Cinematic Spaces of Istanbul Through the Foreign Lens: Hollywood Studio Era, Spy Films and Touristic Experience[*]

Sezen Kayhan & Ayşegül Kesirli Unur [**]

Abstract

As a connecting point between the Orient and the Occident, the Turkish metropolis of Istanbul has inspired foreign filmmakers for decades. Hollywood studio films from the 1930s to the 1950s fabricated the image of Istanbul as an exotic city of espionage. These films were produced in Hollywood studios which later added landscape stock footage during editing. With analyzing five films: *Stamboul Quest* (1934), *Background to Danger* (1943), *Journey into the Fear* (1945), *Flame of Stamboul* (1951), and *5 Fingers* (1952), this study intends to show how foreign filmmakers created the image of Istanbul in Hollywood studio era and continued to use the same images later in films produced on location. Selected films which use Orientalist imagery offer the spectators a virtual touristic experience. Similar to the immersion of the tourists within the cultural authenticity that is staged and performed for them, cinema can offer a "distant immersion" for the spectators (Corbin, 2014). Although the city's representation transformed to a certain degree depending on the dominant ideological views of the international setting, the iconic images of Istanbul in early spy films from the 1930s continue to appear in contemporary productions of the genre in an attempt to offer a familiar pleasure in a new context.

Keywords: Cinematic city, spy film, Istanbul, Hollywood studio era, Orientalism.

[**]Sezen Kayhan: Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, Institute of Film, Theater, Media and Cultural Studies, Orcid no: 0000-0001-6772-6154, skayhanm@uni-mainz.de
Ayşegül Kesirli Unur: Bilgi University, Department of Film and Television, Orcid no: 0000-0002-1442-8038, aysegul.unur@bilgi.edu.tr

Araştırma Makalesi

Yabancı Gözüyle İstanbul'un Sinemasal Mekânları: Hollywood Stüdyo Dönemi, Casus Filmleri ve Turistik Deneyim *

Sezen Kayhan & Ayşegül Kesirli Unur **

Öz

Şark ve garp arasında bir bağlantı noktası olarak görülen İstanbul, yıllardır yabancı sinemacılara ilham vermektedir. 1930'lardan 1950'lere kadar çekilen Hollywood stüdyo filmleri, İstanbul'u egzotik bir casus şehri olarak resmetmiştir. Bu filmlerin neredeyse tamamı Hollywood'daki stüdyolarda çekilmiş, daha sonra gerçeklik etkisini artırmak için kurguda manzara görüntüleri eklenmiştir. Bu çalışma, *İstanbul Görevi* (1934), *Tehlikenin Ardı* (1943), *Korku Ülkesine Yolculuk* (1945), *İstanbul Alevi* (1951*)* ve *Ankara Casusu* (1952) isimli beş filmi analiz ederek, yabancı film yapımcılarının o dönemde bu filmlerle nasıl bir İstanbul imajı ürettikleri ve daha sonra bu imajın nasıl kalıcı hale geldiğini keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Oryantalist imgelerin kullanıldığı bu seçilmiş filmler, izleyicilere sanal bir turistik deneyim sunmaktadır. Turistlerin kendileri için sahnelenen kültürel otantikliğe kapılmalarına benzer şekilde, sinema da izleyicilere "uzaktan mekâna çekilme" tecrübesi sunmaktadır (Corbin 2014). Bu filmlerde yer alan İstanbul imajı yıllar içinde, uluslararası egemen ideolojik görüşlere bağlı olarak belirli ölçüde değişse de, 1930'ların erken dönem casus filmlerindeki İstanbul'un ikonik görüntüleri, günümüzde Batılı izleyiciye tanıdık bir turistik zevk sunmak için kullanılmaya devam edilmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Sinemasal şehir, casus filmi, İstanbul, Hollywood stüdyo dönemi, Oryantalizm.

**Sezen Kayhan: Johannes Gutenberg Mainz Üniversitesi, Film, Tiyatro, Medya ve Kültürel Çalışmalar Enstitüsü
 Orcid no: 0000-0001-6772-6154, skayhanm@uni-mainz.de
 Ayşegül Kesirli Unur: Bilgi Üniversitesi, İletişim Fakültesi, Radyo, Televizyon ve Sinema Bölümü
 Orcid no: 0000-0002-1442-8038, aysegul.unur@bilgi.edu.tr

Cinematic Spaces of Istanbul Through the Foreign Lens: Hollywood Studio Era, Spy Films and Touristic Experience

Introduction

Istanbul has long been an attraction for travellers in pursuit of the exotic and a lure for artists in search of inspiration. Its geographical location as a bridge connecting East and West, its historical and cultural richness and its beautiful nature have impressed many non-Turkish filmmakers. As the film scholar Ahmet Gürata explains, Istanbul has been a popular location for international films since the inception of cinema (Gürata, 2012: 14-15). During Hollywood studio era, filmmakers mainly interested in the unique spy stories rather than the city itself, so they preferred to create Istanbul in their own studios as they imagined. They depicted the city as an Eastern, exotic and dangerous place where encounter with the other is risky but inevitable. When films started to be produced in real locations in Istanbul in the 1960s, the city's image slightly changed in parallel with Turkey's close relations with the West. However, most of the iconographical images of the city persist in all these eras despite the difference in political contexts. The Orientalist and exotic images that once dominated Hollywood productions continued to be used in different degrees and Istanbul is still represented as a chaotic Eastern city in more recent films such as *Skyfall* (2012), *Two Faces of January* (2014), *The International* (2009) and *Taken 2* (2012).

