

Henry Luce, *Fortune*, and the Attraction of Italian Fascism

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The July 1934 issue of *Fortune* magazine focused entirely on Italy, a country led at the time by the fascist Benito Mussolini. The articles covered topics ranging from Italy's economy to the fall from grace of its old aristocracy. But while the essays were often critical of the government and economy of Italy, the issue was far from an indictment of fascism. It was positive enough, in fact, for historian Robert Herzstein to generalize that *Fortune* had "lauded Mussolini as a decisive leader who had remade Italy." The mix of critical distance and admiration that characterized the issue appeared most clearly in the opening editorial comments, likely written by *Fortune*'s founder and editor Henry Luce. The column tempered its sense that "no 100 percent journalist can be more than a few percent Fascist, which is to say, by definition, he is a non-Fascist" with the statement that "the good journalist must recognize in fascism certain ancient virtues of the race, whether or not they happen to be momentarily fashionable in his country: discipline, duty, courage, glory, sacrifice." *Fortune* combined a denial of fascist affiliation with a nostalgic embrace of the spirit of fascism. Even as the magazine refused to offer its full support to Italy, the editors pointed to its government as an exemplar of timeless values apparently "unfashionable" in the United States in 1934. Americans, they insisted, could learn something from Italy.¹

In the late twenties and thirties, Henry Luce was accused of harboring fascist tendencies. His accusers pointed primarily to the editorial practices of *Fortune* and its older sibling, *Time*. *Time*, a magazine notorious for its editorializing news copy, was particularly well-known in its support of Mussolini. As Herzstein notes, "When important issues were at stake, one knew where *Time*'s editors

stood. . . . The magazine approved of Italian Fascist leader Benito Mussolini, *il Duce*." *Time*'s involvement with fascism was not limited to Italy, either. *Time* foreign correspondent Laird Goldsborough, for example, called supporters of Spanish fascist leader General Francisco Franco ". . . men of property, men of god and men of the sword." And while Luce was not nearly as vocal as Goldsborough, he did support his correspondent's writing even when it became a highly divisive staff issue at *Time*, Inc. But there was more to the accusations than just these editorial tendencies. Observers as disparate as *Fortune* writer Dwight Macdonald, *Fortune* managing editor Eric Hodgins, and biographer W.A. Swanberg have seen fascist leanings in Luce himself. Macdonald, referring to the anonymous corporate structure of *Time*, Inc., accused Luce in 1937 of "fascist capitalism." Hodgins, in his 1973 autobiography, recalled that Luce liked "the purported aims of fascism." And Swanberg claimed that Luce admired the dynamism, militarism, strong leadership, and anti-Communism of Mussolini's Italy. Clearly, Luce appeared to some of those familiar with him to be attached to certain fascist ideals.²

But these accusations clash with a more common portrait of Luce. Henry Luce was a man famous for his Americanism and patriotism, and for his admiration for what in his 1941 essay "The American Century" he called "the great American ideals . . . a love of freedom, a feeling for the equality of opportunity, a tradition of self-reliance and independence and also of cooperation." He fervently supported the idea of competition, not only in the marketplace but in the realm of ideas as well. How could a man with such ideals be attracted to fascism, a form of government that systematically denied freedom and the importance of the individual?³

In the interwar years, and particularly in the thirties, fascism *was* a real political option. Some critics, in fact, felt that either it or communism was an inevitability. This sense of the possibility of revolutionary change underlies this whole essay. Luce was fascinated by politics and admired much of the American governmental system, yet he was willing to consider and advocate what seem to us to be radical viewpoints. For instance, he argued in a 1928 article for the mainstream *Saturday Review of Literature* that "the *system of government as set forth in the Constitution* is fundamentally unsuited to modern America" (his italics), and that the Constitution itself was badly in need of replacement. Even if we read this as an imaginative exercise, as opposed to a serious policy proposal (a reading which is not entirely convincing), it reveals Luce's sense that fundamental changes might be made to the American political system. This openness to revolutionary political ideas was common in *Fortune*, too. Consider, for instance, the opening article of the *Fortune* issue on Italy, which asked its reader to "anesthetize for the moment the ingrained idea that democracy is the only right and just conception of government." I argue that Luce was attracted to fascism not to slander him, but to try to understand an attraction that sixty years

later doesn't seem quite possible, except in the most reactionary and radical of thinkers. In the interwar years, though, many of the beliefs that Luce professed were in the mainstream of business thought.⁴

More particularly, this essay explores the seeming contradiction between Luce's attraction to fascism and his support of American democratic capitalism. Most critics have solved this dilemma by pointing to Luce's admiration of individual power and prestige. Luce, they say, was an "uncritical hero-worshiper" (Macdonald's term) who delighted in the aura surrounding powerful individuals, and so often lost, at least initially, his critical edge in his dealings with them. But this answer, by dealing only with the personality of Luce, fails to recognize the deeper cultural sources of Luce's contradictions. The paradox of Luce's simultaneous attraction to both individualism and fascism derives not simply from "hero-worship," but from his ideas about the role of business in the United States.⁵

The grandiose cover of *Fortune's* first issue in February 1930 suggested the scope of the magazine's mission (figure 1). A classical half-nude lounged in front of a giant wheel of fortune, which also seemed to function as the tiller of some landbound vessel. She gazed boldly into the future (signified by the source of light), and displayed with one hand a cornucopia full of fruit and grains (the products of labor). With her other hand this maiden of commerce reached back to spin the wheel, or, alternately, to guide the ship. A small angel perched upon the axle of the wheel, in a pose nearly identical to the larger figure, watching carefully over her movements. In the distance sat a mercantile port, full of activity and tall-masted ships; a number of unidentified, and in fact, faceless men built an unidentified structure, carried goods, and drove wagons, among other things. But the foreground took precedence. The double-meaning of the wheel mixed guidance with the vagaries of chance. Business was simultaneously represented as a game that combined luck with skill and as the blessed force that captained the unaware people in the background. The half-nude both played a game of fortune and determined the fortune of others (with "money" and "fate" resonating in each phrase). The cover drawing highlighted two strands of thought which drove Henry Luce and *Fortune* in the first years of the thirties. The first reading—business as game—pointed to *Fortune's* attempt to focus on the skill and glamour of industry. The second reading—business as captain—recalled Luce's desire to establish business as the acknowledged leading force in American society.

But as the overdetermined symbolism of the cover hints, these two aims easily mesh neither with each other, nor with the economic and cultural reality of the early thirties. The conflicts and tensions inherent in Luce's ambitious goals would produce frustration and blindness in his dealings with "the masses"; his impatience with and disregard of these masses eventually encouraged a sentimental view of fascist politics. Luce saw the market as a competitive game in which young men could prove their mettle and join an "aristocracy of worth" based on

