



analysed. An analysis section provides a description of the content and interpretations. The conclusion argues that this special issue displayed the good and bad that *LIFE* offered its readers.

### **Historical Theory and Method**

This article identifies three significant layers of historical analysis, which are three ways to look at the same subject, and it should be noted this method is experimental.<sup>3</sup> First, there is the Developmental layer, which addresses the traditional practice of journalism. Second, a Political Economy layer examines the political economy of American relations with Asian nations. Third, a Critical/Cultural layer looks at the magazine as a readable text embedded in an historical context. These approaches will be used to examine the representations *LIFE* made of Asia in an effort to answer several questions.<sup>4</sup> First, how does the magazine portray Asia? Is it represented as a singular entity, or as a regional aggregate of different countries and ethnicities? Second, how is Asia positioned in relation to the political economy of the United States? Third, how does the content of this issue compare with regular issues of *LIFE* published before and after the Asia issue? Together these three approaches should offer a more comprehensive interpretation than any single approach.

#### *Developmental*

The Developmental layer of analysis questions how *LIFE* constructed its issues before and after the special issue on Asia was published. The purpose is to see if the special issue resembles other issues from a basic content and design standpoint. James D. Startt and Wm. David Sloan identified the Developmental approach as one of the six “schools” of “interpretation” in mass communication historiography: Nationalist, Romantic, Developmental, Progressive, Consensus, and Cultural.<sup>5</sup>

The Developmental School produced some of the most notable histories of journalism. Its origins are in the late nineteenth century when journalism was becoming professionalised. “It is based on the concept of the professional development of the press, viewing the history of journalism as the continuing evolution of journalistic practices and standards.”<sup>6</sup> Developmental historians represented journalism as a growing, respectable profession, and one that was capable of participating in the improvement of society. The school’s most notable historians and their significant works were Frederic Hudson’s *Journalism in the United States, from 1690 to 1872*; James Melvin Lee’s *History of American Journalism*; Willard G. Bleyer’s *Main Currents in the History of American Journalism*; and Frank Luther Mott’s *American Journalism; A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 150 Years: 1690 to 1940*.<sup>7</sup> Developmental historians such as Hudson viewed the past as a logical path to the present in a determinative chain of events. They admired the newspapers that contributed to the contemporary conditions of the press, but they were not as kind to those who followed a different or obstructionist path.<sup>8</sup>

The methodological significance for this article is that the Developmental approach assists in creating a foundational history, which is one that explains what the typical *LIFE* issue was when the Asian special issue appeared in 1951. This approach will be used to explain the content before and after this special issue hit the news-stands.

### *Political Economy*

The Political Economy layer considers those political and economic factors influencing coverage. These factors can be external and internal. This section will look at the external political factors in Asia that attracted the interest of *LIFE* and the public in general. The internal factors are the top-





own. Kozol makes her argument decoding the images with seemingly little knowledge of the production process of magazines or editing. She often mistakenly attributes *LIFE*'s consistent subject-matter to photographers, rather than to the relationship between photographers and editors. Advertisements are discussed in this study not because they are the same as editorial content, but because advertisements are typically placed near editorial content where they can make an impact. Additionally, while readers understand the difference between advertisements and editorial content, they experience them together.

The three approaches work together by integrating the findings together in the report. Evidence is drawn not only from the special issue of *LIFE*, which is the focus, but from issues of *LIFE* appearing before and after this issue, and from issues of popular magazines and newspapers published at the same time as the *LIFE* issues.

### **Description and Analysis**

This section examines the context from which the Asia special issue appeared, the editorial and advertising content, and analyses this content. A description of the magazine precedes the analysis since it is important for readers to understand what appeared in the special issue. The analytical detail is based on both the internal evidence of the issue itself and external evidence.

#### *Description*

“Asia: Its Troubles and Opportunities,” dated 31 December 1951, was probably a product of *LIFE*'s publisher Henry Luce's interest in this region. He had been born in China to missionaries, and was suspicious of Communism. According to Daniel Marshall Haygood:

[Luce] believed that it was America'



ideology has more force because there are not competing subjects in the issue. So a benefit of analysing a special issue is that the individual pieces, stories and photographs, can be looked at in the context of the whole package.