The representation of Istanbul in spy films has previously been analysed mostly through contemporary mainstream films by different scholars. Akser analyses *Skyfall* and *Taken 2* showing how Orientalism is still alive in recent Hollywood films taking place in Istanbul (Akser, 2014). Behlil et.al also look at the production of *Skyfall* in Istanbul and how Bond films use exotic non-places as a staple of the brand (Behlil, Prado and Verheul, 2020). Dodds explores the geopolitical significance of two earlier Bond films *From Russia with Love* (1963) and *The World is Not Enough* (1999). He suggests that after Turkey became a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member in 1952, its representation also changed as a security and resource-based commodity still exploiting infiltration and intrigue to a certain degree (Dodds, 2003:

125-156). Pamir follows Dodd's argument with comparing two spy films about World War I (*Stamboul Quest*, 1934) and World War II (*5 Fingers*, 1952). He agrees that with the NATO membership of Turkey, the Hollywood representation of the city is Westernized (Pamir, 2015). Even though the representation of Istanbul slightly changed with Turkey's closer political relations to the West in the 1950s, the stereotypical images are still dominant in the 1960s–70s and in more recent films.

This article, particularly interested in the imagination of the city during the Hollywood Studio System, aims to explore earlier Oriental cinematic imagination and the touristic experience it offers in early Hollywood films. It focuses on five Hollywood films entitled as *Stamboul Quest* (1934), *Background to Danger* (1943), *Journey into the Fear* (1945), *Flame of Stamboul* (1951), and *5 Fingers* (1952). Films are chosen on the basis of the criterion of being produced and distributed by minor and major studios between the years of 1930s and 1950s[1]. However, in an attempt to identify the persistence of similar illustrations of the city in later films, the analysis additionally mentions films from post-studio era.

The article analyses the films with the method of discourse analysis, finding its source material mainly in the iconographic representation of Istanbul in the selected case studies. With this method, it investigates the discursive imagination (Rose, 2016: 198-201) of Istanbul in the Hollywood studio era and relates this imagination to the intention of offering a touristic pleasure to the Western audiences through films. In this way, the article associates the persistence of depicting Istanbul as an exotic location in the Middle East to the continuing touristic interest in the city. In the first section, the article focuses on the mental mapping of the cinematic city. Then it looks at the genre formation in Hollywood studio era by particularly concentrating on spy films and discusses the touristic experience that these films offer to Western spectators as an established genre convention. In the last section, it analyses the selected case studies based on this background. In this way, the article intends to understand the representation of Istanbul in the early years of cinema in Hollywood

---

[1] Accessibility of the films is an additional criterion in this selection.

and explain what kind of images continues to persist in contemporary spy films which characterize Istanbul as a cinematic city.

Cinematic City and Mental Mapping

Since the advent of film, cities became diverse cinematic entities. Various scholars explored the relationship between cinema and the city especially in the context of modernity (Mennel 2008, Barber 2002, Bruno 1997 and 2007). As the cities are the centres of technological development, "the growth of cinema was intimately tied to the growth of cities, and the cities were also associated with the development of movie theaters as urban sites of entertainment and distraction" (Mennel, 2007: 5). Correspondingly, the city is constructed by representations and images as well as built environments (Fitzmaurice, 2001: 20). There is reciprocal relationship between city and cinema, as the city being both represents and being represented. According to André Bazin (2005), a part of the ontology of film is built upon geographical and geological foundations. The filmmaker can give the city a character through the lens and this character can be realistic or imaginary. Imaginary portrayals of lesser-known lands are closely related to the mental maps.

Cinematic mental mapping creates an idea of a particular geography which is mostly unknown or defined by stereotypes by the audience. For Jameson, in the context of film a mental map accounts for both the representation and the mode of production and global circulation. In reference to Fredric Jameson, Tom Conley states that:

> […] the individual viewer would be a 'topographer' who tries to link the contradictions found in a particular place—a sequence in a film, or the decision to study a film that belongs to a time and space entirely foreign to the context in which it is chosen to be seen—to a greater "geography" or a world map, in which an assessment of the cartography of the overall (and generally sorry) condition of our planet is tendered (Conley, 2007: 19).