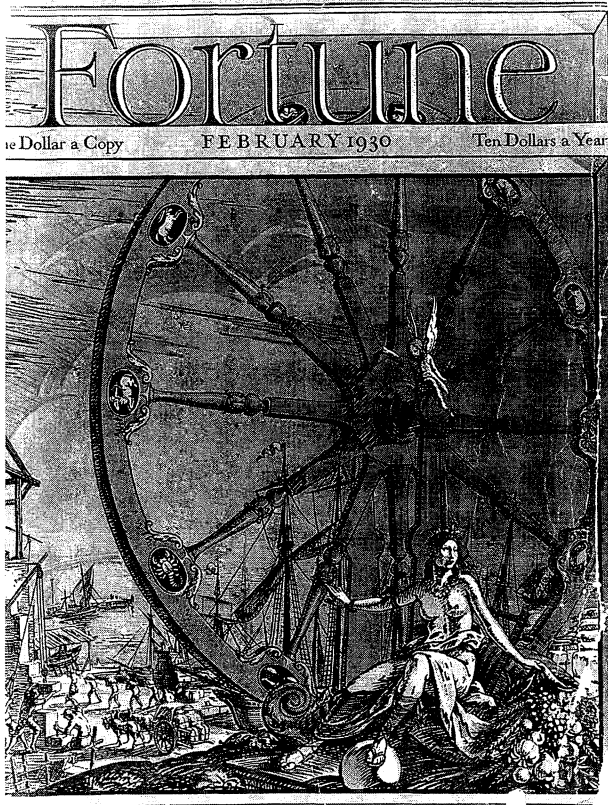


Figure 1: *Cover of Fortune, Volume 1, Issue 1. © 1930 Time Inc. All rights reserved.*

business performance. Similarly, he felt that this managerial “aristocracy” deserved the mantle of leadership, because they knew best how to produce a rational, efficient, and modern economy and society. But his desire for a business “aristocracy of worth” led to a refusal to consider the effects of business competition on the masses, and his ambition for an efficient business leadership resulted in a frustration with those masses’ lack of compliance to managerial control. This blindness and frustration opened Luce to a sympathy for the order and hierarchy of fascism. He supported individualistic ideals in regards to his own business, and yet still fantasized about fascistic control in regards to others’ actions. The division of the United States into an “aristocracy of talent” and “the masses” provided the ground for a double standard that allowed Luce both to fiercely defend individualism and wistfully admire fascism.

I

The first important strand in Luce's thought—imagining business as a game played by expert managers—removed the masses from consideration. By concentrating on his effort to perfect his “art,” the businessman could easily dismiss from his consciousness the real world effects of the economy.⁶

At the center of Luce's conception of business as a game was his desire to establish a new aristocracy “of worth” in America. Talented young men in America, Luce complained, have no “dominant” motive in their life. Denied the honors of war or of meaningful government service, as well as the escape of the frontier, they were trapped in mediocrity and non-recognition. The one possible option for a young man in search of honor seemed to be business. As Luce argued in a speech in late 1930, “the aristocratic principle may be recreated in America through what has always marched under the nicely middle-class name of business.” The key advantage of business in this regard was its dependence on competition: “There must be a top, and if possible, the best men must get there.” The aim in this aristocratic scheme was not so much to make money, but to demonstrate your skill. In a complex industrial world that “tends to make ability more important than luck,” the most talented would inevitably be given their due of honor. Luce even proposed that aristocratic businessmen needed a cheering crowd familiar with the ins and outs of the game: for the public glory of the new managers, the public must learn to “distinguish a little between a man's importance *to* business and the amount of money he gets *out of* business.” Business should be conceived as a game of skill that separated the able from the mediocre.⁷

But for the game to succeed, the players had to believe that the individual, and not personal circumstances, employees, or previous wealth, made the difference. For this reason, *Fortune* continually insisted that corporate heads were personally responsible for their companies' success or failure. In his speeches concerning the new aristocracy, Luce worried that lone men no longer travelled into the wilderness to make their fortunes by their wits and strength. In a similar spirit, the flamboyant opening sentence of a *Fortune* article on copper magnate Daniel Cowan Jackling in April of 1930 recognized the passing of the Great American frontiersman: “The rampant, two-fisted heroes who whelped the American copper industry have rushed on to their stormy Valhalla.” But this didn't mean the United States was lacking in heroes. While the times and necessary skills had changed, the character required for success remained the same. Laboratories had replaced pick-axes, perhaps, but as the article noted, “the man—the scientist on a giant scale—who created the laboratory that is test-tubing and abolishing a mountain is certainly a genius.” Jackling was as much a pioneer as the roughest of the original miners. Referring to Jackling as “the Man of Vision,” the article told the story of the hero's inevitable rise to wealth and power.⁸

Even the relationship between the business “tycoon,” as *Time* famously labeled heads of industry, and “his” products was deeply personal. The magazine gave credit for the success of the Utah Copper Company almost exclusively to

Jackling's management skills; note, for example, the caption under the astonishing four-page fold-out color picture accompanying the article: "A Utah Copper mine whence Mr. Jackling and men have extracted \$500,000,000 of copper." The tycoon's organizational and technological powers had replaced raw labor as the prime force in copper excavation. The opening line of an advertisement in *Fortune* for Eagle-A Papers further demonstrated this point: "They are *his* cars. No matter how many thousands have come off the assembly line—no matter how far away they have been sold—*his* cars still" (italics in the original). In order for the art of business to produce a true aristocracy, the tycoon must be the source of everything his company produced; the wealth of the corporation signified in full the talent and knowledge of the manager.⁹

Fortune as a corporation served as the primary example of a successful competitor. The magazine provided an example of how a business should behave by actively insisting upon and competing for its own honor and glory. Calling the new magazine the "Aristocrat of Business," critics and admirers lauded it as a unique achievement in publishing. Businessman Owen Young thought the publication of *Fortune* portended a new era in which "the all-embracing term 'business' may be drawing to itself the fine spirit of sportsmanship and the beauty of arts." The physically-plush and artistically-conceived magazine simultaneously proclaimed a new business era and its own predominance in that era. And behind the whole project seemed to be Henry Luce. The lack of by-lines for articles hid the diverse and talented writing staff from view, leaving Luce as the only identifiable force behind the magazine. Even the hostile Walcott Gibbs wrote in 1936 (this time about *Life*), "Behind this latest, most incomprehensible Timenterprise looms, as usual, ambitious, gimlet-eyed Baby Tycoon Henry Robinson Luce." *Fortune* stood as a model for the glamorous, tycoon-controlled corporation that it constantly lauded.¹⁰

The oddity of using a magazine as a model for industrial organization, though, signals one of the key tensions within Luce's ideas about business. Just as the "scientist on a giant scale" was replacing the American frontiersman as the ideal capitalist, companies focusing on communications, service, and finance were gaining on and surpassing industry as the primary forces in the United States economy. Richard Ohmann in his *Selling Culture* looks to the historians Robert Wiebe, Gabriel Kolko, and Martin Sklar to argue that in response to the financial crises of the 1890s, American industrial leaders began to fear the very competition that had brought them wealth and power. The constant swings between depression and boom left them vulnerable to sudden losses, and fierce competition was shrinking their profit margins. As a result, many of them joined with the professional-managerial class in what Sklar called the "anti-competitive consensus." Industry increased its involvement in legislation and politics in order to protect gains and fight for stability. The talents of the professional-managerial class—of which Luce was most certainly a member—were newly valuable to an industry in need of legal, political, and managerial advice. In fact, as *Fortune*

often pointed out, the new “tycoons” were most often not the owners of the companies but rather salaried managers. Such a significant shift in the economy surely created a different vision of the ideal “tycoon”: how, then, is Luce’s model of the industrial leader different from that of a Gilded Age capitalist?¹¹

The surprise, though, is that the model changed very little. Luce was unwilling to come to terms with the implications of the profound shift away from laissez faire economics, and seemed at times to pretend that it hadn’t happened. On the cover of the first issue of *Fortune*, the port in the background was clearly not of the twentieth century. The tall-masted ships and horses and wagons placed the scene in the early industrial revolution or earlier, and certainly before what Kolko called “political capitalism.” The article on Jackling, too, made a too easy equation between the “two-fisted” pioneers of early capitalism and the managers and scientists of monopoly capitalism. Since Luce imagined his aristocracy of worth succeeding in a world created by competition rather than by legislative control and political influence, to acknowledge the stabilizing and “anti-competitive” effects of political capitalism would be to forgo the level-playing field so important to his conception of business and aristocracy. Luce had to selectively ignore the change from an economy ruled by fierce competition and industrial magnates to one regulated by government, unions, and managerial expertise—the very change that made possible Luce’s rise to power as a editor and corporate manager, and in fact the very change that *Fortune* regularly celebrated and pushed forward—in order to retain his vision of businessmen competing for honor and awards. Luce’s model of an industrial leader varied little from a Gilded Age ideal because Luce couldn’t forgo his Carnegie-like belief in a “level-playing field” without canceling the meaning of the business “game.”

