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Citation for published version (APA):
Pisters, P. (2010). Filming the times of Tangier: nostalgia, postcolonial agency, and preposterous history. In D. Iordanova, D. Martin-Jones, & B. Vidal (Eds.), *Cinema at the periphery* (pp. 175-189). (Contemporary approaches to film and television series). Wayne State University Press.

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Filming the Times of Tangier

Nostalgia, Postcolonial Agency, and Preposterous History

Tangier, peripheral city par excellence at the border between Europe and Africa, is nowadays mostly known for its illegal immigrants who want to cross the ocean to Spain. Leila Kilani's documentary *Tanger, le rêve des brûleurs/Tangier, the Burner's Dream* (Leila Kilani, France, 2002) powerfully presents the sociopolitical dreams of people wanting to leave North Africa and "burn" their IDs. However, Tangier has also always attracted many Europeans and Americans to settle or seek adventure in the Maghreb. In André Téchiné's film *Les Temps qui changent/Changing Times* (France, 2004) the main character, Antoine (Gérard Depardieu), has just left Europe to arrive in Tangier with the very individual aim of regaining the heart of Cecile (Catherine Deneuve), of regaining a lost love in Tangier. Granted, Téchiné also acknowledges the burners. In one scene, Antoine and Cecile pass by a group of people waiting for an opportunity to leave and they briefly discuss their fate. But at first sight, these burners do not directly concern the main characters. Struck by these apparent oppositional types and directions of desire that traverse Tangier in these films, this chapter investigates the different attractions of this peripheral location.

Many film crews took their cameras to capture the whimsical magic of Tangier. Since the nineteenth century the city has occupied an important place in the imagination of the West and East as an extremely complex, chaotic, dangerous and at the same time alluring and open city. Locals, settlers, smugglers, secret agents, travelers, tourists, and migrants of all sorts have moved to and from the city, throughout history, in always changing dynamics. Because of these changing dynamics, and Tangier's status as both peripheral city and transnational meeting point, I want to propose the hy-

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pothesis that Tangier might offer a paradigmatic case for discussing the ways in which the dynamics between center and periphery have changed in the contemporary world. In order to develop this hypothesis I will focus on the concept of time (as history, memory, and temporality). Because Tangier is such a complex and even legendary city, in the first part I will sketch some of Tangier's history. I will do this by looking at several (of the many) films shot in Tangier and considering these as "sheets of the past" that make up the city as it is today.[1] In this section the films serve as bits and pieces of actual history, as traces of the past that can be partially reconstituted in the image. A brief tour of this cinematic landscape is necessary at this stage to sketch in the contours of the temporal map of Tangier. This mapping then provides a preliminary discussion of the image of the city that will be challenged in the second part, where I will move to contemporary postcolonial Tangier. Here I will address the concept of time as it has been developed in postcolonial theory, looking at the postcolonial condition and the question of agency, described by Homi Bhabha as a "temporality of Tangier." This temporality of Tangier, I will finally argue, is what we might need in order to understand the shifting dynamics between center and periphery.

"Sheets of the Past": Imagining Tangier's History

According to Henri Bergson the present, every present perception, is already in the past. Bergson argues that we live in the past that is preserved in rec-ollection—images that are stored in a not necessarily chronological order. Each moment in the present invites us to jump to other layers of the past.[2] Gilles Deleuze has developed this model further in respect to cinema and cinematographic consciousness.[3] This conception of the past stored in im-ages that we can address in a nonchronological order at a metalevel can be used as a very basic methodology to briefly sketch Tangier's history through several films. Of course, these films are not history itself but they are re-lated to historical circumstances and events that I will address. Moreover, as imaginations in themselves they also have a role to play in our historical con-sciousness. All films include at least three layers of time that cause disjunctive perspectives: the time that the film's story addresses; the time in which the film was produced, which influences the film's form and content implicitly or explicitly; and the time in which we view the film, which can alter our perception of the events earlier presented. In this section I will mainly focus on the first time, the time of the film's story. This will reconstitute an account of the main historical developments of the city, which implies a chronologi-

cal notion of time. This classical notion of time will be challenged by the "temporality of Tangier" that will be developed later on in this chapter.

