New Directions in National Cinemas
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COSMOPOLITAN FILM CULTURES IN LATIN AMERICA
1896-1960

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In 1918, a columnist from Santiago de Chile writing for the US Spanish-language magazine *Cine-Mundial* observed that the “feverish activity in the cinematic circles of this capital have had repercussions all over the country, where the empire of the screen is rapidly expanding.” Four years later, a correspondent in Caracas noted that “the conquering and cosmopolitan cinema” now overshadowed live entertainment. While they make no explicit mention of Hollywood film, the imperial metaphors used by these local correspondents strongly evoke the North American industry’s self-declared “invasion” of South American markets during World War I, a territory that “would become a major factor in the USA’s takeover of world markets and later in its retention of control.” The growing importance of Latin American markets for US studios is signaled by the founding of *Cine-Mundial* and later *Cinelandia*, Spanish-language film magazines published in the United States that became heralds of North America’s growing “empire of the screen.” Yet as these early commentaries suggest, these magazines also linked the expansion of film culture with desires for cultural modernity that were at once cosmopolitan and local, demanding further revision of scholarly accounts that equate the global circulation of Hollywood films with cultural colonization.

During lengthy runs that coincide closely with the golden age of the classical Hollywood studio system, *Cine-Mundial* (1916–1948) and *Cinelandia* (1926–1948) acted as highly ambiguous markers of the presence of US cinema in Spanish and Latin American film markets. They tirelessly promoted not only Hollywood products but also models of distribution, exhibition, and fan consumption that were dominant in the United States, while occasionally publishing criticism of Hollywood’s representational and labor practices from both contributors and readers. Featuring mostly original articles in Spanish (*Cine-Mundial* also included columns in Portuguese), the two magazines took pride in the fact that they were published in centers of US film distribution and production. *Cine-Mundial*, whose title translates to “world” or “global cinema,” was printed in New York by Chalmers, publishers of the influential trade magazine *Moving Picture World*. Like its sister publication, *Cine-Mundial* was originally targeted toward distributors and exhibitors; its first three years coincided with New York’s emergence as the new center of Hollywood’s export business, as London’s importance to the global film trade declined because of wartime conditions and customs regulations. *Cinelandia*—which literally means “Filmland,” and was commonly used to refer to Hollywood in Spanish—was fittingly published in the Los Angeles area for most of its run. It began its life as a fan magazine, capitalizing on audience interest in the star system that had been consolidated in the previous decade.

Although they commanded only a fraction of the readership enjoyed by massively popular English-language film magazines (at its peak circulation between 1929 and 1931, *Cine-Mundial*’s readership was 10 percent that of *Photoplay*), both publications enjoyed broad popularity in Spain and Latin America, as advertisements and letters from readers across the Spanish-speaking world attest. The three decades spanned by *Cine-Mundial*’s and *Cinelandia*’s runs would see a series of rapprochements between the US film industry and Latin American markets, conditioned by a broader rhetoric of Pan-Americanism in trade and politics. Both magazines persisted only briefly after World War II, a moment marked by the restructuring of the US studio system and the rise of Mexico’s film industry as a competitor for Hollywood.

As foreign-language publications pitched mostly to overseas audiences in multiple countries, *Cine-Mundial* and *Cinelandia* are curious cultural objects. Although they were published in cities where Spanish-language journalism flourished in the early twentieth century, they are only tangentially linked to the most significant currents of the Spanish-language press in the United States as identified by Nicolás Kanellos: the “exile press” intended to shape
politics in the journalists’ homelands, the “immigrant press” designed to address the concerns of recent arrivals, and the “native Hispanic” publications that cultivate a sense of shared cultural identity and political agency within established Spanish-speaking communities. Cine-Mundial and Cinelandia are closer to the trade publications printed in Spanish in the United States beginning in the mid-nineteenth century that advocated for North American commercial interests in Latin America. Predating the division of film markets by language during the transition to sound, Cine-Mundial and Cinelandia collectively addressed groups of geographically dispersed readers as “latino” or “hispano” (Spanish-speaking), with the aim of facilitating and reinforcing an asymmetrical flow of cultural goods.

Yet these magazines also opened their pages to locally specific, spatially dispersed, and ideologically contradictory discourses. While they promoted the international expansion of North American film, Cine-Mundial and Cinelandia also encouraged readers linked by a common language to imagine themselves as part of a cosmopolitan film culture mediated by, but not limited to, the consumption of Hollywood cinema. Explicitly acting as intermediaries between Hollywood studios and distributors, exhibitors, and fans in Latin America, the two magazines highlighted multiple sites of film production and consumption. Evoking language-based cultural kinship between readers and producers, the magazines foregrounded Spanish-speaking communities’ contribution to the cultural life of New York and Los Angeles, and rhetorically linked these cities with entertainment culture in the diverse sites where the publications were consumed.

This tendency is most evident in Cine-Mundial’s practice of publishing crónicas, here, reports on local entertainment scenes by correspondents in metropolises such as Buenos Aires, Havana, Mexico City, and Madrid and smaller cities such as Guatemala City, San José in Costa Rica, Camagüey in Cuba, and the Balearic Islands in Spain, which worked to create a sense of simultaneity between far-flung locations. Present in the magazine from its inception through the end of the twenties, these columns covered not only local film exhibition but also theater, opera, sports, and current events. After the transition to sound facilitated the rise of film production in Argentina, Mexico, and Spain, the crónicas reappeared in a more limited form, covering Spanish-language industries in the thirties and forties. In comparison, Cinelandia devoted limited space to contributors writing outside Hollywood. Yet it enthusiastically adopted the dialogic structure of the fan magazine, actively soliciting and publishing letters from readers, who commented on films, stars, and the politics of Latin American representation in Hollywood. Conversely, New York and Los Angeles emerge in the magazines’ pages not only as sites where US films were produced or dispatched to global markets but also as cities whose large Spanish-speaking communities contributed to their cosmopolitan character. The magazines often evoked the intellectual life and quotidian experiences of local immigrant populations in articles, short stories, and cartoons.

While both Cinelandia and Cine-Mundial published texts by English-language contributors, most of their columnists were themselves immigrants of Spanish or Latin American origin, who positioned themselves as ideal intermediaries between North American production companies and Spanish-speaking readers in the United States and abroad. Francisco García Ortega, who acted as Cine-Mundial’s editor-in-chief for its entire run, was a Cuban national who also wrote for English-language publications and (according to a collaborator) was accepted by North American journalists as “one of their own.” Mexican journalist José María Sánchez García, who became the magazine’s Hollywood correspondent in May 1922, contributed to a number of periodicals in his home country. Not surprisingly, given the recent influx of immigrants to Los Angeles during and after the Mexican Revolution, Cinelandia had a large contingent of writers of Mexican origin. These included journalist Armando Vargas de la Maza, who also published in the popular Mexico City magazine El Universal Ilustrado, and Agustín Aragón Leiva, who later worked as Sergei Eisenstein’s assistant during the production of ¡Que Viva México! Alluding to their experience as exiles and expatriates, these journalists framed themselves as cultural translators for readers curious about the film business.