The tycoon expressed talent and worth through his manipulation and mastery over an ever-coursing progress. His awards came in the form of public honor and money. His fairly gained victory over the other competitors in the field gave him standing, his “worth” deserved. Unfortunately, as I will show, this conception of the tycoon relegated “the masses” to non-existence: everyone existed only in his capacity as a businessman. Imagining business as a game left the player to achieve results solely in terms of his own honor. *No one was affected by the actions of the aristocratic businessman except himself.* The political importance of this cloaking of social responsibility can be explained in the context of Susan Buck-Morss’ article “Aesthetics and Anaesthetics.” Buck-Morss argues that as anaesthetics made the act of surgery less painful for both the patient and surgeon, surgeons began to imagine the body as a site for their own achievements. The screaming and thrashing that might have accompanied an earlier surgery were replaced by the calm of the anaesthetized patient. She cites one account of an amputation under general anaesthesia that ends with a surgeon’s formal bow to his enthusiastic audience. The patient had become the *hyle*: the unseen matter upon which some other significant action takes place. The surgery seemed to be performed

only as a representation of technique and a demonstration of skill. The supposed beneficiary disappeared from consideration.¹²

Luce's philosophy presented a metaphor with important similarities to Buck-Morss' surgery. The businessman played his game in order to gain honor for himself; the original purpose of industry—the production of goods for use and sale—fell, like the patient's welfare (and limb) in the amputation, by the wayside. Like the surgeon, the tycoon acted in a setting that disregarded the consequences of the actions upon the *hyle*, which in the case of the businessman was *actually* the masses (as opposed to the metaphorical “social body” in Buck-Morss). The identification of business with a game of skill moved the stress away from the production of goods in a world full of workers and consumers toward a specialized arena wherein the tycoon attempted before a knowledgeable but admiring crowd (Luce's ideal public) to master “the economy.”

Groups of people ceased to matter in the game of business. According to biographer W.A. Swanberg, Luce felt that “the poor were simply the most inefficient members of society.” In the game of business, they were simply players who were not succeeding. Luce was born in China to missionary parents in the late-nineteenth century. Swanberg argues that growing up as an elite in a setting overwhelmed with poverty ironically caused Luce to lose any sympathy for their plight: “to function efficiently, missionaries felt they had to steel themselves against excess sympathy.” The constant shock of human deprivation forced Luce to build a defensive shield that made consideration of the plight of lower classes inconceivable to him. With the masses blocked from view, the economy became a site of individual competition. Dwight Macdonald complained in 1937 that *Fortune* was more interested in technology than in sociology: “Machines and balance sheets are . . . more ‘exciting’ (a favorite word at *Fortune*) than social data.” This need for “excitement” points directly to the magazine's tendency to pass over the condition of groups of people for evidence of individual gamesmanship. As Luce confessed to Macdonald, “People just aren't interesting in the mass. . . . It's only individuals who are exciting.”¹³

Luce recognized individual members of the public, but he resisted thinking of a group or mass as significant. Another comparison to Buck-Morss' article will help clarify this point. She sets up a trilogy of positions that arose in the modern era: agent, *hyle* (or object), and observer. Fascism, she argues, makes the masses believe that they are both the *hyle* and the observer; in this way, they can enjoy the spectacle (as observers) of their own destruction (as *hyle*). But in the scheme of Luce's game, the masses were everything but the *hyle*: as a knowledgeable public, they watched and applauded (as observer), while at the same time aiming to break onto the field (as agent). There is no recognized *hyle* when business is a game; the money earned might as well be imaginary. Of course, millions of people are affected by the moves of large corporations and by the health of the economy, but because individual performance is the key to the game, the plight of individuals (as *hyle*) affected by an economy beyond their control is of no concern. The knowledgeable public should ignore the wood (even if it is

themselves) out of which the businessman artist carves his visionary corporation. Luce disregarded social harm because the game allowed him to avoid acknowledgement of its basis in real situations.¹⁴

This lack of connection between “the economy” (as the site for the game) and the condition of groups of workers was expressed in a *Business Week* editorial written weeks after the Crash:

The trouble at this moment is not with business but with businessmen. They are still trying to translate their stock averages, paper gains and losses and shrunken private check books into terms of fewer automobiles, radios, cigar lighters . . . for the hundred odd million who merely read about the panic in the evening paper and went to bed to go to work in the morning.

The argument here was not that the businessman should not be worried about money; rather, it was that the economy was so regular and strong, as seen in its ability to provide regularly for the worker, that only panic by businessmen could create a real problem. The regular and dependable lives of the worker became the *given evidence* of the overall stability of a game ultimately based upon those lives, but flightily unattached to them. This argument that the Crash existed only on paper continued for years into the Depression; only after piles of evidence of poverty had accumulated did the business press recognize the human tragedy of the Depression.¹⁵

The results of Luce’s and *Fortune*’s ideas—in short, their unwillingness to see real world effects of the business game—also manifested itself in the style of *Fortune*. I will briefly indicate how *Fortune*’s parallel of the tycoon and the artist encouraged the elision of the effects of the economy on people other than the business “players.” Luce decided early in the process of creating *Fortune* that he wanted to make extravagant use of the photograph, and to insist that both photography and the subject of *Fortune* photography were deserving of artistic attention. *Fortune*’s editors had no intention of continuing the tradition of photographs of important individuals established by *Time* and other news magazines. Everyday products or factories were to be captured with an artistic eye. Luce quickly hired Margaret Bourke-White, whose stylized pictures of Soviet industry were perhaps the most well-known “art” photographs in the United States at the time, and gave her an artistic freedom unknown to the staff writers. The magazine even occasionally presented “portfolios” of photographers, reproducing six or more full-page black and white images on a theme unrelated to other articles.

The importance of this stress on photography lies in the parallel proposed by *Fortune* between the photographer and the tycoon. In photographers’ fight for the

right to call their work artistic, Luce recognized an analogy to his own aims. In the twenties and early thirties, both photographers and tycoons were fighting to have their creations judged as art; each argued that the photograph or the corporation was an expression of individual talent. Just as photographers like Walker Evans (a *Fortune* staff member in the thirties) aggrandized personal vision over luck or the subject of the photo, Luce insisted that the tycoon had control of his surroundings. And if Evans' one-man show at the Museum of Modern Art in 1938 announced the arrival of photography as a true "art," *Fortune* tried to do the same for business in 1930. Recognizing this parallel, *Fortune* proclaimed the artistic authority of the photographer in its pages. In April 1930, the magazine published a portfolio of aerial photographs by Captain Alfred G. Buckham. While the aerial picture was a common trope in *Fortune* stories and advertisements, the remarkable characteristic of these photographs was that in each one evidence of the airplane appears, either in the form of the wing tip on the edge of the frame or of another plane. By printing these five photographs, the magazine foregrounded the individual artistic act that created the pictures, which the magazine claimed were "without equal, artistic or technical." In addition to individual photographs, *Fortune's* treatment of writers and visual artists shows its support of the artistic legitimacy of photography. The writing staff, as Luce stressed, was an "objective," fact-gathering, cooperative group, and so did not receive bylines. Photographers, though, as prototypes of the creative, controlling tycoon, always received credit. *Fortune* reversed the conventional wisdom by insisting that the written word could be depersonalized (and so "objective"), but that the photographic image was inseparable from its creator. By encouraging the artistic fetish with personal vision and genius in photography, Luce thought to give credence to his own sense of the businessperson's role.¹⁶