Viewers approach the films with pre-defined geographical norms which are not independent from global power relations and perspectives. López (2002) emphasizes that filmmakers are not without prejudices or ideological motives. Considering the East-West dichotomy, cinematic representation of the East is mostly shaped by the familiar discourse within the framework of Orientalism. In his seminal work Edward

Said looks at Orientalism as a construct that implies a primordial difference between the West and the East. The "dogmas of Orientalism" define the Orient as irrational, inferior and underdeveloped; while the West is rational, superior and developed. This constructed difference also justifies the West's control over the East (Said, 1978). The studio films analysed in this study address these issues of power and domination. Analysing city films give the opportunity to explore these networks and power relations.

Nowell makes a distinction between the two types of city films. One is the kind of film that is "mostly studio-shot […] and often offers a generally dystopian vision of an undifferentiated city which is either unidentifiable with any actual place or only loosely so" (Nowell-Smith, 2001: 101). Films like *Metropolis* (1927) and *Blade Runner* (1982) are examples. The second type is the location-shot films that use mostly identifiable places. "The attraction of films in this second category can be touristic, as personal dramas are played out against attractive backdrops - San Francisco in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958) or Venice in Joseph Losey's *Eva* (1962)" (Nowell-Smith, 2001: 101).

In case of the early studio films on Istanbul, Nowell's two categories merge. These early films are produced in studios but they also offer a touristic experience. They combine both built environments in the studios and touristic attractions through the use of stock city footages. The early spy films present a dangerous and exotic city with a diverse crowd that is created using the pre-coded signs of a touristic gaze which is simultaneously reconstructed by the films. The representation of Istanbul in these films offers a shallow encounter based on an illusionary portrayal which is a common trait of the spy film genre.

Hollywood Studio System, Spy Films and Touristic Experience

Hollywood studio system started to be formed in the 1930s after the film industry in the United States turned into an oligopoly during the era of silent films. With the introduction of sound to cinema, the industry gained a new structure which did not change for the next twenty years. Five major (Paramount, MGM, Fox, RKO, Warner Bros.) and three minor production companies (Columbia, Universal, United Artists)

controlled the production, distribution and exhibition of films and dominated the industry (Thompson and Bordwell, 2019: 189-190). During this era, the film industry which was already standardized to a great extent worked like a "factory" in order to appeal to a mass population and controlling all areas of production, distribution and exhibition gave the major and minor production companies the platform to understand the ways of speaking to the hearts of the audiences (Schatz, 1981: 4). Although the vertical integration of the production companies was dismantled by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1948, as Thomas Schatz underlines "[b]y this time, however, Hollywood had read the pulse of its popular audience in developing an engaging and profitable means of narrative cinematic expression, the conventions of feature filmmaking were firmly established" (Schatz, 1981: 5).

Genres were among the major foundations of this system. By depending on "a combination of novelty and familiarity" (Buscombe, 1995: 21), film genres offer the audiences the pleasure of recognizing familiar patterns of narrative, theme and iconography in new contexts (Schatz, 1995: 93). Among these patterns, genre iconography which "involves the process of narrative and visual coding that results from the repetition of a popular film story" (Schatz, 1981: 22) plays a key role in the instant recognition of a film's genre. According to Thomas Schatz, the process that leads to this instant recognition relies heavily on intertextuality. Audiences are able to identify a generic icon when it is repetitively used in various films which are categorized in the same genre. However, as Schatz underlines, genre iconography does not only involve visual coding of the narrative. Thematic values that these generic icons point at are equally significant for creating a genre's iconography. He states that:

> [a] genre's iconography reflects the value system that defines its particular cultural community and informs the objects, events, and character types composing it. Each genre's implicit system of values and beliefs—its *ideology* or world view—determines its cast of characters, its problems (dramatic conflicts), and the solutions to those problems (Schatz, 1981: 24).

In other words, Schatz emphasizes that, together with its ideological implications, a genre's iconography belongs to the intention of solving societal problems through the narrative of genre films in a ritualistic manner.

This intention becomes apparent in a generic text such as spy film which is frequently inspired by the political and social climate of the time and reflects the dominant ideological views of the country of origin. This association leads to the frequent transformation of the spy figure in different eras. For instance, when influenced by the political conditions of the 1930s, espionage turned into a justifiable act. The villainous portrait of the spy figure is depicted as an upper-class gentleman who is accidentally or unwillingly drawn into the world of intrigue, conspiracy and violence in order to defend democratic values against authoritarianism (Booth, 1990: 139).

In all these periods, travel can be considered as a foundational element of spy fiction. For instance, travel, especially to "exotic" locations and tourism are central characteristics of Ian Fleming's James Bond novels (Seed, 2003: 126). By considering the frequent preference of spy films to set their stories in multiple, sometimes "exotic", spaces, it can be asserted that spy films offer a touristic experience for spectators. According to Amy Corbin, the textual elements of films can construct the spectators as virtual tourists even if the narratives do not include any kind of travel. The cinematic experience invites the spectators to a virtual cultural landscape and exposes them to various kinds of cultural practices that belong to a physical location together with the opportunity to get to know the space from the perspective of different people. In this sense, for Corbin, spectatorship can be approached as a virtual travel experience that closely resembles tourism. In the touristic experience, the unease is consoled by the provided distance between the site and the tourist. This is accommodated by virtuality in the case of a cinematic experience. Similar to the immersion of the tourists within the cultural authenticity that is staged and performed for them, cinema can offer a "distant immersion" for the spectators (Corbin, 2014: 314-318).