As a consequence of the economic and political imbalances between their sites of publication and their sites of consumption, Cinelandia and Cine-Mundial intensified the dialectics of proximity and distance, access and remoteness, and consumption and desire that characterize film magazines and the star system they support. In her influential essay “Early Cinema and Modernity in Latin America,” Ana M. López argues that “cinema fed the national self-confidence that its own modernity was in progress by enabling viewers to share and participate in the experience of modernity as developed elsewhere,” yet at the same time, local “viewers had to assume the position of spectators and become voyeurs of, rather than participants in, modernity.”
Beginning in the early 1990s, Anglo-American film scholars have reevaluated the assumed passivity of the film spectator through close attention to Hollywood fan magazines, generating approaches that can shed light on the dynamics of film culture in early twentieth-century Latin America. Laura Isabel Serna has argued that Spanish-language film magazines published on both sides of the US-Mexico border played a key role in fostering new forms of consumer and entertainment culture that were framed as signs of national progress. She notes that in *Cine-Mundial*’s Mexico City crónicas, “critics and journalists positioned participation in a national film culture, built around the consumption of films produced elsewhere, as part of a set of desirable social practices that demonstrated Mexico’s modernity.” According to *Cine-Mundial*, cultural progress was to be achieved by the “modernization” of film exhibition and fandom, rather than through local production. Although *Cine-Mundial* regularly reported on filmmaking in Latin America through the end of the 1920s, especially in Argentina, the magazine’s editorials often subtly discouraged these homegrown efforts or recommended that it occur under tutelage from US or European experts.

With the exception of Serna, who has analyzed *Cinelandia* and *Cine-Mundial* within a broader panorama of Spanish-language periodicals that circulated in Mexico, these long-running magazines have received almost no scholarly attention, although their recent digitization may spur further research. Used occasionally as sources, their transnational character has rendered them marginal to histories of both Hollywood and Latin American “national cinemas.” Attending to the exchanges with Spanish-speaking audiences brokered by North American magazines allows for the partial recovery of local meanings and uses of Hollywood films for these publics. Highlighting film production and consumption as local practices, and fostering affinities between a far-flung group of spectators, *Cine-Mundial* and *Cinelandia* constructed North American cinema as a shared point of reference in processes of cultural modernization whose horizons were intercontinental.

In both magazines, readers dispersed across the Americas were called to participate in the construction of a film culture that reconciled the imagined desires of Spanish-speaking markets with the practices of the Hollywood studio system. Analyzing *Cine-Mundial* and *Cinelandia’s* structures of reader address, I suggest that their discursive orientation toward their readership can be divided into three broad phases, determined by shifting economies of production and distribution and broader political discourses on inter-American relations. First, in its early years, *Cine-Mundial* sought to enlist the participation of Latin American spectators in the advancement of cultural “progress” through the distribution and exhibition of Hollywood film. Crónicas express local ambitions for an entertainment culture that would be both up to date and edifying, often echoing the discourse of uplift cultivated by *Moving Picture World* and other US film magazines that sought to make cinema a respectable middle-class diversion. *Cine-Mundial* solicited allies in every aspect of the film business, from US producers and distributors to exhibitors, projectionists, and spectators overseas. Second, beginning in the late 1920s, both *Cine-Mundial* and the newly founded *Cinelandia* turned their attention to the relationship between star and viewer, cultivating fan consumption of stars and associated commodities. By the end of the decade, the transition to sound and the emergence of film industries in Argentina, Mexico, and Spain led to a provisional renegotiation of Hollywood’s hegemonic status and its representations of the Spanish-speaking world, with *Cine-Mundial* and to a lesser extent *Cinelandia* providing coverage of film production in Spanish overseas, giving rise to a third phase in the magazines’ relationship to their readership. In a development that paralleled the staging of national folklore for export in these industries, reader contributions solicited by the magazines signal the emergence of a touristic and autoethnographic mode during the Good Neighbor era, marked by Hollywood’s renewed reliance in Latin American film markets in wartime and a shift within Hollywood toward ostensibly “positive,” if no less stereotyped, representations of Latin Americans and Latinos.

Highlighting the prominent place of cinema in the advancement of US political and economic interests in Latin America, *Cinelandia* and *Cine-Mundial* aligned themselves selectively with local desires for a modern and cosmopolitan entertainment culture, encouraging the consumption of imported films and consumer goods while devoting relatively little attention to production abroad. Yet at the same time, their reliance on fan participation and their focus on the creative labor of immigrant populations of Los Angeles and New York tentatively reverse the roles of producer and consumer. As popular and long-running US film magazines published in a foreign language, these publications shed new light on the transnational imaginaries of modernity linked to Hollywood’s global presence.
Hemispheric Cooperation and Local Modernization:
Cine-Mundial in the Silent Era

Two decades after the inaugural January 1916 issue of Cine-Mundial was published, editor-in-chief García Ortega recalled that the “first issue nearly went out with the name Cinemático Pan-América [Pan-América Cinematógráfica] on a terrestrial globe.” While the editors ultimately chose a title that was more geographically expansive, the magazine’s explicitly hemispheric orientation is evident in the cartographic image that did appear on the cover: a map of the Americas that identified major urban centers. In a statement outlining its editorial program, Cine-Mundial stressed that the “European war . . . has demonstrated ad nauseam that we peoples of the Americas, from North to South, from Tierra del Fuego to the North Pole, can live with complete independence in economic matters from the influences of the old continent.” This rhetoric of hemispheric cooperation is clearly linked to the wartime conditions that hampered both imports to and exports from Europe, leading North American film producers to turn to Latin America to replace lost revenues.

In September 1916, Moving Picture World recommended its sister publication as a guide for companies looking to expand into the “nearly virgin territory” of the Latin American film market. To further this goal, Cine-Mundial aimed to “convince the intelligent audience of the Latin republics of this continent of the indisputable merits of American [film] manufacturers, with the end of gaining in these communities the prestige, renown, popularity, and acceptance that they richly deserve.” This statement from the magazine’s opening editorial frames the commercial success of US cinema in the region not only as a mutually beneficial development but also as a foregone conclusion, attributable to Latin American spectators’ discerning tastes. This tautological rhetoric that recurs frequently in the magazine’s early years: if the aesthetic superiority of Hollywood cinema to its European competitors was accepted as a given, North American films’ growing dominance in a particular market could be construed both as proof of local audiences’ already refined sensibilities and as a measure of cultural progress.