While *Fortune's* treatment of photographers provided support to the idea of a creative, independent businessperson, the visual aesthetic utilized in *Fortune* worked to hide the effects of the economy on the masses. The magazine attempted, in the words of one review, to treat "industrial subjects with a wealth of artistic photographs and fine printing, precisely as if they were some precious artistic theme." This presentation of industry as a "precious artistic theme" encouraged a "high" art obsession with artistic form, and its aggrandization of the artists' "vision" over the subject of the art. By stressing form over content in its art, *Fortune* again implied that the creator (Buck-Morss' agent) was more important than the object out of which the work was made (*hyle*). But while this may be suitable for "high" art, its effect in the realm of business was less desirable.¹⁷

One way in which *Fortune* photography backgrounded the masses was through its constant use of repetition. In its desire to print "artistic" photography, *Fortune's* editors were willing to experiment widely with abstraction. But a concentration on form could make the content almost irrelevant, as revealed perhaps by the occasional difficulty of caption writers to explain the presence of

the picture in a news story (one caption under a stylized Bourke-White photo read “What a derrick looks like from the bottom up”). The focus on form could also create a disturbing defamiliarization of the content, and the constant use of repetition in *Fortune* pictures made this even more drastic: note, for example, the photo of hanging slaughtered pigs (figure 2). The organized and planned atmosphere of the factory encouraged a treatment of repetition; everything from croquet balls to stacked wood to rows of buildings were photographed (often at a diagonal that recedes to the edge of the photo) as a study in the repeated form. The dissonance between form and content is perhaps shown best by a bizarre review of the first issue: “Sumptuous to the point of rivaling the pearly gates—with its photographs, its almost lyric elaboration of the detailed process of ‘disassembling’ the hog, it goes Carl Sandberg one better in poeticizing the stock yards of Chicago.” The euphemism of “disassembling” is doubled with an admiration of the “almost lyric” photographs of pig corpses and huge mounds of dust from waste pig parts, in a review that notices but refuses to acknowledge the gruesome content of the story. But the subjects of these photographs were not always factory machines, or even slaughtered pigs. The same process of defamiliarization through repetition happens in a picture of workers, who, faceless, are required to maintain the order of a row of machines (figure 3). But whatever the content, the subjects in these repetitive photos become defamiliarized shapes in an artistic composition. Form (the production of an artist/agent) takes precedence over content (the *hyle*). The mass once again retreats from view.¹⁸

II

As intimated on the cover of the first issue of *Fortune*, Luce’s vision of business as a game forced the individual and daily lives of the masses into the background and encouraged the businessman to act with only his own aims (and not those of the social collective) in mind. The second half of Luce’s attitude toward business—the desire to guide and manage the economy as a whole—on the other hand, recognized the existence of the masses. But the creation of a rational and efficient economy through managerial leadership required that the great majority of citizens accept the wisdom and leadership of the managerial elite. Thus, the aspiration to guide the economy encouraged an attempt to unify and control the masses, purportedly for their own good. This desire for a unified masses inevitably failed, but the planning businessman was still often unable to accept the inefficiency of a diverse society. The failure of attempts to control the masses led to frustration with decentralized or democratic power that helps to explain Luce’s attraction to Italian fascism.

The ubiquity of the crowd was a defining characteristic of modernity. In 1937, Henry Luce appeared in front of the American Association of Advertising Agencies in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, and argued that advertisers and journalists must do more than “give the public what it wants.” Instead, they



Figure 2: Defamiliarizing through repetition. Photograph taken by Margaret Bourke-White for article on Swift and Company entitled "Tsaa-a Tsaa-a Tsaa-a," in the February 1930 issue of *Fortune*. Reproduced by permission of the estate of Margaret Bourke-White.



Figure 3: Repetition applied to the worker. Photograph taken by Arthur Gerlach for an article on the Biltmore Hotel, "Biltmore," in the February 1930 issue of *Fortune*.

need to consider their ethical responsibility as controllers of public opinion. They must, in Luce's words,

... face the great new physical reality in society—crowds. Not merely Hitler's crowds, or Mussolini's, or Stalin's, or Hirohito's, but the crowds on American beaches, the crowds in movies—the even vaster crowds you advertisers yearn for—mass circulation.

The crowd, Luce believed, threatened modern democratic society in its physicalness, in its depersonalization, and in its tendency to release the irrational, and, he warned, American crowds are no less powerful or uncontrollable than those of Europe. The uncontrolled crowd endangered the comfort and progress of modern society. As Luce asked in the same speech, “Can the masses save themselves from the barbarous dominion of the mass mind? If you have complete, unqualified, irrational faith in the common man in the new revolutionary world, then you will believe in giving the public what it wants.” According to Luce, expert planners had to guide the masses around the dangers of demagoguery. The public could not be trusted with its own thoughts.¹⁹

This recognition of the irrationality of the crowd was especially disconcerting to the businessman. For *Fortune*, the uncontrollability of the crowd threatened business in three different forms: consumers, labor, and “money-grubbing” businessmen. The first was perhaps the most disconcerting. As the economy gradually switched from a producer-driven machine to a consumer-centered marketplace, businesses started to realize that their success depended upon a force over which they had little rational control. This anxiety at the power of the buyer manifested itself in, among other places, advertiser's characterization of the masses as feminine. The culturally-stereotyped female—irrational, whimsical, and flighty—was a nightmare to a seller of products, and commentators speculated that a vast majority of household purchases were made by females. In one advertisement in *Fortune*, for the Charles Daniel Frey Company, businessmen readers were shown the back of a classically-drawn female figure, and told that their livelihood lay “In the Hollow of Her Hand” (figure 4). This dependence on irrational forces was difficult to accept for business; classically-inclined or not, the businessmen were unwilling to give up their Fate to a fickle woman.²⁰

Fortune focused on the fashion industry as a metaphor for this uncontrollable social body. More than any other business sector, the women's garment industry was at the mercy of consumers' flighty trends. An unanticipated turn in desires of women could easily destroy a business. Attempts to control fashion met with little success, according to *Fortune*. Two different articles from 1930, “Model Women” and “Cloak and Suit,” insisted that women, not courtiers, created and controlled trends. But this lack of central authority did more than injure individual businesses: it kept the industry as a whole from achieving efficiency and economic rationality. “Cloak and Suit” argued that the industry would never truly

IN THE HOLLOW OF HER HAND



..... SHE is 16; she is 30; she is 65. She sells eggs in the country, notions in a department store, bonds on Wall Street. She is a graduate of the fourth grade, high school, or occasionally Smith. She wears \$15 frocks, home-sewn dresses, Chanel gowns. She is a drudge, a hoyden, a help-mate, a lady; she is the aggregate American woman . . . and, in her various ways, she is the spender of the nation. Deciding how the bulk of her family's money shall be divided, she controls the profits of many manufacturers. Extravagant, frugal; wise, foolish; fickle, dependable; she holds *your* business, in all likelihood, in the hollow of her hand . . . The successful advertising of many of our clients talks a woman's language: color in kitchens and bathrooms for Crane Plumbing; interior decoration for Karpen Furniture; smartness for Marshall Field and Company, Retail; home movies for Filmo Cameras; bright attractive jackets for Capitol Boilers; and even Wilson Brothers advertising, directed to men, has invariably invited women, who buy 65% of men's haberdashery, to read between the lines.