When spy films choose Istanbul as a location to set their stories, they offer the spectators a virtual touristic experience. On the one hand, this experience can be approached as a way to represent the glamour of the spy's profession by explaining his many travels, encounters and collaborations as well as love affairs with characters from diverse cultures. On the other hand, this encounter can easily turn

into a shallow touristic experience depending on the film's description of the local setting and the local figures, as well as the spy's activities and relations there.

According to John Urry (1995), various practices that are not commonly associated with tourism such as films, television programmes, newspapers and magazines create an expectation about a space and help to construct the touristic gaze. This touristic gaze is constructed through a collection of signs that are associated with certain landscapes with particular anticipations attached. For instance, the image of a couple kissing in Paris automatically creates the idea of "romantic Paris". By being under the influence of these signs, tourists all around the world seek "the signs of Frenchness, typical Italian behaviour, exemplary Oriental scenes, typical American thruways, traditional English pubs" (Urry, 1995: 133). By building on the spectators' anticipation to find the "typical" indigenous sceneries from a particular location, films can recreate the idea of elsewhere based on these commonly circulated signs. Spy films set in Istanbul reconstruct the city for the touristic gaze of the Western spectators in a similar way. Depending on the chosen iconography for the city, Istanbul easily turns into an "othered" place for Western spectators by being furnished with the pre-coded signs of Oriental scenes.

Istanbul in Hollywood Studio Films

During the 1930s and 1940s when World War II marked all civil activities, films about spies and espionage were in demand in Hollywood. The first spy film set in Istanbul was *Stamboul Quest* (1934) directed by Sam Wood. It reached box office success in the US. Later, Orson Welles' and Norman Foster's *Journey into the Fear* (1945) followed in its footsteps. Both films take place in Istanbul but neither of them was actually produced there. *Stamboul Quest*'s locations were created at the MGM studios in Culver City, California, while *Journey into the Fear* was shot in RKO studios in Los Angeles. Both films only used footage of Istanbul's cityscape (from the historic peninsula) to give the audience the impression that the films take place in Istanbul. Similar footages of the cityscape became common elements in the spy films that are analysed in this section such as *Background to Danger* (1943), *Flame of Stamboul* (1951), and *5 Fingers* (1952).

Stamboul Quest is set at the same time as World War I and it is about the visit of a German female agent called Annemarie aka Fräulein Doktor (Myrna Loy) to Istanbul. This is in order to find a spy who provides critical information to the British Government. They suspect Ali Bey (C. Henry Gordon), the Turkish commander for the Dardanelles. Annemarie goes to Istanbul to secure the proof. However, she falls in love with an American citizen, Douglas Beall (George Brent), before this journey begins. This love affair complicates the mission. The film opens with the Arabic-Orientalist:

> … city silhouette that acts as the background image for the opening titles. The opening Istanbul hotel scene, where Annemarie is introduced to Istanbul, starts with the important shot of the Galata Bridge, which also provides the only real image of the Istanbul space in this film (Pamir, 2015: 38).

For being an early example of the genre, the film establishes the iconography of representing Istanbul in spy films with these images.

In *Stamboul Quest*, Istanbul is mainly formed out of the filmmakers' imagination from an Orientalist perspective. This perspective is additionally expressed in a conversation between the German handler, Herr Von Sturm (Lionel Atwill), and another agent, Kruger aka #117 (Leo G. Carroll) whose ideas of Turkey are composed of "thick coffee, fat women, atrocious smells". In a similar manner, when they travel to Istanbul from Berlin, Annamarie waggishly suggests that Douglas is interested in coming to Turkey to visit "the harems". In this sense, before the arrival of the characters in the "supposed" Istanbul, the city is already portrayed as a foreign place with strange customs, different smells and new foods. On their arrival, although it has a modern outlook, the hotel room of Fraulein Doktor is decorated in an Ottoman-Arabic fashion. Bellboys who wear traditional clothes and a fez appear carrying Annamarie's suitcases. In the following scenes, Annamarie goes to a charity event in order to meet Ali Bey at the bazaar. The entertainment includes acrobatic stunts which are performed in traditional clothes. An oriental soundtrack can be heard in the background.

