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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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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between culture and power while presenting aspects of the construction of American hegemony in the Latin American region in the first part of the Twentieth Century. 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 globe, among other cultural artefacts, have made the United States the purveyors of culture. This article looks at the United States success in exporting films to Latin America also thanks to their governmental "Good Neighbor Policy". The goal of the policy was to create Pan-American solidarity, and resulted in the creation of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA). The OCIAA coordinated with American filmmakers to produce films that would improve U.S. relations with Latin America. One of the OCIAA's biggest collaborators was Walt Disney, who produced *The Three Caballeros* (1945) and *Saludos Amigos* (1942). It is through a case study of these two films that questions of agency, representation, hegemony and the relationship between the United States and Latin America are explored. This case study of *The Three Caballeros* and *Saludos Amigos* is just the tip of the iceberg of the enduring and complex relationship between Hollywood, Washington and its impact on international relations, globalization.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The relationship between culture and politics has been increasingly studied over the past few 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 institutional 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).

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 example of this was the government of the United States in the forties, which used various resources, including media, to achieve cultural 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. The Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA) was created during this period to improve U.S. relations with Latin America and advance U.S. hegemony in the region.

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).

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).

1.2 Americanization

The United States has had a significant influence on popular culture and film worldwide. One needs only to look at the highest grossing films this past year to realize how important Hollywood is to the movie industry worldwide. One of the reasons why Hollywood has been so successful globally is that the film producers have mastered the art of making entertaining films that are highly visible and globally appealing (Cowen 2004, 75). The successful exportation of American films and the proliferation of cultural icons, such as McDonald's and Starbucks, around the globe have made the United States the purveyors of culture in the global system. However, the United States did not achieve this success alone; they rely on government intervention and on the support of the local elites, who have the money to purchase these cultural 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 2004, xii). 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.

From a cultural studies perspective there are two main debates about whether globalization is creating a homogenized culture or is fostering diversification. The homogenization argument can be attributed to Americanization, which implies that cultures around the world are becoming more Americanized. William H. Marling and other academics have questioned this approach.

Globalization has certainly increased the exchange of cultural products, such as film and art, but some of what we associate with being American is not, as Marling proves in his book *How "American" Is Globalization?*. Marling argues that "[g]lobalization looks disproportionately 'American' to Americans because when they travel they readily recognize familiar products and

components of their own lives” (Marling 2006, 80). In addition American firms, such as McDonalds, have to adapt to the local context and needs in order to be successful, and hire local staff; the only thing that remains American is the company logo. Even Hollywood films are not as American as we think; they are often filmed abroad with an international cast (Marling 2006, 18). Hollywood, itself, is not even American as it is internationally owned and operated, spending money and returning profits all over the globe (Marling 2006, 19).

This paper, however, will not focus on these current debates of Globalization, 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 how American is globalization.

1.3 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?

2.0 Theoretical Framework and Methodology

2.1 Approaches and Concepts

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 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 chapter will address a few of these approaches to illustrate how they are applicable to an analysis of *Saludos Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros* and 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 the 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.

2.2 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). 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). Ideas are "...understood as intersubjective meanings as well as collective images of world order" (Bieler & Morton 2003). 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 cultural industries 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

Nazi influence 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 manoeuvres rather than forceful armed intervention (Kramer 1981, 77).

The United States effectively used film to convince Latin Americans 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”.

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). 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. 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.

2.3 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 (Siwi, 7; Adams 2007, 294). 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 was very particular in what he chose 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 Jose 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).

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, 1-2). 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.

2.4 Comparing the Analysis of other 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, 124, Burton 2007, 229). 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.

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 America, thus creating an imperial and paternalistic relationship. 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, 230-231).

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

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.

2.5 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*, 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 and Donald Duck have become global characters that, although linked with the United States, do 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).

2.6 Contact Zones

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 resulted in an entertaining but confusing film according to Bosley Growther, a reviewer 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.

2.7 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.

2.8 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. Furthermore, I will do a content analysis of the films. 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. 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 with the help of Latin American artists, who Disney's team 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.

3.0 Historical Context

3.1 Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor Policy"

Before discussing the analysis of the two films it is important to discuss the historical context, which enabled their creation; this includes a discussion of the Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor" Policy and the work of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs during the period. The United States made it clear prior to the twentieth century that it considered Latin America an important region. The Monroe Doctrine stated that Latin America was part of the United States "sphere of influence" and attempted to keep European influences in the region at bay. Theodore Roosevelt strengthened this doctrine by creating the "Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, "...which declared that the United States had the right to intervene in the nations of Latin America if instability in the region threatened order and American interests or if the nations to the south failed to meet their international obligations" (Schmitz 2007, 10). As a result, the U.S. participated in several armed interventions in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico and Nicaragua (Schmitz 2007, 11). Unfortunately, these armed interventions did not create stable governments or secure American interests; instead they fostered resentment and anti-American sentiments in the region. In response to these negative perceptions Theodore Roosevelt agreed to the Clark Memorandum, written by Rueben Clark in 1928, which stated that the United States should put an end to military intervention in the region (Schmitz 2007, 16).

After World War I and the beginning of the Great Depression there were a number of Americans who wanted to remain out of the European conflict in the late thirties and wanted to revert to a protectionist approach to the market. As a result a non-interventionist approach to foreign politics was adopted. Another group of Americans, however, advocated for the U.S. government to expand foreign trade in order to resuscitate the failing economy during the thirties. Due to these two opposing

viewpoints the New Deal was inconsistent in its efforts to expand “hemispheric commerce” (Gellman 1979, 40). American bondholders during this period worsened the situation when they turned to the U.S. government in the hopes of collecting the debt owed to them by Latin American nations, who had defaulted on their loans (Gellman 1979, 40). The Hoover administration refused to help bondholders collect the debt (Gellman 1979, 40). A number of conferences and bilateral discussions were organized during this period in an attempt to resolve these issues.

Consequently, one of Franklin Roosevelt’s main objectives in the late thirties was to increase trade with Latin America, both to stimulate the economy and to compensate for the lost trade from Europe. Britain during this period had granted preferential trade to Commonwealth nations (Gellman 1979, 47). Germany and Japan also had preferential trade agreements; for example Brazil granted preferential trade to Germany (Gellman 1979, 47). As a result the United States needed to focus on finding new trading partners, and Latin America who was also losing trade from Europe appeared to be the best solution. United States exports to Latin American rose from an average of 18.3 percent between 1936 and 1938 to 19.9 percent in 1939; and imports rose slightly during the same period from 23 percent to 23.7 percent (Gellman 1979, 58). Latin American imports from the U.S. rose from 32.8 percent to 40.5 percent during the same period, while their trade decreased with the United Kingdom and Germany (Gellman 1979, 58). These figures illustrate the increased dependence of Latin America on the United States market.

A number of U.S. oil and petroleum companies, such as Standard Oil, also had vested interests in Latin America. A number of Latin American governments including the Mexican and Bolivian government confiscated American oil companies land holdings (Gellman 1979, 49-50). The U.S government and oil companies resolved these issues with the governments’ that had confiscated lands through discussions. The end result was mutually beneficial agreements that prevented the

majority of land confiscations, and when U.S. oil companies' lands were confiscated the home countries government compensated American corporations (Gellman 1979, 52-56).

Although, the United States foreign policy was non-interventionist, the main concerns of the U.S. government were to increase trade, in order to help stimulate the economy, and remove the Axis powers influence in Latin America. Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor Policy" suggested that US interests in Latin America, such as oil and trade, would best be served by mutual discussions and peaceful manoeuvres rather than forceful, armed intervention (Kramer 1981, 77). As a result, the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs was created to achieve the goals of the "Good Neighbor Policy".

3.2 Combatting Axis Propaganda in Latin America

Germany was already well advanced in the dissemination of its propaganda in Latin America. By the late thirties Germany had successfully banned all American movies and other cultural goods; "...they also revolutionized the use of mass communication and launched media offensives that paralleled their military strength" (Serviddio 2010, 485). They actively promoted Nazi propaganda films and built radio transmitters to broadcast Nazi propaganda throughout Latin America. The U.S. government feared that the Nazi propaganda would mobilize German sympathizers in the region (Serviddio 2010, 485). As a result the Division of Cultural Relations (CR) was created in 1938 by Franklin Roosevelt to make cultural policies that were compatible with larger foreign policy goals and American values "...such as free market, capitalism, consumerism, individualism, democracy and freedom" (Serviddio 2010, 486). The Division of Cultural Relations had a small budget of seventy-five thousand dollars but it managed to sponsor student and professional exchanges, organize art exhibits, and build American Libraries and cultural centers (Serviddio 2010, 486).

Nelson Rockefeller noticed during a business trip for Standard Oil in 1939 the significant presence of German firms and immigrants in Latin America; he felt these groups were spreading Nazi ideals. Consequently, he felt that the Division of Cultural Relations was failing to curb Nazi influence; as a result he encouraged Roosevelt to create an agency dedicated to spreading pro-American messages in Latin America (Serviddio 2010, 486).

