup> Annebelle Sreberny-Mohammadi, "The Global and the Local in International Communication," in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch, eds., *Mass Media and Society* (London: Arnold, 1996) 177-203.

<sup>21</sup> Dominic Strinati, "The Taste of America: Americanization and Popular Culture in Britain," in Dominic Strinati and Stephen Wagg, eds., *Come on Down: Popular Media and Culture in Post-War Britain*, (London: Routledge, 1992) 50.

<sup>22</sup> Diane Mermigas, cited in Herman and McChesney, 53.

<sup>23</sup> Roger McNamee, cited in Daniel Okrent, "Happily Ever After?" *Time* 24 Jan. 2000: 43.

<sup>24</sup> Cited in Morley and Robins, 11.

<sup>25</sup> Cited in Morley and Robins, 11.

<sup>26</sup> Annebelle Sreberny-Mohammadi, "The Global and the Local in International Communication," 180.

<sup>27</sup> Cited in Curtis Prendergast, *The World of Time Inc.*, 82

<sup>28</sup> Cited in Curtis Prendergast, *The World of Time Inc.*, 100.

<sup>29</sup> Chris Redman, "Special Issue: Europe, 50 Remarkable Years," *Time* Winter 1996: 5.

<sup>30</sup> J.M. Jaffe and G Weimann, "New Lords of the Global Village?" in Reinhold Wagnleitner and Elaine Tyler May, eds, *Here, There and Everywhere* 306.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with author at Time-Life, Brettenham House, London, 23 March 2001.

<sup>32</sup> *Time* 21 Sep. 1992: 6.

<sup>33</sup> All statistics about circulation are found on Time's website at <http://www.time-planner.com/planner/circulation/index-body.html>, 12 Dec. 2000

<sup>34</sup> Interview with author at Time-Life, Brettenham House, London, 23 March 2001.

<sup>35</sup> Jonathan Friedman, "Americans Again," 143.

<sup>36</sup> Ann and Donald Morrison, "Time for a Change," *Time* 2 Apr. 2001: 4.

<sup>37</sup> John H. Dunning, *The Globalization of Business* (London: Routledge, 1993) 166-189.

<sup>38</sup> Morley and Robins, *Spaces of Identity*, 75.

<sup>39</sup> Jacques Attali, "For a New Political Order," *Time* Winter 1996: 143.

<sup>40</sup> Jacques Attali, "For a New Political Order," 143.

<sup>41</sup> In shaping transnational relations, the U.S. is often seen as significant not only in terms of its technological, military and informational capacity but also through its influence on structural adjustment agencies such as the IMF and the World Bank and through developmental market idioms championed by the so-called “Washington consensus.” On the last topic, see Kate Manzi, “The New Developmentalism: Political Liberalism and the Washington Consensus,” in David Slater and Peter Taylor, eds., *The American Century*, 98-114.

<sup>42</sup> Walter Isaacson, “Luce’s Values – Then and Now,” 103.

<sup>43</sup> Dominic Strinati, “The Taste of America,” 50.