Its cover differs from the Korean covers even though war photojournalist Duncan made the image. On the cover a young woman looks over the right shoulder of the viewer. She holds an umbrella in her right hand. The blades of the green umbrella encircle her, and this umbrella becomes the background. The familiar white letters spelling out *LIFE* appear in the usual upper-left hand corner framed by a red rectangle, and the bottom has a red band across the page with



images and advertisements are addressed in this discussion section due to limitations of space and lack of significance.<sup>15</sup> Stories that would reinforce points established by analysing other stories—and which are thus redundant—are not presented. The opening story, “Three Views of Asia,” is accompanied by maps of Asia seen from “Russia view,” from Asia to the U.S.S.R. view, and from the historic human passage perspective.<sup>16</sup> Across from this story, on the preceding left-hand page, is an advertisement from Squibb. It contains a blithe photograph of a cat rubbing its head against a young child seated in a high-chair. A small illustration in the bottom-right corner is of a soldier giving blood or medicine to an injured colleague. These images compete for our attention with the map. Depending on personal experience and attitude, the reader will probably enter into the “Three Views of Asia” story thinking about either the

long time.”<sup>20</sup> With hindsight the remark as to their conservative nature rings loudly for Americans who remember the Iranian hostage crisis, but it gets washed aside because of Americans’ disinterest in conflicts that brew slowly rather than erupt.

*LIFE* follows “Decline of the Westerner” with the stories “Rise of Red Star” by Robert Neville, “What Asians Think of U.S. Policy,” and “Why We Fight and Hope.”<sup>21</sup> Neville and *LIFE* represent China as treacherous and brilliant: “With strong and bloody hands they have achieved ... a ‘degree of unification never before known in Chinese history.’” Their “genius” is demonstrated in how they “have attacked and stalemated the first United Nations army, a mainly American force, and a good one.”<sup>22</sup> China is not just “China,” but “Red China.” This use of “Red” carries into the narrative: “It is a Red political device to stir up the countryside and keep the peasantry forever under subjection.”<sup>23</sup> “Red” already had connotations in the States, where the *Red Channels* was published—a pamphlet claiming the people listed in it were Communists who had not been blacklisted from working in Hollywood—and Senator Joseph McCarthy had begun his hunt for Communists, which became known as McCarthyism.

Neville does offer an important insight in one paragraph pertaining to the declining relations between the Soviets and China. He reports, “The reader who pores long and hard over reams of Chinese Communist propaganda will now search in vain for references to Soviet aid, let alone Soviet generosity.”<sup>24</sup> Like Duncan’s comment on conservative Iranians, it is a smart and significant observation that with hindsight begs for greater attention.

The photographs for this story show labouring Chinese, Tibetans at a Chinese government celebration held not far from the Dalai Lama’s palace, the burning of landlords’ title deeds, a mass public trial, the people’s militia, and a volunteer soldier receiving Mao’s autograph. The images are not spectacular, but they serve as illustrations to reinforce the article.

“What Asians Think of U.S. Policy” and “Why We Fight and Hope” take views on American foreign policy. The three Asians *LIFE* uses as spokesmen for Asia are a professor in Beirut, an editor of a newspaper in India, and an Indonesian statesman. *LIFE*'s readers learn that the United States was equated with freedom before the end of World War II. However, this view changed when the United States did not help Arab refugees in the Jerusalem area, and instead supported Israel and France's colonial policies. Once again, the reader is warned of a problem that will continue to grow. According to professor Nabih Amin Faris, “Consequently, Arab and Moslem leaders and masses have become convinced that the U.S., *not* Britain, is now their enemy and the only obstacle to the realization of their hopes. If this seems an unfair interpretation the fact remains that this is the picture seen through Arab eyes.” For newspaper editor, Frank Moraes, “The U.S. sees security in terms of guns and money.... Communism is essentially an economic problem. Alleviate the economic ills and you remove the very conditions of its existence. The attainment of political freedom is an end in itself. This, of course, is not true. But it is how the American scene presents itself to the general Asiatic gaze.”

<sup>25</sup> “What

Asians Think of U.S. Policy” is a startling exposé of the lessons not heeded by American leaders during the preceding fifty years. The recommendations are too lengthy to reprint here, but they provide ample warning of the goodwill being lost because of American foreign policy.

The neighbouring editorial, “Why We Fight and Hope,” asks “whether Asia ought to be considered as a single unit at all.” It argues that journalistically to cover Asia as a whole is different from treating it as a whole through foreign policy. *LIFE* claims Asians want to be wanted, and want to be loved. Instead, the U.S. has adopted the arduous task of the policeman. “The whole equation is far more complicated than most Americans have been willing to

believe.”<sup>26</sup> *LIFE* advises Asia to learn how to become wealthy instead of asking for so much of American wealth to be transferred to Asian countries. The editorial recommends the U.S. should recognise and correct its errors, especially over Palestine, and should oppose Communism wherever it appears in Asia.