The scene in the nightclub where Ali Bey takes Annamarie to dinner opens with a show by a belly dancer and other exotic attractions. (Figure 1) The smoky mise-en-scene supported by Arabic music shows a dark and gloomy yet entertaining place. To comply with this image, in Ali Bey's quarters, the Arabesque window frame is one of the most vivid pictures in the film. The set design clearly illustrates Orientalist iconography through the use of exotic objects like water pipes, rugs, wall tiles and "cezve"s. If the time period that the film takes place is considered, it can be claimed that the film creates a stereotypical portrait of the Ottoman Empire before the establishment of republican Turkey.

Figure 1. The night club in Stamboul Quest (1934).

Istanbul's representation as an exotic setting points at a continuous trend regarding the portrayal of the Middle East in Hollywood films. Lina Khatip explains that representation of the Middle East in cinema has been frequently associated with the familiar discourse of Orientalism (Khatip, 2006: 4). By referring to Edward Said's conceptualization of Orientalism, she states that the constructed difference between the East and the West, the latter dominating the former due to its superior position against the inferior other, has allowed the portrayal of the East as a place in need of

the West's dominance. By giving examples from films such as *The Mummy* (1999) and *Three Kings* (1999), Khatip underlines that:

> Egyptian Arabs are comically portrayed as ignorant, cowardly, and barbaric (for instance, being referred to as 'smelly like camels'), while American characters in contrast are portrayed as 'civilized' (being composed, acting logically and bravely in the face of a mummy that accidentally comes back to life) (Khatip, 2006: 5).

In addition to this Orientalist portrayal, in parallel with Orientalism's imagination of the non-West as a singular vast geography, Hollywood films represent Arab characters without specifying their nationality, disregarding the cultural and religious differences among the nations which are located in the Middle East. The Orient appears in these films as a vast entity which has to be feared and controlled (Khatip, 2006: 6-7). According to Khatip, by using these cinematic images, the United States intends to secure its dominance in world politics.

In such a way to echo Khatip's argument, Laurence Raw sees the representation of Turkey in Hollywood films that were produced from the 1930s to the 1960s reinforcing an Orientalist gaze. He states that the major studios of the time were "[…] attracted by the exotic images stereotypically associated with the Republic and/or the Ottoman Empire, which formed the basis for a succession of epics taking place in the so-called 'mystic East'" (Raw, 2012: 222). The success of the exotic locations in genre films such as *Casablanca* (1946) led the studios to follow this trend in other locations and capitalize on the concept (Raw, 2012: 222). Spy films that were located in Istanbul in the studio era can be considered as an extension of this formulation.

Another spy film from a little later in the period, *Journey into the Fear*, uses similar images of Istanbul repeating the genre's iconography regarding the city's representation. *Journey into the Fear* follows an American ballistics expert in Turkey who tries to escape from Nazi agents but becomes trapped with them on the same ship. Most of the film takes place on the ship but first scenes are set in Istanbul. They are enough to give an idea about the representation of the city at that time. The three important locations in this film are the fictional Adler Palace Hotel of Istanbul, the night club and the military headquarters. Compared to the Arabesque decoration in

Stamboul Quest, the hotel in *Journey into the Fear* is more modern. The facade of the hotel has a French architectural style, and the lobby is decorated with modern floral curtains and wallpapers. On his arrival, the main character of the film, Howard Graham (Joseph Cotton), is greeted by the hotel receptionist who speaks English fluently almost without an accent. They meet the company representative Kopeikin (Everett Sloane) for the first time here. When Kopeikin introduces himself with a warm greeting, Howard and his wife (Ruth Warrick) hesitate to engage with him. Kopeikin feels the need to share his credentials to convince them that he is actually the company representative. At this moment, the voice-over of Howard describes Kopeikin as a "pest". Kopeikin is shown as a character who talks his way into having dinner with the Grahams even though they did not want to spend time with him. He is a loud, talkative, shady and over the top person who pushes his agenda on others, resembling an Eastern character designed under an Orientalist gaze. In this sense, Howard's first encounter with the cultural other happens in a cosmopolitan setting with a modern outlook which very quickly turns into harbouring a highly uncomfortable, even threatening, meeting with an Eastern subject.

The next stop in the film in Istanbul is the night club to which Howard is almost forcefully taken by Kopeikin. The singers, acrobats and illusionists in the night club give the repeated idea that Istanbul is the perfect place for exotic attractions. Alongside this exotic representation, the place can also be described as a cosmopolitan setting that is inhabited by various characters from all over the world. Josette (Dolores del Rio) and Gogo Martel (Jack Durant) who perform acrobatic numbers on stage dressed in leopard-patterned costumes are visitors from France. Peter Banat (Jack Moss), who is later introduced as a Nazi agent working in Bulgaria, appears in the background. Jazzy tunes sung in Turkish by a woman who wears a shiny evening dress and flowers in her hair support the distinctive atmosphere of the night club. The illusionist who takes the stage after the singer wears a quilted turban over his tuxedo and a cloak. He is assisted by a woman who is dressed in an Asian-inspired costume and ballet shoes. The illusionist automatically starts to speak in English to Kopeikin and continues his performance in Turkish, French and English in such a way to acknowledge that he addresses a diverse crowd. He says that his next performance is going to be a trick that he learned in India. One of the most important

scenes in the film takes place at this moment: the Nazis kill the illusionist instead of Howard. This is how the Americans learn that they are being targeted by Nazis in Istanbul. In this way, the nightclub turns into a shady place where all the intriguing plans are initiated. The central place of the nightclub in the narrative of this film can be considered as a trope which is appropriated in spy films that set in Istanbul in later years and nightclubs "became a common Istanbul *mise-en scène* that is still used to this day" (Pamir, 2015: 51).