These attempts to flatter Latin American audiences were transparently self-serving, and Moving Picture World leaves little doubt as to the attractiveness of Latin American markets for film producers and distributors. In June 1916, the magazine quoted a studio representative’s declaration that “we find that the people of South America are the best patrons of motion pictures anywhere in the world, we find that they have money and are willing to spend it, we find that they appreciate quality whenever they are allowed to get a glimpse of it. I tell you that we are going into this market with a vengeance and we are going to exploit it according to our own plans.” According to the same article, film prices in the region had been depressed by local monopolies that dealt in secondhand stock that was often heavily damaged. Irregularities

Fig. 4.4 The inaugural cover of Cine-Mundial, January 1916. Billy Rose Theater Division, the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.
in distribution, including piracy and difficulties in enforcing exclusive contracts, undercut studios' attempts to maximize profits, as did exhibition practices such as frequent changes in film programs and poor-quality projection. Expansion into Latin American markets became one of the causes that regular contributor W. Stephen Bush relentlessly championed in Moving Picture World, where he became well known for urging producers and exhibitors to cultivate the "aesthetic and educational function of film." Like Moving Picture World, Cine-Mundial was initially targeted toward professionals in the film business, as its visual design and content suggest. Offering a heavy dose of news and information relating to the business side of cinema, as well as more occasional articles about educational film and aesthetics, Cine-Mundial was composed of dense columns of small print broken up by relatively small photographs. Beginning in the twenties, photographic reproductions would become more plentiful in the magazine, as an increased use of white space allowed them to become the focal points of visually striking page layouts. Increasingly, issues featured one or more interviews with actors, as well as large numbers of glamorous star portraits. Although early issues featured a single actress or actor, by 1922 each might contain as many as fifteen photographs of stars. That year, Cine-Mundial claimed a 100 percent increase in circulation over the previous one. Across this shift, the magazine's varied content implied that distributors, exhibitors, projectionists, and fans alike had a shared responsibility to foster practices of film distribution, exhibition, and consumption that were modern, efficient, and edifying. Cine-Mundial used this notion of "modern" film culture to advocate for business practices that benefited US producers and distributors, such as exclusive booking contracts and the importation of new releases directly from studio offices in New York or the local branch offices established in a number of Latin American countries between 1915 and 1917.

Recurring sections that focused on the practical aspects of film exhibition exemplified this pedagogical mode of address. In his column El Arte de la Proyección, F. H. Richardson fielded questions from Latin American projectionists seeking help for locally specific conditions, such as venues not wired for electricity and the heavy damage to films prevalent in exhibition venues in areas more remote from transportation hubs. At the same time, he urged his readers to cultivate "respect for the profession" and continually reminded them of their role in the smooth functioning of the film industry.

Edward Kinsilin's El Teatro Moderno offered recommendations regarding movie theater architecture, which film scholar Aurelio de los Reyes has credited with inspiring Mexico City's first "movie palace," the Olimpia. Brief notices singled out individual US movie theaters as "model" for their spaciousness or releases of recent films. In turn, the progress of exhibition culture in Latin America was showcased in a smaller number of news items that praised specific movie theaters, such as the Cinema Central in São Paulo. Making the connection between up-to-date exhibition venues and cultural modernity explicit, an April 1918 editorial declared, "The state of advancement of a city or country is made evident by its movie theaters." In order to drive home the point, the editor contrasts two towns of similar size located in Chile: Chiná, with a "single movie theater that opens its doors barely twice a week," and nearby Antofagasta, which supported nine venues that screened films nightly; then he asks rhetorically, "Does any sign occur to the reader that would more clearly indicate the relative progress of the two cities?" Implying that even smaller cities not necessarily familiar to most readers contributed to the modernization of film exhibition, the editor sketches an intercontinental frame of reference, suggesting a kinship between widely dispersed locations in the Spanish-speaking world.

Within this geographical imaginary, New York appears as a privileged site of film commerce, and at the same time, as a space of cultural consumption and production in Spanish. In its first two years, when New York was swiftly displacing London as the export center for North American production companies, Cine-Mundial emphasized New York's status as "the heart of the cinema world" and "the logical center of the film business." Beginning in 1917, the column Batuillo Neyorquino (New York Mishmash), provided readers with a sense of the local entertainment scene, which was presented separately from general film industry news. Furthermore, a sense of shared intellectual community—and a perception of the cinema's cultural legitimacy—was generated through interviews with Spanish writers who passed through New York, including Ramón del Valle Inclán and Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, whose novels were adapted both in Spain and in Hollywood, most famously as the Valentino vehicles Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (dir. Rex Ingram, 1921) and Blood and Sand (dir. Fred Niblo, 1922). In addition to sharing their pronouncements on film aesthetics, these authors occasionally contributed literary texts. In a more humorous register, in 1922 Cine-Mundial introduced Aventuras de la Familia Pérez en Nueva York, a series of stories about a womanizing immigrant and his social-climbing wife and daughters.
by Costa Rican journalist Modesto Martínez, which García Ortega would later attempt to turn into a film. Crónicas, cartoons, and photographs relating to New York’s "Little Spain" began to appear more frequently in the magazine in the late twenties and early thirties.

Quotidian details of immigrant life in New York appeared in Cine-Mundial’s pages alongside crónicas from diverse locations in the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking world. Reporting on the dynamics of exhibition and distribution and the reception of individual films, the crónicas also discussed sports, current events, and even the weather, inasmuch as it affected film attendance. As the chronicles dwindled in number throughout the twenties, some were converted into crónicas gráficas, or "photo-chronicles," which, rather than generating a verbal account of local entertainment culture, juxtaposed candid photographs of current events. While the crónicas focused on the imported fare that dominated Latin American screens, they also charted the intraregional circulation of Latin American and Spanish films and the growth of local film journalism with interest. In 1916, the Argentine film Noblezas gauchas (Gauchano Nobility, dir. Humberto Cairo, Eduardo Martínez de la Pera, and Ernesto Gunche, 1915) was greeted with enthusiasm in Barcelona, while Spanish productions like Barcelona y sus misterios (Barcelona and Its Mysteries, dir. Albert Marro, 1916) and the 1917 version of Vicente Blasco Ibáñez’s Blood and Sand (Sangre y arena, dir. Ricardo de Baños) found success in Cuba, Argentina, and Uruguay.

Furthermore, the chronicles observed the expansion of local film journalism and Cine-Mundial’s influence on these new publications and columns. Both correspondents and editors complained about newspapers and magazines that repr. content from Cine-Mundial without attribution. In an article written by García Ortega for Moving Picture World, he cites an American film agent in Buenos Aires who claimed that Cine-Mundial’s "reviews, special articles and news items of the American film world are copied so repeatedly by the local press, that it is playing the leading role in popularizing American [photo]plays, actors, and directors." While seeking to create audience recognition of, and demand for, Hollywood films and stars, Cine-Mundial may have also helped foster the local development of specialized film publications.

As newspapers and magazines overseas appropriated Cine-Mundial’s contents without authorization, correspondents echoed back the cosmopolitan rhetoric central to the magazine’s editorial program, linking its goals
to local desires for cultural modernization. (It should be noted that correspondents appear to have acted both as contributors and subscription agents, receiving a flat fee for their articles and a commission for the subscriptions, and thus had a financial incentive to praise *Cine-Mundial*’s positive qualities and align themselves with its aims.) A first-time correspondent from Bogotá enthusiastically described *Cine-Mundial* as a “publication ... that brings to all the corners of the world the exact knowledge of all the magnificence of the cinematic art ... enlightens the masses and brings the audience and the impresarios knowledge of the goodness and merit of the films that are commercialized.” Similarly, a correspondent in Camagüey, Cuba suggests *Cine-Mundial*’s role in a broader current of cultural uplift, declaring: “The influence of the cinematograph in the artistic world is powerful, and so irresistible that it penetrates even in regions where civilization is still in swaddling clothes. Our city demonstrates this by the revolution produced in the elegant, modernized high society, which advances by giant steps. ... Although Camagüey’s society has always been distinguished, it is impossible to deny that the cinema has influenced its evolution.”