Rockefeller's suggestion resulted in the creation of the "Office of the Coordinator of Commercial and Cultural Relations between the American Republics"; which was created August 16 1940 and later renamed the "Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs" (OCIAA) (Kramer 1981, 73). Nelson Rockefeller was named the coordinator of this new office. The OCIAA was the main agency in the United States government in charge of creating cultural policies. The OCIAA organized many cultural exchanges between the United States and Latin America to improve relations. "All cultural activities were, according to the [OCIAA], forms of propagation of friendship or of enmity, as well as another medium of communicating between the peoples and strengthening bonds" (Bosemberg 2009, 7).

The OCIAA created cultural productions that would convey more positive images of the "other" to Latin Americans and Americans. For example, in film Latin Americans were often depicted as lazy and were the villains. There were also cultural incoherencies in these films with Brazilians speaking Spanish and other Latin Americans speaking Portuguese (Siwi, 7). So the OCIAA was focused on rectifying these negative images. The cultural products produced by the OCIAA for Latin America not only conveyed positive images of Americans but also demonstrated the military, industrial, and institutional strength of the United States and its capacity to defend itself and the Americas (Cramer 2006, 795). North of the Border "...the [OCIAA] sought to inspire a 'sympathetic understanding' of Latin America and a positive interest in the region as an

object of study, travel, or investment” (Cramer 2006, 795). It also wanted to convince Americans of the region’s strategic and economic importance for the United States.

Gisela Cramer and Ursula Prutch, authors of the article *Nelson A. Rockefeller’s Office of Inter-American Affairs (1940-1946) and Record Group 229*, discovered while looking at documents pertaining to the OCIAA in the archives that internal memoranda explicitly discussed how the OCIAA was to successfully convey more positive images of the U.S. to Latin Americans (Cramer 2006, 796). For example, the internal documents listed how to convey to Latin American elites that the United States was neither devoid of culture nor spiritually inferior to Europe, as was the popular belief. The internal memoranda also discussed “...how to garner the goodwill of deeply Catholic circles and leaders of thought, or how to attract the educated elites into North American circuits of the arts and sciences” (Cramer 2006, 796).

According to a report made by the OCIAA the establishment of the agency was directly linked to the German presence in Latin America and perceived danger of Nazi influence in the region. The report indicated that Latin America was important to Germany because of its natural resources, as a market for German products, and a place for German immigrants (Bosemberg 2009, 2-3). German propaganda aroused antagonism against the U.S. in Latin America, and was disseminated through German firms, schools, radio and films (Bosemberg 2009, 3). Due to the United States need for Latin America as an ally and trade partner the main objective of the OCIAA was to convince Latin Americans that their interests were linked with the U.S. and not the Axis. According to Rockefeller the task was to convince them of the “U.S. Credo”, which promised “...a better standard of living, greater personal security, and more individual freedom” (Bosemberg 2009, 3-4).

3.3 Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs

The office had three divisions: the Commercial Division and Financial Division; the Division of Communications; and the Division of Cultural Relations. The Commercial Division and Financial Division were interested in the commercial, financial and economic situation of Latin America, and in bringing government agencies and private corporations concerns together (Bosemberg 2009, 5). Initially, the OCIAA helped compile the “Proclaimed List of Certain Blocked Nationals” (the Black List) as part of a program to remove agents and sales representatives of U.S. firms who were believed to be pro-Axis (Bosemberg 2009, 5). Later this practice of blacklisting would develop into an operation to eradicate firms and corporations, particularly involved in transport and communication systems, owned by German nationals (Bosemberg 2009, 6). The OCIAA also persuaded American firms to buy Latin American products and to provide loans through the Export-Import Bank to encourage entrepreneurship (Bosemberg 2009, 6). These economic and political objectives, however, could only be realized with the use of cultural activities and communications (Tota 2009, 29).

At the beginning the communication division of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs was focused on disseminating information, through radio, news columns, and other forms of press, to counteract Axis propaganda and to provide more accurate information about what was going on in the U.S and Europe than the German propaganda “lies” (Bosemberg 2009, 7). The Division of Communications also helped increase the number of American radio programs aired in Latin America.

In early 1941 U.S. radio programming in a large metropolitan area in Latin America accounted for only an hour and half of airtime on a weekly basis. The OCIAA increased U.S. broadcasting to forty hours daily, or two hundred and eighty hours of radio airtime a week (Ogilvie 1945, 107). In addition, these programs were broadcasted in Spanish, Portuguese and English to

radio audiences in Latin America. This increase in U.S. radio programming was achieved by building twenty-two new transmitters to support the already existing fourteen short-wave broadcasting transmitters (Ogilvie 1945, 107). The Office of War Information and the Office of Inter-American Affairs shared the thirty-six short-wave broadcasting transmitters. The Office of War Information was allocated two-thirds of the transmitter time, while the OCIAA was given the remaining time (Ogilvie 1945, 107).

One of the biggest advantages to short-wave broadcasting is that it was the only medium not censored and monitored by the receiving country (Ogilvie 1945, 109). It also has the ability to reach a large audience, including illiterates. Additionally, the OCIAA transcribed their broadcasts and sent them to local radio stations in the outlying areas of Latin America to be reread; consequently reaching an even larger audience (Ogilvie 1945, 111). A number of OCIAA radio programs were also produced locally in Latin America. An example of a locally produced program was the radio programs that taught English language classes. A U.S. advertiser recognized the importance and effectiveness of this program; consequently he took it over and broadcast English lessons in sixteen Latin American countries (Ogilvie 1945, 112).

During the early years of the war only a handful of Latin American publications reported the successes of the allies. Hitler and Mussolini dominated the headlines in most newspapers (Siwi, 11). As a result, the Press Section of the OCIAA tried to persuade Latin American publications to run pro-American stories, and as an incentive the OCIAA offered subsidies to sympathetic publications (Siwi, 11). The Press section also published a few of its own magazines in Latin America; for example *Em Guarda* and *Seleções* in Brazil (Siwi, 11). These magazines were liberal and enjoyed a wide readership in Brazil. Consequently, they were very attractive to American companies seeking to sell products like cars and Coca-Cola to Latin American consumers (Siwi, 11). Not only did these advertisements sell American products, but also the advantages of the

“American way of life”. The OCIAA wanted Latin Americans’ to buy into the “American dream”; as a result companies that advertised in OCIAA publications received tax breaks (Siwi, 11).

Another important division of the OCIAA was the Art division headed by René d’Harnoncourt, which collaborated with the Museum of Modern Art to exhibit pieces of art from Latin America (Serviddio 2010, 485). During the twenties and thirties a number of Latin American artists, including Diego Rivera, were commissioned to paint murals in the U.S. and the Museum of Modern Art exhibited a number of their works (Serviddio 2010, 481). A number of Americans were displeased by the fact that foreigners were being paid to do such work under the “New Deal”, particularly when there were so many unemployed Americans. In addition, muralists, particularly Mexican artists, began to paint murals with politically charged messages that criticized capitalism, colonialism and the United States (Serviddio 2010, 483). This more politically active art was not considered authentic Latin American art. Americans had certain expectations that authentic Latin American art should depict the region as a fixed imaginary place rooted in a pre-Columbian past (Serviddio 2010, 487). The OCIAA continued to promote this perception by only exhibiting artwork that depicted Latin America as a place untouched by progress and only inhabited by the indigenous people that depended on traditional agricultural activities for sustenance (Serviddio 2010, 482).

In 1940 Cândido Portinari, a Brazilian artist was given a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (Serviddio 2010, 484). In 1941 he was commissioned by both Brazil and the United States to paint a series of murals for the Hispanic Foundation of the Library of Congress (Serviddio 2010, 484). The Rockefeller Foundation funded the murals. Portinari painted four murals that addressed the five hundred year experience of inter-cultural contact in the Americas in an overtly positive manner (Serviddio 2010, 484). The four murals were called: *Discovery of the Land*, *Entry into the Forest*, *Teaching of the Indians*, and *Mining Gold* (Serviddio 2010, 484). “From a cultural

point of view, Portinari's art was an ideal representative of the distinctive image of Latin America already created: an uncivilized world, where ancient traditions prevailed and people lived according to them" (Serviddio 2010, 484). Artists whose work was more abstract and modern in style were rejected as inauthentic and denied placement in American art exhibitions, in places like the Museum of Modern Art (Serviddio 2010, 484-485).

Film was also a very effective method used by the OCIAA to convey its pro-American messages to Latin America because like radio 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). This is particularly true in the case of Disney films, such as *The Three Caballeros*, which was produced under the auspices of the OCIAA. The film is very funny and makes the audience laugh, which makes the viewers more relaxed and less aware of any hidden messages. The use of film by the OCIAA will be discussed in greater detail in chapter four of this dissertation, as it is the main focus of this study.

4.0 The Film Industry North and South of the Border

4.1 Hollywood during the Inter-War Years

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 impression of being neutral. (Raiti 2007, 156) This is why the OCIAA focused on producing films that would adhere to the “Good Neighbor Policy”. The task of producing and distributing films fell to the Motion Picture Division of the OCIAA, which collaborated with large studios in Hollywood. (Adams 2007, 292) During the Inter-War years, however, Hollywood studios faced a number of changes.