CHARLES DANIEL GREY COMPANY * GENERAL ADVERTISING AGENCY

333 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago Magazine, Newspaper, Outdoor, Radio, Direct Mail

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Figure 4: Fear of the female consumer's power. Advertisement for the Charles Daniel Grey advertisement agency in the February 1930 issue of *Fortune*.

be modernized until “MiLady” stopped feeling that “a dress is worthless once she has seen its duplicate.” Using the language of evolution to describe industrial progress, the author suggested that the flighty “MiLady” had made the “fourth largest industry” in the United States not even a business “dinosaur,” but a “protozoan colony.” While the men’s fashion industry had “followed a course more parallel to that of other industries,” irrational women consumers had kept the women’s garment industry inefficient and archaic. “Model Women,” on the other hand, compared the rule of women consumers to the political ruptures of unsteady governments. Suggesting that the fluidity of fashion undermined any long-term stability, the author declared that while one fashion “revolution” had ended, a “new regime” of fashion guidelines had been ushered in. In the unruly state of the women’s garment trade, the businessman had no more control over his fortunes and his money than a businessman faced with serious political unrest. *Fortune*’s essays on women’s fashion warned that the growing power of women consumers threatened the stability and progress of modern business.²¹

The task for business, then, was to guide the consumer market, and to control its eccentricities; if the seller could sculpt the desires of the consumer to his needs, his anxieties would be calmed. The best means to this end seemed to be advertising, and the businessman quickly learned to look to the advertising industry to ease his fears of sudden market disruption. Advertisers catered to business anxiety by claiming to leave little to chance: scientific research could make advertising a “reliable sales medium.” Advertisers put their faith in their ability to predict the behavior of the masses and asserted that old methods were no longer acceptable. “The impulsive use of untried intuitive ideas,” as one ad put it, or “Guessing,” as another more straight-forward competitor wrote, were no longer professional tools. Like the science-minded social planner, the advertiser saw the possibility of efficiency and stability in a move toward professionalized, expert control. The scientific rhetoric of advertising, combined with most advertising men’s contempt for the “weak-kneed conformity” of the consumer, produced a phenomenal sense of the power of the advertisement. The businessman was encouraged by professionalized advertising industry to hope that the emotional consumer crowd could be controlled.²²

But the crowd manifested itself in forms other than the woman consumer. *Fortune* feared the power of labor as well. “Cloak and Suit” opened with the subtitle, “The country’s fourth largest industry is at the mercy of two forces—labor and a woman’s vanity. Together they keep it without leadership and without stability.” The article paired the woman consumer with the more traditional opponent of capital—labor—and connected them both to market instability and irrationality. Interestingly, *Fortune* generally supported the existence of trade unions, and praised their ability to stabilize markets and raise standards of living. In “Cloak and Suit,” even, the author noted that the larger, more established garment businesses cooperated with labor because unions tended to drive cheap competitors out of business. “A Burlesque Tyrant” in November 1930 noted that

“no one, even the most old-fashioned of employers, would deny Labor’s right to organize nor deny that often Labor’s only bulwark against exploitation has been the union.”

But any attempt by labor to lead was dismissed by *Fortune* with the same mix of sarcasm and anxiety that “Model Women” mocked the “new regime” of women consumers. “A Burlesque Tyrant,” the headline declared, “is Labor when it ascends to the throne.” The piece strung together examples of “tyrannical” and “absurd” union practices that limited production and wasted time, and declared the ridiculousness of labor’s claims to leadership. Just as Luce recognized the talent of his staff while limiting its power and individual recognition through anonymity and collaboration, *Fortune* supported labor’s right to organize but insisted that it not attempt to influence business matters. While *Fortune* businessmen saw advertising as the answer to consumer power, the irrationality of labor could be controlled simply by keeping it away from the “throne.”²³

Unfortunately, even if consumers and labor could be brought under control, the business community would still struggle to control its own members. Every businessman who claimed to support honest and mutually beneficial planning seemed to have an evil, irrational, and selfish other half. In fact, this “irrationality” arose at least in part from the competitive nature of capitalism. In his *New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics, 1920-1935*, Colin Gordon argued that the New Deal came about primarily because businessmen became so frustrated with competitive practice that they turned to the government as a regulating institution. He pointed out that competition did not produce efficiency: “Although economic competition is driven by rational self-interest, it fails to yield rational outcomes. . . . [As a result], business interests routinely seek private or political organizations as an escape from its effects.” Industry in the United States, because of its loose organization and cultural investment in competition, has proven particularly difficult to stabilize for any length of time. Business has repeatedly refused the constraint of outside control through unions or government (except for a small period during the New Deal, as Gordon argued) in favor of difficult-to-enforce internal agreements.²⁴

Fortune tried to convince businessmen to abide by just such an internal agreement. The magazine stridently agreed that, as the above *Business Week* editorial scolded, “the trouble at the moment is not with business but with the businessmen.” *Fortune* considered the unification of the business world to be among its chief duties. In its founding statement, Luce made the distinction between “the gentleman and the money-grubber” in an attempt to create a business culture that refused to take part in the “irrational,” selfish, and cut-throat competition that upset markets and lowered all competitors’ profit margins. As a 1930 essay argued, competition could be a “deadly vice” if it was engaged in by “the wrong kind of persons.” The same article expressed a fear of “legislative authority” if such speculative activity was not controlled internally. An article in March 1930 on advertising ethics acknowledged the effectiveness of “tasteless” advertising, but it eventually asserted that “when everything [has been said], one

feels that the element of good taste cannot be so disregarded without a result which is on the whole regrettable." Ungentlemanly behavior may provide momentary gains, but in the end the whole business community suffers. Even the format of *Fortune*—its artistic photographs and lush color reprints, its engaging writing and top-rate investigative journalism, its expensive paper, impressive size, and prohibitive one dollar cover price—suggested a “classiness” that dismissed “renegade” business behavior as not worthy of a “gentleman.” By promoting a business culture in which the businessmen acted like “gentlemen,” in their appreciation of fine arts, their refusal to engage in anti-productive competition, and their deference to managerial expertise, the magazine hoped to control the rampant speculation and greediness that sullied the reputation of the businessman but, more important, destroyed the stability of the market. Just as the businessman attempted to unify and rationalize his market through advertising, *Fortune* tried to consolidate and control the actions of renegade speculators by “selling” the businessman on the intelligence and profit of playing like a “gentleman.”²⁵

Fortune businessmen tried to unify all three of these manifestations of the crowd—women consumers, labor, and “money-grubbing” businessmen—into a body controlled by a managerial head, whether in the form of advertisers, trade union-friendly business leaders, or *Fortune*’s community of business gentlemen. In each case, *Fortune* wanted to retain the productive power of the members of the crowd without letting the individual members get beyond the control of “rational” managers. Unfortunately, this desire of Luce and *Fortune* for control stood little chance of success in a democratic nation with a capitalist market, and its almost inevitable failure pushed Luce towards a frustration with the “proto-zoan” organization of decentralized competition. Mussolini’s Italy offered an alternative to the uncontrolled irrationality of the United States’ crowds.

Jose Ortega y Gasset’s *The Revolt of the Masses*, a book from which Luce often quoted in the thirties, can help us understand how Luce’s frustration with the masses drew him toward Mussolini and fascism. Ortega y Gasset, a Spanish parliamentarian and anti-fascist intellectual, expressed the need for a strong national purpose in which all citizens felt invested. Luce felt this sense of purpose was also missing from American culture. As we saw earlier, Luce heralded business as a new “dominant” motivation because he felt the United States offered its young men no worthy challenges to provide them honor or passion. But the antagonism that many United States citizens felt towards business meant it stood little chance of replacing war or the frontier as a true national ambition for the country. Even as Luce praised business, he recognized that business could only motivate a limited sector of the country, and he continued to look for a more convincing, inclusive motivation.

