



# *FLYING DOWN TO RIO*

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2.5



# RIO DE JANEIRO



- Rio de Janeiro is Brazil's second largest city. Its population today is close to 7 million people.
- Famous for its beaches (Copacabana and Ipanema) as well as the favelas, where the poorer populations live, as well as the Carnaval celebration.



# BRAZIL IN THE 1930S

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- In 1930, the populist leader Getulio Vargas organized a military coup and became president of Brazil until 1945.
- His government was called the Estado Novo ("New State"), characterized by a strong nationalism and authoritarianism, as well as a push towards modernization.
- In the 1930s, Vargas was at first close to Nazi Germany and the Axis powers for economic and ideological reasons. Changed to the US and allies' side in the early 1940s, with the Good Neighbor Policy.



# FLYING DOWN TO RIO (1933)



- In groups, overall impression:
  - Have you watched a film from this era before? In black and white? What elements caught your attention?
- Then, summary of the film:
  - Plot
  - Characters
  - Conflicts
  - Resolution

1933 –  
Beginning of  
Good  
Neighbor  
Policy

# FLYING DOWN TO RIO (1933)

- Dolores del Rio (1904-1983) was the first Mexican actress to have leading roles in Hollywood. Played the “Latin type”.

Beautiful, headstrong,  
confused

- What is her character, Belinha, like?
- Love triangle – between Julio (Brazilian tradition) and Roger (US technological modernity and
- What does her union with Roger represent?
- A “white orchid”. In a country with a large Black/mixed population. Why is this significant, for the feasibility of the Goo

US/Brazil allyship –  
success of GN

Race permits her union with Roger –  
doesn't challenge US racial politics



# *FLYING DOWN TO RIO (1933)*

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Let's watch the following scenes and discuss:

- First love scene: 0:27:00 – 0:28:18
  - “I’m going to institute some radical changes in your country”
- The Carioca: 0:39:40 – 0:40:45 / 0:45:50 – 0:47:12
  - “dancing with a new love”; “two heads together they say they are better than one”
- Airplane modernity: 1:20:40 – 1:23:00
  - “We’ve got to get to Rio and we’ve got to make time”
- The blessing: 1:26:50 – 1:28:11
  - “Her happiness is my happiness”



# *FLYING DOWN TO RIO (1933)*

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- How does this film work as part of the “informal empire” of the US towards Latin America?
  - Does not only represent US/Latin American relationship, but wills it into existence – it does not yet exist in the 1930s (Brazil closer to Germany and Axis).
  - US achieves its objectives not through use of force but through technological modernity, ingenuity and goodwill.
  - Role of culture (music, film) in envisioning these political and economic alliances.
  - Can be consumed by the movie-going masses in the US – representation of Lat. Am. neighbors as friendly and gallant.

Does this challenge  
power dynamics  
between US and Lat.  
Am.?



Not really. Lat. Am.  
bends to will of US,  
the leader in this  
relation.

# NEXT CLASS

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- *The Three Caballeros*: Walt Disney's Goodwill Tour and the emergence of its modern aesthetic.
- Height of WWII and Good Neighbor Policy.