Hollywood’s relationship with Washington was changing, as the big studios found themselves in the middle of a heated debate between isolationists and interventionist groups in the United States (Welky 2008, 4). Today we are used to seeing celebrities like Bono or Richard Gere advocating for important political and humanitarian issues; this was not the case in the 1930s particularly not in Hollywood. The films made in Hollywood were expected to be optimistic, noncontroversial and entertaining (Welky 2008, 7). Critics of Hollywood activism recalled the industry’s actions during World War I as evidence of the dangers of propaganda. “Major studios had promoted Woodrow Wilson’s drive for 100 percent Americanism and endorsed his assertion that the war would make the world safe for democracy” (Welky 2008, 7). Most Americans during the Depression era viewed the Great War as a tragic mistake (Welky 2008, 7).

Despite these concerns Hollywood made anti-fascist films, which depicted Germans and Japanese as enemies, as well as films that build patriotism in the States. David Welky argues in his book “The Moguls and the Dictators: Hollywood and the coming of World War II” that although it is impossible to quantify Hollywood’s influence on American thought, it certainly has had an effect

(Welky 2008, 4-5). He argues that during the thirties and forties Hollywood films helped prepare Americans for their entry into World War II after the bombing of Pearl Harbour. Films made during this period not only promoted the importance of national unity in the face of a foreign threat, but also actively encouraged the entry of the United States into the European conflict (Woll 1980, 57).

Hollywood studios also faced an antitrust lawsuit in 1938 that threatened the big studios financial stability (Welky 2008, 8). The Justice Department was running a campaign to stamp out monopolies during the thirties. The major seven studios practiced “block booking” and “blind selling”; distributor sold films in groups to the theater owners without any knowledge of the merits of the films or the ability to reject any films in the package (Woll 1980, 57). Government lawyers eventually consented to settlement that left the studio system intact. This decision was based largely on “...Roosevelt’s desire to keep Hollywood’s propaganda power on his side” (Welky 2008, 8).

Hollywood was also beginning to lose revenue from Europe by the late thirties. This forced studios to focus on bolstering its relations with its most important foreign outlet, Great Britain, and to focus on building closer ties with Latin American Countries (Welky 2008, 8). It could be argued that the need to find new markets to sell and distribute films was Hollywood’s main reason for collaborating with the OCIAA.

4.2 Hollywood’s previous experiences in Latin America

Although Central and South American countries lacked movie theatres, making them a less than ideal outlet, they were Hollywood’s best opportunity to off set the potentially crippling loss of the European market (Welky 2008, 105). Latin American countries also had their own film industry, which had developed alongside the American and European industry (Woll 1980, 77). This was particularly the case for Mexico, Brazil and Argentina who had well-established industries. The majority of other South American countries, however, did not begin experimenting

with film until the early twentieth century; European immigrants who had been exposed to the film industry in Europe were often the producers of these first films (Woll 1980, 77).

Hollywood was also distributing and producing films for Latin America before Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor Policy". It was during this period that the original derogatory film stereotypes of Latin Americans were established. During the period of silent films when Latin American locales or people were included it was generally in the context of a Western. These films emphasized action and violence (Woll 1980, 7). The villains were generally Mexican bandits who were dark-skinned, swarthy mestizo "greasers" (Hershfield 2001, 141). It was not until the Mexican Revolution that Hollywood began to receive complaints from Mexicans about how they were portrayed on the big screen. Despite these complaints it was not until World War I that Latin Americans were replaced as villains by the German Kaiser and Huns (Woll 1980, 13). This improved portrayal of Latin America was short-lived as the old derogatory portrayals returned at the end of the war.

During the 1920s Hollywood continued to pursue Latin America as another market for their films. However, by 1919 the Mexican government sent a formal letter to film producers protesting how they were portrayed in film (Woll 1980, 17). The Government felt that the films did not depict typical conditions in Mexico; instead they focused on squalor and primitivism. The letter did little to change Hollywood practices; consequently as of 1922 Mexico decided to ban all films that portrayed its people or country unfavourably (Woll 1980, 17). This threat was later followed-up by a policy to not only ban the offending film but all subsequent films produced by the same company. Other countries, such as Panama, followed suit and began to ban offending Hollywood films (Woll 1980, 17-18). Latin American countries supported each other on the embargo of Hollywood films with reciprocal treaties (Woll 1980, 34).

In addition, Latin American countries were not only offended by these Hollywood films but

were also fearful of American imperialism. They feared that the Hollywood films would inundate the market and crowd out domestically produced works (Woll 1980, 65). As a result, Latin American governments encouraged domestic production as a means of fostering cultural independence. Mexico almost passed a quota law, and Brazil provided tax credits for domestic studios (Welky 2008, 103).

Hollywood's response to these actions was to begin filming in Argentina and Brazil the same formulaic films with the typical Latin American bandit as before. When that no longer worked producers started to create fictitious countries so that they could continue using the stock Latin villains and bandits in their films, but avoid offending the inhabitants of actual Latin American countries (Woll 1980, 19-20). This manner of making films reveals that Hollywood believed that Latin America was a uniform entity, unaffected by cultural, geographical or social differences (Woll, 1980, 32). The same stock Latin American characters could be transposed from one country to another unchanged. These fictitious countries hardly fooled anyone, as they were clearly intended to represent Latin America. Consequently, when sound films began to appear in the early 1930s Hollywood producers and Latin American producers were very much at odds with each other. By the mid-1930s Hollywood began to abandon films set in Latin America, partly because they did not want to incite any more resentment from the region and because the European market was more profitable, with more theatres and money (Welky 2008, 104).

4.3 Latin American Stereotypes

Latin Americans similar to other groups have been portrayed on the big screen by several different stereotypes that have been created and perpetuated by Hollywood studios. According to Charles Ramirez Berg stereotyping is rampant in film and "...slips effortlessly into the existing hegemony" (Berg 1997, 104). Stereotyping is a tool of the dominant class which functions in movies and media to maintain the status quo, "...by representing dominant groups as 'naturally'

empowered and marginal groups as disenfranchised” (Berg 1997, 111). Latin Americans prior to the “Good Neighbor Policy” were mostly characterized by three different kinds of stereotypes. These stereotypes according to Charles Ramirez Berg marked Latin Americans as a symbol of ethnic exclusion (Berg 1997, 111).

The most popular and earliest stereotype was that of the bandit/villain, whose origins can be traced to the era of silent films (Berg 1997, 113). He is characterized as dark skinned, dirty, and unkempt. The bandit is treacherous, shifty and dishonest. The bandit’s reactions are emotional, irrational and generally violent; his intelligence is fairly limited allowing the American hero to easily thwart his plans (Berg 1997, 113). The bandit’s female counterpart is the “Harlot” who like the bandit generally plays a secondary role in westerns. The “Harlot” is characterized as being hot-tempered, lusty, and of easy virtue. She is a highly sexualized character who is always in need of a man (Berg 1997, 113).

The second type of Latin American stereotype present in films, including to some degree those made during the period of the “Good Neighbor Policy”, was that of the “male buffoon” and “female clown”. These characters similar to the bandit and harlot are secondary characters to the American hero, however instead of being depicted as evil they are ridiculed for what makes them different (Berg 1997, 114). This character is simple-minded and fails to master English, resulting in a kind-of broken English being spoken (Berg 1997,114). The “female clown” in particular is characterized by her explosive emotions and inability to restrain her baser instincts, however unlike the “Harlot” her sexuality is tempered by her comedic role (Berg 1997, 114). The role that Carmen Miranda played in the Latin American musicals of 1940s, wearing the multi-coloured costumes and fruit-covered hats, is a good example of the “female clown” stereotype.

The stereotypes of the “Latin Lover” and the “Dark Lady”, which depict Latin Americans as great lovers, compensated for the negative stereotypes listed above. The “Latin Lover” was more

of a character type epitomized by Rudolph Valentino, rather than a geographical region (Berg 1997, 115). The “Latin Lover” was often of Italian descent rather than Latin American. The trademarks of the “Latin Lover” are his swarthy complexion, dark hair, suavity, sensuality, and tenderness (Woll 1980 23; Berg 1997, 115). Despite his good qualities he generally loses the heroine when she meets an American stranger. The “Dark Lady” is similarly characterized by her good qualities, which attracts the attention of the American hero. She is generally aristocratic, very mysterious, and a highly virtuous woman (Berg 1997, 115).

Many other stereotypes for Latin Americans existed, such as the lazy peasant but the six listed above were the most common in film prior to and in some cases including the period of the “Good Neighbor Policy”. In addition, Latin American actors and characters were divided, and continue to be according to Clara Rodriguez, by their perceived colour and class. European looking types became major actors, where as darker less European looking actors portrayed bandits and extras. In other words the villains, including the bandits, were portrayed as being poorer and darker than the “Latin Lover” character that is part of the upper class and conforms physically to European prototypes (Rodriguez 1997, 81). Hollywood’s collaboration with OCIAA focused on creating more positive stereotypes of Latin Americans that would support the “Good Neighbor Policy”.