Just as Luce bemoaned the loss of the frontier as a site for young men to earn honor, Ortega y Gasset blamed the listlessness and violence of Europe in the

twenties on the lack of a suitable “programme of human activity.” He opened *The Revolt of the Masses* by asserting that the primary problem of modern Europe was the “accession of the masses to complete social power,” and argued that this was a major crisis, “since, by definition, the masses neither should nor can direct their own personal experience, and still less rule society in general.” Because the masses had no ability to rule, modern European nations were left without the direction that strong, trained leadership provided. Without this direction, Ortega y Gasset argued that the modern nation state would eventually collapse. The solution was in the creation of a “gigantic continental State” in Europe. By forming a new State, he argued, the “select minorities” of Europe could give themselves and the masses a new object for living and end the drift inevitable under the rule of the masses.²⁶

This new object for living would also provide a new moral code that would unify the continent in its “submission” to a higher goal. Ortega y Gasset insisted that individuals need a higher purpose to which they could submit themselves if they were going to be strong, moral people. The masses had lost sight of this need. They had finally taken to heart the revolutionary liberal sense that all men are sovereign, but without understanding that the rights of man come with responsibilities. Liberalism, for Ortega y Gasset, required that the “individual bind himself to maintain a severe discipline over himself,” but the masses had failed to recognize the “discipline” concomitant with “sovereignty.” In reaction to this, Ortega y Gasset praised the lost value of “submission.” Submission, he said, required service to some higher moral standard, and this recognition was what separated the “aristocrat” of talent from the mass man.²⁷

In the formation of a European state, Ortega y Gasset saw the common purpose that would convince the masses to “submit.” In such a project, “each individual felt himself an active subject of the State, a participator and a collaborator.” But the “participation” of the masses clearly had its limits. Since Ortega y Gasset made a clear division between those who should lead and those who should follow, “submission” had two different meanings. While the “aristocratic” leaders needed to submit to a moral code, the followers were left to submit to the leaders. Because of this double meaning, the European state promised a vigorous sense of direction while returning power to an elite group of managers.²⁸

It is not difficult to see why Ortega y Gasset’s ideas were attractive to Luce. In Ortega y Gasset’s belief that a new “programme of human activity” could contain the masses and allow a talented leadership to act unhindered by the masses’ irrationality, Luce imagined ways to unify and control the behavior of the crowd: the women consumers, labor forces, and “money-grubbing” businessmen who made the marketplace so unstable. Just as Ortega y Gasset’s “selected minority” followed a “higher moral code” but expected the masses to follow the minority, Luce’s “aristocracy of businessmen” considered themselves beholden to the code of “gentlemen” but felt the consumers and labor should fall into place behind them. Just as Ortega y Gasset imagined the creation of a European state

as a moral and honorable cause, Luce looked to business to provide opportunity for glory and ambition. And just as Ortega y Gasset insisted that the masses—“by definition”—could not rule themselves, and so civilization as a whole benefitted when they submitted to the trained and talented “select minority,” Luce and *Fortune* argued that modernization and progress would be served if the crowd would allow the managers—those who have suffered a “careful education and rigorous apprenticeship,” in the words of Luce—to create an efficient, rational business market.²⁹

Luce agreed with the anti-fascist Ortega y Gasset that the world, ruled now by the masses, was missing an important sense of a higher national purpose and a strong moral code. Ironically, Luce found a solution to these problems in Italian fascism. In 1928, Luce told a group of businessmen that Mussolini provided a positive example of what America needed:

America needs at this moment a moral leader, a national leader. The outstanding national moral leader in the world today is Mussolini. And I say this, heartily disagreeing with nearly all of his moral principles. Fact remains, he has pulled his country up by the pants; he has made Italy stand up, he has substituted self-respect for vanity, patriotism for greed, ambition for boredom. He has made the nation stand up, stand up. That is what a great moral leader does.

By giving his countrymen an example to live up to—even if that example was disagreeable—Mussolini had returned honor to his nation. By providing strong, inspirational leadership, he had inspired Italy to recover its self-respect and begin to act as a unified nation. The value of fascism, for Luce, was its ability to return a country to the discipline, participation, and collective action that Ortega y Gasset described as part of the nation-building process. Mussolini offered a model of the type of leadership that could ensure the order, hierarchy, and national purpose that the United States—especially its business—needed to function at its highest levels of efficiency. Italy’s fascism exhibited the national unity and sense of purpose that Luce felt was missing from the economy and culture of the United States.

In addition, Italian fascism had revived the value of “submission,” and provided the “aristocracy” with an arena in which they could excel and gain glory. Of the five “ancient virtues” that *Fortune*’s editors believed we “must recognize” in fascism, three (discipline, duty, sacrifice) directly reject individual needs in favor of the welfare and honor of community: they are, essentially, the values of Ortega y Gasset’s “submission.” In the United States, where such “virtues” were “unfashionable,” the crowds of consumers, laborers, and businessmen could upset the modernization of society, but in Italy, Luce believed, that would not

happen. The other two “virtues” (glory and courage) refer to the ability of talented individuals to distinguish themselves in ways that the mundane and bureaucratic United States (for Luce) and a listless Europe (for Ortega y Gasset) had left behind. They are the values of ambition, and especially with their connotations of war, of national achievement.

But how does Luce’s agreement with the anti-fascist Ortega y Gasset harmonize with his admiration of Italy’s fascism? The answer lies in the way Luce and Ortega y Gasset understood fascism, and particularly that of Mussolini. Ortega y Gasset understood Italy to be “the revolt of the masses” against the true leaders of Europe. In arguing that fascism was a “typical movement of mass-men,” he asserted that “Mussolini found a State admirably built up—not by him, but precisely by the ideas and forces he is combatting: by liberal democracy.” The tragedy of Italy was that mass men had misidentified the forces that had made the country more productive and modern. Ortega y Gasset claimed that this error would inevitably lead to the nation’s collapse. Luce, on the other hand, admired the leadership abilities of Mussolini. Where Ortega y Gasset saw chaos and directionlessness, Luce saw order, unity, and moral purpose. Ortega y Gasset argued that the modern progressive State was defined by its “plan of common life with an enterprise in common. . . . [and] the adhesion of men to that attractive purpose,” and that these components are exactly what were missing in governments under mass rule. But Luce, in the above quote, suggested almost the opposite: Mussolini “has made Italy stand up. He has substituted . . . patriotism for greed, ambition for boredom. . . . That is what a great moral leader does.” Mussolini had provided the “enterprise in common.” In doing so, he had both controlled the crowd, by replacing the selfish “greed” of speculation and ungentlemanly competition with the collective commitment of “patriotism,” and he had inspired the talented, by providing an object for “ambition” and a path for glory. As he argued in Scranton, Pennsylvania, in 1934, “The more you examine Italian Fascism, the more you will feel that it is not so much a system as it is a moral force. . . . *The moral force of Fascism may be the inspiration for the next general march of mankind*” (italics mine). For Luce, Mussolini was doing exactly what Ortega y Gasset wanted the true “aristocracy” of Europe to do: provide an object of living that would inspire the crowds to give up their aspirations to power and unify themselves behind the leadership of a trained “select minority.”³⁰

III

In “Aesthetics and Anaesthetics,” Susan Buck-Morss quotes the Nazi Joseph Goebbels: “we are artistic people, entrusted with the great responsibility of forming out of raw material of the masses a solid, well-wrought structure.” Throughout this essay, I have been exploring how Luce saw himself in a similar (if much less horrible) role, and how this conception of himself and business managers in general led him to admire certain facets of fascist government. But the sense that the masses were “raw material,” or *hyle*, for some larger project,

combined with a belief that trained managers were best equipped to control and build the “well-wrought structure” of the United States economy and government frustrated Luce: democracy, capitalism, and perhaps just humanity were too complex for even an expansive “artistic” vision to contain. Nonetheless, his admiration for Mussolini did have certain effects on his behavior as a businessman and political actor. In this last section, I will show how Luce’s attraction to aspects of fascism manifested itself both in the authoritarian organization of his corporation and an attraction to the “ancient virtues” of war.³¹

“A nation without an aristocracy,” Henry Luce proclaimed in 1930, “is a nation all belly and no head.” Luce’s desire to be that head showed itself most obviously in the organization of *Time*, Inc. As Dwight Macdonald noted, Luce desired a corporation that would be an extension of Luce himself:

Luce’s idea, roughly, is that the corporation accepts responsibility for the general economic and social well-being of its employees. . . . In return, the employee identifies his own future with that of the corporation, centering all personal ambitions therein and thinking of it as “my” rather than “their” corporation—though, of course, not taking this too literally in the matter of dividends.