The nightclub becomes the centre of intrigue in another spy film, *Flame of Stamboul,* (1951) which tells the story of Larry Wilson (Richard Denning), an American intelligence agent, who falls in love with a woman, Lynette (Lisa Ferraday), in his journey to Istanbul. When the time comes to travel to Cairo, Lynette decides to stay in Istanbul because she is hired by a group of criminals who are in the pursuit of some military secrets. In order to steal the defence plans to protect the Suez Canal, Lynette has to pretend as the famous belly dancer, the Flame of Stamboul, and infiltrate in the house of a wealthy Egyptian. Larry meets her again in Cairo when he is on duty of catching the leader of this criminal group, The Voice (George Zucco).

Although the film majorly set in Cairo the adventure begins in Istanbul. As the camera slowly zooms into the image of a map in the opening credits the location of Istanbul is seen on the focus. The first shot of the film shows the panoramic scenery of Golden Horn with various mosques in the background. This stock footage transitions to a studio setting which mimics the pier, supposedly located somewhere in Istanbul. Passengers are seen boarding on a ship to Cairo. When Lynette refuses to embark on the ship she is taken to a night club in which the Flame of Stamboul performs. The nightclub does not have any specific marker to symbolize Istanbul as a setting. But it has an Orientalist feel with the belly dancer performing on the stage while the show is dominantly enjoyed by men (Figure 2). In this context, "the Flame of Stamboul" turns into the embodiment of the city's aura which is associated with the body of a mysterious, Middle Eastern woman. When Lynette replaces the famous belly dancer of Istanbul and goes to perform in Cairo the nightclub that she performs in this new location highly resembles the nightclub in Istanbul.

Figure 2. The night club in Flame of Stamboul (1951).

These two Middle Eastern cities are differentiated in the film only by means of the stereotypical touristic markers that they are associated with. Whereas Istanbul is advertised with the scenery of the Golden Horn, Cairo is introduced with the Pyramids. In this way, the film does not only reveal its intention to offer a touristic experience to the Western spectators but also exposes how this intention has Orientalist undertones.

The common characteristic of these films is their production in the studios and their use of cinematic spaces in an Orientalist fashion. Istanbul in these films consisted of a studio-designed city shaped by the stereotypical ideas of the filmmakers. While the location backdrops added exotic elements to the story, Istanbul is depicted as a foreign and mysterious land that functions as a passage from the West to the East, harbouring a cosmopolitan crowd visiting the city on their way to the Orient. The same image of the city is repeated in another spy film of the era, *Background to Danger* (Raoul Walsh, 1943). This is predominantly set in Ankara but the main character visits Istanbul in the end.

In 1952, Turkey became a NATO member and "was courted by the United States as an ally of the West" (Pamir, 2015, 67). Turkey's developing relations to the West played a significant role during the 1950s and 1960s when there was a

particular change in the representation of Istanbul in spy films. In the spy films of this period, Istanbul is portrayed "as a historic, chaotic, cosmopolitan and Westernised city and that this representation by Hollywood is informed by the Cold War discourse of the time" (Pamir, 2015: 67). However, even though this development contributed to the transformation of the city's depiction in Hollywood films of the period, particular iconographic images which are identified with Istanbul in previous spy films continued to persist in the narrations. In this way, the films kept offering a touristic experience to the Western spectators.

5 Fingers (1952) by Joseph Mankiewicz illustrates such a transformation using Western fashion. *5 Fingers* is about a famous spy, Cicero (called "Diello" in the film), the valet to the British Ambassador to Ankara, who sells British secrets to the Germans. The film takes place during World War II in neutral Turkey. Even though a big part of the film was produced in Ankara, there are many scenes that shows the transformation of the representation of Istanbul. In the last twenty minutes of the film, Diello escapes to Istanbul to trade British secrets and the spectators are introduced to Istanbul once again with the "'timeless' iconic image of the Golden Horn, the Historic Peninsula and the Galata Bridge" (Pamir, 2015, 80).

In these last moments, the first image that is shown from Istanbul is the current city hall of Beyoğlu municipality in the Pera district. This is shown as the German consulate. The street is portrayed as a busy location with pedestrians in modern clothes and automobiles are seen passing by. When the camera shifts to an indoor setting, the tramways can be seen through the window. In their pointless search for Diello in Istanbul, the British agents describe the city as "created by Allah for the convenience of spies" since nobody can be found. In the Galata district, street sellers who carry their good on their heads, backs or on horseback dominate alongside pedestrians in modern clothes and the customers who occupy the outside sitting area of a restaurant. When the German agents enter the restaurant to meet Diello, men and women can be seen enjoying their meals inside and smoking. The restaurant shows the customers in modern Western fashion and the waiters serving in suits (Figure 3).

