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**Americanization as Global Politics:
The United States Government's use of Disney as a
Cultural Ambassador in Latin America During World War Two**

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Topic and Objectives

The relationship between culture and politics has been increasingly studied over the past decades. Culture is the space wherein entities fight for the control of meaning. It is also the medium in which power can be constructed and resisted. (Gomez 2011, 144-145) Power exists in everyday life, as well as in politics. (Dirks, Eley and Ortner 1994, 4-5) Power and discourses exist as a result of social interactions, and it is through these social interactions that social forces are constructed, which influence what you eat, wear and watch on television, along with many other aspects of daily life. (Ching, Buckley, Lozano-Alonso 2007, 23-24)

The group that is able to impose its culture is the dominant group that possesses power; traditionally this would have been the elites or bourgeoisie. According to Antonio Gramsci the dominant group within a nation that is able to impose consensually its understanding and practice of culture achieves cultural hegemony. For example sectors of the bourgeoisie may be the dominant group and if the rest of the population recognizes their culture as the dominant referent of a national culture then the bourgeoisie possesses hegemony. (Jones 2005, 45-48)

Culture, however, does not only play an important role in domestic politics but also in foreign politics. According to the neo-Gramscian perspective developed by Robert Cox hegemony is not just limited to state dominance. The production of relations within and outside the state "...give rise to particular social forces that become the bases of power within [...] a specific world order." (Bieler and Morton, 2003) These social forces or hegemony are produced in the context of what has been referred to as the "state-civil society complex". This concept, related to Gramsci's understanding of the state, claims that the state is formed by both government operations within the 'public' sphere (government, political parties, military) and the 'private' sphere of civil society, which includes the church media and educational institutions, through which hegemony function. Once hegemony has been consolidated domestically (both public and private spheres) it may expand outwards on a global scale. (Bieler and Morton, 2003)

A good contemporary example of this was the government of the United States in the forties, which used various mediums of culture, including media, to achieve consensus in the 'private' sphere of civil society. (Bieler and Morton, 2003) Subsequently, this consensus or social relation produced in civil society would then translate into support for government policies, such as the "Good Neighbor Policy", and institutions in the "public" sphere of the state. This explains why the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA) was created to improve U.S. relations with Latin America.

The office had three divisions: the Commercial Division and Financial Division; the Division of Communications; and the Division of Cultural Relations. The main objectives of the office were economic and political but it could only reach these objectives through cultural activities and communications. (Antônio Pedro Tota & Daniel Joseph Greenberg 2009, 29) Consequently, the OCIAA reached out to musicians, actors and movie producers to collaborate with them to create cultural productions to improve Latin American and North American perceptions of each other.

One particularly famous collaborator was Walt Disney; who was sent on a subsidized “Good Will Tour” of Latin America in 1941 by the American government. This was a mutually beneficial relationship because not only did Walt Disney’s presence in Latin America convey to the people of Latin America that the United States had taken a genuine interest in the region, but it also resulted in the production of two key films: *Saludos Amigos* (1942) and *The Three Caballeros* (1945). (Walt & El Grupo 2008) Originally Walt Disney had been contracted to make twelve short films about Latin America for the OCIAA, but upon returning home from the trip it proved more economical to produce two anthologies. (Walt & El Grupo 2008) Walt Disney proclaimed the films and the trip to be a success for both parties because he managed to make money (they had been experiencing financial hardship prior to the trip) and the OCIAA got two entertaining films that portrayed their neighbours south of the border in a more positive light. (Walt & El Grupo 2008)

There has been a lot of literature written about the trip itself and the two films have been analyzed to a certain extent, but very briefly and under a particular lens; such as a gendered power analysis and a postcolonial analysis with the United States filling the role of the colonial. It appears, however, that no one has attempted yet to evaluate the context under which these films were produced. The explicit purpose of these films was to reframe the relationship between Latin America and the U.S., but how was this relationship to be reframed and by whom? Both films are riddled with stereotypes and illustrate what the United States wanted to see in Latin America; which is a simple-minded, quaint, less modern counterpart. (Dorfman & Mattelart 1975, 19) Despite the suggestion of scholars like Julianne Burton, who analyzed *The Three Caballeros* through a gender-power lens, the relationship between the U.S. and Latin America was not dichotomous in nature. Although their interactions were asymmetrical and favoured American interests, Latin Americans were active participants and did have an influence on their northern neighbours. It is important to consider that what Walt Disney and his team learned about Latin America and decided to include in the two films originated from Latin Americans; more specifically Latin American elites. (Adam