Echoing the rhetorical strategies of the magazine’s editorials, the correspondent links the expansion of American-style film culture to a path of artistic progress already charted by locals’ elevated tastes.

*Cine-Mundial*’s suggestion that discerning Latin American audiences would welcome any high-quality films was strategic, given the absence of productions specifically designed to appeal to Spanish-speaking audiences. Although *Cine-Mundial* claimed that studios were recruiting Latin American personnel to better cater to the tastes of their readership, only rarely did the magazine highlight films with Latin American or Spanish settings. This was a prudent stance, given the highly stereotyped treatment of Latin American characters, especially Mexicans, in Hollywood films. Although *Cine-Mundial* claimed in March 1917 editorial that the “few films of this nature produced today in the United States have no other object than to exploit the credulity of that ignorant element that exists everywhere,” this was belied by growing frustration with offensive films, especially in Mexico, where mounting tensions with Hollywood studios culminated in a 1922 boycott of the entire output of several US production companies, decreed by president Álvaro Obregón.

In fact, García Ortega wrote in *Moving Picture World*, also in March 1917, that “films where every Mexican or South American is a bandit or a ‘desperado,’ whatever that means, should be kept in this country or shipped to Europe, Africa or the North Pole—they are not appreciated in Latin America.”

Disingenuously claiming that stereotypical representations were on the wane, *Cine-Mundial* could likewise produce little evidence that Hollywood studios were making serious attempts to cater to Latin American spectators. Instead, a cosmopolitan detachment from national or regional specificity in film production was praised by both editors and correspondents, in contrast with the cultivation of nationalist themes for export that would make Mexican and Argentine film industries profitable after the transition to sound. Building on discourses that framed cinema as a “universal language,” an October 1916 editorial praised Hollywood features that “not only have international interest, but have also managed to eliminate, almost completely, those provincialisms that become incomprehensible as soon as the border of the country of origin in crossed.”

Filmmakers were discouraged from cultivating specifically local audiences and urged to compete with Hollywood on the global market, despite the structural imbalances that characterized it.
Along with its regular, if somewhat skeptical, coverage of film production in the Spanish-speaking world, *Cine-Mundial*'s editors made a modest attempt to highlight Latin American and Spanish performers with the creation of the section Favoritos del Cine (Movie Favorites), in which small photographs and capsule biographies of actors of all nationalities were published. Yet these profiles could not compete with the growing number of interviews and star photographs that filled the magazines' pages. The forging of a Hollywood-oriented fan culture in *Cine-Mundial* is most evident in the Preguntas y Respuestas (Questions and Answers) section, which was introduced in June 1918. The section's editor answered fan queries, provided stars' addresses, and gave basic English translations for use in letters, facilitating interaction with the emerging Hollywood star system, as Serna has observed. In 1925, the columnist in charge of Preguntas y Respuestas estimated he had received sixty thousand letters since the creation of the section, or an average of eighty-five hundred a year. Although this figure is impossible to verify, it suggests considerable engagement from the magazine's readership, reported as 38,103 the same year. Marsha Orgeron has argued that the interactive aspects of movie magazines enact a "discourse of empowerment" that at once highlights and undoes the divide between stars and fans, and thus producers and consumers, of film culture. In the case of *Cine-Mundial*, this participatory mode of engagement sought to bridge geographic divides as well, enlisting the participation of Latin American spectators in American-style practices of fan consumption.

Indeed, many correspondents reported on emerging fan practices, which were claimed as markers of cultural progress. In 1917, Argentine contributor Emilio Chapperon observed young women's particular affinity for film fandom, noting that they "collect portraits, biographies, anecdotes, following with the scrupulousness of a scholar the artistic path traversed by their favorite actors and actresses. . . . The cinematograph is called upon to serve as an extension of school, it is already the extension of the home in this manifestation by the most sensitive and intuitively impressionable [spectators]." Drawing parallels between formal study and film fandom, Chapperon presents cinema as a pedagogical force, whose appeal to young women is proof of its power to foster loftier sentiments. In a less lyrical tone, Havana correspondent Eduardo Quiñones describes the growing affection of local audiences for North American actors: "We treat Grace Cunard and Francis Ford with informality"—that is, using tú, the second person pronoun reserved for social equals—and "we have baptized Billie Ritchie . . . with the picturesque name Canillita," meaning newsboy. Such linguistic strategies worked to domesticate Hollywood stars, demonstrating that fan culture involved as much transculturalization as it did cultural colonization. Presenting fan practices as a means of aesthetic education or of facilitating a more casual and personal relationship with an emergent star system, these early discussions of fan culture are suggestive of a broader shift in North American discourses on cinema, from a rhetoric of uplift and progress, to a focus on stars and consumer desire. In *Cinelandia*, these elements took center stage as the magazine worked to solicit readers' collective identification with Spanish-speaking actors of varying origins and to navigate Hollywood's troubling representations of Latin America and Spain while foregrounding overlooked forms of immigrant cultural labor.

**STAR COMMODITIES AND LATINO/LA LABOR: CINELANDIA IN THE TWENTIES**

Upon *Cinelandia*'s initial launch in September 1926, editor-in-chief Lucio Villegas invoked the pedagogical function of the medium of film while emphasizing the magazine's key advantage: its geographic position at the heart of the US film industry. According to Villegas, a Chilean national who later became the head of dubbing at RKO, *Cinelandia* "proposes to fill a gap that is felt profoundly in the Spanish-speaking countries, by establishing coverage of the screen in Hollywood itself, the world's most important center for the production of this educational agent that we call film." He also highlighted the magazine's sponsorship by prominent industry figures such as King Vidor, Ernst Lubitsch, and J. Stuart Blackton. Perhaps in part because Villegas's tenure at the magazine was short-lived, this explicit discourse of progress, reminiscent of the early years of *Cine-Mundial*, was quickly deemphasized in favor of the play of erotic and consumer desire fostered by the star system.

