

The Hollywood Film Industry during World War II

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá Hollywoodským filmovým průmyslem během druhé světové války. První část se zabývá úlohou, kterou Amerika hrála v obou světových válkách. Dále popisují izolacionismus a jeho protějšek intervencionismus, které jsou oba nedílnou součástí americké historie. Další sekce se zabývá počátky Hollywoodského průmyslu a filmy, které vznikaly po velké depresi. Část třetí popisuje filmy, pohádky a zpravodaje, které vznikaly na začátku války stejně jako filmy, které vznikaly po vstupu Ameriky do války a propagandu ve filmech a intervenci do filmového průmyslu ze strany vlády. Praktická část se věnuje analýze dvou Hollywoodských filmů vydaných po útoku na Pearl Harbor a vstupu Ameriky do války – *Casablanca* a *Létající tygři*.

Klíčová slova: Hollywoodský filmový průmysl, 2. světová válka, 1. světová válka, propaganda, film, izolacionismus, intervencionismus, Disney studio, týdeník, úřad válečných informací, Warner Bros., *Casablanca*, *Létající tygři*.

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis aims to analyze the Hollywood film industry during World War II. The first part deals with America's role in both world wars. I also describe isolationism and its counterpart, interventionism, both of which are an indispensable part of American history. The next section deals with the beginnings of the Hollywood industry and the films made after the Great Depression. The third part describes films, cartoons and newsreels made at the beginning of the war as well as movies made after America's entry into the war, including film propaganda and government intervention into the film industry. The practical part is dedicated to the analysis of two Hollywood films released after the attack on Pearl Harbor and America's entry into the war – *Casablanca* and *Flying Tigers*.

Keywords: Hollywood film industry, World War II, World War I, propaganda, film, isolationism, interventionism, Disney studio, newsreel, Office of War Information, Warner Bros., *Casablanca*, *Flying Tigers*.

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I hereby declare that the print version of my bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

American history has been indisputably connected, first to the foreign policy of what can be called “isolationism,” then later to the notion of “interventionism,” also called “anti-isolationism,” although scholars do not always agree on the definitions of these terms. According to Professor of History, Wayne S. Cole, the term isolationism describes “individuals holding widely varying foreign policy views.” Cole uses the word isolationism to express the belief that America will not be able to stay out of foreign affairs through cooperation with other states. Thus, it should avoid international commitment to stay out of conflicts.¹ American Historian and Educator Professor John Milton Coopers’ definition of isolationism is similar: “isolationism is an attitude, policy, doctrine, or position opposed to the commitment of American force outside the Western Hemisphere, except in the rarest and briefest instances.” Political isolationism defines “men’s actions within limited situations” such as voting and is influenced by external factors, e.g., the geography or ethnicities of other nations. Cooper also emphasizes isolationism’s importance in twentieth-century America.² This thesis will refer to isolationism and anti-isolationism as political ideologies defined by these and other scholars.

It was not just the view of foreign politics that made politicians isolationist or anti-isolationist. The view of domestic affairs also played a specific role. For instance, in the 20th century, the fear of totalitarianism and communism taking over America during the state of emergency required the government to take specific actions. Manfred Jonas, Professor of History, discusses the attitude to this problem in his work. Although most left-oriented politicians and leaders tend to be anti-isolationist, and the right-oriented incline more toward isolation, when isolationism is involved, the line between political parties is blurred. Individuals in one party can represent opposite ideas regarding this problem. However, as Jonas claims in his work - “an informative distinction can be made between different kinds of isolationists on the basis of their attitudes toward conditions within the United States.” An isolationist can be inclined toward intervention on one issue and against intervention on

¹ Cole, S. Wayne. *Senator Key Pittman and American Neutrality Policies, 1933-1940*. (*The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 46, no. 4, pp. 644–62, 1960), 644, Smuckler, H. Ralph. *The Region of Isolationism*. (*The American Political Science Review*, vol. 47, no. 2, pp. 386–401, 1953), 388.

² Cooper, Milton. John, Jr., *The Vanity of Power: American Isolationism and the First World War 1914-1917* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Corporation, 1969), 2-5, 8-12.

another. For instance, an isolationist politician might be for American involvement in world affairs due to commerce but against any other involvement.³

The definition of “anti-isolationism” or “interventionism” is addressed by Cole in his work. Essentially, this idea represents the opposite of isolationism, the idea of intervention in foreign affairs to prevent wars, because not intervening may negatively impact American interests and national security. Cooper and another scholar Ralph H. Smuckler also refer to interventionism simply as involvement in international affairs.⁴

Though mostly isolationist, the U.S. eventually intervene in both Wars. Mainly due to organizations such as The Creel Committee, officially known as the Committee on Public Information (CPI) in World War I, or Office of War Information OWI in World War II, both more described later on in the following chapters.⁵

Nevertheless, after the end of World War I, Americans returned to isolationism once more. And from the 1920s’ until the adoption of the first Neutrality Act in 1935, America avoided European conflicts. Their only interactions with foreign countries were to be through commerce. The costs of war were enormous and left people disillusioned about other interactions with foreign countries. Though during the years before World War II, the U.S. government was to a certain degree involved in foreign political affairs. For instance, intervention in the Treaty of Versailles, according to which Germany had to pay huge reparations because they were blamed for causing the war. American diplomats belonging to the interventionist group provided them with a plan for new reparation payments and loans. But they still claimed that the only intervention was for business.⁶ The situation in Germany was critical. They were unable to pay reparations and take care of people’s basic needs at the same time, which resulted in hyperinflation due to Germany printing more and more money. As a result of reparations and the Great Depression – an event described in the following sections, – Germany entered an economic crisis. Both events resulted in the rise of Nazism with Hitler’s victory in an election in 1933 and afterward, the beginning of World War II by invading Poland in 1939.⁷

³ Jonas, Manfred. *Isolationism in America, 1935–1941*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 70-73., Smuckler, H. Ralph. *The Region of Isolationism*, 388-389.

⁴ Cole, S. Wayne S. *Senator Key Pittman and American Neutrality Policies, 1933-1940*, 644, Cooper, Milton. John, Jr., *The Vanity of Power: American Isolationism and the First World War 1914-1917*, 4, Smuckler, Ralph H. *The Region of Isolationism*. 388-389.

⁵ Fischer, N. *The Committee on Public Information and the Birth of US State Propaganda*. (Australasian Journal of American Studies, 35(1), 2016). 51–78. Accessed April 30.04. 2023 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44779771>

⁶ Streissguth, Tom, and Lora Friedenthal. *Key Concepts in American History: Isolationism*. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2010), 3-6, 22-23.

⁷ Streissguth, Tom, and Lora Friedenthal. *Key Concepts in American History: Isolationism*, 5, 15.

The Hollywood industry was also influenced by war and the American attitude toward foreign conflicts, although the collapsed German economy during the Weimar Republic was not featured in movies at all (nor in any other US popular media). In the pre-war years, Hollywood dealt with many opposing groups, like the Women's Municipal League and the Federation of Churches, worried about the influence movies represented. Consequently, the producers and the movies had to deal with censorship imposed by the government and go through a careful selection. This changed with the Second World War and American entry into WWII.⁸

Hollywood films underwent a radical transformation during this war compared to the WWI period. The government closely cooperated with the industry to promote the war effort and alter the public's perspective. Despite the variety of movies produced during the war, specific recurring themes are evident. As Boggs Carl, a Professor of Social Sciences and film studies, and Pollard Tom, also a Professor of Social Sciences note that nearly every film portrays U.S. military forces as righteous fighters who fight because they do not have any other choice. The war fought was the so-called "good war," a war for a good cause, freedom, and democracy, justifying the sacrifices and suffering. The enemies are the evildoers that American heroes must defeat. U.S. forces, surrounded by the enemy seemingly with no way out, outsmart the enemy, often with the help of superior technology, and eventually defeat the enemy.⁹

Their objective was not only to promote American patriotism but also the concept of alliance and cooperation, mainly through sharing universal values of peace and security, and cinema was the most effective medium for doing so. Hollywood was experiencing its Golden Age, with an astounding 85 million weekly visitors. At that time, most theatres began their programs with newsreels, cartoons, and short documentaries, followed by one or more full-length movies, and the general public regarded films as a source of information. The appeal of movies is unquestionable, as compared to other sources of information movies had it all – moving images, sounds, costumes, and famous movie stars. Thus, it became an ideal tool for U.S. propaganda during World War II.¹⁰

⁸ Hass, Elizabeth, Terry Christensen, and Peter J. Haas. *Projecting Politics: Political Messages in American Films* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 67-70.

⁹ Boggs, Carl, and Tom Pollard. *The Hollywood War Machine: U.S. Militarism and Popular Culture* (Boulder: Paradigm, 2007), 13.

¹⁰ Bennett, M. Todd. *One World, Big Screen: Hollywood, the Allies, and World War II*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 6-7.

The first chapter of the thesis is focused on the American isolationist position and its history, followed by a short introduction to American attitudes before World War I. The next chapter is about the American position before World War II, the cause of the U.S.'s entry into the war, and how most citizens viewed the war happening in Europe. The following section addresses the Hollywood industry itself. The struggles of Hollywood studios, how the content changed, and how did the Hollywood industry help change American citizens' opinions. Furthermore, what role did the government play in the choice of movies created.

The practical part will analyze propaganda portrayed in two specific movies of my choice. The first movie is *Casablanca* (1942), with its subtle persuasion, barely noticeable for the first-time viewer. The second movie is the direct opposite – *Flying Tigers* (1942). Finally, the thesis will compare the movies and the tactics used to change people's perceptions of war and the U.S. decision to join the war.

I. THEORY

1 THE AMERICAN ATTITUDES DURING THE WORLD WARS

This chapter is dedicated to analyzing the very beginnings of American isolationism. The following section discusses one of the most important events that disrupted America from its non-intervention perspective – World War I and the main reasons for their change of attitude. The last section introduces the American point of view in-between wars.