2007, 293) Walt Disney and his team only met with artists and government officials who conveyed to Walt Disney their own particular perceptions' of their country, region, and identity. (Walt & El Grupo 2008)

Rationale and Significance

The United States has become known worldwide for its cultural icons, such as McDonald's and Starbucks. The successful exportation of American films and icons around the world have made the United States the global purveyors of culture. However, the United States' success in cultural export markets depends on the support of local elites, who have the money to purchase these products.

According to Robert Cox, during and after the Second World War Britain, which was the dominant power throughout the nineteenth century and had secured its undisputed supremacy with its naval force, was beginning to decline. The United States quickly filled the gap left by Britain, with what is called the *pax americana*. (Cox 1981, 140) Unlike the period of British hegemony, the United States power was more rigid, and depended upon alliances; particularly alliances that would help contain other powers; such as the Nazi influence during the Second World War and the Soviet Union's power during the Cold War. (Cox 1981,140) "The *pax americana* produced a greater number of formal international institutions than the earlier hegemony." (Cox 1981, 140) The Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs is an example of a formal international institution that was created to secure American hegemony.

Hardt and Negri suggest that there is no longer one dominating power or "Empire" today but rather a network of power relations. (Hardt & Negri 2001) The United States, however, continues to be a dominant node in this network and one of the reasons for this is their use of civil society or more specifically transnational corporations. American transnational corporations have institutionalized mass production and consumption worldwide, and the expansion of this mass production has been the basis of American hegemony throughout the world post-World War Two.

This Major Research Paper, however, will not focus on the current economic and cultural hegemony of the United States, but will rather present the early construction of American global hegemony. This case study and analysis of the OCIAA and Disney will enable us to better understand the relationship between culture, power and politics through the perspective of a cultural history of the U.S.-Latin American relations. In addition, it will question how American globalization really is because although the films were produced by Walt Disney Latin American

elites played a role in their production. This can be related to more current debates about global Americanization, which imply that cultures around the world are becoming more homogenous with American culture.

In this particular case-study what is important to consider is what was included or excluded from films, for example indigenous or dark skinned individuals are largely absent from films about Latin American during this period and there is evidence that this was explicitly done to appease the Latin American elites who wanted to portray themselves as light-skinned and European. (O'Neil 2001)

Research Questions

1. How can we characterize the activities of the OCIAA as an institutional expression of Americanization in the 1940's?
2. What was the importance of the alliance between the public (Good Neighbor Policy) and the private (Disney Inc.) in the diffusion of Americanization as a cultural model in Latin America?
3. What were the interactions between Latin Americans and U.S. cultural industries that shaped the process?

Literature Review

The majority of articles and books published about the OCIAA and the “Good Neighbor Policy” acknowledge the importance of cultural industries to improve U.S. relations with Latin America during the forties. Only a few, however, have critically reviewed these cultural productions. The majority of scholars, who have critically analyzed the cultural productions of the OCIAA, have applied concepts such as Antonio Gramsci and Robert Cox’s neo-gramscian perspective of hegemony, and critical theory to complete their analysis. Other general approaches that have been used by scholars to analyze cultural interactions between regions of the world are Edward Said’s “Orientalism” and Mary Louise Pratt’s concept of contact zones. This review will address these approaches and a few others, along with a brief description of the historical context to illustrate how *Saludos Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros* appear to have maintained the old asymmetrical relationship between the two regions; as well as their significance to securing American hegemony. These concepts will be grounded in the theoretical frameworks of cultural history and critical discourse analysis (CDA), because both approaches are interdisciplinary which is required due the complexity of this case study. Although the case study is historical in nature the objective is to relate it to more contemporary questions of globalization, which requires an interdisciplinary approach.