4.4 Hollywood’s collaboration with the OCIAA

The Motion Picture Division of the OCIAA collaborated with large studios in Hollywood, including Disney, and a number of other small producers across the country (Adams 2007, 290). The collaboration between the OCIAA and Hollywood was made possible by Rockefeller’s connections, including John Hay Whitney who was a prominent millionaire, who had financed many films including *Gone With The Wind* (Adams 2007, 290). Mr. Whitney had a number of important connections with big Hollywood producers; as a result Rockefeller put him in charge of

the Motion Picture Division of the OCIAA. The Motion Picture Division worked with large studios to produce information campaigns for both sides of the border, as well as produce feature films and newsreels that were in line with the “Good Neighbor Policy” (Adams 2007, 290). The priority of the motion picture section of the OCIAA was to create new symbols expressing the importance of hemispheric unity between the United States and Latin America (Woll 1980, 56). The OCIAA sponsored showings of Hollywood films with vigorous statements of the democratic way in American embassies and Ministries throughout Latin America (Woll 1980, 56).

Seth Fein discusses extensively the production of propaganda films for Mexico in his article *Everyday Forms of Transnational Collaboration: U.S. Film Propaganda in Cold War Mexico*. The United States and Mexican government collaborated to distribute and show American propaganda films, which depicted the United States in a more positive light, because there were concerns of anti-American sentiments in Mexico (Fein 1998, 405-406). There were other propaganda films made with Disney-type cartoons distributed throughout rural Mexico to demonstrate the importance of hygiene and to teach good agricultural practices (Fein 1998, 402). Seth Fein suggests that these films not only improved relations between the United States and Mexico but also advanced the project of modernity; in short they attempted to convince the Mexican population to emulate Americans (Fein 1998, 403).

An example of one of these short films produced by Disney for the OCIAA is the film *Planning for Good Eating* (1944). The film is meant to teach both the family in the film and the audience what people need to eat in order to ensure good health. The main character of the film is a father, whose name is “Careless Charlie” (*Planning for Good Eating* 1944). The use of the adjective “careless” with Charlie’s name has a particularly negative connotation. Although it is not explicitly stated the way that Charlie and his family are drawn suggests that they are Latin Americans. In addition, their home and farm are clearly situated in a rural area of one of the many

countries in Latin America, although the exact location is never specified. The family's home is drawn to look run down with unplanted fields and a dead tree by their house, all of which suggests that both the family and farm are not doing well (*Planning for Good Eating* 1944). The narrator continues to describe the diet of Charlie and his family as unsatisfactory. He blames the "run-down condition" of Charlie and his family on the fact that they eat the same food everyday: corn bread and beans. It is okay for animals to eat the same foods all the time, but not for man according to the narrator (*Planning for Good Eating* 1944). Charlie and his family do not know any better according to the narrator, but it is insinuated that it is Charlie's fault for being careless (*Planning for Good Eating* 1944). The film educates Charlie's family and the audience about what man needs to eat to sustain himself. Man needs three different types of food according to the film: vegetables and fruit; animal products; and grains and roots (*Planning for Good Eating* 1944). The narrator continues to repeat this same message for the last half of the film, which perhaps suggests that the OCIAA and American Government did not believe that the audience (which would have been primarily in Latin America) would have understood the message the first time. At the end of the film Charlie and his family have learned to plant a variety of foods and raise animals for meat; he is no longer called "Careless Charlie" but rather "Careful Charlie" as he is now able to provide the proper foods for his family (*Planning for Good Eating* 1944).

Similar to the other divisions of the OCIAA the Motion Picture Division rewarded good behaviour. For example, Mexico helped the OCIAA and American producers a great deal during this period. They provided expertise, studio space and equipment for American films that needed to be filmed on-site in Mexico (Ryan 1983, 58). The Mexican film industry also proved to be an invaluable help in the production of Spanish language films. The OCIAA and United States Government rewarded Mexican filmmakers with film equipment and helped build studios (Falicov 2006, 258). They also provided Mexico with a large supply of film stock, while restricting the

supply to other Latin American countries such as Argentina (Falicov 2006, 248 & 258). Film stock was restricted from Argentina because the country officially declared itself neutral, which posed a threat in the minds of Americans (Falicov 2006, 248). German propaganda films were shown in Argentinean theaters, while films produced by the allies, such as Charlie Chaplin's film *The Great Dictator* were censored (Falicov 2006, 250). Consequently, the Argentinean film industry had to rely on the black market to purchase film stock, which enabled the Mexican film industry to surpass Argentina's struggling film industry (Falicov 2006, 258).

John Hay Whitney was convinced that Hollywood films were important in "...the campaign of winning the hearts and minds of Latin Americas and of convincing Americans of the benefits of Pan-American friendship" (O'Neil 2001, 360). He felt, however, to be truly effective Hollywood would have to incorporate more Latin American talent into its movies. This introduced Americans to entertainers like Carmen Miranda. Although more Latin Americans were included in films, they maintained a subordinate role to American entertainers (O'Neil 2001, 361).

Hollywood formalized its relationship with the OCIAA in March 1941 when it reconstituted the Freeman Committee into the Motion Picture Society for the Americas (MPSA) (Welky 2008, 268). The movie producer Walter Wanger, who was a staunch interventionist that believed the film industry should openly denounce dictatorships and promote Americanism, led the MPSA. He went so far as to invite Franklin D. Roosevelt as a speaker to the Academy Awards Ceremony in 1940 (Welky 2008, 260-261) The Wagner led MPSA became Hollywood's primary liaison with the OCIAA. The MPSA and OCIAA met on a weekly basis to discuss Latin American issues (Welky 2008, 268).

The OCIAA, however, wanted more from Hollywood, but it was unclear how more could be accomplished. Consequently Rockefeller's office distributed questionnaires to Latin American experts and public relations experts to determine how best to promote goodwill. Their response to

the questionnaire reached a clear consensus that they needed to send stars (Welky 2008, 268). Armed with the results of the questionnaire Franklin D. Roosevelt's son James sold Will Hays, the head of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association of American (MPPDA)², on a star-studded trip to Mexico (Welky 2008, 268). Will Hays approached the Motion Picture Society of America (MPSA) and OCIAA to line up actors and arrange security details with the state departments. This group of actors and actresses, known as the "Goodwill Fiesta" left for Mexico April 11 1941 (Welky 2008, 268). The "Goodwill Fiesta" included such actors as Desi Arnaz, Lucille Ball, and Mickey Rooney (Welky 2008, 268). The success of this expedition prompted the OCIAA and MPSA to ask Walt Disney to visit South America.

John Hay Whitney wanted each studio to send two stars to Latin America every year after the "Goodwill Fiesta", which would have cost them upwards of \$500,000 (Welky 2008, 271). In addition studio executives saw little return for their \$35,000 investment in the "Goodwill Fiesta" (Welky 2008, 271). It was unclear if these expeditions actually increased profits. In Mexico the theatres' profits actually fell during the "Goodwill Fiesta". The Hollywood magazine *Variety* speculated that this may have happened because Mexicans could get a better show for free from the visiting stars (Welky 2008, 271). Furthermore, the foreign department were concerned that light-hearted films they were producing were out of place during such serious times; "...South Americans might interpret them as evidence of North American frivolity" (Welky 2008, 271). In response to these issues John Whitney recommended that each studio assign a Latin American expert with the authority to veto productions that might negatively affect hemispheric friendship (Welky 2008, 271).

² The MPPDA was created in 1922 by the presidents of the major motion picture studios to resist government censorship of American films. It was a self-imposed censorship board. (MPAA 2011)

4.5 Addison Durland: Latin American Expert

In conjunction with these trips south of the border John Whitney strongly encouraged Will Hays to hire a Latin American specialist for the Production Code Administration (O’Neil 2001, 360). The job of this Latin American specialist was to read movie scripts to ensure that they were not offensive to Latin Americans. Addison Durland, who had previously worked for NBC’s Spanish-language division, was chosen to fill this position for the Production Code Administration in 1941 (O’Neil 2001, 361; Bregent-Heald 2010, 271).

Durland was born in Cuba in 1903 to John Durland, a New York Banker, and Carmela Nieto, a Cuban journalist. He spent his formative years in Havana, Cuba and spent a number of his adult years in the United States (O’Neil 2001, 361). It was his hybrid identity and experience living in both regions that made him the obvious choice for the job. Although Addison Durland was from Latin America, it is difficult to call him an expert as he is Cuban and every country in Latin America is culturally different. However, he did have the advantage of being able to speak Spanish and Portuguese, and he did have previous experience as the chief for NBC’s Spanish-language division.

His job was to make sure that Hollywood’s Latin-themed films did not offend the Latin American censor boards, “...whose members held the keys to film distribution in their respective countries” (O’Neil 2001, 361). Hollywood producers felt that they would achieve success if they portrayed Latin America more accurately. They felt that a more realistic portrayal of the countries and its people would lead to improved relations with their neighbours to the south, and an increase in movie ticket sales. Addison, however, realized that if they portrayed certain aspects of Latin America too faithfully that they would upset their largest audience and those who controlled the distribution of their movies (O’Neil 2001, 366-368).

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. These letters were written overwhelmingly by upper class, Latin American men (O'Neil 2001, 368). It is likely that 'moviegoers' shared the same views as the authors of these letters. Durland's censorship of films 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, 368). 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.