1.1 Beginnings of Isolationism

To fully understand American attitude toward war and isolationism, we need to go even further to the very beginnings of the country. The first mentions of American isolationism are dated back to the 18th century. But long before first remarks on isolationism, after America's discovery, the nation came up with the idea of mission."¹¹ According to Rodgers Daniel, Professor of History, "the sense of national mission that marks American civic-political culture, its confidence," and the idea of exceptionality from other countries formed the nation since Puritan John Winthrop's famous speech "City upon a hill." The speech heralds the bright future of America, its rise to world leaders, economic ascendancy and different destiny granted by God.¹² Puritans' mission was to reform English Church and society but without success. Nevertheless, they were able to defend their community as unique and too special for the Old World. This, according to Cooper showed that Puritans' experience with the mission had "activist and defensive potential" and could be viewed as a foreshadowing of future interactions between isolationists and interventionists group in America.¹³

The idea of isolation from foreign affairs has been adopted from England. After 1715, isolationism was viewed as a positive policy of "England's turning its back on European connections in order to pursue more important interests, particularly commercial ones, overseas."¹⁴ The idea of non-intervention was well received. Soon after, the first comments on separation emerged. Remarks of different American destiny and their separate mission to all humankind, again a reference to "A City Upon a Hill," and the belief that Europe is not capable of staying out of war for a long period led to the War of Independence in 1776.

¹¹ Cooper, Milton. John, Jr., 8-9

¹² Rodgers, Daniel. *As a City on a Hill*. (Princeton University Press, 2018), 3.

¹³ Cooper, Milton. John, Jr., 8-9.

¹⁴ Cooper, Milton. John, Jr., 8-9.

Consequently, this together with the idea of mission, is what formed American nation in the following years with only a few exceptions.¹⁵

After its independence, America had been constantly pulled into European affairs caused by Britain, France or Spain, which strongly supported their growing distaste of European conflicts and their need for isolation. However, by 1815, Europe averted its attention from America, and the nation had enjoyed years without foreign conflicts, which again assured them of their conviction of non-intervention and mission. Only a few notable disturbances pulled them back into European conflicts again.¹⁶

Even though U.S. avoided taking part in the war between the years 1935-1941, the country was not completely isolationist. The country was still involved in foreign commerce, welcomed immigrants, and believed that its institution should serve as an example for the rest of the world. However, when we discuss the question of involvement in World War II, the citizens were against intervention in foreign affairs. One reason was their contempt toward war, and the other was that it did “involve no vital interests of the United States” and could be resolved outside of the U.S.¹⁷

1.2 American position during World War I

As mentioned previously in the introduction part, at the beginning of the war in Europe, the US attitude to foreign affairs remained isolationist. Nevertheless, this did not protect them from German submarine attacks. In 1915, Germany attacked Lusitania, a British passenger steamer with over 100 American citizens onboard. This attack divided America into opposing camps, one in favor of joining the war and the other opposed. The majority continued to oppose American intervention in the war, and the United States remained neutral and only officially joined the Allies two years later.¹⁸

The release of correspondence between Arthur Zimmerman, the German foreign minister, and the German ambassador to Mexico was the first major issue to address America's involvement in the war. Their correspondence included pledges of Mexico's full support for Mexico in the war campaign against America and an agreement that Mexico would retrieve their lost territories from the previous American-Mexican war. Though it

¹⁵ Cooper, Milton. John, Jr., 9-1, Jonas, Manfred. *Isolationism in America, 1935–1941*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 101-103.

¹⁶ Cooper, Milton. John, Jr., 11-12.

¹⁷ Jonas, Manfred. *Isolationism in America, 1935–1941*, 1-3

¹⁸ Streissguth, Tom, and Lora Friedenthal. *Key Concepts in American History: Isolationism*, 2-3, Cooper, Milton. John, Jr., 20.

merely reinforced America's continued stance on this conflict as the majority of politicians regardless of whether they were Democrats or Republicans were still against intervention. However, it had an impact on commerce as the day following the release of the telegram, the United States issued a bill arming merchant ships. And later with the Lusitania incident America entered the war.¹⁹

1.2.1 Movies produced during World War I

Propaganda tools were used not only in WWII but in WWI as well. Though the content of movies was slightly different compared to WWII. Here are some notable movies produced during this period. *The Battle Cry of Peace* (1915), a movie about German invasion of USA to instigate fear and provoke patriotism or a “preparedness movie” as Historian Isenberg T. Michael claims. The next one worth mentioning is *Hearts of the World* (1918), a sentimental movie about the hardships of a family living in France. The movie itself received mixed reviews and was viewed as “mawkish rather than inspiring.” And another one – *Civilization* (1916), a movie depicting the horrors of war and advocating peace.²⁰

1.3 After World War I

World War I ended in 1918. It claimed the lives of millions of soldiers and civilians alike. The horrors of World War I only strengthen Americans’ opinion to avoid foreign conflicts and concentrate on domestic issues. The first indication of their regained isolationist position was the rejection of the Treaty of Versailles, which formally ended World War I. The Treaty of Versailles also created an organization called the League of Nations comprised of the victors of WWI and their allies, whose sole purpose was to prevent another devastating international conflict that would cost millions of lives before it even began. Although President Wilson was one of the most ardent supporters of this organization and its mission, many of his political opponents opposed other interventions. In the end, President Wilson failed to ensure the treaty’s ratification, and America did not become part of the League of Nations.²¹ The political scene was divided into two factions. Most democrats were interventionists, therefore, they supported further interactions with Europe even after the Great War. While the other political party, the Republicans, were isolationists and preferred to stay out of foreign affairs. President Wilson was part of the Democrats, which could

¹⁹ Cooper, Milton. John, Jr, 167-168, 177-179.

²⁰ Isenberg, Michael T. *War on film: The American cinema and World War I, 1914-1941*. (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1981), 102-103, 200-201.

²¹ Streissguth, Tom, and Lora Friedenthal, 3, 78, 81

explain his motivation to intervene, whereas his opponents from the Republican Party were the ones who thwarted his plan.²²

Simultaneously, the situation in Europe gradually changed. Germany was obliged to pay reparations for its role in the war. The amount they were obligated to pay was astronomical, and Germany soon lost the ability to repay its debt. In 1922, hyperinflation was caused by Germany's increasing need to print money. Afterward, the U.S. loaned money to Germany to help them get back on their feet. Thus, hyperinflation ended, but Germany remained in a precarious situation and required funds to pay the reparations. It escalated in 1929 during a stock market crash in the U.S. The prevailing conditions in Germany paved the way for Hitler and the Nazi party, who would eventually lead the entire world into World War II.^{23,24}

Isolationism in America especially thrived during the 1930s, after the economic crisis. According to Blower L. Brooke, Professor of History, this decade perfectly captured the American isolationist attitude to European affairs and their "national mood." The economic crisis persuaded Americans not to waste their resources on never-ending conflicts in Europe and instead focus on their internal affairs. Not to mention the inability of former allies to pay off their debts which only underlined their convictions. Many Americans had no time or desire to deal with what was happening outside of America during the crisis. Even scholars who rarely use such a strong word to describe a period refer to this era in American history as isolationist.²⁵

1.3.1 Change from Isolationism to Neutrality

As the conflicts in Europe intensified, the U.S. Congress did not lag behind and, in the 1930's passed a series of Neutrality Acts to ensure their non-interventionist position. This act represented the mindset of most citizens together with Republicans and many Democrats. The first Neutrality Act was passed in 1935. It banned all trade in arms and ammunition with any nation at war. In 1936 Congress added a clause to the act prohibiting the provision of loans to belligerent nations. In 1937, the act was adjusted once again. Despite its intention to keep America out of war, it ultimately failed. The acts were legitimate until 1941 when Lend-Lease took over. Since Britain and France declared war on Nazi Germany in 1939, the

²² Streissguth, Tom, and Lora Friedenthal, 22-23.

²³ Streissguth, Tom, and Lora Friedenthal, 23-23,81.

²⁴ Rose, D. Kenneth. *American Isolationism Between the World Wars: The Search for a Nation's Identity*. (New York: Routledge, 2021), 91-93.

²⁵ Blower, L. Brooke. *From Isolationism to Neutrality: A New Framework for Understanding American Political Culture, 1919–1941* (Diplomatic History, vol. 38, no. 2, pp. 345–76, 2014), 346. Accessed April 27, 2022. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26376561>

United States has maintained a neutral position. Despite being neutral in action, most of the conversation in America was about war. As Germany advanced and conquered the following states, Britain was referred to as a “last line of defense,” and Americans gradually adopted a new position.^{26,27}

Claiming neutrality and adopting a series of Neutrality Acts, America still intervened in foreign affairs. The first such example occurred only a few weeks after the adoption of the first act. In 1935, even though the embargo not to sell ammunition to belligerent Italy and Ethiopia was invoked, President Roosevelt intervened differently and challenged merchants to follow a “moral embargo.” According to Historian Powaski E. Ronald, a “moral embargo” allowed a trader to export necessities that do not fall under the act, such as steel, oil, and others. The next disturbance was the conflict in the Pacific between China and Japan in 1937. According to the Neutrality Act of 1937, the United States must impose an embargo on warring nations. However, there was no official declaration of war. In addition, when President Roosevelt realized China’s reliance on ammunition, he did not invoke the act. Though many opposed him, namely isolationists and pacifists, his only reply was that American ships would not carry arms to both sides.²⁸ The last Neutrality Act of 1939, still active in 1941, underwent many adjustments. On November 17, 1941, President Roosevelt “repealed” some sections, allowing American merchant vessels to be armed. Afterward, little of the original Neutrality Act of 1939 remained. Nevertheless, the repeal had a significant effect on the U.S. neutrality policy.²⁹

In 1941 Lend-Lease Act was authorized by Congress, and America ceased to be neutral. Despite widespread opposition, Lend-Lease was adopted to provide weapons and ships to Great Britain. The supporters, namely internationalists, believed that the United States has a greater mission to help other nations in times of need. Furthermore, the group believed that this was the best way to remain on the Allies’ side while avoiding direct involvement in the conflict. However, the inconclusive negotiations with Japan and the subsequent attack on the military base Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, ended all the previous debates, and the U.S. was pulled into the war.³⁰

²⁶ Streissguth, Tom, and Lora Friedenthal, 5,6, 72.

²⁷ Rose, D. Kenneth, *American Isolationism Between the World Wars: The Search for a Nation’s Identity*, 244, 246.

²⁸ Powaski, E. Ronald. *Toward an Entangling Alliance: American Isolationism, Internationalism, and Europe, 1901-1950*. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 67-71.

²⁹ Wright, Quincy. *Repeal of the Neutrality Act*. (The American Journal of International Law, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 8–23, 1942), 8-9.