Figure 3. The cafe in Istanbul in *5 Fingers* (1952).

In the next scenes, the British agents leave the restaurant with Diello. The German agents follow them through the crowded streets of Istanbul. The chase takes place around Nuruosmaniye Mosque and leads to the Grand Bazaar. This is typically illustrated as a very loud and crowded place, occupied by all kinds of people, mostly locals. At the end of the pursuit, Diello manages to escape from everyone by taking a small boat on the harbour of Karaköy, ending up in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil.

Even though *5 Fingers* shows a more Westernized Istanbul, it still uses same touristic surroundings such as the Grand Bazaar as a background for action and chase scenes. In this sense, the film can also be seen as a precursor of the forthcoming spy films that are shot at thaton location in Istanbul. This convention of showcasing the most touristic places in Istanbul's historical peninsula additionally functions to enhance the touristic experience of the spectators. The same touristic experience that is offered to the Western spectators in these early spy films becomes an established convention for the future films which chose Istanbul as a setting. Despite the relative changes in the representation of the city in different eras depending on the political and social climate, the images of the exotic Eastern city which were constructed in studio film from the 1930s to the 1950s continue to persist

in later films, even in the contemporary ones. For instance, in *From Russia with Love* (1963), the camera arrives in Istanbul before the main character, James Bond. The first image of Istanbul is the depiction of Hagia Sophia together with the Bosphorus from the perspective of the Blue Mosque. When Bond sets foot on Istanbul, although the airport is shown as a modern place, on his way to his first almost every frame begins and ends with the image of a different mosque in such a way to emphasize the dominantly Muslim presence in the city and enhance the touristic experience of the spectators. Nuruosmaniye Mosque, which was used as a set in *5 Fingers*, once again appears as the first stop for James Bond after his arrival. Besides, the influence of the Oriental gaze is very apparent in the interior design, especially the furniture, the decorative objects and the ornaments of indoor settings.

Contemporary spy films such as *Skyfall* (2012) and *The International* (2009) are also keen to represent the city and its places in an Orientalist manner when the narrative required a mysterious, exotic and fantasised encounter with another culture. In *Skyfall*, Istanbul is portrayed as an empty space that is constructed for a touristic imaginary purpose by being deprived of "a sense of narrative, emotional, ideological, or geopolitical purpose" (Behlil, Prado, Verheul, 2020: 93). As Behlil et. al. emphasized, Bond productions approach these exotic settings as non-places. The same approach is repeated in *The International* which illustrates Istanbul in an Orientalist manner. In both films, the locations, which are actually very far from one other to the point of even being in different cities, are edited to appear closer together in order to create visually attractive exotic transitions and the image of a dangerous city that is full of threats and tensions. The selected locations are mostly crowded and disorganised places which supports the idea of Istanbul being a chaotic Middle Eastern city.

Conclusion

Based on these depictions, Istanbul's cinematic representation has not very much changed from early studio films to contemporary on-location productions. The films exploit various discourses about the city interchangeably with a persisting iconography. If the narrative requires the construction of a Westernised image, the city is constructed as a modern metropolis. However, if a more Eastern sensation has to be evoked, then the films rely on creating an Orientalist portrayal. Çağlar Keyder states that "Istanbul's global role had derived from its location at the intersection of two civilizations: Western travelers saw it as the door to the East, whereas Muslims regarded it as an occupied but not fully conquered outpost to the West" (Keyder, 1999: 8). It seems like the shifting depictions regarding the city intend to vitalise the "bridge metaphor" that is frequently associated with Istanbul being the bridge between the West and the East. The locations that are used in the films bridge between the modern, Westernised look and the imagination of the Orient. In this sense, the cinematic experience, which appears to be mainly designed for a Western audience, offers a touristic experience in a diverse setting from a safe distance. The persisting stereotypical images of the city which turns into a part of the genre's iconography in this context contributes to this touristic experience. By exploiting Istanbul's changing imagination from different perspectives, the films aim to create a fascinating, glamourous atmosphere and attempt to capitalise on the spectators' imagination of elsewhere instead of offering a genuine connection with the local setting.

In this framework, the tendency of spy films to set their stories in various "exotic" locations can be seen of as a way to promote the films as distinctive, expensive, touristic attractions that not only offer a leisure activity in the premises of the movie theatre, but also the opportunity to virtually travel and experience the fascinating encounters of the spies from a safe distance. Although the city's representation transforms to a certain degree depending on the dominant ideological views of the international setting the iconic images which are associated with Istanbul in early spy films from the 1930s continue to appear in contemporary productions of the genre in an attempt to offer a familiar pleasure in a new context.