The American film *The Wind and the Lion* (John Milius, USA, 1975) presents Tangier in 1904 as a location where several imperialistic powers try to gain a foothold in Morocco and to have access to Africa and the Arab world. From the nineteenth century onward Tangier was the place where France, Spain, Germany, England, and the United States sent most of their diplomatic and commercial missions. The film is set several years before Morocco would become a French and Spanish protectorate and one year before the German emperor Wilhelm II provoked a scandal by expressing his antipathy to the French machinations for influence. This led in 1906 to the Algeciras conference that declared Tangier as an open and independent zone, and eventually to the 1923 declaration of Tangier as an International Zone, governed by an international board that consisted of representatives of seven countries (England, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, United States, and Morocco, which had both Jewish and Arab representatives).

The plot of the film is loosely based on a real event known as the Perdi-caris Affair, which involved the kidnapping of a supposedly American citi-zen, Ion Perdicaris (played in the film by a woman, Candice Bergen). The kidnapper is a tribal headsman from the Rif called Raisuli (Sean Connery in the film), who wanted to fight Western influence by putting pressure on the Moroccan sultan, whom he considered a marionette of the Europeans. An important role is also assigned to President Theodor Roosevelt (Brian Keith) who in 1904 sends warships to Tangier in order to put pressure on the Moroccan officials to release the American citizen. The fact that Perdicaris turned out to be a Greek citizen is not mentioned in the film, right in line with official historical accounts. The French and especially the Germans in the film are depicted as much less civilized and less powerful than the Ameri-cans and the nationalistic self-portrayal of America is quite interesting, even if it is not topical here. What I mainly want to emphasize is how Tangier is presented as an arena for the international struggle among several imperial powers, which eventually led to its status as an international zone.

During the Second World War, Tangier, because of its international sta-tus, became known as a spy's nest and a dangerous place to be. It was also the place from which resistance against Vichy France was organized. The French film *Mission à Tanger/Mission in Tangier* (Hunebelle, France, 1949) is one of several espionage films that refer to this reputation of Tangier. It is a classic thriller, complete with a Hitchcockian McGuffin, an undefined secret mes-sage that has to get across the sea.[4]

Mission in Tangier combines actual footage of the city, initially seen from the periscope of a submarine, with scenes shot in a studio in Paris. Besides Tangier's historical role in international resistance and espionage, here I want to mention the ways in which both the Spanish and (again) the Germans are represented in this film. The Spanish, who occupied Tangier during the war, are rendered foolish by the performance of a young Louis de Funes, the Germans by the depiction of German officials that kill and capture French spies and by the strategic use of historical footage of Hitler.

After the war Tangier regained its international status and was famous for its libertinous climate. Peter Goedel's 1996 documentary *Tanger, Legende einer Stadt/Tangier, Legend of a City* (Germany, 2000) is interesting in this respect. The film is about Tangier's "golden years," the 1940s and 1950s, when it built its legendary reputation as a playground for eccentric millionaires and famous artists, a continuing meeting place for secret agents and all kinds of crooks and gamblers. The film combines four sorts of images: found footage and historical documentary images of the city during the war and during the independence struggles; images of actor Armin-Mueller Stahl in the present who arrives in Tangier to recall his fictitious past in Tangier; dramatized flashback images of this past where Stahl spent happy days with his French fiancée, Marie, who was killed accidentally during the liberation riots in 1956; and interviews with Europeans and Americans (most famously Paul Bowles) who remember the good old days, when Europeans were throwing parties all over the city, when American and European writers (William Burroughs, Tennessee Williams, Samuel Becket, Jean Genet, to name but a few) went to the city to have a "white Christmas" ("white" of course not referring to snow as Paul Bowles jokes in the film), and when the city seemed to be a happy and magic meeting place for all nationalities, Western nationalities that is. The Europeans recall that on the Moroccan side only three influential aristocratic families could participate in the magic dream of the legendary city. Writer Mohamed Choukri is the only Moroccan in the film who talks from a nonprivileged Moroccan perspective and mentions the fact that the Europeans always considered the Moroccans as servants. In these same golden years, however, Tangier nevertheless also played a key role in the struggle for independence, which is also shown in this film. In 1947 the sultan Mohamed V proclaimed in his famous Tangier speech his full support to the Istiqlal—the Party for Independence. In 1952 riots in Tangier made the call for independence louder, which in 1956 became a reality. Tangier was no longer an international zone and became part of the Moroccan kingdom. *Tangier, Legend of a City* speaks of these historical moments by showing important archival footage. But all these images are centered on the individual