³⁰ Streissguth, Tom, and Lora Friedenthal. 33

1.4 American position during World War II

Although late, the U.S. eventually entered the war in 1941 and became one of the leading forces. However, as mentioned previously, America was already on its way to joining the conflict long before, and this was only formal ratification of the process. Before entering the war, American citizens were divided over whether or not to do so, and it was the Pearl Harbor attack that restored their sense of unity. Many citizens were so shocked by the attack that they claimed they could recall what they did and where they were, every minute of it as they heard the news. For many, it was a turning point. As Winkler states, the “period of waiting” was finally over, and America could fully concentrate on war. To ensure support for the war effort at home and abroad, the government used propaganda programs. Many organizations were created to gain support and applaud heroism, but many failed due to internal disputes. Finally, in 1942, an organization established to resolve the confusion was founded - The Office of War Information (OWI). This was a turning point for propaganda campaigns and American cinema³¹

³¹ Winkler, M. Allan. *Home Front U.S.A.: America During World War II* (Arlington Heights, Ill: H. Davidson, 2012), 1-2, 31-35.

2 HOLLYWOOD INDUSTRY BEFORE THE WAR

This section focuses on Hollywood itself. Its first struggles, movies produced before the beginning of World War II and the influence of the Great Depression.

2.1 Growing popularity and concerns

Although to a limited extent, the origins of American motion pictures reflected the lives of the American working class. With its increasing popularity among the masses, critics expressed their growing concerns regarding its influence on the viewers. For these critics, movies posed a threat to people, threatening to corrupt their minds with immoralities and unhealthy mindsets. The groups who protested against the content shown in the movies were primarily Christians, civic, or progressive reformers. Their focus was on controversial issues such as violence, crime, drinking issues, race topics, birth control, and suicide.³²

The first struggles regarding movie content came in 1906, and a year later, in 1907, the first censorship regulation emerged. Two years later, in 1909, the National Board of Censorship was created with members from different groups such as the Federation of Churches and Women's Municipal League. Since then, this group has been involved in making decisions on whether a movie is appropriate or not. As movies became more and more part of the mass culture, critics needed to find an acceptable solution that would end the domination of movie studios and solve the problem of inappropriate content. Adding sound to then silent movies in the 1920s only underlined the problem. Critics realized that this new type of movie could spread information to an even wider audience and more clearly. After long debates about the future of the movie industry and its freedom in creation, the Motion Picture Production Code was adopted at the beginning of 1930, and thus censorship has been imposed on all movie scripts since then.³³

2.2 Motion Pictures before World War II

Certainly, one of the most significant influences on 1930s cinema was the introduction of sound films and the establishment of the Motion Picture Production Code. Nonetheless, we should not neglect one of the biggest economic crises in 1929 – the Great Depression. This tragic event influenced workers worldwide and even Hollywood production itself. Preceding the Great Depression, Hollywood generated over 500 movies per year with over 90 million

³² Vaughn, Stephen. *Morality and Entertainment: The Origins of the Motion Picture Production Code* (The Journal of American History, vol. 77, no. 1, Organization of American Historians,), pp. 39–65, 1990), 40.

³³ Vaughn, Stephen. *Morality and Entertainment: The Origins of the Motion Picture Production*, 40-41.

viewers per week, and it became one of the most prosperous years ever. Though, the number of viewers rapidly decreased after the Great Depression. With the stock market crisis, many began to question their values and beliefs in what they had previously considered normal. They doubted their belief in rewarding hard work and “the fairness of the American system.”³⁴ Since the beginning of the crisis, the movies, especially those focusing on social issues, were, in the authors’ words - “cynical and despairing, offering no hope of salvation, but soon they grew optimistic, offering simple solutions that usually involved reliance on a strong leader.” A few movies played with the idea of fascism, and some promoted President Roosevelt’s idea of the New Deal³⁵ - a set of regulations adopted to improve the prevailing situation after the stock market crash.³⁶

Tino Balio, author and Professor of Communication Arts, is of a different opinion. Movies about social problems with crime and gangsters as the central theme represented only a small portion of production, at least in the major studios. However, the primary motivation behind production remained the same - money, not “social justice.” The studios also feared being accused of propaganda and therefore focused more on “pure entertainment” practiced until then. Warner Bros. was an exception. Even though their films avoided explicitly addressing the issues in favor of an indirect approach. One example is the film *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* (1932), based on the real-life experience of Robert E. Burns in Georgia prison camp. The story shows brutal living conditions inside the camp and the struggles of a World War I veteran sentenced to ten years of labor in the camp. The ending merely emphasizes the character’s earlier suffering. After escaping twice from the prison, he is now a fugitive with no prospects.³⁷

Other social films from that era include *Public Enemy* (1931) and *Little Caesar* (1930). Both are action movies with a strong emphasis on crime and violence. Once again, they address social issues indirectly, especially class and ethnic problems. They are concerned with issues such as “Can the American system save itself from depression?” “Could it help the working class and minorities in case of emergency?” The answers

³⁴ Hass, Elizabeth, Terry Christensen, and Peter J. Haas. *Projecting Politics: Political Messages in American Films*, 106.

³⁵ Hass, Elizabeth, Terry Christensen, and Peter J. Haas. 106.

³⁶ Streissguth, Tom, and Lora Friedenthal, 111.

³⁷ Balio, Tino. *Grand Design: Hollywood as a Modern Business Enterprise, 1930-1939*. (University of California Press, 1995), 280 – 281.

presented in the movies were not particularly encouraging, just as the situation was not during the Great Depression.³⁸

The second group – comedy movies – made fun of society instead. One example is Paramount's *Duck Soup* (1933), which openly assaults politics, dictatorship, and fascism,³⁹ or Harold Lloyd's independent movie released through Paramount – *Movie Crazy* (1932). A comedy about a young aspiring actor who accidentally sends a photo of someone else to a Hollywood studio and, as a result, is invited to a film audition. He causes all sorts of trouble during his stay and gets romantically involved with an actress, and he is eventually recognized by the owner.^{40,41}

The next category is horror movies with films such as Universal's *Frankenstein* (1931) or Paramount's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931). While horror films did not have a significant representation in Hollywood, they remain an undeniable part of the industry.⁴² Authors of *Projecting Politics* note that *Frankenstein*, or the movie *Dracula* (1931), subconsciously addresses humans' deepest fears.⁴³

The last category is Musicals. Compared to social movies, musicals viewed the world rather positively, although not always realistically. The *Gold Diggers of 1933* (1933) and *Gold Diggers of 1935* (1935) or *Footlight Parade* (1933) were the types of films where the characters get what they want after working hard and overcoming all the hardship. Authors of *Projecting Politics* also comment on *Footlight Parade* musical and its strong leader that can be relied on, like Roosevelt, and the fact "the musicals incorporate the optimism of the New Deal."⁴⁴

³⁸ Hass, Elizabeth, Terry Christensen, and Peter J. Haas. 106-107.

³⁹ Hass, Elizabeth, Terry Christensen, and Peter J. Haas. 107-

⁴⁰ Balio, Tino. *Grand design: Hollywood as a modern business enterprise, 1930-1939*, 257.

⁴¹ *Movie Crazy*. Directed By Clyde Bruckman, Paramount Pictures, 1932. Accessed April 04,2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GVVSw85HA54>

⁴² Balio, Tino. *Grand design: Hollywood as a modern business enterprise*. 298.

⁴³ Hass, Elizabeth, Terry Christensen, and Peter J. Haas. 107.

⁴⁴ Hass, Elizabeth, Terry Christensen, and Peter J. Haas. 107

3 THE HOLLYWOOD FILM INDUSTRY DURING WORLD WAR II

3.1 Hollywood in 1939-1941

At the beginning of the war in 1939, the Hollywood industry was thriving. It was a time when two-thirds of the American population saw at least one newsreel, cartoon, or movie per week portraying the typical setting of a fantasy world of romance, adventure, and success to escape from the cruel reality of the Great Depression since 1929. Studio companies such as Warner Bros, Paramount Pictures, 20th Century Fox, and others ruled the industry. Nonetheless, the Hollywood industry attracted more than just Americans. It gained worldwide popularity, and the term “Hollywood” became a symbol of art.⁴⁵

With the growing involvement in the war, the content and aims of movies gradually shifted as well. From escapist art to content focusing on foreign affairs, Hollywood carefully moved to more concerning issues such as war and political ideologies. Furthermore, after Pearl Harbor, there was no question of restraining itself, and Hollywood movies were deeply immersed in the ongoing war. There is no doubt that movies served as one of the most influential media from 1942 to 1945. The most significant shift came after Germany took over Czechoslovakia, Mussolini took Italy, Japan seized Albania, and General Franco took over Spain. Sudetenland was occupied since 1938 by Germany and *Casablanca* also portrays a Czechoslovakian resistance fighter against Germany named Laszlo.⁴⁶

Consequently, the first movie depicting fascism found its way to the cinema screens. The movie in question is *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* (1939), which cautioned people about fascism in the U.S. threatening democracy. Some regarded the images as an eye-opener. For others, it was pure propaganda. Although one thing is clear, it came out at the right time. The situation in Europe was alarming, and Americans were tense. Germany conquered one country after another, U.S. isolationist position and its naive dreams of safety were slowly shattered. As a result, Lend-Lease was adopted, and America ceased to be a neutral country. But despite all the unrest the movie caused, it did not mark the beginning of propaganda movies as we know them.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Koppes, R. Clayton, and Gregory D. Black, 1-7.

⁴⁶Ryback, W. Timothy. *Dateline Sudetenland: Hostages to History*. (Foreign Policy, no. 105, pp. 162–78), 1996. Jacobs, Lewis. *World War II and the American Film*. (Cinema Journal, vol. 7, University of Texas Press, Society for Cinema & Media Studies, pp. 1–21, 1967), 1-2.

⁴⁷Jacobs, Lewis. *World War II and the American Film*. 1-2.

3.1.1 Newsreels

Though propaganda began in earnest only after the Neutrality Acts were dissolved, newsreels cautiously presented European affairs since the late 1930s. Nevertheless, as the government inclined more and more to the idea of intervention, the content of newsreels changed as well. Their primary focus lay on national defense. The reels featured military training, parades, or air force's dive-bombing attacks. They highlighted the progress and speed of military equipment production. Newsreels typically portrayed American patriotism, their might, discipline and unity, and military equipment demonstrating their preparation to defend the country. It was a period characterized by "inspirational and morale-building journalism." Before Pearl Harbor, they believed they must assist Britain - "to defend America by aiding allies."