Historical Context: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “Good Neighbor Policy” and Creation of OCIAA

Before analyzing the two films or discussing what the OCIAA achieved in Latin America during the forties, it is essential to understand the historical context that made Latin America a region of interest. It is important to look at the context and events that led to creation of the “Good Neighbor Policy” and OCIAA because they were what made it necessary to improve relations with Latin America. The main goals of the “Good Neighbor Policy” and OCIAA were to create Pan-American solidarity and curtail Nazi influence in the region. In addition, the United States needed to find a new trading partner, due to a loss of trade from Europe, to help its ailing economy during the Great Depression. Consequently, the United States looked towards Latin America who was also struggling from a loss of trade from Europe. (Gellman 1979) A number of authors have written about Roosevelt’s “Good Neighbor Policy” and the creation of the OCIAA. (Fein 1998; Gellman 1979; Joseph 1998; Kramer 1981; Ogilvie 1945; Pike 1995; Schmitz 2007) Some have chosen to focus on one region within Latin America or one cultural medium that the OCIAA used, such as radio or film. (Fein 1998; Ogilvie 1945) These authors are primarily historians who have described the events that led to creation of the OCIAA and what the office was involved in under Nelson

Rockefeller. These sources are extremely important to understand the historical context, but their analysis of the OCIAA's work or the significance of the new relationship with Latin America are brief; no more than a few paragraphs.

In addition, the Nelson Rockefeller Archives Centre has paid a number of academics researching this topic to write about what can be found in the archives. (Bosemberg 2009; Cramer & Prutsch 2006) These papers can be extremely useful to understand what the OCIAA was involved in, but they also have the potential of being biased because all the documents they look at were produced by the OCIAA; consequently they are more representative of the United States Government's point of view. Scholars' writing papers for the Rockefeller centre also have a tendency to declare that the OCIAA's work in Latin America was an overall success, but as Tamara Falicov's article about the Argentinean film industry and Susan Ryan's article about Mexican films suggest, their success varied throughout the region. (Falicov 2006; Ryan 1983) How was the OCIAA successful though? In Mexico and many other countries the OCIAA managed to stop the showing of propaganda films from the Axis powers, but in Argentina, however, they continued to be shown. (Falicov 2006) In this case the OCIAA did not succeed in removing Nazi influences from Argentina.

Robert Cox's Neo-Gramscian Perspective of Hegemony

If the goal of the United States was to create a more positive relationship with Latin America while maintaining the hierarchy between the two regions, then Robert Cox's neo-Gramscian perspective of hegemony in international relations theory may be employed to help understand why the U.S. Government invested in cultural productions at the time.

As previously mentioned, neo-Gramscian perspectives of hegemony emphasize the production of hegemony, which is established by social forces that occupy leading roles within the state (both 'private' civil society and the public sphere) that is then projected outwards on a global scale. (Bieler & Morton 2003) Hegemony is constituted by the social relations of production, which relate to the "...production and reproduction of knowledge and of the social relations, morals and institutions that are prerequisites to the production of physical goods." (Bieler & Morton 2003, 2) Changes in the production of relations give rise to particular social forces that become the bases of power both within and outside the state. Hegemony is also produced in the various forms of state. It is produced within the traditional state, characterized by government apparatuses, but it functions and is legitimized within civil society, through the media and educational institutions. (Bieler & Morton 2003) Additionally, in order for hegemony to be established it needs to be created

domestically by a dominant social class. Once consolidated domestically, it can be exported globally. Hegemony is therefore a consensual form of power, in which dominance can only be achieved if its power has been recognized. (Bieler & Morton 2003)

Furthermore, there are three more elements required in order for hegemony to be established: ideas, material capabilities, and institutions. (Bieler & Morton 2003,3) Ideas are "...understood as intersubjective meanings as well as collective images of world order. (Bieler & Morton 2003, 3) Material capabilities refers to the resources available; in the case of the United States and the OCIAA there were ample filmmakers, actors and animators in Hollywood to produce the necessary cultural products to secure American hegemony. Lastly, institutions incorporate the other two elements and enable a particular order to be stabilized; the OCIAA fulfilled this role as a government agency.