The importance of the Westerner is visible in “Medical Missionary,” which tells the story of Dr. Edwin B. McDaniel, an American doctor in Thailand sent by the Overbrook Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia and the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood.<sup>27</sup> “He and the 532 other medical missionary workers in Asia are among the most respected Americans on that continent.” The attempts at Christian conversion are glossed over in “Medical Missionary:” “Overbrook leaves evangelism mostly to Siamese Christians while Dr. McDaniel concentrates on medical tasks.”

Japan becomes the model Asian country in “The Example of Japan.”<sup>28</sup> David Douglas Duncan provides most of the photographs for this story, as well as the cover image. The article tells of traditional Japanese home designs that are becoming popular in the West, the strength of landscape gardening, Zen Buddhist monks (“Warrior Monk Today Meditates”), scrolls and wood-block prints, and the dance and drama of Noh and Kabuki plays. Duncan’s photographs are colourful and interesting, of higher quality than most of the photographs in the issue. The text offers a quick overview of the different topics, and the photographs are what draw the reader to the story. It is difficult to select any one image to discuss because there are a number that are informative and well constructed from an aesthetic standpoint. One of the most interesting shots is of a grandmother putting her granddaughters to bed in a very simple and “uncluttered space.”<sup>29</sup> In another photograph printed below, the room is seen from a different perspective as a dining room. The two images show the multifunctionality of the room. The peacefulness and serenity of

the bedroom image comes from the minimal lighting, child at rest, body position of the grandmother, and orderly lines of windows, doors and trim.

*Analysis*

Several points deserve analytical attention. First, how does this issue differ from other contemporary issues? Second, how does the editorial content relate to the advertising content? Third, how can the content be interpreted in a proper historical context? These issues are discussed by looking at adjacent issues, American consumerism and Asia, and the political triad of the West, Asia and “Red” countries. As a reminder, the purpose of this issue as described by *LIFE* was to explain why family and friends care about Asia and





countries as a more singular Asia, because of the focus on the developing Asia and Communist positions, without questioning the price of colonialism on countries like India. A more comprehensive comparison would have required greater explanation by *LIFE*, so few prototypes exist as a result.

The issue does provide insightful but underemphasised warnings about Asia. One of these is the remark by writer and photojournalist Duncan about Iranian authorities being strongly conservative, in the previously mentioned “Decline of the Westerner.” Writer Neville cast another warning in his remark, from “Rise of Red Star,” that Chinese propaganda was lacking its earlier influence on the Soviets. An additional warning was that Muslims were beginning to see

the United States









how history would have unfolded had the leaders of the United States read more carefully the quiet warnings in *LIFE*. This issue offered cultural and political information that was sometimes insightful and at other times so pro-American that any sense of objectivity becomes hard to detect. Given Luce's position on China, the tone of this issue reverberates with his influence. *LIFE* is at once respectful of the culture and disrespectful of the ability of Asians to manage their own affairs. *LIFE*'s editors were performing a delicate balancing act. Previously unmentioned stories on Chinese scrolls and Asian actresses buttress the crucial political pieces, for readers wanting to read serious analysis but not eager for the doom and gloom of boiling geopolitics.<sup>36</sup> (m)-5(c)-6(T)-5(T)

strongest voices, dealt with the political, economic and military relations between Asian countries and the United States, issues which have been highlighted here. While the subject matter lent itself to Political Economy, this analytical approach also offered a more intensive examination of how the relations were portrayed by *LIFE*. Developmental history is more



to 1940 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941).

8. Startt and Sloan, 25-26.

9. Anthony Y. H. Fung, "Politics of Media Economics and Economy of Media Politics: An Overview" (*Journal of Communication Inquiry* 20, 1996), 99-113.

10. When Political Economy is capitalised it refers to the historical approach; when it is not capitalised it refers to political economy theory in general. Critical/Cultural is capitalised as a reference for a distinct approach and to differentiate it from cultural studies and history in general.

11. Warren I. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), xii.

12. Daniel Marshall Haygood, "Henry Luce Head Cheerleader for American Hegemony? 'Time' Magazine's Coverage of Indonesia