In contrast, Britain was frequently portrayed as desperate and pathetic, awaiting rescue by the U.S. Factory workers were depicted as hardworking and fully supporting desperate Britain. However, soldiers and factory workers were not the only ones presented as true patriots. American citizens also contributed to the war effort. They were known as civilian spotters and were responsible for monitoring the sky for air riders. They promptly alerted the army report center if they spotted one, therefore contributing to national defense. The atmosphere was utterly directed toward American defense efficiency, military leaders, and political leaders addressing the citizens, but the reels rarely showed incidents abroad. The shortage of foreign conflict material was scarce due to government restrictions, as the country remained officially neutral. All famous studios of that time created these reels, from Paramount and Universal to Fox's Movietone News. This was the content of newsreels in 1941 before the U.S. officially joined the Allies, but propaganda reached a whole new level after that.^{48,49}

3.1.2 Movies produced before American entry to the World War II

The events of World War I and the subsequent Great Depression confirmed America's resolve to avoid another foreign conflict. While recovering from all things lost, they returned to their isolationism and did not intend to get involved in another war. This attitude of non-intervention was reflected in movies produced during that time. Author Ralph Donald, Professor of Mass Communications, refers to this approach to movies as a "war is hell"

⁴⁸ Jacobs, Lewis. *World War II and the American Film*, 2-3.

⁴⁹ United States, Army Air Forces. *Army Air Forces Newsreels 1941*. Accessed March 27, 2022. <https://archive.org/details/USArmyAirForcesNewsreels1941>

attitude. The main idea of these movies was to demonstrate that war is a massacre, and it is not worth it. The characters' main objective was survival, the plots were more realistic to present war as it was – “a hell.” Movies such as *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) and *What Price Glory* (1926) emerged, showing once again what the war was really like for ordinary soldiers and the hell they suffered without any illusions.^{50,51} Another focus of the industry prior to the war was on history and culture, and numerous films admiring especially British culture and history were released. Mainly since both countries had a lot in common, be it language, heritage, or culture. Some examples are folklore and literature classics *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1935) and *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938). However, there are also historical pieces about royalty, such as *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex* (1939).⁵²

With the growing threat from Nazi-occupied Europe, the motion pictures developed a distinct kind of movie focused on anti-Nazi propaganda and anti-isolationism, which finally erupted after Pearl Harbor. On the other hand, this approach is referred to by author Donald as “war is heck.” After that, however, heroism and comradeship became dominant themes, and war movies started to appear again. For instance, the movies *They Died with Their Boots On* (1941) or *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939), a movie later remade into blatant propaganda *Flying Tigers* (1942) analyzed in the second part of the thesis. Nevertheless, this did not go without any complications from groups against propaganda and war in general. As a result, the industry went through a series of trials, as mentioned in previous chapters.⁵³

3.2 Propaganda and Hollywood

“Propaganda is the expression of opinions or actions carried out deliberately by individuals or groups with a view to influencing the opinions or actions of other individuals or groups for predetermined ends and through psychological manipulations.”⁵⁴

As Bennett M. Todd, Professor of History notes, there was a general belief that propaganda could influence human behavior, and there was no better method to promote a particular ideology or thought than using cinema. Before television, no other medium could compete with cinema. It combined the visuals and audio experience with the correct dark

⁵⁰ Donald, Ralph. *Hollywood enlists!: propaganda films of World War II* (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2017), Chapter I – Hollywood and Washington.

⁵¹ Streissguth, Tom, and Lora Friedenthal, 3-4.

⁵² Bennett, M. Todd. *One World, Big Screen: Hollywood, the Allies, and World War II.*, 55-56.

⁵³ Donald, Ralph. *Hollywood enlists!: propaganda films of World War II*, Chapter I – Hollywood and Washington.

⁵⁴ Koppes, R. Clayton, and Gregory D. Black. 49-50.

atmosphere in the theatres to intensify the experience. Furthermore, Hollywood merely amplified the sensation. Many people initially doubted that movies could persuade people in a way that benefited the government. This attitude changed with the forthcoming threat of being involved in the war.⁵⁵

Nonetheless, World War II was not the first time America employed propaganda to influence public opinion. The Committee on Public Information (CPI), established in 1917, was the first organization to deal with propaganda. Another unofficial title of CPI is “The Creel Committee” named after George E. Creel, the head of CPI. Though this organization used all means of propaganda from pamphlets, posters, and movies about war progress, the “Four Minute Men” community is one of the most notable ones. Group of volunteers giving a four-minute long “pity speech” in front of an audience. At the end of the war, the estimated number of speeches reached over 750,000 given by seventy-five thousand volunteers and patriotic Four Minute Men.⁵⁶

However, propaganda earned a bad reputation among Americans. This is primarily due to their belief that manipulative propaganda was one reason for joining the senseless massacre known as World War I. Moreover, the postwar period and particularly the rise of fascism in Europe and the Great Depression only strengthened their convictions. As a result, the isolationist party opposed propaganda in films as it supported pointless belligerence. Furthermore, CPI was accused of undermining liberty and advising nativists to be suspicious of other minorities or radicals in the United States. Thus, the CPI became associated with totalitarianism, which was spreading in Nazi Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union.⁵⁷

Consequently, Americans had one additional reason to see propaganda negatively prior to WWII. Additionally, one anti-propaganda group pointed out that propaganda frequently refers to the government’s distrust in people’s ability to reach wise conclusions on their own. Despite this, most anti-propaganda organizations remained silent upon the United States’ entry into the war in 1941. The first rumors of another propaganda agency were spreading, though not without any opposition, and as a result, The Office of War Information (OWI) was established.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Bennett, M. Todd. *One World, Big Screen: Hollywood, the Allies, and World War II.*, 24-25.

⁵⁶ Fischer, N. *The Committee on Public Information and the Birth of US State Propaganda.* (Australasian Journal of American Studies, 35(1), 2016), 51–78.

⁵⁷ Bennett, M. Todd, 24-27.

⁵⁸ Bennett, M. Todd, 24-27.

3.2.1 Office of War Information

In 1942 following CPI, the next propaganda agency – OWI, was established. As a result of Hollywood’s demands about the content of war films, OWI established an office in Hollywood with personnel available all the time to provide advice and valuable insight. President Roosevelt then met with Congress to address the awareness of war among American Citizens. Roosevelt specified set themes that the war movies must follow to improve public understanding. The themes were – “Why We Fight?” “Whom we Fight?” “With Whom We Are Allied in Fighting?” “The War at Home.” “What We Must Do?” “And The Job of the Fighting Man at the Front.” Thus, the government released Information Manual for the Motion Picture Industry, where specifics regarding each point were explained.⁵⁹ The first point emphasized the necessity to give up comfort and life itself to win and defend democracy and freedom. To fight for the country and its people, become a patriot. The following section analyzed the enemy. It analyzed his objectives and enlightened the audience about his nature.⁶⁰ The third section discussed the Allied nations’ collaborative efforts and the importance of understanding them in order to fight alongside one another. Section IV. addressed the importance of military equipment. American workers could contribute significantly to equipment and military production by putting in more effort.⁶¹ Section V. emphasized what ordinary citizens could do to contribute to the war effort, such as volunteering their services and actively cooperating in rationing programs. The last section focused on recruitment. The purpose of motion pictures was to depict military life in its entirety. They did, however, stress out the positive features as well. The best out of democracy – is “concern for the health, welfare, and morale for the individual fighting man and remind them what they are fighting for.”⁶²

3.3 Hollywood in 1942-1945

After Pearl Harbor, the attitude of the Hollywood industry changed. When it came to characterizing the enemy, they no longer exercised restraint. The situation in Europe was dire, and there was zero opportunity to release movies in Nazi Germany and other European states. Over 375 propaganda films were released without regard for Axis power or even

⁵⁹ United States, Office of War Information and Bureau of Motion Pictures. *Government Information Manual for the Motion Picture Industry*, (Washington, D.C.: Office of War Information, 1942), Introduction Part. Accessed May 02, 2022.

<https://libraries.indiana.edu/collection-digital-archive-gimmpi>

⁶⁰ United States, Office of War Information and Bureau of Motion Pictures. Introduction & Section II.

⁶¹ United States, Office of War Information and Bureau of Motion Pictures, Section III – IV.

⁶² United States, Office of War Information and Bureau of Motion Pictures, Section V, Section VI.

isolationists. Hollywood had been prospering, and theatres screened one propaganda film after another twenty-four hours per day. Numerous businesses were influenced by war and the shortage of fuel, vehicles, and other essentials, but Hollywood avoided most of these restrictions. The reason was simple – propaganda in movies helped the war effort. Therefore, the industry enjoyed an advantage.⁶³

President Roosevelt, a Republican, and interventionist from the very beginning, could finally employ propaganda in movies without restraint. One of his first initiatives was establishing a relationship between the government and industry that may benefit both parties. Later, in June 1942, an OWI was formed to consolidate all the overlapping agencies dealing with propaganda and the motion picture industry. However, this does not mean that censorship utterly disappeared. Another office – the Office of Censorship, a separate office from OWI, was established to regulate movies, mail, and other media forms. Although OWI's goal was to “tell the truth,” inform the citizens of the current events occurring worldwide and change their perspective on war, the films produced were far from that. Most war movies presented the Japanese and German people as evil and cruel enemies while America was the innocent one, the heroes that only tried to save their land and its people. Even though the Japanese attack did cause America to officially join the war and start its collaboration with Hollywood, anti-Japanese movies accounted for a relatively tiny proportion of war propaganda films. The war was a vast topic that the Hollywood industry explored to its finest. They combined familiar wartime settings and scenarios with their trademark “gangster stories, screwball comedies, and frothy musicals.”⁶⁴ While the Allies fought for freedom, the Axis powers sought to enslave people, depriving them of their liberty and soul. “Racial slang” became common in the movies, and Japanese were called “Japs” or “Nips” after “Nippon” - one way how to call the country in the Japanese language. Japanese were pictured as simpletons and inferior beings unworthy of ordinary life and being part of the nation. Other nicknames were “yellow rats” and “little brown men.”⁶⁵

3.3.1 Movies after Pearl Harbor

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the government and Hollywood industry collaborated closely, and motion pictures became the primary propaganda medium. One aspect films concentrated on was uniting the allies by highlighting their goodness, heroism, and

⁶³ Donald, Ralph. *Hollywood enlists!: propaganda films of World War II.*, Chapter I - Hollywood and Washington.

⁶⁴ Koppes, R. Clayton, and Gregory D. Black, 56-61.