The United States government relied heavily on culture during the nineteen-forties to project a positive image of itself to Latin America in an effort to convince them to cooperate. Franklin Roosevelt had adopted a non-interventionist approach to foreign politics in the forties, whereby the U.S would not align itself or enter into an alliance with another country. However, it proved essential that they maintain influence in Latin American because of the risk of Nazis in the region. Consequently, the Roosevelt administration created the "Good Neighbor Policy", which developed the idea that U.S. interests could be best, served by mutual discussions and peaceful maneuvers rather than forceful armed intervention. (Paul Kramer 1981, 77)

The United States effectively used film to convince Latin America to become their ally in the war. Film and media are part of the 'private' sphere of civil society, through which hegemony functions. The films produced by the OCIAA, including *Saludos Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros*, were aligned with the U.S. Government's foreign policies, such as the "Good Neighbor Policy". Consequently, these cultural mediums helped support and secure the United States Government's hegemony in the region.

Film is a very effective medium because it has the potential of reaching a large population, including those who are illiterate. In addition, it is an attractive cultural medium that is both entertaining and can give the false impression of being neutral. (Raiti 2007, 156) Particularly, in the case of *The Three Caballeros* because of its use of humour, which makes the viewer laugh and relax. Consequently, the film appears harmless, and the viewer unconsciously consumes the political messages from the film. Although, as it will later be discussed in relation to Stuart Hall's

article *Encoding/Decoding* the audience does play an active role in the production of meaning; therefore they are not passive consumers.

According to Adam David Morton "...changing forms and relations of production embodied by neoliberal globalisation lead to a recomposition of state-civil society relations, generating new structures of exploitation, forms of class-consciousness, modes of resistance and class struggle." (Bieler & Morton 2003, 4) This in turn raises the awareness of issues of subjectivity, identity and difference. The issue of subjectivity is particularly important because although the United States was interested in securing its hegemony or power within the region, they were supported by Latin American elites who were also attempting to secure their own hegemony. Disney and other filmmakers consulted Latin American elites (artists and government officials) about their perceptions of their region and identity, which contributed to the construction of new, more positive stereotypes of Latin Americans.

When it was announced that Hollywood was going to coordinate with the OCIAA in a campaign to ensure Pan-American solidarity, Latin American diplomats and cultural elites wrote letters to Hollywood officials expressing how their respective countries should be portrayed on screen. (O'Neil 2001) These letters were written overwhelmingly by upper class, Latin American men. It is likely that 'moviegoers' shared the same views as the authors of these letters. Addison Durland, who was hired in 1941 as a Latin American specialist of the Production Code Administration, was greatly influenced by these letters. Consequently, he focused on portraying Latin America as these elite males saw their country, which was modern, clean, and particularly in the case of Brazil and Argentina, as European in complexion. (O'Neil 2001) Consequently, Latin American cities were increasingly incorporated into films. Latin American actors and actresses who were pale in complexion were also favoured because of Durland's censorship.

The participation of Latin Americans in this process illustrates that the construction of U.S. hegemony was very complex, and also contributed to the construction of an internal hegemony within the Latin American states; which provided the necessary consensus and support for the American global hegemony.

Stereotypes and "Otherness"

One of the main ways that the United States was able to encourage Latin American cooperation was not only by exporting films that portrayed Americans positively, but also by creating films that avoided stereotyping Latin American's as the villain or as lazy. (Siwi, 7; Adams 2007) Some films produced by the OCIAA were more successful than others at avoiding

stereotyping. For example, the main character “Careless Charlie” from Disney’s films *Planning for Good Eating* (1944) continued to represent Latin Americans as careless, lazy and unmodern. They were more successful, however, with *Saludos Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros* because they consulted with Latin American artists and government officials to learn about them and their culture. (South of the Border with Disney 1942)