tragedy of Mueler-Stahl's character who loses his fiancée at the moment of independence and who dies after he has "relived" all the important memories with his fiancée in Tangier in 1956.

Alexandre Arcady's *Dernier été à Tanger/Last Summer in Tangier* (France, 1987) is also set in 1956. The film pays homage to the classic film noir, with a private detective who tells the story in voice-over, a femme fatale, cigarettes, nightclubs, and of course a few dead bodies. The film on the one hand refers to Tangier's wild reputation, and on the other hand to the important political changes that took place in that year. But again these changes are not the central concern of the film. They form the background of the story and explain why many people, like the European main character, detective Richard Corrigan (Thierry Lhermitte) have to leave. In an interview on the DVD of the film, Alexandre Arcady admits that for him, filming in Tangier was a sort of replacement. As a *pied noir* (person of French origin born and raised in Algeria), at the time of making the film in the 1980s it was still not very easy for French people to revisit the country they had to leave about twenty-five years earlier during the War of Independence. Tangier therefore symbolizes European regrets for having to leave the Maghreb when colonialism ended. I will return to this point soon. To conclude this chronological overview of Tangier's history: After the death of Mohamed V in 1961, during the reign of Hassan II the city was largely neglected. Since 1999, the new King Mohamed VI has spent as much time as possible in his palace in Tangier and the city has undergone large construction works. Tangier has slowly regained its old attractive reputation. Nowadays many tourists from Spain cross the ocean on the speedy ferryboats from Tarifa and Algeciras. Moroccans who live in Europe visit the city to spend their holidays at the seaside. Its dangerous reputation too has regained importance. The harbor still attracts smugglers (*contrabandeurs*). Since Spain, following the Schengen Agreements in 1991, closed its borders and started to demand visas for entrance into Europe, the city has also become the place from which illegal immigrants from all over Africa and the Maghreb try to reach the European coast that is visible from everywhere in the city.

The Temporality of Tangier versus the Nostalgia of Casablanca

Having sketched some of Tangier's historical dimensions through its recollections-images, I will now move to Tangier as a postcolonial city as it emerges in recent films. Historically the postcolonial era of Tangier starts in 1956. Acknowledging the possible problematic aspects of the term *postcolo-*

nial, I take Homi Bhabha's definition in his article "The Postcolonial and the Postmodern" as a starting point. Here Bhabha states:

Postcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and the discourses of "minorities" within the geopolitical division of East and West, North and South. They intervene in those ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to give a hegemonic "normality" to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged histories of nations, races, communities, peoples.[5]

Now, what I have been doing so far, by and large, was giving exactly such a "hegemonic" account of the city's history, which is a problem at the heart of center-periphery discussions. As Bhabha argues, the testimony of third world countries and their emancipation require a radical revision of the social temporality in which emergent histories may be written, a rearticulation of the cultural text or the "sign" in which different identities may be inscribed. Bhabha calls this a "strategy of survival" that is both transnational and translational. It is transnational because contemporary discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacements (and all films set in Tangier talk about displacements of various sorts). It is translational because such dynamic histories make the question of how culture signifies a rather complex issue involving translations between different languages and other cultural signs.