⁶⁵ Bennett, M. Todd. 102-103.

persistence to “humanize” them and make an average spectator feel more connected to them. Despite many unresolved problems each country faced, be it American racism or presenting the Soviet Union as a liberal democratic country, all countries proclaimed that they fought for liberty and a peaceful world. In this manner, they had also been presented in films, regardless of how unrealistic that seemed. America, quoting Bennett, was marketed “as a collective force for “freedom” trafficked in inspirational fiction that overlooked some grim realities.” An example of a movie with a “unity” theme is, for instance, *Action in the North Atlantic* (1943).⁶⁶

Meanwhile, the Japanese were presented as less than humans and faced racism in the movies. Although presented as evil and villains, German people were still treated as humans, and movies differentiated between the good Germans and Nazis. For instance, Twentieth Century–Fox movie *The Moon Is Down* (1943) introduces the Good German concept or *Casablanca* (1942) and the villain Nazis – the movie analyzed in the second part of my thesis. Other well-known studios have also adopted this concept of bad and good German. Paramount Pictures presents *The Hitler Gang* (1944) or RKO studio with its *Hitler’s Children* (1943). Nazism was shown as evil and a threat to life itself from the very beginning, even though people were still not fully aware of the atrocities Nazis committed.⁶⁷ *Why We Fight* (1942-1945) is yet another impactful series by Frank Capra that describes the origins and causes of war and why it is necessary to fight.⁶⁸

3.3.2 Cartoons

Finally, we discuss Hollywood propaganda without mentioning cartoons. From the silent film era of the 1920s to the 1950s, cartoons enjoyed their popularity on the big screen. Animated series were primarily responsible for the “proliferation of propaganda” during wartime. They became a powerful tool for persuasion and influence over so many people precisely because they were cartoons. The audience did not anticipate propaganda and political messages from this genre. They expected humorous, exaggerated stories while relaxing and lowering their guard, which suited to creators’ intentions of recruitment for war. Animated characters with their benign nature were perfect for the task. The fusion of their characters with patriotism “created a unique juxtaposition over audience expectations.” The

⁶⁶ Bennett, M. Todd, 97-100

⁶⁷ Bennett, M. Todd, 103-107.

⁶⁸ Simon, Charnan. *Hollywood at War: The Motion Picture Industry and World War II*. New York: F. Watts, 1995. 42-43

leading studios responsible for war propaganda content in cartoons were undeniably Walt Disney, Warner Bros, and studio MGM.⁶⁹

Due to financial difficulties, the government basically owned the Disney studio from 1941 to 1945, giving them exclusive control over the content of animated short movies. Disney then produced approximately 32 short films per year.⁷⁰ Some typical wartime short cartoons depicted the well-known Disney character Donald Duck. For instance, in the cartoon *Commando Duck* (1944), the main protagonist, patriot Donald Duck, fights bad and stupid Japanese soldiers. Additionally, the soldiers have an accent to make them more amusing. Their comment, “*Japanese manners say: always shooting a man in the back, please,*” is another example of mockery. Another cartoon worth noticing is *The Thrifty Pig* (1941), which, despite being published ahead of Pearl Harbor, also deals with Nazi Germany. For instance, when the big bad wolf – a Nazi – tries to blow off the pigs’ house, his pants fall off. The conclusion contains political messages designed to persuade people to purchase war-related stamps. However, these examples are just ones out of many.^{71,72}

As for the Warner Bros studio, their proliferation of propaganda was through their animated series *Looney Tunes*. Several notable titles include *The Ducktators* (1942) and *Daffy - The Commando* (1943). The first title presents world totalitarian leaders as ducks, ridiculing each of them. Hitler is mocked for his failed attempt to become an artist. His speeches are shown as incomprehensible gibberish, and people following his idea as gullible. Additionally, the cartoon mocks Mussolini and the Japanese leader. The ending reiterates the message to purchase bonds and stamps to help finance the war. The latter depicts Duffy, a Looney Tunes cartoon character, mocking and outwitting a Nazi commander repeatedly.^{73,74}

⁶⁹ Raiti, Gerard C. *The Disappearance of Disney Animated Propaganda: A Globalization Perspective*. (Animation, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 153–169, 2007), 153-156.

⁷⁰ Raiti, Gerard C. *The Disappearance of Disney Animated Propaganda: A Globalization Perspective*, 157.

⁷¹ *The Thrifty Pig | 1941 | WW2 Era Cartoon*. Uploaded by The Best Film Archives, 25th Dec. 2013.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8fjvfmnMqc>

⁷² *Commando Duck | Donald Duck vs. the Japanese | 1944 | WW2 Era Cartoon*. Uploaded by The Best Film Archives, 25th Nov. 2013.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWaf3dQxAfQ&ab_channel=TheBestFilmArchives

⁷³ *The Ducktators | World War 2 Era Propaganda Cartoon | 1942*. Uploaded by The Best Film Archives, 23rd June 2014.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=522qtqjSagM>

⁷⁴ *Daffy - The Commando | 1943 | World War 2 Era Propaganda Cartoon*. Uploaded by The Best Film Archives, 24th Dec. 2016.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qy_MQkaJ5WE&ab_channel=TheBestFilmArchives

II. ANALYSIS

4 ANALYSIS OF SELECTED MOVIES

The practical part will be focused on analyzing isolationism and anti-isolationism, the role America played in movies, and the heroism and patriotism described in the theoretical part. The next aspects of my analysis are the portrayal of the enemy and the concept of unity and teamwork as well as the opinion of OWI.

4.1 Analysis of Casablanca

Casablanca portrays a cynical expatriate Rick Blaine who runs a café in a Vichy-ruled city called Casablanca. It is a city where refugees escape from war with the dream of continuing their journey to America. Rick's café is attractive not only for refugees but also for Nazi and French officials. At the story's beginning, two German soldiers are murdered, and their transport letters are stolen. Consequently, a petty criminal, Ugarte boasts to Rick about two letters of transit he just acquired. The documents are irreplaceable. They permit their owner to move around occupied Europe without restrictions. Every refugee in Casablanca desperately wants this document to leave for Lisbon. Ugarte wishes to sell these documents in the café, and because he does not trust anyone, he gives them to Rick so that he can hide them. An investigation into the murder of German soldiers begins. Additionally, Major Strasser of the Third Reich visits Casablanca. His mission is to prevent Czechoslovakian resistance leader Victor Laszlo heading to Casablanca with his wife Ilsa Lund from meeting Ugarte and obtaining the exit documents for America. Corrupted prefect of police captain Louis Renault realizes that Ugarte is responsible for the murder. He is eventually arrested in the café and dies in custody, and the documents' location remains hidden. Later that evening, Victor Laszlo and Ilsa arrive at Rick's Café searching for the documents, only to learn that Ugarte has passed away.

The meeting between Ilsa and Rick reveals they are ex-lovers, and Ilsa broke Rick's heart. Ilsa discovers that Rick possesses the visas and tries to persuade him to give them to her. Rick initially resists because he is resentful and bitter after what Ilsa did. However, he changes his mind when he learns why she left him and that she still loves him. Rick gets along with the corrupt officer Louis and therefore comes to him to ask for help. Laszlo is famous for his work worldwide, and Major Strasser and Louis will do everything to prevent his departure. Hence, Rick informs Louis that the documents are for him and Ilsa. Believing it to be accurate, Louis attempts to arrest Laszlo upon receiving the documents from Rick, only to find out Rick's true intention was to let Laszlo and Ilsa leave Casablanca. Louis then secretly calls Major Strasser pretending it is someone from the airport. At the airport, Ilsa,

who chooses to be with Rick, learns that Rick wants her to accompany her husband. Thereupon, we witness Ilsa and Rick's heartbreaking farewell. Rick realizes there are more important things than love and bids Ilsa farewell. Major Strasser arrives at the scene after the plane takes off, only to be shot by Rick. Despite everything, Louis covers for Rick, and they both walk toward an unknown horizon, knowing that it is time to stop being inactive and finally act.⁷⁵

4.1.1 Setting of the movie and background information

Warner Bros. film directed by Michael Curtiz and written by Howard Koch. It was released in 1942 after America entered World War II. However, the story takes place on December 2, merely a few days before the Pearl Harbor attack and America's direct involvement in World War II. Despite the absence of direct references to war and violence in the film, we are still reminded of the global conflict. The very first scene, in which successive images depict refugees fleeing Europe's dreadful situation, establishes the gravity of the situation. The story occurs in Casablanca, a French-ruled city in Morocco in North Africa. Casablanca is only the start of the journey for all the refugees, as they hope to obtain exit visas and continue to Lisbon and then to America. And below is the opening monologue, which describes the terrible circumstances.

Narrator: "Lisbon became the great embarkation point. But not everybody could get to Lisbon directly, and so, a tortuous, roundabout refugee trail sprang up. Paris to Marseilles, across the Mediterranean to Oran, then by train, or auto, or foot, across the rim of Africa to Casablanca in French Morocco. Here, the fortunate ones, through money, or influence, or luck, might obtain exit visas and scurry to Lisbon, and from Lisbon to the New World. But the others wait in Casablanca – and wait — and wait — and wait."⁷⁶

And thus, they wait for their turn. And the best place to wait and acquire the newest information regarding visas and possibilities to depart from Casablanca is Rick's nightclub - Café American. It is the gathering point for different people from distinct classes and ethnicities, all feeling the same hope and despair. Moreover, it is a place where most of the story transpires. The letters of transport are hidden there, Ugarte is arrested there, the first meeting between the ex-lovers occurs there, and the notorious piano scene where all the different ethnicities unite to tone down Nazi soldiers also occurs there.

⁷⁵ Casablanca. Directed by Michael Curtiz, 1942. Warner Bros., accessed on 19. 04. 2022. <https://fsharetv.co/movie/casablanca-episode-1-tt0034583/>

⁷⁶ Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*, 01:22 to 02:18.

Although *Casablanca* appears to be a simple love story set during a time of war, upon closer observation, we can discern numerous subplots. Among the most dominant ones is isolationism vs. interventionism, heroism, love vs. duty, the portrayal of America, or the concept of unity.

4.1.2 Representation of America

Since the beginning of the movie, America represents the land of freedom, a land devoid of suffering, and the Nazis. The U.S. is once more portrayed as a “city upon a hill” as mentioned in the first part of Winthrop’s famous speech. The narrator’s very introduction mentioned below starts with references to America as something more, a land of hope and opportunities, a land of freedom.