Although Mr. Durland was concerned with appeasing the Latin American elites, who were in charge of distributing the films in their respective countries, they remained subordinate to Americans in films. Latin Americans were portrayed as "...fun-seekers, flirts, and flamboyant dancers" (O'Neil 2001, 366). As a result Latin Americans were not considered for more serious roles. This compromise between the expectations of American and Latin American audiences will be discussed further when we examine the two Disney movies in detail.

5.0 Walt Disney: *Walt and El Grupo* South of the Border

5.1 Mickey Mouse Propaganda

Walt Disney has produced short cartoons and films with his beloved characters Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and Goofy for decades; however, the cartoons that he made during the Second World War were particularly unique because the studio were all but owned by the U.S. government. Disney was known for mismanaging his finances but due to a number of miscalculations including spending over four times the allocated budget for *Fantasia* (1940), which achieved only modest success; and a large strike at his Burbank studio that left fewer than half of his employees on the payroll by the end of 1941 Disney was in serious financial trouble (Raiti 2007, 157). As a result Disney accepted a contract from the U.S. government to make patriotic propaganda films for the U.S. military. In addition, “[t]he Disney Studios were...in proximity to military manufacturing behemoth, Lockheed Martin, and this physical closeness...” helped the U.S. government to collaborate with Disney (Raiti 2007, 157). These contracts enabled Disney to salvage his studio during the war years and entrench his marquee characters into American patriotic culture (Raiti 2007, 157). Between 1941 and 1945 Disney produced approximately 32 short films as well several education and instructional films for the U.S. government (Raiti 2007, 157).

Gerard Raiti, the author of the article *The Disappearance of Disney Animated Propaganda: A Globalization Perspective*, argues that the films *Saludos Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros* are also examples of U.S. propaganda from the period. However, instead of being overt, participatory propaganda like other wartime shorts, they are much softer and are focused on coaxing the American public to foster good sentiments for Latin America (Raiti 2007, 159). The films do not ask audiences to take action like other propaganda films that called for the public to purchase war

bonds or to enlist. The two Disney films attempt to create positive portrayals of the misrepresented people of Latin America. Raiti argues that the films are propagandistic because they advocate a political agenda of cooperation through a one sided message (Raiti 2007, 159).

5.2 Walt and El Grupo

Walt Disney was sent on a subsidized “Good Will Tour” of Latin America in 1941 by the American government (Kaufman 1997, 262). 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) This resulted in the production of two key films: *Saludos Amigos* (1942) and *The Three Caballeros* (1945). (*Walt & El Grupo* 2008)

The OCIAA requested that Disney visit South America after the success of the “Goodwill Fiesta”. The request worked well with Disney’s existing commitments to the American Government to make war propaganda films. Rockefeller and Whitney Hay were instrumental in the hiring of Walt Disney as they felt he would be able to deliver the message of democracy and friendship below the Rio Grande (Woll 1980, 55). Whitney claimed that Disney would be able to show the truth about the “American way”, another executive producer proclaimed him “...the greatest ambassador of all time...” because people around the world recognize and love Disney’s characters (Woll 1980, 55). As a result both men felt that Latin Americans would believe Disney’s message of Americanism (Woll 1980, 55). Walt Disney initially refused to go on a goodwill tour, but when the OCIAA asked him to visit Latin America to not only spread goodwill but also to collect material for several short films that the Government would pay for, he agreed.

Walt Disney commissioned a significant number of studio writers and animators to accompany him to search out subjects in Latin America appropriate for their type of films. This group referred themselves as “El Grupo”, a name that has been referenced in a recent documentary

called *Walt and El Grupo* (2008). Disney took on no financial risk in this project, as the OCIAA guaranteed against any losses he may incur from making Latin American themed movies.

Walt Disney and his team visited a number of Latin American countries including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay during the fall of 1941. Some members of *El Grupo* also travelled to Bolivia and Peru (Welky 2008, 270). They met with musicians, artists and other cultural experts from the various countries they visited. These Latin American artists provided Disney with the material he needed to produce the films that the OCIAA had requested (*Walt & El Grupo* 2008). The documentary *Walt and El Grupo* illustrates that Walt Disney was primarily shown traditional culture by the Latin Americans he consulted. For example, Florencio Molina Campos, an Argentinean artist, introduced Walt Disney to the Argentinean gaucho (*South of the Border with Walt Disney* 1942). Florencio Molina Campos was famous for his paintings of the traditional cowboy of Argentina, the gaucho (Foster, M. Lockhart & D. Lockhart 1998, 145-146). Disney was also shown Argentinean folk dance by the expert professor Shazabeta (*South of the Border with Walt Disney* 1942).

Although *Saludos Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros* presented Latin Americans in an overall more positive light, by avoiding stereotyping them as lazy or depicting them as the villain in the films, the two films do continue to present some stereotypes. Dale Adams accurately points out in his article that the artists and government officials that Walt Disney consulted with 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 these artist and cultural experts could be considered part of the elites of Latin America, they focused on promoting “traditional” culture to the United States most likely because it was more marketable. Edward Said has done a great deal of research on the concept of

“otherness” in relation to his theory of “orientalism”, and it has been found that we are often interested in the “other” because of what we consider to be different or exotic about them.

Consequently, the “Good Neighbor Policy” films could not focus solely on the modern Latin American cities and everyday life because this would have not been entertaining for American audiences. As a result, Disney and film producers had to compromise with the demands of the Latin American elites and the interests of the American audience. Ana Lopez has argued that Hollywood films are ethnographic in their own terms, producing their own constructs of ethnicity and national identity (Lopez 2001, 405-407). This is similar to the commodification of indigenous art, which has resulted in people purchasing what they perceive to be “traditional” art and avoiding the purchase of more contemporary pieces (Mullin 1992, 413-414).

5.3 Saludos Amigos

The film *Saludos Amigos* was released in 1942 to audiences on both sides of the border. It included four separate short films that introduced American audiences to four different Latin American countries. The film begins in Peru with the *Lake Titicaca* short, which introduces American audiences to life in the Andes. The second short film entitled *Pedro* is about a small Chilean plane that delivers the mail to Mendoza, Argentina on the other side of the Andes. An Argentinean segment called *El Gaucho Goofy*, which compares the gaucho of the pampas to the traditional American cowboy, follows. The film ends with the musical number *Aquarela do Brasil* where the audience is introduced to a Jose Carioca, who shows Donald Duck his native Brazil.

The film is organized into a travelogue format that is very informative and almost documentary like in some ways. In between the four animated sequences live-action documentary footage from Disney’s visit to Latin America are included. This includes images of modern Latin American cities, such as Rio de Janeiro. The narrator for all four segments in particular gives the impression that we are watching a documentary type film. However, Disney was very particular of

what he chose to present about Latin America in the film and how he chose to represent them.

The *Lake Titicaca* segment focuses on Donald Duck's experience as a tourist in the Andes. Although it does illustrate some true facts about life in the area, such as the Inca clothing and the traditional reed boats very little attention is given to the Inca people themselves. Instead the main character in this sequence is a Llama who is controlled by a flute. The Incas who are included in this short-segment are for the most part drawn in very little detail. The majority of them lack facial details. Consequently, their eyes and nose are simply a black line on their face.³ The lack of details in these drawings could indicate the lack of attention and importance granted to indigenous people by both Latin American elites and Americans. They are also depicted as being very simple minded and un-modern. The narrator for this segment tells the audience that people from Lake Titicaca can be divided into two classes: "those who walk with the wind, and those who walk against it" (*Saludos Amigos* 1942).

Although this is a cartoon and certain things, such as the description of the two groups of Incas, are exaggerated to be funny, in no other segment of *Saludos Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros* are such clearly derogatory or negative comments made. It is clear that these comments and drawings are done for their entertainment value, but they also fit within the Latin American elites' perceptions of indigenous people. The inclusion of Lake Titicaca fulfills the American audiences' need to see the 'exotic' aspects of Latin America. However, it is made clear that the Incas are inferior to other Latin Americans, which would satisfy the Latin American elites who controlled the distribution of the film. In addition, the inclusion of the flute that controls the Llama's movements is very similar to the stereotypical image of the snake charmer in the orient, perhaps an example of "orientalism".

The *Pedro* segment is a little harder to analyze because of Disney's choice to use a plane to

³ See appendix 1 for picture from Lake Titicaca Segment

represent Chile. This choice is a little confusing as planes are everywhere and therefore are not representative of Chileans. However, *Pedro* is very similar to the *The Little Engine that could* (an American children's story published in the 1930s), because like the Little Engine Pedro perseveres through obstacles to complete his task of delivering the mail (Plotnick 2012,11). Perhaps Disney was trying to convey that the people of the Andes are capable of persevering despite harsh living conditions. Beyond this there is not much else that can be said about this segment as it makes very few references to Chile and the Andes. A Chilean cartoonist, René Pepo Rios, however was very disappointed with Disney's creation of a small weak airplane to represent his country. In response he created a comic about Condorito, an anthropomorphic condor that he considered to be more representative of Chile (Booker 2010, 239).