*Cinelandia* leveraged its location rather aggressively, commenting, for example, in answer to a reader's query, "New York, as far as cinema goes, is nothing; 95 percent is produced in Hollywood; what's published there is peanuts [tortas y pan pintado]; they've never gotten a whiff of Hollywood in their life." Between 1928 and 1929, the magazine's circulation increased more than tenfold from 3,090 to 41,798, quickly coming to rival *Cine-Mundial*'s print run of 53,297 in 1929. This popularity was almost certainly linked to *Cinelandia*'s photo-heavy, visually appealing layout and its ability to provide a greater number of star interviews. Beyond a single monthly profile by its
Hollywood correspondent, Cine-Mundial was largely limited to interviewing actors and other entertainers who passed through New York. As an imagined space in Cinelandia, Hollywood overshadows Latin America and Spain, which hardly appear as geographic locations. Instead, they are effectively reduced to sites of individual fan consumption, only glimpsed in the portions of the magazine generated by readers. During the silent era, production in Latin America is the subject of only two articles—a report on the making of the Peruvian film La Ferricholi (dir. Enzo Longhi, 1929) and a photo spread devoted to the Brazilian feature Barro humano (Human Filth, dir. Adhemar Gonzaga, 1929)—and local exhibition is rarely covered.58

Similarly, Cinelandia did not initially make a concerted effort to feature actors of Latin American or Spanish origin or descent; it seems to have assumed, like Cine-Mundial, the “universal” appeal of Euro-American stars and themes. During the first two years of its run, the magazine only occasionally profiled Latino/a stars, including Mexican Ramón Novarro, a Brazilian newcomer who went by the stage name of Mario Mariano, and Mexican American Gilbert Roland (né Luis Alonso). A shift in editorial policy is evident in January 1929, when Cinelandia announced a new editor-in-chief, Juan J. Moreno. At this stage, Hollywood studios were beginning to promote the stars of Latin American origin that appeared in its Spanish language productions, although sound cinema would not have its debut in Latin America until later that year.59 Cinelandia began to feature interviews with Latino/a stars, including Lupita Tovar, Raquel Torres, Mona Rico, Lupe Vélez, and Gilbert Roland at the rate of two per issue, before seemingly running out of popular actors to cover in July.

Given that most of these stars were Mexican or Mexican American, while the magazine circulated in many other Spanish-speaking nations, Cinelandia worked to foster a pan-Latino mode of reader engagement. The magazine continually refers to expansive categories such as raza hispana (Hispanic race) and elemento latino (Latino element), soliciting a sense of affiliation from Spanish-speakers readers whose nationalities were rarely, if ever, represented among the ranks of Hollywood stars. Similarly, by using the possessive nuestro (our) to refer to stars of diverse origins, including the Spanish actor Antonio Moreno and the Mexican star Dolores del Río, the magazine fostered a collective sense of ownership over stars among its geographically dispersed readership.60 The vague, undifferentiated “Latin” identity evoked in Hollywood productions is echoed by Cinelandia in its attempts to appeal to the widest possible readership.61

A wide array of articles and advertisements sought to capitalize on this imagined identification with stars, using their images to promote consumer goods. The monthly section La Moda en Hollywood (Fashion in Hollywood) featured female stars of varying ethnicities in elegant outfits, and actors of both sexes posing in front of automobiles. Cinelandia also included many advertisements for beauty products designed to flatter or conceal elements of physical appearance that were racially marked, including skin-whitening creams and hair-straightening products. An ad for Max Factor featuring Lupe Vélez and Raquel Torres promised to put “the secret of make-up within the reach of all Latina women,” while Ramón Novarro appeared in an ad for Stacomb hair cream that promised to tame an unruly hair texture appropriate to his villainous roles, but not his elegant off-screen persona.62

In Cinelandia’s coverage of stars of Latin American origin, the familiar tension between a star’s presumed essence and the labor of their self-fashioning took on a special resonance with regard to ethnic and national identity. A comprehensive discussion of the racial politics of Latino/a star images in the classical Hollywood era, from “Latin lovers” such as Novarro to “spitfires” such as Vélez and “exotic” beauties such as Dolores del Río is beyond the scope of this essay.63 I limit myself to signaling how the magazine oscillated between criticism of Hollywood’s representational practices and material that perpetuated many of their problematic aspects: essentialized notions of “Latin” identity that associated it with stereotyped traits, such as violence or sexual passion, and a fondness for “ethnic masquerade.”64 In a context where white actors could generally play characters of any race, while actors of color were limited and indiscriminately assigned—to various “exotic” roles, the dissonance between actor and role, especially when subversively highlighted by the performer him/herself, had the potential to highlight ethnicity itself as a performance. Although “ethnic masquerade” might generate a degree of ambivalence, contributors and readers expressed profound dissatisfaction with Hollywood’s casting and representational practices, even though Cinelandia also perpetuated these practices in its pages.

This delicate navigation of contradictory discourses is evident in a July 1927 article that mocks the studios’ practice of deflecting criticism of denigrating representations, especially of Mexicans, by setting the action in an imaginary country.65 In “Where Is Costa Roja?” journalist Gil Alvear narrates a day spent on the set of the film La Paloma (The Dove, dir. Roland West, 1927) attempting to locate the film’s setting. He finally gets a straight answer
from Manuel Reachi, a Mexican attaché present on the set, who explains that Costa Roja was invented to “absolve Mexico of the sins attributed to it by the drama ‘La Paloma.’ ... They wanted to take advantage of the picturesqueness of our race. ... But what is taken from our peoples is so modified and mixed with other capricious elements, that one cannot reasonably take Costa Roja even as an allusion to any of the countries where our language is spoken.”

Another article protested Hollywood’s “odious falsification of types and settings,” attributing it to the fact that “the basis of the film business consists of the movie theaters that can be filled with the hundred and ten million inhabitants of the United States. The foreign market is completely secondary.” By contrast with the Pan-American discourse of Cine-Mundial’s early years, which foregrounded the economic interdependency of the Americas, Cine-landia openly acknowledged the significant but ultimately secondary place of Spanish-speaking audiences in the studios’ economic calculations.

Despite criticisms of Hollywood productions set in Latin American and Spain, Cine-landia often perpetuated the stereotypes ubiquitous in Hollywood films and American fan magazines. Reporting on the studios’ search for a replacement for the late Rudolph Valentino in 1927, Villegas writes, “We will discard all the Scandinavian and German combinations, whose masculine element does not lend itself to characterizing Romeos or Don Juans. We are left to examine only the three Latino actors, the three with Spanish blood, Antonio Moreno, Ramón Novarro and Luis Alon[s]o (Gilbert Roland). Cine-landia also availed itself of images (likely furnished by studio publicity departments) that reduced national and ethnic identity to a set of stereotyped signifiers. Monthly photo spreads featured actors in different “national” costumes: for example, the blonde Dorothy Dalton appears dressed as a “Charra gringa” (Gringa cowgirl), while a caption admonishes her to “take off that sombrero and sarape, Dorothy, and don’t try to pass for Mexican!”

Conversely, in the photo spread México Oriental, Dolores del Río poses in ostensibly Chinese, Egyptian, and Russian outfits that resonate with her film roles, which were characterized by “a vague upper-class exoticism articulated within a general category of foreign/other tragic sensuality.” These seductive photo spreads highlight a fluid play with identity, ironically made possible by an indifference to cultural specificity.

The cross-national masquerades highlighted in Cine-landia had obvious echoes in English-language discourses that cast the studios as a veritable Babel where actors, characters, and scenery from all over the globe could be found (or faked). Not surprisingly, the magazine emphasized that “in this cosmopolitan group [of actors] Spanish-speaking elements ... are noteworthy.” Less expected is Cine-landia’s practice of foregrounding the presence of Spanish-speaking immigrants in Los Angeles, making visible forms of racialized labor that were elided in most fan-magazine discourse about...
Hollywood. Cinelandia often alluded to the work of Mexican and other Latin American extras, as well as the menial work done by those who tried and failed to find employment in the studios. In 1927, Vargas de la Maza observes that he had “seen arrive in the restless cinematic colony many men and women of our race, with a few coins in their pocket and their minds filled with rich illusions and hopes. The eternal illusions and hopes of the Latinos! They came to lengthen that interminable caravan of old and young, beautiful and ugly, who made the journey from the remotest latitudes, hypnotized by the marvelous mirage of Cinelandia.” De la Maza draws on well-worn narratives that frame Hollywood as a city of (broken) dreams; yet at the same time, he sketches an international imaginary of migration that aligns Hollywood’s illusions with Latin American immigrants’ desires for economic and geographic mobility.