Narrator: “With the coming of the Second World war many eyes in imprisoned Europe turned hopefully, or desperately toward the freedom of the Americas.”⁷⁷

This view of America through the eyes of refugees in *Casablanca* is maintained throughout the film. Almost every time somebody mentions America in the film, it is about people's desire to escape to the country. The refugees are prepared to go to any length to reach their destination. Their desperation is evident in Rick's conversation with Annina, a young Bulgarian woman who approaches him for advice.

Annina “Monsieur... ..you are a man. If someone loved you very much... ..so that your happiness was the only thing that she wanted in the world... ..and she did a bad thing to make certain of it... ..could you forgive her?”

Rick: “Nobody ever loved me that much.”

Annina: “And he never knew, and the girl kept this bad thing locked in her heart... ..that would be all right, wouldn't it?”

Rick: “You want my advice?”

Annina: “Yes, please.”

Rick: “Go back to Bulgaria.”

Annina: “Oh, but if you knew what it means to us to leave Europe, to get to America... Oh, but if Jan should find out. He is such a boy...”⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*, 01:12 to 01:21.

⁷⁸ Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*, 1:06:28 to 1:07:05

This example shows that people are willing to sacrifice themselves to leave for America. In her desperation to “get to America,” is considering adultery as a way of payment for the visas. Police Officer Louis is known for granting visas to beautiful women for small sexual favors.

Nevertheless, America is not only presented as the beacon of light for the refugees. Throughout the movie, there are also some subtle comments about the American capability and how it does not pay off to underestimate the country and its citizens. An example of this is the conversation between Louis Renault and Major Strasser referring to American achievement in World War I.

Major Strasser: “My impression was he's just another blundering American.”

Louis: “We mustn't underestimate American blundering. I was with them when they blundered into Berlin in 1918.”⁷⁹

Another example illustrates America as an isolationist country. Rick sits in his café late at night after a meeting with his ex-lover Ilsa. He agonizes over his life, comments on the date in Casablanca, and asks Sam, “What time is it in New York?” Sam answers: “My watch stopped.” Rick continues with his monologue: “I bet they're asleep in New York. I bet they're asleep all over America.”

4.1.3 OWI and *Casablanca*

Although Rick's character is not initially committed to the war effort, he eventually realizes what is important and what they must sacrifice. On the other side, Laszlo is dedicated to the cause from the very beginning. He represents the “Why we fight” question from the manual released by OWI together with the government and one more agency. He fights for survival, freedom, and his land. The enemy and his nature are also clearly indicated in the movie. Thus, it meets another manual's requirement.

According to the official OWI review of *Casablanca*, the movie is satisfying and meets the requirements. It especially emphasizes the courage of Laszlo and the underground movement, portraying them as worthy allies of America. Other points are the sacrifice of love over duty, picturing America as a heaven for the “oppressed and homeless,” or the portrayal of the enemy.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*, 51:15 to 51:23.

⁸⁰ United States, Office of War Information, Bureau of Motion Pictures. *Feature review report of Casablanca*, October 28, 1942.

4.1.4 Patriotism, heroism, and intervention

Victor Laszlo is an embodiment of a resistance fighter. Laszlo is an interventionist, so according to Cole's definition discussed in the theoretical part, he is involved in foreign affairs and fights together with allies. He is internationally renowned for his work and thus has many enemies. Laszlo is portrayed as a real hero, encouraging people and never surrendering. He escaped from a concentration camp, and, despite his ordeals, he continues to fight. He fights for freedom, peace, and his people. His resistance and will to fight are portrayed in the scene mentioned above. When German soldiers sing "Die Wacht Am Rhein," the remaining customers look discouraged, though only until Victor arrives. His character does not permit him to neglect this situation. He goes to the band and says: "Play "La Marseillaise." Play it!" Suddenly, the situation reverses, and people start singing the French national anthem immediately. This is a moment when the unity of all the people inside Rick's Café wins against the villains – the Nazi soldiers. This scene sends an important message to the audience – through unity and teamwork, we and the Allied forces can defeat the Nazis. Consequently, for Major Strasser, it is yet another indication that Laszlo is dangerous, and they should arrest him immediately.

Major Strasser: "You see what I mean? If Laszlo's presence in a caf can inspire this demonstration... ..what more will his presence in Casablanca bring on?"⁸¹

His patriotism is apparent in the scene with Major Strasser. Despite being in the presence of a Nazi official, he proudly declares he is a citizen of Czechoslovakia.

Louis: "Mademoiselle Lund and Monsieur Laszlo, may I present Major Heinrich Strasser."

Major Strasser: "How do you do? This is a pleasure I have looked forward to."

Laszlo: "I'm sure you'll excuse me if I'm not gracious. You see, Major Strasser, I am a Czechoslovakian."

Major Strasser: "You were a Czechoslovakian. Now you are a subject of the German Reich."

Laszlo: "I have never accepted that privilege. And I'm now on French soil."⁸²

He is a direct antithesis of Rick. From the beginning, he is an interventionist and an idealist who genuinely believes in his purpose to fight against the Nazis. There is no character development because his ideals remain constant throughout the film. For him, the

⁸¹ Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*. 1:14:03 to 1:14:09.

⁸² Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*, 28:00 to 28:20.

fight for freedom is as natural as breathing, and he perceives his struggles and the opportunity to fight as a privilege.

Rick: "Don't you sometimes wonder if it's worth all this? I mean what you're fighting for."

Laszlo: "You might as well question why we breathe. If we stop breathing, we'll die. If we stop fighting our enemies, the world will die."⁸³

4.1.5 Isolationism

Using Cole and Cooper's definitions of interventionism, the main character Rick fits the description and can be considered a typical representative of isolationism and neutralism. He represents America itself and its attitude toward war described in the first part of this thesis. Rick, however, was not of this opinion the whole time. In 1935, he ran guns to Ethiopia and fought in the Spanish Civil War against Fascists. Devastated by his broken heart, he turns to cynicism and does not want to be involved in foreign conflicts. The same can be said about America, which, rather than being brokenhearted, was disillusioned after World War I and reluctant to join the battle. Rick's isolationism is visible from the very beginning. This is evident in his conversation with Louis about arresting Ugarte in his café.

Louis: "Rick, there will be some excitement here tonight. An arrest in your caf."

Rick: "Again?"

Louis: "This is no ordinary arrest. A murderer, no less. If you're thinking of warning him, don't put yourself out. He cannot escape."

Rick: "I stick my neck out for nobody."

Louis: "A wise foreign policy."⁸⁴

Louis's last sentence can also be used to reference American foreign policy before WWII. Another example is when Ugarte is captured by the police and desperately screams for Rick to help him. However, Rick calmly stands there and does nothing. Finally, one of his customers expresses growing concerns about Rick's inactivity, to which Rick replies with the exact phrase mentioned above: "I stick my neck out for nobody."

Rick's conversation with Victor Laszlo is another example. One of them is an isolationist, while the other is a patriot engaged in the fight for freedom. After obtaining the information, Laszlo visits Rick to persuade him to give him the visas as he is significant for

⁸³ Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*, 1:27:13 to 1:27:23

⁸⁴ Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*, 17:26 to 17:41.

the resistance fight. Rick's reply repeatedly demonstrates his perspective on the whole situation. "I'm not interested in politics. The problems of the world are not in my department. I'm a saloonkeeper."⁸⁵

These cases are undeniably the proof of his perspective, though, upon closer examination, it becomes evident that his isolationist attitude and "sticking his neck out for nobody" is not always accurate. Some of his actions indicate that he still subtly fights against the Nazis and "sticks his neck out" for others. One example is when a German customer is denied entry to the gambling den because he is German. Rick denies him access and tears his bribe in the scene, prompting the man to exclaim indignantly: "What? Do you know who I am?" and Rick vigorously declares: "I do. You are lucky the bar is open to you."⁸⁶ The same German gives his check on the bar to bartender Sasha. He gives it to Rick, who promptly rips it to shreds. "Some German gave this check. Is it alright?" [Rick proceeds to tear it and writes a new one].⁸⁷ Or when he helps Annina's husband win money through gambling, preventing her from selling herself.

4.1.6 Change from isolationism and neutralism to intervention

The same as American attitude changes after Pearl Harbor discussed previously, and so does Rick's viewpoint gradually shifts from isolationism to interventionism. From the beginning, he is disillusioned, and when he encounters Ilsa, his old wounds open again. When he learns the truth about Ilsa's departure and her decision to return to him, he is torn between two options. Either stay with his lover, whom Rick still adores or let her go to his rival Victor Laszlo, who needs her assistance in his fight. Furthermore, as Rick later says to Ilsa, Victor needs her. In the end, he concludes that some things are more important than love. He sacrifices his love, chooses duty, and sends Ilsa where she belongs – to Victor.

Ilsa: "But what about us?"

Rick: "We'll always have Paris."

Ilsa: "We didn't have..."

Rick: "We'd lost it until you came to Casablanca. We got it back last night."

Ilsa: "When I said I would never leave you."

⁸⁵ Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*, 1:11:18 to 1:11:24

⁸⁶ Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*, 09:49 to 09:52.

⁸⁷ Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*. 14:59 to 15:10.

Rick: “And you never will. But I've got a job to do too. Where I'm going, you can't follow. What I've got to do you can't be any part of. Ilsa, I'm no good at being noble. But it doesn't take much to see that the problems of three little people... ..don't amount to a hill of beans in this crazy world. Someday you'll understand that. Now, now. Here's looking at you, kid.”⁸⁸

The final conversation between Rick and Victor at the airport indicates that Rick has finally joined the war. Rick: “Here it is.” [hands Laszlo the letters of transit] Laszlo: “Thanks. I appreciate it. Welcome back to the fight. This time I know our side will win.”⁸⁹ Rick’s decision and final transformation into a patriot are also recognized by Louis as he states: “Well, Rick, you’re not only a sentimentalist, but you’ve become a patriot.”⁹⁰

Nonetheless, Louis Renault, the police prefect, undergoes the most remarkable transformation. Louis’s sole motivation from the start has been money. Money is all that matters to him, and he is an ally of whoever is in power. None of his actions demonstrate a commitment to justice or the Third Reich. His reason is simple – Major Strasser is in control, and thus he accompanies him. His indifference is demonstrated even when he permits Rick to operate his café, fully aware it is a gambling den and frequently receiving fixed wins. In addition, Louis exploits beautiful young refugee women, as mentioned previously, and even wagers with Rick on Laszlo’s situation. Ultimately, it is his friendship with Rick that may aid him in his transformation. He expresses his affection for Rick from the very beginning. “He’s the kind of man that, well, if I were a woman... ..and I were not around, I should be in love with Rick.”⁹¹

In comparison to Rick’s change, there is not some major incident that causes it. Though, in the end, Louis also commits himself to a just cause and decides to leave Casablanca and join the Allies together with Rick. One of the first signs is a scene at the airport. While pouring French wine and looking at the bottle, he discarded the bottle in the dustbin instead. Rick and Louis both join the fight at the end, which Rick describes as “the beginning of a beautiful friendship.”⁹²

⁸⁸ Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*, 1:37:04 to 1:37:41.

