

OPENING OUR HEARTS TO THE MAGIC OF OTHER KINGDOMS:
CULTURAL SHARING BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE UNITED
STATES IN KINGDOM HEARTS

by

CHELSEA HORTON

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Anthropology
in the College of Sciences
and in The Burnett Honors College
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term 2009

Thesis Chair: Dr. Ty Matejowsky

ABSTRACT

For the past decade and even earlier, globalization has been a popular buzzword in academia and has provoked a number of intellectual discussions concerning its nature and effects. In these discussions concepts such as cultural imperialism, cultural homogenization, and indigenization appear which are perceived by-products of globalization in many cases. While some debate the moral implications of globalization and these related phenomena few prefer to take a more neutral stance and simply investigate the objects that are born from the combination two distinct cultural traditions.

My research investigates the cultural flow between the United States and Japan which can be considered 'cultural sharing'. In this context, globalization is a phenomenon that can happen on equal footing and can support the exchange of distinct cultural ideas as a beneficial and voluntary process. In the last century, both Japan and the United States have borrowed cultural items from one another and localized them. The step after borrowing and localization occurs when parties from each country work together with the intent of creating a joint project. *Kingdom Hearts* stands as a prime example of this because the Japanese company Square and the American company Disney collaborated in order to create a product which represents a hybridization of both cultures.