Beyond superimposing narratives of Hollywood ambition with immigrants’ pursuit of the “American dream,” Cinelandia’s contributors also evoke a rhetoric of reconquest, ironically framing Mexican labor in Hollywood as a means of rewriting the terms of US-Mexico relations. Positioning the work of extras and crew alongside the Latino/a stars featured in the magazine, Cornelio Diricio writes in 1929, “As California was Mexican territory until 1847, it’s not surprising that one fine day, there was a Mexican invasion to reconquer it. So it has been and soon, all of Hollywood will be an extension of Mexico. Already, 75 percent of the extras are Mexican; they abound among technical personnel; some are assistant directors or assistants.” Less optimistically, Felipe de Leiva (likely a pseudonym of Agustin Aragón Leiva) comments in “Memoirs of an Extra,” “The conquest of Hollywood by Latinos is a fact. . . . Their triumph in the cinema is indisputable. They are the ones who work cheaply, they are the ones who provide greater efficiency. . . . The use of Mexicans means a savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars for producers, year after year.”

As Serna has observed, in the late twenties the English-language press in Los Angeles used fears of a foreign “invasion” of Hollywood to stir up xenophobic sentiment against emigré actors and Mexican extras, provoking a strong reaction from the Spanish-language paper La Opinión. Here, Leiva inverts the metaphor of invasion to extend this critique of racially stratified labor. Cinelandia thus highlighted the degree to which Mexican migrants, in Serna’s words, were ultimately “excluded from the possibilities for social mobility promoted by the popular, and indeed international, discourse on Hollywood as a land of promise and possibility.”

Fig. 4.4 Extras in the film The Loves of Carmen (dir. Raoul Walsh, 1927), starring Dolores del Río, wait in line to receive their pay. Cinelandia, November 1927. Billy Rose Theater Division, the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Cinelandia also cultivated a collective fascination with Latin American and Latino/a stars and the construction of their ethnically marked personas as it rhetorically instituted a pan-Latino readership. The economic and political terms of Hollywood’s relationship to Spanish-speaking markets would shift during the transition to sound and the era of the Good Neighbor policy. Yet in Cine-Mundial and Cinelandia, Hollywood’s star system would remain the locus that connected geographically dispersed readers, while Argentine, Mexican, and Spanish film was granted only a marginal space in their pages.
Remapping Film Production in Cine-Mundial and Cinelandia:
From the Transition to Sound to the Good Neighbor Era

In the pages of Cine-Mundial and Cinelandia, the transition to sound sparked heated debates without leading to a significant refocusing of either publication toward the incipient sound film industries of Argentina, Mexico, and Spain. Special sections devoted to these developments, especially in Mexico, were introduced in Cine-Mundial in the early thirties and made occasional appearances in Cinelandia later in the decade. Yet despite contributions by overseas correspondents, reviews of Spanish-language films and profiles of Latin American or Latino/a stars again became fairly rare after the early thirties. Given that they remained closely aligned with the studios, it is logical that Cine-Mundial and Cinelandia would cover Hollywood stars and films, even at the risk of failing to cater to Spanish-speaking readers' interest in production in their native language.

More puzzling, perhaps, is the magazines' relative inattention to the films produced under the so-called Good Neighbor policy. Expanding on his 1933 declaration of a policy of nonintervention in Latin America, Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA) under the direction of Nelson Rockefeller in 1940. In this spirit of hemispheric cooperation and in conjunction with Hollywood's renewed reliance on Latin American audiences at a moment when European markets were difficult to access, OCIAA's film branch strived to eliminate the most egregious stereotypes of Latin American characters. In keeping with the irreverent tone cultivated by Cine-Mundial beginning in the late 1920s, the term buen vecino (good neighbor) often appears in a less than serious light. For example, a caption accompanying a publicity photo of Paulette Goddard at a bullfight in Mexico lends "good neighbor" the connotation of a sexual rather than a political approximation between the United States and Latin America. More occasionally, it is used in connection with social events in New York organized to foster Pan-American solidarity. Aside from publicity photos of icons of the Good Neighbor policy, such as Walt Disney and Carmen Miranda, who appears in a photo signing war bonds for the National Defense League, the magazines dedicated little column space to emblematic films produced under its mandate, such as the Disney production Saludos Amigos (1942) or The Gang's All Here (Busby Berkeley, 1943), starring Miranda. Neither the transition to sound nor the Good Neighbor era led to a lasting realignment of the magazines' geographic horizons, which in Cine-Mundial's case had greatly narrowed since the silent era.

The transition to sound, as a number of scholars have explored, marked a renegotiation of the relationship between Hollywood studios and international markets, which they struggled to retain through experimenting with dubbing, subtitling, foreign-language versions of English-language films, and occasional foreign-language features with original scripts, such as the series of Paramount films starring tango singer Carlos Gardel. As commentators in Spain and Latin America expressed concerns that North American talkies would accelerate cultural Americanization, studio executives feared
that foreign-language markets would reject films with dialogue in English. Cinelandia’s audience weighed in on both questions: for example, in one issue a reader in Panama observed a marked decline in film attendance that she attributed to a rejection of English-language talkies, while a Mexico City resident scoffed at the “exaggerated use of tired concepts of Mexicanism and the loss of language” in local objections to sound cinema.83

The short-lived practice of producing Spanish-language films in Hollywood to cater to Latin American and Spanish markets was also highly contentious, sparking a “War of the Accents” in which “the issue of spoken language (pronunciation, regional slang, and diction) assumed a central position, whereby issues of class, generational conflict, nationality, and cultural integrity were collapsed into a discussion of cinematic dialogue and the proper use of Spanish,” even as long-standing criticisms of Hollywood’s representation of Spanish-speaking nations flared up with renewed intensity.83

Some proposed that the Peninsular Spanish used internationally by theater troupes be adopted in sound cinema, a suggestion that reinforced existing cultural hierarchies and sparked protests by spectators and journalists from Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

Although a detailed assessment of the politics of Hollywood’s Spanish-language productions is beyond the scope of this essay, I want to highlight how the transition to sound briefly reconfigured the positioning of Cine-Mundial and Cinelandia with respect to the Hollywood studios and the industries that began to establish themselves in earnest in Spanish-speaking nations. The promotion of affiliated sound technologies was quickly integrated into the magazines: illustrated advertisements used the images of stars to promote radios and gramophone records recorded by popular performers, including the Mexican tenor José Mojica, star of several Spanish-language productions, and Argentine tango singer Libertad Lamarque, an RCA Victor recording artist who became a key figure of early Argentine sound cinema and later worked extensively in Mexico.84