References

Akser, Murat (2014). "From Istanbul with Love: The New Orientalism of Hollywood." In *Whose City Is That? Culture, Design, Spectacle and Capital in Istanbul*. Dilek Özhan Koçak and Orhan Kemal Koçak (Ed.) in. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 35-46.

Barber, Stephen (2002). *Projected Cities: Cinema and Urban Space.* London: Reaktion Books.

Background to Danger. *(1943).* Directed by Raoul Walsh. Warner Bros.

Bazin, Andre (2005). *What is Cinema?* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Behlil, Melis, Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado and Jaap Verheul (2020). "The Dead Are Alive: The Exotic Non-Place of the Bondian Runaway Production." *The Cultural Life of James Bond: Specters of 007*. Verheul, J. (Ed.) in. Amsterdam University Press. 81-102.

Booth, Alan R. (1990). "The Development of the Espionage Film." *Intelligence and National Security*, 5(4). 136-160.

Bruno, Guiliana (1997). Site-seeing: Architecture and the moving image. *Wide Angle* 19 (4), pp. 8-24.

Bruno, Guiliana (2007). Film and the geography of modernity. A. Marcus & D. Neumann (Eds.) in. *Visualising the city* (pp. 13-30). Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge.

Buscombe, Edward (1995). "The Idea of Genre in the American Cinema." *Film Genre Reader II.* Barry Keith Grant (Ed.) in. University of Texas Press.

Conley, Tom (2007). *Cartographic Cinema*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Corbin, Amy. (2014). "Travelling through Cinema Space: The Film Spectator as Tourist" *Continuum*, 28(3). 314–329.

Dodds, Klaus (2003). "Licensed to Stereotype: Geopolitics, James Bond and the Spectre of Balkanism" *Geopolitics*, 8(2). 125-156.

5 Fingers (1952). Directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz. 20th Century Foz.

Flame of Stamboul (1951). Directed by Ray Nazarro. Columbia Pictures.

From Russia with Love (1963). Directed by Terence Young. Eon Productions.

Gürata, Ahmet (2012). "City of Intrigues: Istanbul as an Exotic Attraction." *World Film Locations:* Istanbul. Özlem Köksal (ed.) in. London: Intellect. 24-25.

Journey into the Fear (1945). Directed by Norman Foster. Mercury Productions.

Keyder, Çağlar (1999). "The Setting." *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local*. Çağlar Keyder, (Ed.) in. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. 3-29.

Khatib, Lina (2006). *Filming the Modern Middle East: Politics in the Cinemas of Hollywood and the Arab World.* London and New York: I.B. Tauris.

López, Ana M. (2002). "Are all Latins from Manhattan? Hollywood, ethnography, and cultural colonialism". A. Williams (Ed.) in. *Film and Nationalism* (pp. 195-205). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Mennel, Barbara (2008). *Cities and Cinema.* London and New York: Routledge.

Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey (2001). "Cities: Real and Imagined." *Cinema and the City. Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*. Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice (Ed.) in. Oxford: Blackwell.

Pamir, Alican (2015). "Representations of Istanbul in Two Hollywood Spy Films About World War I and World War II." MPhil Thesis. University of Southampton.

Raw, Laurence (2012). "Hollywood's Turkish Films 1930–1960: A Nation Looks at Itself." *The Transnational Turn in American Studies: Turkey and the United States.* Tanfer Emin Tunç and Bahar Gürsel (Ed.) in. Peter Lang Publishing: 207-224.

Rose, Gillian (2016). *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*. London: Sage.

Said, Edward W. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Fitzmaurice, Tony (2001). "Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context". *Cinema and the city: Film and urban societies in a global context*. Shiel, Mark and Tony Fitzmaurice (Eds.) in. Oxford: Blackwell

Seed, David (2003). "Spy Fiction." *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*. Martin Priestman (Ed.) in. Cambridge University Press: 115-134.

Schatz, Thomas (1981). *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking, and The Studio System*. New York: Random House.

Schatz, Thomas (1995). "The Structural Influence: New Directions in Film Genre Study." *Film Genre Reader II*. Barry Keith Grant (Ed.) in. University of Texas Press.

Skyfall (2012). Directed by Sam Mendes. Eon Productions, MGM, Columbia Pictures.

Stamboul Quest (1934). Directed by Sam Wood. MGM.

Taken 2 (2012). Directed by Olivier Megaton. EuropaCorp, M6 Films, Grive Productions

The International (2009). Directed by Tom Tykwer. Columbia Pictures, Atlas Entertainment.

The World is Not Enough (1999). Directed by Michael Apted. Eon Productions, MGM.

Thompson, Kristin and David Bordwell. (2019). *Film Art: An Introduction.* McGraw-Hill Education.

Two Faces of January (2014). Directed by Hossein Amini. StudioCanal, Working Title Films.

Urry, John (1995). *Consuming Places.* New York: Routledge.