Dale Adams, however, accurately points out in his article that these artists and government officials were part of the Latin American elites, who were high within the internal hierarchy. (Adams 2007, 293) These Latin American elites helped the American filmmakers avoid the old stereotypes of Latin Americans, but they also promoted other stereotypes. (Adams 2007, 293) Although, *Saludos Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros* avoid the usual Latin American stereotypes, such as the stereotype of Latin Americans being lazy, and avoid making generalizations about the region, by making short films related to individual countries, Disney is very particular in what he chooses to present about Latin America in the two films. The documentary *Walt and El Grupo* illustrates that Walt Disney was primarily shown traditional culture during his 1941 trip to Latin America, which could explain why traditional cultural icons, such as the Incas and Argentinean Gaucho, were primarily used in the films. The only city that he and his team spent any great deal of time in was Rio de Janeiro, which most of the Disney team claimed in interviews to be their favourite place; this could explain why the character Joe Carioca, the green Brazilian parrot, is included in both films and is the most contemporary depiction of a Latin American country in the films. (Walt & El Grupo 2008; South of the Border with Disney 1942; Kauffman 1997)

This focus on what makes Latin America “exotic” or different from the United States could be linked to the concept of “otherness” a key concept in Edward Said’s theory of “Orientalism”. (Said 1979) Although “Orientalism” refers more to the Western view of the Far and Middle East as a strange, exotic and mystic region, the idea of misrepresentation of the “other” that stems from “Orientalism” could be applied to a similar relationship between two different cultures.

The concept of “otherness” is clear in the two films because there are very few parallels made between the United States and Latin America. The films rarely depict modern Latin American cities that would resemble North American cities such as New York or Los Angeles, except in the documentary *South of the Border With Disney*. Instead, the films focus more on the rural space where the Gaucho of Argentina lives, and the indigenous Inca village high in the mountains of the Andes. The narrators in the two Disney films also make use of words such as native and quaint, which give the impression of being paternalistic and place Latin Americans in an inferior position in

relation to the United States. These perceptions of the quaint, rural culture of Latin American most likely originated from Latin American elites who perceived the rural regions as inferior to the cities where they lived. In addition, the United States would have focused on these perceptions because it supported their preconceived notions of the region.

Leslie Felperin has already used the concepts “Orientalism” and “otherness” to analyze the Disney film *Aladdin*. (Felperin 1997) Although her use of “Orientalism” is more directly applicable because of the setting of the film in the Middle East, her article can serve as a good example of how to apply the theory to analyze a film.

Different Ways of Analyzing Disney films

Many other authors have already critically analyzed several Disney films and Disney comics. (Brode 2005; Telotte 2007; Watts 1997; Felperin 1997; Kauffman 1997; Dorfman & Mattelart 1975). The most popular book published related to this topic is “How to Read Donald Duck”, which was originally published in Spanish in 1972. (Dorfman & Mattelart 1975) The book analyzes comic books produced by Disney for Latin America in an attempt to illustrate the underlying political connotations of the comics. Through analyzing these comics the authors came to the conclusion that Disney does not simply reflect the ideologies of the time, but actively disseminates ideological concepts. Other authors have deconstructed Disney cartoons and films to illustrate how gender, class and other cultures are represented. (Brode 2005, Burton 2007) Despite Walt Disney’s assurance in an interview that Disney films are produced for entertainment and “education” second; these books appear to prove otherwise.¹ The films are produced with intent, whether that is to disseminate a particular concept or ideology, or to win over the hearts and minds of the Latin American people so as to increase American power and influence in the region. This research will deepen our understanding of these concepts, because *The Three Caballeros* and *Saludos Amigos* will be analyzed in relation to the American government’s aspirations in Latin America. Hopefully, some parallels will be drawn between the messages in the films and the goals of the United States government.

Some scholars have also suggested that the relationship between the United States and Latin America is one that can be viewed through a historic lens of gendered power relations. (Ching, Buckley, Lozano-Alonso 2007, 3) This viewpoint advances the idea that the United States feminizes Latin American, thus creating an imperial and paternalistic relationship.