During the transition, several contributors were offered studio positions, suggesting Hollywood’s urgent need for cultural advisers. In addition to Villegas’s work at RKO, a number of Cine-Mundial contributors were contracted by studios: Miguel de Zárraga wrote Spanish-language adaptations for MGM, and his wife Elena de la Torre was employed by Fox to review books by Latin American authors for optioning.85

Beyond the impact of individual journalists as consultants, the magazines also presented themselves as intermediaries between Hollywood and Spanish-speaking viewers. In a January 1930 editorial, editor-in-chief Juan J. Moreno emphasized Cinelandia’s role as an advocate for Spanish-language production, addressing himself directly to both spectators and studios: “To the Spanish-speaking audience: CINELANDIA will continue fighting for the interests of Spanish-speaking fans, dedicating itself to the task [of insuring] that the films produced here will be worthy of the Latin public. To the producers: our position in the industry allows us to serve as interpreters of the desires of the fans in Spanish-speaking countries and our knowledge of these countries, which entails advantages that you can well imagine and that we offer with good will.”86

Thus Moreno positions Cinelandia as a mediator, capable of shaping a program of production that will be satisfactory for both studios and Spanish-speaking audiences. During the silent era, Cinelandia had confined itself to criticizing “denigrating” films without presuming to exert pressure on the studios themselves; the introduction of sound cinema prompted the magazine to envision a more substantial role as a power broker within Hollywood. Furthermore, the publication suggested that its film reviews could help shape a desirable product by critiquing Spanish-language films made in Hollywood or abroad and by Anglo or Latino producers. For example, in the case of Sombras de Gloria, the Spanish-language version of Blaze O’ Glory (dir. Renaud Hoffman, 1930), which starred the Chilean José Bohr, a reviewer resists the temptation to be swayed by his sympathy for the director’s efforts. He affirms, “What the reader-fan in our countries desires is that talking films be produced in Spanish, of the same quality as the North American [films], and is depending on the honorable criticism of this magazine to deduce their merit.”87

By January 1932, Cinelandia’s hopes for good-quality production in Hollywood were largely frustrated: foreign-language production had been mostly abandoned by the studios because of disappointing return on investment, although smaller numbers of Spanish-language films would continue to be produced, most notably at Fox and Paramount, throughout the thirties. While still presenting itself as the arbiter of Spanish-speaking fans’ opinions and desires, Cinelandia saw itself obliged to solicit their help in convincing the studios that Spanish-language production was a worthwhile venture. Moreno wrote in an editorial, “The practical thing in this case would be for the fans of Latin America and Spain to resolve to express their authorized opinion about this important matter, by means of letters directed to the office
of CINELANDIA, in such extraordinary numbers, and of such a convincing logic, that the producers cannot ignore the force of a desire so unanimously expressed." While the letter-writing campaign seems not to have materialized or in any case, had little impact on studios’ production strategies, Moreno’s call to action reinforced a sense of fan agency made possible by the economic upheaval of the transition.

Despite a resurgence of film production in New York during the period, brought about by Broadway’s supply of playwrights and theatrical talent, Cine-Mundial did not claim to have any particular clout with the studios. However, the magazine cosponsored a script-writing contest with Fox in 1934, stressing the importance of facilitating quality Spanish-language production in Hollywood despite the emergence of Spanish-language filmmaking overseas. Addressing these developments, the magazine added columns on the entertainment world in Spain and Mexico in late 1935. The latter, written by pioneering film journalist Marco Aurelio Galindo, offered industry gossip and commentary on Mexican films (which were rarely reviewed by the regular staff) in terms that were more blunt than patriotic. Although these columns were short-lived—the magazine announced that they would be suspended in September 1936, supposedly because of filmmakers’ complaints—Cine-Mundial incorporated intermittent coverage of the Mexican film industry through the rest of its run. Well-known playwright José Francisco “Pepe” Elizondo penned a series of Mexico City crónicas and other articles for the magazine between 1939 and his death in 1943. Elizondo incorporated occasional discussions of nationalist aesthetics into his reports on the Mexican film industry, which included a behind-the-scenes look at a local film set and an appropriately nonsensical interview with the comedian Mario Moreno (Cantinflas). In early 1944, Cine-Mundial inaugurated the columns De Plateros a la Quinta Avenida (From Plateros Street [a central thoroughfare in Mexico City] to Fifth Avenue) and Ventana de Buenos Aires (Window on Buenos Aires) to cover film production in Mexico and Argentina.

For its part, Cinelandia briefly experimented with the column Por Otras Tierras (In Other Lands) in 1937, and intermittently published Notas Panamericanas and Notas Hispanoamericanas in 1942 and 1943. In January 1943, the magazine issued a call for articles on “film reviews of the production of Hollywood and Latin America. Pan Americanism. Literature and folklore of our countries. Art. Tourism. Interviews of international importance,” for which they offered to pay ten dollars. In addition to the typical subjects of fan letters—opinions of both Hollywood productions and Latin American films—Cinelandia solicited contributions that reinforced official discourses of Pan-Americanism or encouraged readers to turn a touristic gaze on their home countries. However, the invitation seems to have had little effect on the content of Cinelandia, which largely overlooked Argentine, Mexican, and Spanish film production. Instead, the magazine limited itself to profiles of stars like Mona Maris, who had starred in Hollywood Spanish-language films in the thirties and worked in Argentina before returning to the United States, and Carmen Miranda, perhaps the most emblematic figure of the Good Neighbor policy.

While reader collaboration with Cinelandia seems to have been of limited importance, Cine-Mundial inaugurated a more successful initiative in April 1937: a monthly foto concurso (photo competition), in which readers rather than professional photographers would furnish images of the varied locations in which the magazine was consumed. Each month, eight winners received a prize of one dollar and had their entries published in the magazine. Inheriting the logic of the crónicas gráficas of the 1920s, the magazine’s preferred subjects were “curious notes about local life; street scenes, [scenes] of action, or on a subject that constitutes a novelty for other American countries. Lastly, the contestant should not forget that the purpose of the Photo Competition is to increase intercontinental interest, showing each other the good things we have in our respective countries.” Enlisting readers to perform acts of autoethnography that facilitated the intercontinental circulation of “positive” images, each foto concurso yielded a miscellany of picturesque scenes and contemporary events that renewed Cine-Mundial’s role as a mediator between multiple sites in Latin America, here by selecting and juxtaposing graphic content. Yet while the Pan-American rhetoric that marked Cine-Mundial’s debut persists, the discursive links between entertainment culture and national or local progress are conspicuously absent. With the growing consolidation of national culture industries, a North American magazine was a less and less relevant space for such discourses to be aired.

From the transition to sound through World War II, the economic importance of Spanish-speaking markets loomed large for Hollywood studios, even as sound film industries in Argentina, Mexico, and Spain successfully exploited the new opportunities offered by talking pictures. Rather than aligning themselves directly with the studios’ attempts to recapture international markets during the transition or the Good Neighbor initiatives
of the 1940s, Cine-Mundial and Cinelandia positioned themselves as intermediaries between fans and film producers, soliciting direct engagement from readers in constructing a desirable Spanish-language film culture both onscreen and in their own pages. Yet by the mid-forties, the expansion of both film production and print culture in Spanish-speaking nations was noticeably displacing the US fan magazines from their role as Hollywood’s mediators.