⁸⁹ Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*, 1:38:31 to 1:38:41.

⁹⁰ Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*, 1:41:14 to 1:41:18.

⁹¹ Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*, 27:44 to 27:50.

⁹² Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*, 1:42:08 to 1:42:12.

4.1.7 The Nazis as the enemy

According to OWI, the movies produced should portray the enemy and his objective. The enemy here is the Nazis and fascism. Major Strasser, a German Nazi official, is portrayed as arrogant with contempt for everything, not German. Even though the movie introduces the enemy and what he stands for, besides a few exceptions, not much is revealed about their crimes. There are only subtle indications about their actions. For instance, when Major Strasser visits Rick's saloon, and Louis demands the best table available, Carl's reply, "I have already given him the best. Knowing he is a German; he would take it anyway"⁹³ indicates how they are perceived by others. The following example is the opening scene with the narrator, which not only introduces America as the land of freedom but also demonstrates the suffering of people escaping from the Nazis and fascism. There is only one case when German officers are directly insulted. It is in an argument in Rick's Café between a German officer and a French one. The brawl is ended by Rick, and the French officer comments in his native language: "Dirty Boche. Someday we will have our revenge."⁹⁴

4.2 Analysis of Flying Tigers

This film is a Pacific War drama portraying a group of young American mercenaries volunteering to become pilots in China to fight against Japanese oppression in the air with the fliers Curtis P-40C. The first hardships begin when the squad captain, Jim Gordon, accepts his old friend, Woody Jason. The group of fliers differs regarding the motives behind their decision to enlist. For some, the reason may be money. For others, revenge or just the excitement they get from fighting. From the very beginning, Woody does not fit well with the rest of the squadron. In his first encounter with the Japanese flyers, he decides to pursue them by himself without permission. Unfortunately, it is too late when Blackie realizes his flier is without ammunition and is shot down. Fortunately, he ends up unharmed. However, the same cannot be said about the P-40 fighter. Another major incident is when Woody once more recklessly pursues the Japanese and abandons his wingman Blackie Bales. Consequently, Blackie is bombarded by the Japanese pilots and must jump out of the plane, only to be shot while hanging on his parachute. This incident only alienates him even further, and his presence is frowned upon by the rest of the squadron. Woody adores the beautiful young nurse Brooke, whom the rest of the group considers Jim's girl. With time, Brooke

⁹³ Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*, 20:50 to 20:54.

⁹⁴ Curtiz, 1942, *Casablanca*., 1:03:11 to 1:03:13

realizes Woody is not so bad and goes on a date with him. As a result, he arrives late for his night patrol, and another pilot pretends to be him. The pilot in question is Hap Davis, who is forbidden to fly as his vision deteriorates. That proves crucial in the subsequent battle. He collides with a Japanese pilot and dies. After that, Woody became alienated from the rest of the squadron even more.

Afterward, the Pearl Harbor attack happened, which left everyone in shock. Then a mission is assigned to Jim and his group – to blow up a bridge and prevent the train with supplies from reaching its destination. Jim decides to accept the mission, knowing he will not return. Little does he know Woody secretly sneaks into the plane and intends to assist him. The mission is accomplished, but Woody is shot and shoves Jim out of the plane with a parachute. He then heads with the plane straightforwardly into the train. Although Woody is dead, the Flying Tigers' mission is not accomplished yet. They take off on their routine patrol flight with the American anthem in the background and continue their battle.⁹⁵

4.2.1 Setting of the movie and background information

The story is based on a real American Volunteer Group (AVG) led by former U.S. Army Air Corps (AAC) captain, pilot Claire L. Chennault. Though the Flying Tigers in the movie fought against Japan prior to Pearl Harbor, the original squadron's first real battle came only after the attack. Shortly after their deployment, they got recognition after winning a fight against Japan, despite not possessing enough fliers. That brought them immediate glory, especially at home and in China. Since then, more and more glorious stories about their deeds have followed. The group attracted Hollywood's attention, and the film *Flying Tigers* was released shortly after.⁹⁶

The story takes place in China, but there is no specific place where the story occurs, like Rick's Café in Casablanca. Instead, most scenes are in the air, with Tigers fighting against Japan or on the grounds of their headquarters.

4.2.2 Portrayal of the Chinese people

Flying Tigers' potential allies in this movie are the Chinese. It is a reference to the American-Sino relationship is discussed in the theoretical part. Chinese are introduced as simpletons speaking broken English. We can identify them only in two different roles – a

⁹⁵ *Flying Tigers*. Directed by David Miller, 1942. Republic Pictures.

⁹⁶ Call Steve, Friedman, M. Hal, (Ed.). *War in the American Pacific and East Asia, 1941-1972*. (University Press of Kentucky, 2018), Chapter 2 - Here's Your Air War: Popular Culture Depictions of Land-Based Air Power in the Pacific.

peasant or a dimwit. They admire the fliers and what they represent. It is evident from the first few minutes when the fliers return from their patrol, and the camera aims at Chinese citizens looking at the sky with adoration and respect. This situation occurs chiefly with the peasant group. Another case is when a young Chinese girl gives Woody some rice cakes.

Woody: "What's she selling?"

Brooke: "She's brought you these rice cakes as a tribute."

Woody: "Tribute? For what? That corny trick with the half dollar?"

Brooke: No, for your courage and loyalty as a member of the flying tigers."⁹⁷

The second group appearing in the movie is dimwits. Every time some "dimwit" appears in the scene, his stupefied face is accompanied by broken English. The two dialogues below introduce two Chinese characters. The first one is Chef Chin, and the second one is Mike, who helps the fliers with repairs. Every time they appear on screen, their English is gruesome, and they resemble small children addressing their parents with ridiculous facial expressions.

Chin: "But music...Very nice."

Jim: "Can't you turn that record over? Has it only got one side?"

Chin: "Oh, him turn over, no music. But him turn over."

Jim: "never mind. We're getting so we like it. Thank you."

Brooke: "Look, chin, why don't you surprise us? Bring us something new like... Chow mein."

Chin: "Ah, very nice. Very good chow mein. American dishes."⁹⁸

Woody: "Mike, that ship gassed?"

Mike: "Yeah, him full to top. Okay."⁹⁹

4.2.3 OWI and *Flying Tigers*

The agency addressed in the previous chapters had a strong opinion about the movie. Although their primary interest was to introduce China as more than "just a lot of names in a geography book," the outcome of the Hollywood production did not meet their expectations. The representation of Chinese people as simpletons or peasants lacking subjectivity sends a message of American superiority to the audience. And despite it being

⁹⁷ *Flying Tigers*, 1942, 1:00:50 to 1:01:00.

⁹⁸ *Flying Tigers*, 1942, 1:02:16 to 1:02:41.

⁹⁹ *Flying Tigers*, 1942, 51:43 to 51:47.

an American movie defending Chinese citizens from Japanese oppression, only rarely did Chinese people appear. And if they did, it was not on equal footing. In substance, the movie successfully delivered the message of China being a country with living adults and children suffering from war. However, it failed to depict them as equal and worthy of being allied with the United States of America. Though it failed to portray China as a worthy ally, it follows other themes discussed in the chapter named Office of War Information. The question - “Why we fight?” “Whom we fight?” and the “Job of the fighting man...” are all addressed here.

4.2.4 Patriotism and heroism

The squadron is portrayed as a group of heroes coming to liberate China from Japanese oppression from the very beginning. They are courageous patriots willing to die for their country and others. Even outnumbered and with archaic aircraft equipment, they still choose to fight against the vile enemy because they believe in their mission. In times of need, they do not hesitate to help the families of their deceased comrades in arms at the expense of their profit. From the prologue itself, it is apparent what role the pilots will perform. Chiang Kai-Shek, a Chinese soldier, describes the Flying Tigers as “a symbol of the invincible strength” and “upholding the cause of justice and humanity.”¹⁰⁰

When Woody is introduced to the rest of the squadron, the enemies attack their headquarters, and it takes only a few seconds for the squad to recover and head fearlessly for a counterattack. Compared to Woody, their reason to fight is not all about money, but things change when they hear the news about Pearl Harbor. They were volunteering groups helping China against Japan beforehand, but now it is their business. It is - “the will of the congress(...) And of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make it very certain(...) That this form of treachery(...) Shall never again” - threaten American peace, says the radio speaker. “Our people, our territory...And our interests(...)Are in grave danger,”¹⁰¹ he continues. The speech ends with a declaration of war against the Japanese empire. This is the turning point. At that moment, it is directly connected to their homeland and people. From this point, everything changes. A colonel visits the tigers, and his message is clear – they have to extend more effort than ever before.

¹⁰⁰ Flying Tigers. Directed by David Miller, 1942. Republic Pictures, accessed on 27. 04. 2022. <https://dopebox.cc/movie/flying-tigers-1942/>

¹⁰¹ Flying Tigers, 1942. 1:23:55 to 1:25:35

As a result, one of the main characters, Jim, decides to take upon himself the mission given by the colonel for America and its people.

4.2.5 Unity and teamwork

Unity and teamwork were other tools used by the OWI, presented in the manual described above, to promote war. It was one of the central themes in the movie, besides heroism. Throughout the movie, Jim constantly reminds his comrades of the importance of teamwork. Without teamwork, their achievements would not happen. Teamwork between the squadron is necessary. They must rely on and trust each other. Without trust in their comrade, their life could be in danger. Besides teamwork, unity is also essential for their cooperation. With the same objective to defeat the enemy and protect the Chinese people from Japanese oppression, their understanding of one another stimulates their motivation and reason to risk their lives. The cases below depict Jim's reminder that teamwork is crucial.

“Results here are based on cooperation and understanding. Discipline in the air is strict because that's the only way... An outfit like this can operate.”¹⁰²

“Don't try to win this war all by yourself. Stick close. Tail them in formation.”¹⁰³

Another point indicating unity can be the national anthem in the background in the last scene as they take off to fight the enemy. This shows it is “our fight” now, and we need to unite against the common enemy for America. Unity is also displayed predominantly during their fights, formations, and trust in themselves, and their comrades means they can face the enemy in the air. Plus, the formations they show, and the discipline are again expressed in the air.