¹ This interview with Walt Disney is on You Tube, but the bibliographic details are missing.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7c5EZwZLFA>

Julianne Burton suggests in particular that *The Three Caballeros* illustrate these gendered power relations. Donald Duck in her analysis is equated to Don Juan and throughout the film he is focused on conquering the beautiful Latin American women. (Burton 2007, 229) These beautiful women according to Julianne Burton represent what is attractive about the region, and will encourage Americans to take an interest in Latin America. Donald Duck's attempts to conquer the women in the film are paralleled in her analysis with the original colonial conquest of the territory. (Burton 2007, 231-231) Burton's neocolonial interpretation of the film is compelling, but perhaps Donald Duck's love of women and his behaviour could be considered more representative of the obnoxious American tourist, or perhaps it is simply supposed to be funny. Julianne Burton's analysis, similarly to many other analyses, fails to capture the complexity of the relationship between the U.S. and Latin America during the period. Scholars like Julianne Burton have essentialized the relationship and or created a hierarchical relationship between the U.S. and Latin America, when in fact their interaction enables them to influence each other's culture. The U.S. is however the more dominant, which is why overall the traditional power relationship remains, unchanged by the films. This study will deepen our understanding of this relationship and avoid over-simplifying the interaction between the U.S. and Latin America.

Modernity and Globalization

The importance of Disney cartoons during this period is unique, and according to Gerard Raiti, the author of *The Disappearance of Disney Animated Propaganda: A Globalization Perspective*, has suggested that the success of American cartoon propaganda cannot be replicated today. (Raiti 2007, 153-155) It cannot be replicated because cartoons have become associated more with children since the creation of Saturday Morning Cartoons in the sixties. (Raiti 2007, 160) Disney's successful propaganda of the forties also could not be repeated in today's globalized world because Mickey Mouse has become a global character that, although linked with the United States, does not necessarily represent American culture anymore. (Raiti 2007, 157)

Although Raiti correctly identifies the strength and importance of nation states during the forties, he does not address the increase in contact between these nations. During this period more nations were in contact, primarily because of the need to have allies during the war. The problem with this period is that it is a time of transition, in which there exists fragments of modernity but at the same time the number of exchanges between countries were increasing and the space in which these contacts took place were beginning to become unclear. (Giddens 1990, 1-2)

A number of authors have discussed the contact zones in which these exchanges take place. Mary Louise Pratt and Gilbert Joseph and others have argued that they are not geographic places with stable significance but rather are sites of social spaces of exchange and negotiation. (Pratt 1992; Joseph 1998) An example of a contact zone is media, such as film. (Appadurai 1996, 35)

The Three Caballeros and *Saludos Amigos* represent the contact and exchanges that took place between Latin America and the United States in the forties. *The Three Caballeros*, in particular, illustrate the unclear boundaries of these contact zones with its use of animation and live action shots. According to J.P. Telotte this use of hybrid animation breaks down the boundary between fiction and reality. (Telotte 2007, 249-250) This results in an entertaining but confusing film according to Bosley Growther, from the New York Times who reviewed both films. (Growther, 1945) Both of Mr. Growther's reviews give the impression that the American audiences enjoyed the films, but did not understand the OCIAA's message and their significance.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Reception

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) will be a useful framework for this study because of its interest in "...the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance."(van Dijk 1993, 249) Teun A. van Dijk defines dominance in his paper as the exercise of social power by elites, institutions or group that results in social inequality. (van Dijk 1993, 249) Dominance may be obtained and reproduced through subtle, everyday forms of communication that may convince us that the dominance is natural. As a result, critical discourse analysts focus on discursive strategies, such as rhetorical figures, access and word choice (which can either be negative or positive), to analyze how different forms of communication legitimate control. CDA also makes use of the various concepts listed above, such as hegemony and "otherness", in its analysis of documents, which is why it will be a good framework to ground these concepts.