Conclusion

In January 1945, Cine-Mundial celebrated thirty years of publication, which, by its own reckoning, made it the world’s oldest continuously published Spanish-language film magazine. Yet only three years later, it noted, “All the popular magazines published in New York to circulate in Hispano-America are losing money,” including Cinelandia, which had moved there in 1946, and “most painfully,” Cine-Mundial itself. While the article does not venture an explanation for the decline, it mentions substantial losses by all of the international divisions of Reader’s Digest, suggesting waning overseas interest in US publications in a post–World War II geopolitical landscape. After Latin America had served its strategic purpose during the conflict, the rapprochement of the Good Neighbor years shifted toward a much more ambivalent relationship in the Cold War period. Significantly, as Mexican cinema became a more formidable rival in Spanish-speaking markets, Hollywood began to compete more aggressively for market share in these territories, ending the cooperation between the two industries.

The most immediate cause for Cine-Mundial and Cinelandia’s disappearance may have been the ascendancy of competitors such as Mexico City’s Cinema Report, which had been published since 1932, and Buenos Aires’s popular Radiolandia, which also covered film-related topics. Like Cinelandia and Cine-Mundial, Cinema Report’s content spanned the Americas, combining coverage of Hollywood with more substantive reporting on production in Mexico and Argentina. With Argentine, Mexican, and Spanish film magazines founded in the thirties coming of age, Cine-Mundial and Cinelandia’s roles as intermediaries were of waning relevance. It is also suggestive that both magazines ceased publication in 1948, the year of the Paramount decision, which ruled that Hollywood studios’ vertical integration of production, distribution, and exhibition was an antitrust violation, forcing them to divest themselves of their movie theater chains. While Hollywood dominance of Latin American screens would persist long after the golden age of the studio system, by the 1950s its printed emissaries were relics of the past.

In the pages of Cine-Mundial and Cinelandia, the logic of the fan magazine, which hails its readers as both spectators of and participants in the construction of film culture, took on an intercontinental scope. In their attempts to forge a pan-Latino readership and viewing public, the magazines emphasized linguistic and cultural affinities across national borders (often in essentializing terms) while granting space to local images and discourses and competing claims to Latinidad. Positioning their contributors as inter-American mediators, much like the immigrants and travelers who shaped the cultural life of Los Angeles and New York, Cine-Mundial and Cinelandia positioned Spanish-speaking readers as an integral rather than peripheral audience for films and as allies in the construction of a specifically cinematic brand of consumer-capitalist modernity.

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Notes

1. M. Hernández, “Crónica de Chile,” Cine-Mundial, September 1918, 58. All translations from the Spanish are mine.
4. Thompson notes that Britain’s close trade ties with South America, including frequent coal shipments, facilitated the distribution of films from London. Exporting Entertainment, 41, 63, 68.
6. According to N. W. Ayers and Sons’ Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals, Cine-Mundial’s circulation as reported to the Audit Bureau of Circulation was 53,297 in 1929; 57,848 in 1930; and 62,023 in 1931 when it reached its peak, versus Photoplay’s circulation of 547,605; 575,625; and 620,331 during the same years. Information on geographic distribution is scarce; I have found sources only for Cine-Mundial in the year 1922, which indicate the magazine was particularly popular in Mexico and Cuba and cite paid circulations of 7,000 in Argentina and 3,000 in Spain. See “Effective Publicity in Latin America,” Chicago Commerce, October 7, 1922, 45; Printer’s Ink, June 29, 1922, 111.

7. The emergence of Pan-Americanism as political strategy and discourse, which peaked during the two World Wars, can be traced to the International Conference of American States organized by James G. Blaine in 1889–1890.


10. Kanellos, Hispanic Periodicals, 73–76.

11. A characteristically Latin American journalistic genre, a crónica is short, topical, and often essayistic in style.


13. Ángel Miquel, Por las pantallas de la Ciudad de México: Periodistas del cine mudo (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1995), 103.


17. Serna, Making Cinelandia, 94.


42. Manuel Rodríguez Artilles, "Crónica de Camagüey (Cuba)," Cine-Mundial, 211.


47. Serna, Making Cinelandia, 95–96.


49. N. W. Ayers and Sons' Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals.


54. Lucio Villegas, editorial, Cinelandia, September 1926, 4.

55. He was replaced by Eduardo Payá in January 1928, and later by Juan J. Moreno.


57. Circulation figures refer to sworn Audit Bureau of Circulation statements drawn from N. W. Ayers and Sons' Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals.


59. The first exhibitions of synchronized sound features in Latin America occurred in São Paulo and Mexico City in April and May of 1929; talking pictures were shown in Buenos Aires in July of the same year.

60. Dario Varona, "Maridos y mujercitas," Cinelandia, January 1930, 60; Virginia Lane, "Dolores del Río," Cinelandia, April 1930, 46.


62. Advertisement, Cinelandia, December 1929, 5; Advertisement, Cinelandia, March 1929, 58.


64. Roberts, "The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat," 15. See also Sturtevant, "Spitfire."


68. The byline may be another of Agustín Aragón Leiva's pseudonyms.

69. Lucio Villegas, editorial, Cinelandia, April 1927, 4.

70. "Una charra gringa," Cinelandia, August 1929, 28.

71. "Mexico Oriental," Cinelandia, July 1929, 28; López, "Are All Latins from Manhattan?"


73. Lucio Villegas, editorial, Cinelandia, August 1927, 3.


75. Armando Vargas de la Maza, "La Vida de Cinelandia," Cinelandia, August 1927, 29.


Octávio de Faria, “Russian Cinema and Brazilian Cinema,” O Fan (Rio de Janeiro), October 1928

Co-founder of the Chaplin-Club and the magazine O Fan, Octávio de Faria is an key figure in the establishment of film criticism in Brazil. Eschewing the political activism of Soviet cinema in favor of praising its directors’ artistry, “Russian Cinema and Brazilian Cinema” hails the achievements of filmmakers like Eisenstein and Pudovkin. It appeared in O Fan’s second issue.

Of all the art forms, the most important for Russia is the cinematographic.

—Lenin

It is with this epigraph that Mr. Léon Moussinac opens his new book, Le Cinéma Soviétique. An impassioned manifesto of cinematographic Communism, this work is of great interest not only as a declaration of enthusiastic support but also as a faithful documentation.

It’s not even worth clarifying that I’m not a Communist. Such a statement would go beyond the limits of this publication, which is not preoccupied with politics or sociology.

Nevertheless, it would be impossible to hold back tremendous applause for the entire cinematographic movement being developed in the new Russia.

To discuss individual works in and of themselves would be, in our case, frivolous. The great examples have not yet arrived to our shores. Of those that have—as in Ivan the Terrible—a public verdict has not been forthcoming, although this film did clarify for me the value of the new Russian theories. (As for Harem of Death, I did not have the opportunity to see it when it was exhibited here.)

So we will be guided by what has been proclaimed, by the near unanimous applause. Or, better stated, we will abstract from individual productions in order to focus on the effort employed in this endeavor.