4.2.6 Woody's development

The same as Rick and America itself, even Woody Jason underwent a striking transformation. Woody is one of the central protagonists of the movie. From the beginning, he appears self-centered, arrogant, and reckless, and his only interest is money and maybe killing “Japs”. The story focuses predominantly on his journey from his selfish, indifferent behavior to becoming more engaged in the fight and finding the right motivation, and realizing what Chinese people experience all over China.

¹⁰² Flying Tigers, 1942, 42:36 to 42:39.

¹⁰³ Flying Tigers, 1942, 05:26 to 05:30.

Before his transformation, as indicated previously, he only cared about money and did not intend to hide it. From the first encounter with the Flying Tigers, he clearly states his opinion about this foreign war, and his concerns include just “dough,” as he calls money. His attitude is not well received by the rest. This is also the beginning of his alienation from the team.

“I know there's a war, but you fellows have no part of it. We're all out here for the same reason. Dough.¹⁰⁴ ...I know, but you're protecting your own home. This is not our home. It's not our fight. It's a business.”¹⁰⁵

He keeps causing problems ever since his first flight, acting independently and completely disregarding orders. The first significant incident is when he disobeys orders and takes off with a flier, only to be shot down, completely destroying it. The following incident caused by his recklessness and arrogance is Blackie's death. Although he initially appears unaffected by the incident, it is the first step toward his transformation. Consequently, Woody visits Blackie's wife and does something incredible considering his previous behavior. He gives her money, persuades her it is from Blackie, and reveals to her the entire story of his heroic deeds. Naturally, they are all fabrications. Afterward, he comes into contact with the children – the scene is described more on the following page. It is another major event causing him to change. And the last incident, when he arrives late because of his date with Brooke and Hip ends up dead as a result. This incident causes even Jim to be disappointed in him.

A scene portraying the infamous date “7th of December” occurs together with a long speech on the radio describing the Pearl Harbor attack. This is unquestionably a turning point for Woody, and after hearing about Jim's suicide missions, it is time to act. He secretly joins Jim on his mission and shares with him his inner thought, indicating his change. The monologue expressing his inner feelings is about his immaturity and inability to connect with people's suffering outside of his reach and territory. However, these doubts are no longer possible after the attack, and it is time to commit to the cause. Below is Woody's long monologue in the airplane before the accident, explaining his reasoning.

¹⁰⁴ Flying Tigers, 1942, 34:42 to 34:48.

¹⁰⁵ Flying Tigers, 1942, 35:05 to 35:08.

“I got it coming to me. But there's one thing you gotta get straight on. A whole lot of us just don't grow up. We stay kids. The most important thing to a kid is the street he lives on. It's his life. It's his whole world. That was me when I first joined up with you. Hong Kong, Shanghai, Chungking- They didn't mean anything to me. Just a lot of names in a geography book. Not towns where millions of people were being maimed and killed by bombs. If you called them Texas, Maine or Michigan... That would have been different. They were my street. That's why I acted the way I did. Not because I was a heel, but because I was still a kid. It cost another man's life to make a man out of me.”¹⁰⁶

4.2.7 The Japanese as the enemy

As Bennett indicated in the theoretical part, the Japanese were often ridiculed and insulted in movies, and the *Flying Tigers* is no exception. While American fliers are the heroes, the Japanese are the story's villains. Even here, racial slang is used to describe the enemy forces. Mostly, we can hear the squad referring to the enemy pilots as “Japs”. However, sometimes other nicknames appear as well, such as “four-eyed Japs” or “little brown friends.” Other notable examples are Jim's references to them as “termites” in his conversation with Chinese Mike or when one of the Tigers addresses them as snakes. “Back home, most of us would kill rattlesnakes whether there was a bounty on them or not.”¹⁰⁷

To make the Japanese pilots appear more sinister and justify American intervention in the battle simultaneously, a scene with small Chinese children gathered around Woody is introduced to the audience. The children are hurt and maimed from the Japanese attacks all over China, and as Brooke remarks, they are orphans who traveled to the headquarters “starved, patient, silent,” looking for asylum and safety. The next example is a scene from the beginning with a little boy that is abandoned, wounded, and crying after the bombing by Japanese pilots, while the rest of the Chinese people, together with the nurses, hide inside a barn.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ *Flying Tigers*, 1942. 1:33:19 to 1:34:02.

¹⁰⁷ *Flying Tigers*, 1942, 35:00 to 35:04.

¹⁰⁸ *Flying Tigers*, 1942.

CONCLUSION

This bachelor's thesis aims to analyze the war movies *Casablanca* and *Flying Tigers*. It was essential to primarily define terms undeniably connected to U.S. history - isolationism and interventionism in the theoretical background. The document also describes other terms related to American history – neutralism and Neutrality Acts, a series of agreements to prevent intervention in war once again. The isolationist or interventionist attitude reflects movie production as well, but the primary catalyst for production was still profit. Propaganda always played a big part in the American movie industry. In the case of WWI, the institution in charge was CPI. This institution took care of promoting war through various media. Whenever the situation seemed precarious, the movies indirectly reflected the situation. For instance, the Great Depression era or pre-war movies.

The breaking point for Second World War was the attack on Pearl Harbor. With this attack, everything changed. The government started closely cooperating with OWI and, together with the Bureau of Motion Pictures, introduced a manual for war movie content. This manual helped Hollywood understand what the government and OWI expected from the movies. The manual addresses six basic questions defining what propaganda films should incorporate. Movies during World War II were designed to promote patriotic fervor and boost public support for the war effort. Cartoons, on the other side, use contempt to make fun of the enemy. Short reels were also regularly released to highlight the efficiency of American workers, their enthusiasm, as well as patriotism and discipline of soldiers. Though both Wars used movies as a persuasion tool, the movies produced were different. Movies during World War I were often more simplistic in their portrayal of the enemy and their message of patriotism, while movies produced during World War II portrayed a wider range of themes and explored different aspects of the war effort.

Casablanca and *Flying Tigers* offer us a diverse repertoire of characters. Rick in *Casablanca* starts as a disillusioned person, often claiming neutrality. Throughout the movie, we can see him change. This transformation also reflects the American public's changing attitudes toward ongoing conflict. Many Americans initially hesitated to enter the war, but as the struggle progressed and the Nazi crimes became more apparent, public opinion shifted towards a more pro-war stance. Woody from *Flying Tigers* shares a similar point of view. Although Rick's degree of isolationist attitude is undeniably greater and comparing Woody to isolationism may be too much of a stretch, to a certain degree, Woody is non-interventionist. His remarks that "this is not our fight" or "this is not our country"

may serve as an example. Yes, he fights the enemy, but his motivation is misplaced. Both characters experience growth toward the movie's end and find a noble cause to fight. However, the catalyst for change is entirely different for each of them. Both movies show interventionism as well. Representatives are Laszlo, a Czechoslovakian resistance fighter for *Casablanca*, and the fliers for the other movie. Both Laszlo and the squadron are patriotic and believe in their fight for freedom. Even though their way of fighting is very different, one fights using words and encouraging others to stand against the oppressor – the French anthem, while the other fights through deeds. However, in both cases, it can cost their lives. The relationship between the characters also shows signs of similarities, but the similarities are almost insignificant. The significant similarity is the structure of these relationships. One woman between two men, one isolationist, and the other patriot, the woman is beautiful, intelligent, and witty. Nonetheless, this is where the parallel ends. In *Casablanca*, the love triangle represents one of the main sub-plots, undoubtedly adding more weight to Rick's final decision to join the fight. While *Flying Tigers* is not about the love between characters, only about attraction, and thus, it does not influence the final decision of both Jim and Woody. Both movies are set near the Pearl Harbor attack, with the second one directly referring to the event when it occurred. While most of the *Flying Tigers* movie occurs in the air or the headquarter, *Casablanca* is set in Rick's café.

The institution responsible for war propaganda OWI also took part in both movies. According to the manual released by OWI and Bureau of Motion Pictures, movies portrayed most aspects necessary to be considered war movies, only the strategies and execution differ. The most noticeable distinction is in the setting and plot. Whereas *Casablanca* depicts an enticing love story during wartime and war is only a sub-plot, *Flying Tigers* is primarily focused on action and fight. The setting is very different in both cases. While *Casablanca* introduces its message to “wake up” slowly, subtly, and almost unnoticeably to ordinary citizens, the same cannot be said of the second movie. From the moment the pilots appear, it is clear that this will be a war film focused on combat. Both movies address the present war, however, *Casablanca* does so without depicting any actual battles or other direct opposition to the enemy, the most visible manifestation of opposition being the underground resistance fight. The enemy is yet another important aspect for war movie that also differs. *Casablanca* introduces Nazi Germany, and as previously mentioned, Nazis, although the enemy are not thought of as inferior and no insults are directed toward them. Whereas the ridicule is rather apparent in the second movie. Constant remarks as “Japs” or “termites” are

used repetitively to make the enemy less worthy in the eyes of the audience. Therefore we have yet another strategy of the manual that was really applied.

As allies are concerned, *Casablanca* does not introduce this concept, although various people visit Rick's Café. On the other hand, the potential allies in *Flying Tigers* are simpletons whom the characters regard as small, dependent children. However, precisely this portrayal of the Chinese shows the fliers in a better light, and the ones that have the right to help the innocent, oppressed people, the possibility to become heroes. The concept of unity and teamwork is more evident in *Flying Tigers*, with the team having a common enemy to fight. *Casablanca* has one scene with the national anthem discussed in Chapter 4, but it is not the story's primary focus. And lastly, the portrayal of America. In the beginning, I referred to the speech "City upon a hill," and once again, this portrayal of America is present in *Casablanca* as well. Starting with the very first line ... Europe turned hopefully, or desperately toward the freedom of the Americas... and this continues throughout the movie, where America is constantly referred to as a land of hope and full of expectation and without war.

Overall, the plot is very different, and the presentation to the audience as well. *Flying Tigers* focuses more on the heroism and bravery of American pilots, thus more likely to persuade audiences who want to show their bravery and fight for glory. Whereas *Casablanca* uses a subtler approach and aims for a broader audience, it is hard to determine who was persuaded more by the movie. However, as one of the main plots is about sacrifice for the greater good, we can assume it may encourage a sense of patriotism and a willingness to support the war effort among American citizens. However, in both movies, the message of "it is time to fight" and "duty over love" or "we are the good ones" remains the same. The distinction is in the portrayal of the audience.

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