In addition, the question of access is particularly important in this case because it will illustrate the agency of Latin Americans. Some elites may have privileged access to certain forms of communication and as a result have more control over their production. For example, the access to parliamentary notes or government briefing notes may be restricted to government employees and officials. Film on the other hand is more accessible to the majority of the population, including those who are illiterate. Stuart Hall suggests in his article *Encoding/Decoding* that production and circulation of meaning is not as linear as previously suggested. (Hall 2005, 163) The producer of a given form of communication encodes certain messages and meanings that are to be decoded by the audience. The audience is the "receiver" of the message, but according to Stuart Hall they are also

the source because their interpretation or decoding of the message may be slightly different. (Hall 2005, 163-165)

Therefore, Latin Americans who watched *The Three Caballeros* and *Saludos Amigos* received the messages encoded in the films by Disney and the OCIAA but their decoding of the messages may have been very different from the intended message. According to Appadurai the further one is from the source of the media's production the more likely the audience are to construct their own interpretation that contradicts the intended message. (Appadurai 1996, 35) Consequently, Latin Americans are active participants in the production of meaning. According to Hall's theory the greater the difference between the producer and receiver in this communicative chain the more likely misunderstandings or "distortions" are to occur. (Hall 2005, 166)

It is very difficult, however, to assess how the films were decoded or understood by Latin American and American viewers. One thought was to look at movie reviews from both sides of the border, but the problem with this approach is it that the review reflects the opinion of the reviewer not a population as a whole. Consequently, this idea of coding and decoding of the film can only be alluded to in a theoretical way, but cannot be proven with evidence at this point. As a result, the focus will be more on concrete examples of who was involved in the production of the films, and what their role was in this process. There are concrete examples of Latin American elites, who were part of the local government or were artists who met with Walt Disney during his "goodwill tour" that were actively a part of the production of the two Disney films.

Design and Methodology

The objective of this research is to deepen our understanding of culture and power relations between the United States and Latin America during the nineteen-forties and to avoid the reductionist tendencies of scholars who have already analyzed this relationship. Due to the difficulty in measuring quantitatively this relationship and because this is more of an exploratory research to increase understanding the emphasis will be on qualitative research methods.

As already mentioned, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) will be applied to this research because of its use of language, rhetoric, symbols and meaning to analyze dominant discourses. CDA will be particularly useful to analyze the films because it will help to organize and identify important elements and words with different connotations. While watching the films I will identify words that have specific connotations to power and concepts such as "otherness". These words will

then be identified as either possessing a positive or negative connotation within these different groups.

Furthermore, I will have to do a content analysis of the film. Due to the fact that the films are multi-layered with language, music, and images it will be necessary to look at all three of these elements individually. As previously mentioned, language will be analyzed with the help of CDA and will be an important part of the discourse analysis of these two films. I will also analyze the behaviour of the characters in the film and the various images in the films, because they also contain certain meanings and connotations. For example, the way that a particular scene or character is drawn will have an affect on the content and message of the film. Lastly, the tone of the music and the producer of the music included in the films will need to be considered. The majority of the music included in the films was written and produced by the Latin American elites, who Walt Disney consulted; which supports the idea of Latin American agency. The music is also primarily traditional, which illustrates to American audiences how Latin America is different, and highlights the regions “otherness” in relation to the United States. Concepts such as hegemony, contact zones, and “otherness” will be used to both justify and lead my qualitative analysis of the films. My analysis will then be compared and triangulated with other scholars’ research to ensure that it is different from past analysis and properly supported.

Ethics Statement

Due to the fact that I am analyzing publicly available documents there should be minimal to no ethic concerns. I will not be submitting an ethics application because I am not dealing with human subjects or vulnerable populations. There may be some issues, however, with language that could result in a biased paper due to the fact that I will be limited and perhaps not capable of reading Latin American sources. Consequently, I will rely heavily on sources produced in the United States. If this is the case I will have to be upfront about the limitations of my research in the introduction section of my final dissertation. Also, in the event that I do archival research I will have to be respectful of the documents and the archives. I will not vandalize or steal documents from the archives.

Proposed Calendar

May-August 2012: First COOP Work term

September-December 2012: Continue research and courses

January-April 2013: Second COOP Work Term

January-April 2013: Continue Research and Proposal Work

April 2013: Find a reader

May 2013: Submit proposal

July 2013: Submit first draft of MRP

August 2013: Make corrections to draft

August 2013: Submit final copy of MRP

October 2013: Convocation

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