Bhabha refers to Roland Barthes' visits to Tangier. Interestingly, Tangier was very instructive for the white French semiotician, enabling him to learn how to open up language and cultural signs for transnational and translational revisions. Bhabha recalls how Barthes describes his Tangier experience: "Half-asleep on a banquette in a bar, of which Tangiers is the exemplary site, Barthes attempts to 'enumerate the stereophony of languages within earshot': music, conversations, chairs, glasses, Arabic, French," when suddenly he feels how the sentence is opened up with the carnality of the voice and the incomprehensibility of language.[6] "I was myself a public place, a souk; words, small syntagmas, bits of formulations, and no sentence could be formed."[7] This is what Barthes calls "the outside of the sentence" and what Homi Bhabha renames as the "temporality of Tangier," a temporality that is changing and open, full of ambiguities.

Bhabha contrasts this temporality with the temporality of Casablanca, for which he refers not so much to the city as, significantly, to the film *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, USA, 1942).

In *Casablanca,* the passage of time preserves the identity of language; the possibility of naming over time is fixed in the repetition:

> You must remember this
> A kiss is still a kiss
> A sigh is but a sigh
> The fundamental things apply
> As time goes by

"Play it again, Sam" which is perhaps the Western world's most celebrated demand for repetition, is still an invocation to similitude, a return to eternal verities.[8]

This tendency is evident in the opening scene of *Last Summer in Tangier,* in which a poster of *Casablanca* on the wall of Corrigan's office now becomes significant in that it refers to a specific temporality that is related to a desire for a repetition of fixed time, a signification of closure.[9] It explains the nostalgic dimension of the film. *Last Summer in Tangier* acknowledges the changes that have taken place but with regret: the hero has to leave. It is as if the only redemption that can be found is in repeating a classic genre, the return of the film noir. On top of this, at the end of the film, the beginning of the film is exactly repeated: the femme fatale offers the hero a light, this time not in a hotel in Tangier but on a boat to America. It is as if the temporality of Casablanca could be repeated by creating a repetitive "sheet of the past" and moving normative history to America. In a similar vein it can be argued that *Tangier, Legend of a City* gives a nostalgic account of the past, especially in its emphasis on the individual love story of the French lovers and repetition of their past, which means that "Casablanca" as a temporal sign can be very easily found in images of Tangier.

Yet, in contrast to this filmic representation, what actually happens in Tangier? I have to go back to Bhabha, who relates Tangier to a very different type of signification: "In Tangier, as time goes by, it produces an iterative temporality that erases the occidental spaces of language—inside/outside, past/present, those foundationalist epistemological positions of Western empiricism and historicism. Tangier opens up disjunctive, incommensurable relations of spacing and temporality *within* the sign."[10] This disjunctive character of Tangier for Barthes leads to a form of discourse he named "writing aloud": the disjunctive moment, the time-lag "between the event of the sign

(Tangier) and its discursive eventuality ('writing aloud') exemplifies a process where intentionality is negotiated retrospectively."[11] In this way, Bhabha argues, "the temporality of Tangier is a lesson in reading the agency of the social text as ambivalent and catachrestic."[12]

The next question is, is it possible to conceive of historical agency in that disjunctive, indeterminate, and contingent moment of discourse in the "temporality of Tangier"? What other narratives can be read in the ambivalence of cultural texts? Put in Bhabha's words: "How does the time-lag signify individuation as a position that is an effect of the intersubjective (negotiation)?"[13] This would imply that those elements of social consciousness imperative for agency can now be thought outside that (Western) epistemology that insists on the subject (individuality) as always prior to the social. Bhabha develops the idea of the intersubjective further with Mikhail Bakhtin's notions of heteroglossia and dialogism and especially Hannah Arendt's concept of the human interest:

It is this public sphere of language and action that must become at once the theater and the screen for the manifestation of the capacities of human agency. Tangier-like, the event and its eventuality are separated; the narrative time lag makes the who and the what contingent, splitting them, so that the agent remains the subject, in suspension, outside the sentence. The agent who "causes" the narrative becomes part of the interest, only because we cannot point unequivocally to that agent at the point of outcome. It is the contingency that constitutes individuation—in the return of the subject as agent—that protects the interest of the intersubjective realm. The contingency of closure socializes the agent as a collective "effect" through the distancing of the author. Between the cause and its intentionality falls the shadow. Can we unquestionably propose that a story has a unique meaning in the first place?[14]

The implication of this is that the contingency of the Tangier-sign enables revisions and negotiations that are not necessarily defined in antagonisms, polarities, and pure oppositions. "Polarities come to be replaced with truths that are only partial, limited and unstable."[15] Contrary to Arendt (who argues for a consensual community), Bhabha is most interested in human togetherness or human interest where subaltern, minority, or peripheral agency seeks revision and reinscription. Therefore, let me now return to some postcolonial images of Tangier and look at some of the revisions that have introduced subjects with postcolonial agency.