The *El Gaucho Goofy* segment is very different from the other three shorts because it clearly illustrates the similarities between American and Latin American culture, specifically the American cowboy culture. Goofy is a cowboy in the short who is transplanted to the Argentinean pampas where he experiences the life of his Latin American counterpart, the gaucho. The narrator begins by redressing Goofy in the traditional clothing of the gaucho and while doing so explains what each item is called and its purpose. Goofy discovers that similar to the cowboy the gaucho wanders the plains by horse and spends his evenings under the stars by campfire. As discussed previously the gaucho is part of traditional culture, but it most clearly illustrates to Americans the similarities between themselves and their neighbours south of the border. This reinforces that despite the many differences between them there are also many similarities between the two neighbours, which enables them to be friends or "amigos".

The Brazil segment of *Saludos Amigos* is probably one of the most interesting of the four shorts for a number of reasons. It is the first time that we are introduced to Jose Carioca, the Brazilian parrot who shows Donald Duck around Brazil in both *Saludos Amigos* and *The Three*

Caballeros. Jose Carioca is a green parrot that was created by Walt Disney during his visit to Rio de Janeiro. He is a very sophisticated character, and is dressed very fashionably. Most of the Disney team claimed in interviews that Rio de Janeiro was their favourite city, which could explain why Jose Carioca is so prevalent in both films (*Walt & El Grupo* 2008). However, it has been argued that Jose Carioca was styled after a malandro (Berndt Morris and Morris, 2011, 3). The malandro became a cultural stereotype of Brazil in the 1930s and 1940s, based on a man who did not have a steady job and survived through his exploitation and deceit of woman (Galm 2008, 271). This stereotype emerged from the urban samba environment of Rio de Janeiro. Malandros made a living by hustling cash with fast-talking roadside gambling and tricks (Galm 2008, 271). They often dressed in a nice white suit and white hat, and represented a “romantic bohemian” ideal in Rio de Janeiro’s popular culture (Galm 2008, 271 & Berndt Morris and Morris 2011, 3). Evidence of Jose’s more trickster, malandro side is less evident in *Saludos Amigos* than in *The Three Caballeros*.

The OCIAA’s priority was the creation of new symbols expressing the importance of friendship between Latin America and the United States. Originally discussions were focused on creating a Miss Pan-America to symbolize the friendship, but as Allen Woll points out they received Jose Carioca instead (Woll 1980, 56). Although Jose Carioca is a very modern, sophisticated example of a Latin American character, he is also an example of the new stereotype that Hollywood created of Latin Americans. Some of his mannerisms and the great modern cities of Latin America that he shows Donald Duck fit the demands of how Latin American elites wanted themselves portrayed in film. However, Jose Carioca is also a very excitable character, which fits the stereotype of Latin Americans being ‘hot-blooded’ (O’Neil 2001, 378). Despite the stereotypical portrayal of Jose Carioca Disney was bombarded with cables, wires and phone calls from ambassadors, consuls, and chambers of commerce after the release of *Saludos Amigos*

because they wanted to know if a similar character could be created for their country (Berndt Morris and Morris 2011, 11).

Any sort of language barrier between Jose Carioca and Donald Duck are overcome through music. However, there are not very many instances of language issues in the film because one of Addison Durland's objectives was to avoid the use of broken English onscreen, and have Latin Americans speak English fluently (O'Neil 2001, 372). Music, however, does play a very important role in both films, as they were a compilation of cartoons, live-action sequences and musical numbers. Latin Americans wrote the majority of the music in both films. The *Aquarela do Brasil* segment revolves heavily around Ary Barroso's famous song by the same name (*South of the Border with Walt Disney* 1942). Ary Barroso was part of a group of younger samba composers who emerged from wealthier neighbours in Rio de Janeiro in the 1930s, who began to produce romantic sambas (Galm 2008, 264).

The song *Aquarela do Brasil* is particularly interesting because it sings about Brazil and its people; interestingly the song in English translates to "Watercolours of Brazil" (Berndt Morris and Morris 2011, 3). It was the most popular song in Brazil at the time of Walt Disney's visit (Berndt Morris and Morris, 3). Despite the fact that Ary Barroso's samba rhythms were inspired by all the cultures of Brazil, Black Africans were excluded from both films. However, unlike previous sambas Barroso's sambas places less emphasis on rhythms and focused more on harmonic and melodic aspects of the music (Galm 2008, 264). It was revealed in a 2010 census that the majority of Brazil's population is black (Góes 2011). In spite of this when Donald Duck and Disney's team visit Brazil there is no mention or images of black people.

In addition, *Aquarela do Brasil* is sung in its native Portuguese in the film so no direct message could be delivered from the lyrics to English and Spanish speaking audiences (Berndt Morris and Morris, 4). Initially Walt Disney wanted the lyrics to be recorded in English, but after

much debate they remained in Portuguese (Berndt Morris and Morris, 4). One of the possible reasons that the song remained in Portuguese is that they did not want to upset Brazilians by altering what is considered a nationalistic samba (Berndt Morris and Morris, 6).

What is particularly interesting though is Disney's choice to include only the first and last verse of the song in the film. This is important because the middle two verses are the only ones in the song that reference dark-skinned Brazilian woman, as a result the lyrics that are included in the film sing only about samba music and the country's tropical scenery⁴ (Berndt Morris and Morris, 6). *Aquarela do Brasil* was also almost censored by the Brazilian government when it was first recorded in 1939 because of the lyric that referred to Brazil as the "land of the samba and *pandiero*" (Berndt Morris and Morris, 6). It was considered distasteful because of samba's connection to the Afro-Brazilian population. It is unclear why Disney chose to include only two verses, but given the fact that the song was almost censored by the government it leaves us wondering if this was done out of respect to the Brazilian government and elite. Regardless of the reasons the film excludes a significant portion of the population and leaves American audiences with the impression that samba music and a primarily European-looking population are what characterize Brazil.

Despite the exclusion of Afro-Brazilians the film was produced in good faith and a genuine attempt was made to inform Americans about their neighbours South of the Border. The film was such a financial success that Disney was quoted in an interview as saying that he did not need the loan guarantees from the Federal Government (CBC). Other Latin American nations looked to Disney to create a character for their country like Jose Carioca, but the only one to receive such a character other than Brazil was Mexico who had Panchito Pistoles to represent them in *The Three Caballeros* (Berndt Morris and Morris 2011, 11).

⁴ See appendix 2 for English lyrics

5.4 The Three Caballeros

The Three Caballeros was released in 1945 to audiences North and South of the border. Similarly to *Saludos Amigos* it comprises several short segments that introduce the audience to different Latin American countries. The success of *The Three Caballeros* is debatable however, when compared to *Saludos Amigos*. It seems to cater more to an American ideal or understanding of Latin America. Walt Disney himself admitted in an interview with CBC that financially *The Three Caballeros* was less successful as he almost needed the government subsidy (CBC).

Unlike the previous film, which was presented as a travelogue, the segments of *The Three Caballeros* are tied together by the common theme of Donald Duck's Birthday. Donald Duck receives three big presents for his Birthday from his Latin American friends. Consequently, the focus of hemispheric friendship is more overtly represented than in the film *Saludos Amigos*. The presents symbolize how Latin America can be packaged and commodified for American audiences. They do not necessarily deliver authentic examples of Latin America, but rather what the American public is capable of understanding, which is rife with stereotypes. The hyper-sexualized women in the film further support the theme of commodifying Latin America; this will be discussed in further detail when we discuss each segment of the film.

The first present is a projector, which is used to show a film of Latin American birds called *Aves Raras*. The film begins with the story of Pablo, a penguin who is always cold and lives in the South Pole. Pablo's goal is to leave the South Pole for somewhere warmer. As Scott Schaffer points out in his article *Disney and The Imagineering of Histories* this is Donald Duck's introduction to the exotic "other" (Schaffer 1996,7). Pablo's connection to Latin America is unclear with the exception of his desire to move somewhere warmer in South America. The film moves further North to introduce Donald Duck to his feathered cousins in the Amazon. Once again the focus is placed on the "exotic other" as he is introduced to beautiful, colourful, exotic birds that

are unique to the region.

The segments in the film up until this point have not focused on a particular Latin American country but rather on the region as a whole. The *Flying Gauchito* short-film changes the focus of the film. The segment is about a little gaucho who lives in Uruguay. Similar to the *El Gaucho Goofy* segment from *Saludos Amigos* the cartoon introduces the audience to the traditional gaucho of the pampas. However, unlike the previous film *The Flying Gauchito* does not focus on the gaucho's similarities with the American cowboy. Instead the film introduces a fantastic, fictional story about a flying donkey, named burrito⁵ that the gaucho registers in a race. The premise of the story is funny and exciting, but also unrealistic. Consequently, the focus of the segment appears to be more on entertaining audiences rather than informing them of Latin American culture. In addition, the flying donkey is something exotic and unrealistic; therefore it represents Disney's continued emphasis on the "exotic other" of Latin America in *The Three Caballeros*.

Furthermore, Molina Campos a prominent Argentinean artist who worked as a consultant for Walt Disney became disillusioned with Disney's portrayal of the gaucho because he felt that it was a disparaging depiction of the gaucho (Foster, M. Lockhart & D. Lockhart 1998, 146). He left Walt Disney's service and although it is unclear if this was after or before the release of *The Three Caballeros*, it could explain why the gaucho segment in *The Three Caballeros* is less focused on the actual culture of the gaucho.