By convincing his workers to identify with the corporation instead of with themselves, Luce hoped to solve the problem of organizational inefficiency and unpredictability. The corporation, like Ortega y Gasset’s nation, would allow each worker to feel himself “an active subject. . . , a participator and a collaborator,” but control would remain in the “head” of the corporate body often pictured in *Fortune*’s advertisements (figure 5). The most apparent manifestation of this philosophy was the lack of bylines in *Fortune*: every bit of copy in the magazine seemed to come not from an individual, but from an institution. In 1937, *Fortune* printed its first justification of this policy, using the language of the corporate body: “*Fortune* speaks with its own corporative voice, not with an assortment of tenors and baritones from individual contributors. . . . [I]t thinks of itself in unity.” The column invoked a fantasy of corporate wholeness. The institution not only “speaks,” but “thinks.” The contributors, it would seem, agreed in all their thoughts and emotions about the magazine.³²

But as Macdonald recognized, the corporate body was not necessarily a happy home: “Like all machines, [Time, Inc.] is vastly impersonal.” *Fortune*’s writing staff was notoriously discontented at the magazine. The creative desires of the writers conflicted with editors’ need to produce “objective,” depersonalized copy. Like advertising copywriters, who fought briefly in the late twenties for bylines on their work, *Fortune* writers, according to Macdonald, had to sit quietly as “copy chiefs . . . performed major surgery on the writer’s work, leaving truncated images . . . and mystified readers.” In order for the corporation to work

THE NEXT STEP IN PUBLIC UTILITY SERVICE

DURING the last few years, America has watched with amazement the gigantic development of public utilities. The generation and transmission of electricity has been multiplied to the great benefit of industry and with an ever-increasing contribution to the efficiency, comfort, convenience and happiness of modern life.

The centralization of electric generation, with its resulting economies and advantages to the public, is comparable to all utility services. We have seen central pumping stations and underground water mains supplies; hundreds of thousands of individual pumps and wells; central electric stations have rendered obsolete the kerosene lamp and other individual systems for producing power and illumination; modern sewerage systems contribute to health and sanitation, and transportation utilities girdle the continent with speed and comfort.

In practically every city and town, smoking chimneys provide condemning evidence to the inefficiency of our common heating practices. Thousands of tons of soot are distributed over our communities, soiling our beautiful buildings, ruining our merchandise and seriously affecting our health. Monstrous coal and ash trucks

add to our traffic congestion and thousands of individual fires set up a terrifying fire hazard. A great need exists for public heating.

In scores of American cities, the magic hand of Public Utility Service is demonstrating that these conditions can be vastly improved by District Heating. Generating steam in efficient central boiler plants and distributing it through well insulated underground mains to all of the buildings within a given district is the solution public utilities are offering to the age-old heating problem. Public heating plants are growing rapidly in response to public demand for service.

Not only for heating purposes, but for process work in industrial plants, enormous quantities of steam are required. Public utility executives, constantly on the lookout for opportunities to render profitable public service, are realizing that District Heating for business, residential and industrial sections is a field of utility service where the surface has only been scratched. Here may be discovered manifold opportunities for economies, increased incomes and magnified public benefit.

With the widespread financial support the American public is giving to public utility enterprises, we may reasonably look for the same rapid expansion in public



steam service as we have observed in other fields of service requirements.

For more than fifty years the activities of the American District Steam Company have been closely allied with the development of District Heating. The experience gained through this close association is available to utility executives and others interested.

AMERICAN DISTRICT STEAM COMPANY

INCORPORATED IN NEW YORK
NORTH TOWNSEND, N.Y.

ADSCO



Figure 5: The corporate body at work. Advertisement for the American District Steam Company in the February 1930 issue of *Fortune*. Reproduced by permission of ADSCO Manufacturing LLC.

in unity, the individual—even if he considered himself an “artist”—was forced to suppress his personality. Ironically, while Luce borrowed the artistic idea of the creative genius for the tycoon, he denied it to the artists within his corporation. Only the creative work of the businessman could be acknowledged, and as Macdonald noted, financially rewarded. In the words of Buck-Morss, the “pseudo-totality” of the corporate body, like Wagner’s phantasmagoria, hid “the alienation and fragmentation, the loneliness and sensual impoverishment of modern existence that was the material out of which it [was] composed.” Luce’s fantasy of a unified corporation fed off the alienation of the supposedly voracious “belly” of workers.³³

Luce’s desire to control the economy through more dependable means than internal agreement also injured the worker through its tendency towards war. Luce expressed occasionally a profound and disturbing nostalgia for war. In 1930, while looking for an “honorable” profession for talented young men, he mused on what war might mean to the United States:

Peace, we say, has her victories no less than war. Has it? . . . If conquest were our united national ambition, . . . before every energetic Harvard man there could glitter the star of a proconsulship. How ridiculous this sounds. Yet to all the poets from Homer to Tennyson it would be astounding that it should sound ridiculous.

War, for Luce, offered the possibility of honor and position. But the same blindness that did not allow Luce to see the masses in the workplace kept him from noticing the soldier in the trenches. There is irony in his pining for a war “of honor”: the same technology that had in many ways allowed business to become a leader had created a form of war in which honor and position were beside the point. The fascists in Buck-Morss—the Futurists, primarily—aestheticized war by convincing the masses that the mass destruction they were observing did not involve their own bodies as the *hyle*. Luce’s aestheticization of war involved a refusal to acknowledge that the destruction was mass. Like the businessman playing the game, Luce’s soldier still seemed to be engaged in a *mano a mano* contest.³⁴

But there was more to Luce’s movement toward war than nostalgia for honorable contest. Lewis Mumford in *Technics and Civilization* argued that war resulted when individuals and nations could “no longer stand the exacting strain of life in groups, with all the necessities for compromise, give-and-take, live-and-let-live, understanding and sympathy that such life demands.” Luce’s frustration with the “irrationality” of the crowd lessened his capacity for “understanding and sympathy.” The feminized consumer resisted attempts at rationalization; his own corporation always remained beyond his full control; even the business community refused to accept rational and efficient leadership. Furthermore, the unlim-

ited progress assumed by the game idea of business was being stifled by businessmen's panic at the Crash of 1929 and by consumers who didn't consume enough to keep the cycle going.³⁵

The "exacting strain" of living in a mass community runs through Luce's writings and speeches. In the opening of "The American Century," Luce's famous 1941 essay arguing for a United States-led global imperialism and for intervention in the European war, he projected his discontent on his fellow citizens: "We Americans are unhappy. We are not happy about America. We are not happy about ourselves in relation to America." Luce's dissatisfaction paralleled Ortega y Gasset's sense that Europe had sunk into "decadence" and atrophy because it had no long-term aim, no "higher purpose." In "The American Century," Luce tried to provide a "united national ambition" in the same expansionist and imperial terms as Ortega y Gasset's "gigantic continental State": the United States, he argued, must enter the war and emerge as the leader of a new global economy and culture. To escape his frustration with the seeming directionlessness of the United States, Luce fantasized about making "the nation stand up, stand up" or inspiring the "next general march for mankind," just as he believed Mussolini had done for Italy. Satisfaction and inspiration seemed to lie in a business-centered global society which offered both adventure and efficiency, and allowed both competitive glory and scientifically-managed logic. He wished to force the crowd to follow his vision of business and aristocracy, and he wanted to pull the world along with him. Towards progress, towards imperialism, towards Italian fascism, and finally towards war.³⁶

Notes

1. Robert Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce* (New York, 1994), 83; Introductory editorial note, *Fortune* 10.1 (1934), 45.

2. Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce*, 49, 97-101; Dwight Macdonald, "Time, Fortune, Life," *The Nation* 144.21 (1937), 586; Eric Hodgins, *Trolley to the Moon* (New York, 1973), 374; W.A. Swanberg, *Luce and his Empire* (New York, 1972), 70-73.

3. Henry Luce, "The American Century," in John Jessup, ed., *The Ideas of Henry Luce* (New York, 1969), 119-20.

4. Henry Luce, "Let it Die," in Jessup, *Ideas*, 91-4; "The State," *Fortune* 10.1 (1934), 48.

5. Dwight Macdonald, "Time and Henry Luce," *The Nation* 144.18 (1937), 502.

6. Any use of gendered language in this essay is intentional. The world of Henry Luce was a male-dominated one, and when he talked of businessmen, he generally meant just that. Certainly there were exceptions: Margaret Bourke-White, for example, was an honored member of staff. But the writers were exclusively male, and the business people that *Fortune* featured were almost all male as well. While I am not focusing on the gendered aspects of his sense of business here, this gender divide is important to the way Luce and his fellow businessmen understood their world.

7. Henry Luce, "Aristocracy and Motives," in Jessup, *Ideas*, 96-101.

8. "Daniel Cowan Jackling," *Fortune* 1.3 (1930), 72-75.

9. *Ibid.*, 72; Advertisement for Eagle-A Paper, *Fortune* 1.2 (1930), 115. In this essay, I use advertisements from *Fortune* and compare them to the business philosophy of Henry Luce. My justification for this seemingly simplistic equation is that I argue that Luce's ideas are mainstream in the business community, not just the individual musings of "hero-worshipper." The advertisements then are useful not only in summing up Luce's ideas (which I will explore with plenty of alternate sources), but more importantly in connecting Luce to this larger community.

10. Advertisement for *Fortune*, *Fortune* 1.3 (1930), 137, quoted from the *Boston Transcript*; Letter to the editor, *Fortune* 1.2 (1930), 128; Walcott Gibbs, "Profiles," *The New Yorker* 12.5 (1936), 20.

11. Richard Ohmann, *Selling Culture* (London, 1996), 50-61.
12. Susan Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered," *October* 62 (1992), 3-41. In defining the use of *hyle* Buck-Morss explains, "Phenomenology uses the term *hyle*, undifferentiated, 'brute' matter—to describe that which is perceived but not 'intended.' [Edmund] Husserl's example is Durer's engraving on wood of the knight on horseback. Although the wood is perceived along with the knight's image, it is not the *meaning* of the perception. If you are asked, what do you see? you will say, a knight (i.e., the surface image), not a piece of wood. (28)" See also Walter Benjamin's "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York, 1968), 217-251, especially the epilogue. This is the piece upon which Buck-Morss builds her essay.
13. Swanberg, *Luce*, 71, 73; Macdonald, "Fortune Magazine," *The Nation* 144.19 (1937), 530; Macdonald, "Time and Henry Luce," 502.
14. Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics," 27-32.
15. "Business Outlook," *Business Week* (November 2, 1929), 3.
16. Untitled Portfolio, *Fortune* 1.3, 77-81. Text is from notes on the photographer, 18. The issue of copyrights seems to further support my contention that *Fortune* highly valued its photographers as individual artists. Robert Capa and other founders of the photographer's cooperative Magnum organized after World War Two in order to wield more power at magazines such as *Life*, and copyright ownership was a central issue in their struggle. Historian Russell Miller argues that Magnum photographers' bid to own its copyrights was unprecedented. But the photographers at *Fortune* seem to have retained the copyright to the images used in the magazine during the thirties. While *Life* continues to own its photographs from the thirties, photographs published in *Fortune* are owned by the photographers (or their estates)—see, for example, the photograph credits from *Life* and *Fortune* photographs in Sean Callahan, ed., *The Photographs of Margaret Bourke-White* (Greenwich, Conn., 1972). Unfortunately, I have been unable to confirm that *Fortune* policy provided photographers with their copyrights in the thirties. Nonetheless, it seems unlikely that *Fortune* would have given up its copyrights to the photographs used in its pages in the sixty years since the decade ended. See Russell Miller, *Magnum: Fifty Years at the Front Line of History* (New York, 1997), 50-1. I should thank here my anonymous reviewers from *American Studies*, one of whom suggested I look into this issue, and all of whom helped me make this a much better essay.
17. Advertisement for *Fortune*, *Fortune* 1.3 (1930), 137, quoted from *The Baltimore Sun*.
18. *Ibid.*, 137, quoted from the *New York Times*.
19. Henry Luce, "Address to the Commissars," in Jessup, *Ideas*, 41.
20. See Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream* (Berkeley, Calif., 1985), 64-69, for a discussion of the tendency of advertisers to characterize the consumer as feminine.
21. "Model Women," *Fortune* 2.3 (1930), 89-92; "Cloak and Suit," *Fortune* 1.5 (1930), 92-100.
22. The three quoted phrases come from advertisements for three different advertising agencies. In order: J. Walter Thompson Company, *Fortune* 2.1 (1930), 95; Cowan and Dengler, *Fortune* 1.1 (1930), 47; and Dyer-Enzinger Company, Inc., *Fortune* 2.3 (1930), 27. For a discussion of the advertisers' contempt for consumers, see Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 68.
23. "Cloak and Suit," 100; "Burlesque Tyrant," *Fortune* 2.5 (1930), 59.
24. Colin Gordon, *New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics, 1920-35* (New York, 1994), 15.
25. Robert Elson, *Time Inc.: The Intimate History of a Publishing Enterprise, 1923-41* (New York, 1968), 130; "Markets," *Fortune* 1.1 (1930), 109; "Good Taste in Advertising," *Fortune* 1.2 (1930), 60-1.
26. For comments on Luce's "careful study" (Herzstein, 83) of Ortega y Gasset, see either Herzstein, *Henry R Luce*, or Swanberg, *Luce*. Jose Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York, 1957), 170, 11, 179, 15.
27. Ortega y Gasset, *Revolt*, 17, 189.
28. *Ibid.*, 169.
29. Henry Luce, "The Tycoon," in Jessup, *Ideas*, 222.
30. Ortega y Gasset, *Revolt*, 122, 176; Elson, *Time, Inc.*, 219.
31. Quoted in Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics," 38.
32. Luce, "Aristocracy and Motives," 100; Macdonald, "Time, Fortune, Life," 585; "Fortune's Wheel" (a regular unsigned column), *Fortune* 16:1 (1937), 36-7.
33. Macdonald, "Time and Henry Luce," 501; Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance* (New York, 1994), 318-22 (see also Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream* 147); Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics," 26.
34. Luce, "Aristocracy and Motives," 96.
35. Lewis Mumford, *Civilization and Technics* (San Diego, 1963), 308. Originally published in 1934.
36. Luce, "The American Century," 106.