The second present that Donald Duck receives is a book from his old Brazilian friend Jose Carioca. The pop-up book enables Jose to take Donald on a trip through the Brazilian state of Baía. This segment begins with Jose asking Donald if he has been to Baía, this leads him into singing a song about Baía. The original Portuguese song was composed as "Na Baixa do Sapateiro" by Ari Barroso in 1938 (Galm 2008, 264). The choice to compose an English version of the song for *The*

⁵ The name burrito is odd because it is typically a Mexican not Uruguayan food or one that is associated with traditional gaucho fare.

Three Caballeros is quite a departure from *Saludos Amigos*. This could be evidence of Disney catering more to the American audience with this film. Additionally, the messaging in the song is slightly altered when it is translated from Portuguese to English. Eric Galm argues that the tone of the song changes from one of bittersweet agony to a more generic romantic ideal (Galm 2008, 264).

Jose Carioca follows up this song with another called “Have You Been To Bahia?” originally called “Você Já Foi À Bahia?” composed by Dorival Caymini (Galm 2008, 263). The song is sung primarily in Portuguese with short intervals of English in the chorus. Towards the end of the song Jose Carioca splits into several parrot versions of Carmen Miranda’s Chiquita Banana character that sing in Portuguese. This highlights a character that Americans during the period would have been familiar with and associated with Brazil.

Once it has been established that both Donald Duck and Jose Carioca have never been to Baía, they become smaller so that they can enter the book and catch a train to Baía. While there they encounter local street vendors, specifically Carmen Miranda’s sister Aurora who plays a character that is selling sweets (Galm 2008, 263). Yet again, another samba type song is sung so that Donald Duck can participate in the action on the street. Unlike *Saludos Amigos*, Donald Duck relies heavily on music when he is travelling with his Latin American friends so that he can actively participate. The song that is sung is “Os Quindins Iaiá” composed by Ary Barroso (Galm 2008, 267). The song is about a street vendor called Iaiá, who according to Jose sells cookies (*The Three Caballeros* 1945). Aurora Miranda is dressed very similarly to her sister Carmen was in many films, which is significant because Carmen was established as a “Brazilian Bombshell” who sold her body and sex appeal on the big screen (Galm 2008, 261). Consequently, it could be argued that Miranda’s character is selling much more than more cookies. However, it would be false to say that Donald Duck represents a colonizer because he chases Iaiá (at least not one who is successful).

Aurora's character is more representative of the "Dark Lady" stereotype because although her many qualities, including her beauty, attract the attention of Donald Duck she is also a virtuous woman who rebuffs the advances of Donald and her musicians. Additionally, Jose Carioca in some ways encourages Donald Duck's behaviour by providing him with a large mallet to fight off the other men who are trying to dance with the Iaiá (*The Three Caballeros* 1945). This is an example of Jose's malandro characteristic, which did not appear to be as present in *Saludos Amigos*.

This sequence comes to an end with one of the male characters stealing the limelight from Iaiá by interrupting her samba party with an entourage of women (Galm 2008, 273). The song "Os Quindins" Iaiá continues to be sung as the group walks through the town, but the style of music has changed from a samba to a marcha (Galm 2008, 272). This change is significant because samba is associated more with the marginalized working class, whereas the marcha is an expression of the middle class (Galm 2008, 272-273). Therefore, we could conclude that the participants in this carnival march are of a higher class; this is further supported by the fact that the characters are pale and European looking. Iaiá and her samba music are cast off to the side denoting a hierarchy in the two styles of music. American audiences would not have understood these messages; for them this scene would have depicted the carnival atmosphere that they had learned to expect from Brazil. This scene however for Latin Americans, particularly Brazilians, depicts a hierarchy of class and race through music.

Donald Duck's last present is a *piñata* from his new friend Panchito Pistoles of Mexico. The way that Panchito is depicted in the film is particularly important because like Jose Carioca he represents a regional stereotype. Panchito is a gun-carrying rooster dressed in charro clothing (Alonso 2008, 238). However, unlike Jose's malandro stereotype, which is from the urban settings in Brazil, the charro or Mexican cowboy is a more rural representation of Mexico. This may be explained by the fact that according to the documentary *Walt El Grupo* Brazil was one of the

countries that Disney and his team spent the most time in, and in particular Rio de Janeiro was a home base for the team during their “goodwill tour” (*Walt & El Grupo* 2008).

Similarities can surely be drawn between the charro, gaucho and American cowboy, but the charro is distinct in that he is not only a national symbol but also a cultural construction of maleness. Olga Nájera-Ramírez argues in her article *Engendering Nationalism: Identity, Discourse, And The Mexican Charro* that he is representative of Mexican machismo and she supports this claim with evidence from the charro’s history (Nájera-Ramírez 1994, 2). Although this paper is unable to go into great detail about the charro as a cultural symbol of Mexico it is important to mention this argument because it will help us to better understand the role that Panchito plays in relation to women and Donald Duck in the film.

Before Donald Duck receives his present from Panchito the three characters break out into song singing *The Three Caballeros* theme song. This song is significant because it is one of the most overt examples of friendship between the two films. The three characters sing about how they have each other’s backs through any circumstances, even “stormy weather”. This appears to be very similar to some of the interactions between *The Three Musketeers*, and the fact that there are exactly three characters further supports the allusion to *The Three Musketeers*. However, what is different is that Panchito makes it very clear in the song that each man is on his own when it comes to a “Latin baby”. This may be a reference to the status quo in old Hollywood films that pitted the Latin American protagonist against the American hero; whom are both fighting for the affections of the Latin American Heroine. This is particularly interesting if we consider Jose to be a malandro type, and Panchito’s charro character to be a cultural construction of machismo, because it begs the question if all three characters are not vying for domination of the female characters in the film. This would make Donald’s chasing of the women in the film less about American colonization, as argued by such scholars as Julianne Burton, and more representative of male domination of women

in general.

Panchito then gives Donald his *piñata* but explains to him first its importance in Christmas celebrations in Mexico. He explains *Las Posadas*, which is when the children re-enact the journey of the Virgin Mary and Joseph when they are trying to find a place to stay for the night (*The Three Caballeros*, 1945). This is one of the few times in the film that Latin American culture is not presented through music, however it still affiliated with festivities by Walt Disney because of its relationship to Christmas and the *piñata*. The children in this segment are depicted walking around old stone buildings, wearing very traditional clothing, and without shoes. The choice to depict this celebration and the children this way emphasises the focus on the “us vs. them” or “other” dynamic. This segment highlights to American audiences how Mexican Christmas celebrations differ from an American Christmas.

When the *piñata* is finally broken open gifts and symbols of Mexico spill out, including serapes and sombreros. The audience and Donald are then presented with an onslaught of images of Mexico, including the briefest of images of Mexico City. An English song about Mexico is sung at this point, continuing the film’s theme of Latin American music being appropriated and changed for the benefit of American audiences. The song is about the singers love for Mexico.

Panchito then takes Jose and Donald Duck on a “magic” flying serape ride into a book about Mexico that fell out from the *piñata*. This is a clear allusion to the magical and mysterious flying carpet of the orient. The flying serape takes the three friends through Mexico showing them the beautiful landscape of the country. Along the way they are introduced to fishermen and traditional Mexican dancers. At one point they stop in Veracruz and are shown a traditional Mexican dance. Donald Duck attempts to participate, but he cannot replicate the dance so instead of having the patience to learn he reverts to jazz music and an American style dance. This illustrates the dynamic of “us vs. them” or Disney’s focus on Latin America’s “otherness”.

However, more importantly Donald Duck's unwillingness to learn may be an example of him valuing American culture over Mexican culture.

The majority of the dancers in Veracruz are young, beautiful women. Jose and Panchito encourage Donald to approach the women and ask them to dance, and when their serape flies over Acalpuco they see a beach full of young, beautiful women. Panchito, Jose and Donald chase down the women from their flying serape like fighter pilots. The encouragement that Donald constantly receives from his friends when approaching the beautiful women of Latin American is one of the main reasons I do not feel that Donald chasing women is representative of American colonization of the region. The three characters support each other and act as wingmen for each other in their pursuit of the fairer sex. In addition, the fact that Panchito and Jose are constantly introducing or showing Donald the women of Latin America begs the question that perhaps they are not only selling Donald on their individual culture and country, but also the beauty of their women.

The final segment of *The Three Caballeros* is a colourful, perplexing reverie of Donald's that includes songs such as you "You belong to my heart" sung by the famous Dora Luz. In this segment Donald chases after all the beautiful women he has encountered in Latin America. There are so many colours and flashy images of beautiful women and flowers in this sequence that it seems that all the festivities of the trip to Latin America have resulted in sensory overload for both Donald Duck and the audience. There is a complete lack of coherency in these segments; the only themes that carry over from the rest of the film are the festivities of the birthday, music and Donald chasing after women. None of these themes are directly related to Latin America, which is one of the reasons that *The Three Caballeros*, although perhaps less propagandistic than *Saludos Amigos*, also presents less authentic images of Latin America.

The Three Caballeros ends with Donald chasing after Panchito and Jose under a bull costume in anger, perhaps over their constant interference when he was trying to win the affections

of a beautiful lady. Jose's malandro characteristic comes out yet again at this point as he attaches lit firecrackers to Donald; resulting in an explosion of fireworks and the words "The End" flashing across the screen in Portuguese, Spanish and English (*The Three Caballeros* 1945). Disney brings back the idea of hemispheric friendship once more in the final few seconds of the film with the friends' arms around each other looking up at the fireworks in the sky. Despite this attempt to reiterate the true message of the film it can be argued that *The Three Caballeros* was less successful in conveying the messages of the OCIA than *Saludos Amigos*. There was less live footage of the actual landscape of Latin American than in *Saludos Amigos*. The film also did not follow the documentary style of *Saludos Amigos*, making it appear less informative. Lastly, the lack of coherency in the sequences in *The Three Caballeros*, particularly the final scenes leaves us with the impression that the film was created more for its entertainment value, particularly for American audiences with the inclusion of more songs translated into English.

6.0 Conclusion

The OCIAA was extremely successful in creating and distributing cultural productions, including film, that supported improved relations with Latin America during the forties. Through the use of various cultural mediums, including film, radio and press, the OCIAA tried to convince Latin American's that their interests were connected with the U.S. rather than the Axis powers. As a result, they secured Latin America as a trading partner and ally. The OCIAA exported American propaganda and other media that was wrought with political messages of hemispheric friendship.

The OCIAA was successful largely because they understood that they needed to please people on both sides of the border to succeed. In the film industry this was achieved by hiring a Latin American specialist for the Production Code Administration. The specialist, Addison Durland, read through Latin-American themed movie scripts to ensure that they were not offensive to their southern neighbours. He consulted with Latin American elite officials and politicians as to what was offensive. This resulted in replacing the old stereotypes of Latin Americans, as lazy or the villains, in film with a new stereotype of Latin Americans as being fun loving and musical. The continent was also presented as possessing diverse cultures, with modern cities and an educated elites. However, movie producers were also pressured to produce films that would be entertaining for American audiences. As a result, films produced during the "Good Neighbor Policy" era merged the more modern image requested by Latin American elites, and the more traditional, subordinate image of the region familiar to Americans.

Despite its perceived success the relationship between the OCIAA and Hollywood was beginning to fray by the time Walt Disney and his team returned home from their "Goodwill Tour". In addition, studio executives saw little return for their \$35,000 in the original "Goodwill Fiesta", which included actors such as Desi Arnaz and Mickey Rooney (Welky 2008, 271). John

Hay Whitney's call for each studio to send two stars to Latin America each year proved to be very costly with little returns on investments. In spite of these mediocre returns on investment the OCIAA continued to ask more of Hollywood and the MPSA, which resulted in a lot of dissatisfaction and grumbling within the industry in the months prior to Pearl Harbour. By the end of the war Hollywood's relationship with Washington had completely unravelled, culminating in the OCIAA being disbanded in 1946 (Siwi, 18). The Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs outlived its use by the end of the war as the United States Government began to focus on the threat of communism and was more invested in places like Eastern Europe and Japan to avoid the spread of communism and the USSR's influence. Hollywood was also no longer a government ally because the movie industry was suspected of being a haven for communists.

The American industry also lost interest in Latin America after the war because previously closed markets in Europe were once again distributing American films. "Business abroad in the three months following the end of the war exceeded grosses of the entire year preceding Pearl Harbor" (Woll 1980, 66). Another contributing factor to the decline in Latin American themed films was the increased practice of dubbing. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer dubbed its film *Gaslight* in 1944 and dubbed all subsequent films with Spanish-speaking actors (Woll 1980, 66).

Although Hollywood lost interest in Latin American and the American government began to focus its foreign policy elsewhere during the post-war period the OCIAA and "Good Neighbor Policy" had many beneficial and unexpected results. Most importantly it educated American's about their neighbours south of the border, and although the images and information that they were presented with was not always authentic, particularly in the case of films, it did reverse some of their misconceptions of Latin America being "backwards". The films produced under the auspices of the OCIAA also successfully reversed old stereotypes of Latin Americans.

In spite of these improvements in the way that Latin Americans were portrayed on the big screen, they continued to be stereotypical, inauthentic depictions of Latin America. The example of Jose Carioca and Panchito Pistoles in particular illustrates how the old homogenous stereotypes were replaced by regional cultural stereotypes such as that of the charro and malandro. These stereotypes were developed through the collaboration of Latin American experts and artists, and American filmmakers. However, it could be argued, particularly in the case of *The Three Caballeros*, that the need to entertain American audiences took precedence over the need for authentic portrayals of Latin America. These new stereotypes endured after the OCIAA was disbanded, and fragments of these stereotypes continue in media today. For example, the character Gloria Pritchett on the ABC sitcom *Modern Family*, recently played by the Columbian actress Sofia Vergara, is similar in many ways to the characters Carmen Miranda and her counterparts played on the silver screen in the forties. Similarly to Carmen Miranda Sofia's character is hyper-sexualized, loud and hot-tempered (Steiner 2012). Her English is also heavily accented, which is one of the things that the OCIAA was focused on avoiding (Steiner 2012).

It could also be argued that the financial support that Hollywood studios received from the American Government through the OCIAA enabled Hollywood to establish itself as the world film capital. While other film industries had to stop production and distribution during the war the Hollywood produced propaganda films for the war and "Good Neighbor" Policy. This allowed the American film industry to continue to develop and improve filmmaking techniques, with very little competition from other countries. The "Good Neighbor" Policy and work of the OCIAA undeniably saved Walt Disney from financial ruin. It could be argued that had it not been for Walt Disney's relationship with the OCIAA that Mickey Mouse and his friends might never have become the prolific characters that we know today. However, it would be false to claim that the films that were produced during the Second World War were purely American productions; they

incorporated Latin American talent, stories from other countries and consultations with Latin American experts. This has remained unchanged today, as Hollywood continues to produce films with either financial or artistic help from experts around the world.

In spite of this knowledge we often have the impression that Hollywood films are American. This impression is very important because it one of the ways that the United States continues to maintain power and cultural hegemony. The United States began to spread American values through film and other cultural mediums during the period of the “Good Neighbor” Policy and Cold War. Although there is no longer a formal relationship between the Washington and Hollywood, as there was during the “Good Neighbor” era film continues to be influenced by Washington and films continue to have an impact on policies, particularly international policy. Jack G. Shaheen, the author of *Guilty: Hollywood’s Verdict on Arabs after 9/11*, argues that Hollywood’s depiction of Arabs as the villains has eased the path for U.S. administration policy. The images of Arabs and other groups of interest have helped enforce American foreign policy. This is particularly true during times of war as “...government campaigns and media exert an especially strong influence in helping to create and shape public attitudes about the ‘other’ (Shaheen 2008, Prologue). This case study of *The Three Caballeros* and *Saludos Amigos* is just the tip of the iceberg of the enduring and complex relationship between Hollywood, Washington and its impact on international relations, globalization and how we view the “other”. Future research could be completed on this relationship and the trends that exist in filmmaking and international policy during the 1940s to 9/11.

7.0 Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1: Saludos Amigos-Lake Titicaca Segment



7.2 Appendix 2: English Translation of Ary Barroso's Aquarela de Brasil

Aquarela de Brasil⁶
(Translation by Daniella Thompson)

Brazil

My Brazilian Brazil

My cunning mulatto

I will sing of you in my verses

Oh, Brazil, samba that gives swing,

That makes people sway

Oh, Brazil of my love

Land of Our Lord

Brazil! Brazil!

For me... for me...

**The following two verses are
omitted from the Disney film:*

Ah, open the curtain of the past
Bring the Black Mother down from the
mountains

Place the Congo King in the congado

Brazil! Brazil!

Let the minstrel sing again

In the melancholy moonlight

Every song of his love

I want to see the Bahian woman walking,

Trailing through the salons

Her lacy skirts

Brazil! Brazil!

For me... for me...

Brazil

Good and savory land

Of the cunning dark-skinned woman

With an indiscreet gaze

Oh, Brazil, green that makes

The world amazed

Oh, Brazil of my love

Land of Our Lord

Brazil! Brazil!

For me...for me...

** The final verse is sung in the Disney film:*

Oh, this palm tree that gives coconuts

Where I hang my hammock

On clear moonlit nights

Oh, hear these murmuring fountains

Where I slake my thirst

And where the moonlight comes to play

Oh, this Brazil, beautiful and swarthy

Is my Brazilian Brazil

Land of samba and pandeiro

Brazil! Brazil!

For me...for me...

⁶ Berndt Morris, Elizabeth and Morris, Charles. "Walt Disney and Diplomacy: The Musical Impact of Aquarela do Brasil." Paper presented at the Latin American Music Center's Fiftieth Anniversary Conference "Cultural Counterpoints: Examining the Musical Interactions between the U.S. and Latin America," Indiana University, Bloomington, 2011. Available from IUScholarWorks (<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/handle/2022/15542>), p. 6.

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