Postcolonial Agency and Revisionist Perspectives

First, it has to be acknowledged that there are certainly forms of "oppositional history" that are proposed as a kind of strategic counterperspective, to rewrite and re-present history from a postcolonial perspective. Mohamed Choukri (who appeared briefly in *Tangier, Legend of a City*) is the author of one of the best-known modern Moroccan novels. *El Khoubz el Hafi* (translated in English as *For Bread Alone*) is his autobiographical story that is also set in Tangier after the Second World War and around 1956. In 2004 the Algerian director Mohamed Rachid Benhadj filmed the book. *For Bread Alone* is a case in point in postcolonial revision and regaining postcolonial agency from an antagonist perspective. The film in itself does not speak of limited or partial truths, but seen on a metalevel in relation to the other images of Tangier described above, it certainly renders the historical truth more partial and limited and can therefore be seen to be revising the history of Tangier.

Like *Tangier, Legend of a City* this film also uses archival material combined with dramatization. However, the archival footage is now framed in a completely different story: that of a child (later young man) from the Rif whose family fled to the city in the hope of finding bread. At the beginning of the film the images (both archival and dramatized) emphasize the enormous difference between the wealth and decadence of the French and other Europeans and the incredible misery of the common Moroccan people. We see happily dancing Europeans in found footage and then in dramatized scenes the poverty of Choukri as a child who searches waste bins for food.

Second, other archival images are introduced that show people from the Rif Mountains fleeing from starvation by drought, which provides an explanation for the poverty and misery in the city, a perspective that is absent from the other films discussed so far. The Tangier riots are also dramatized. Choukri as a young man (played by Said Taghmaoui) gets arrested even though he is at the riots more by accident than by political conviction. In prison he learns how to write Arabic, which changes his life. This has a large symbolic and political meaning. Here postcolonial agency is literally acquired by accessing and mastering language and the ability to revise history. It is clear that this film proposes a new agent as a collective intersubjective effect, where the subject is not prior to the social as in the story of Mueller-Stahl and his Marie told in *Tangier, Legend of a City*. There is still individuation, but it is through the social and the contingencies of history that Choukri gains agency.

Another example of a revisionist film is Leila Kilani's *Tangier, the Burn-*

er's Dream, mentioned above. Here the revisionist project is not so much related to the revising of history but to changing our perception of the current image of illegal immigrants who do not get a voice in mainstream media (other than perhaps a sound bite). I have discussed this documentary elsewhere more elaborately, arguing that the main strategy of the film is to provide these characters with dignity and agency by showing them as people with a dream, a dream of conquering the frontier like cowboys.[16] Also the film makes their story seem like an adventure: after hearing about the dangers of hiding under trucks, the images in close-up of the trucks become very suspenseful. The film changes one's perception of "minority people" like illegal immigrants and turns the camera into an emancipatory tool of the periphery.

This affects the temporalities of the center as well. There are basically two strategies for the old center (the West as the source of history that puts others in the shadow/at the periphery) to deal with the temporality of Tangier. On the one hand, as demonstrated with contemporary films like *Last Summer in Tangier* and *Tangier, Legend of a City,* it remains difficult for the former colonizer to let go of the past, which is therefore revisited very often in a nostalgic fashion, projecting personal loss onto the collective loss, sticking to a "temporality of Casablanca." I am not arguing that this is not legitimate, or that it is always completely excluding of the other perspective. Both *Last Summer in Tangier* and *Tangier, Legend of a City* do acknowledge these perspectives, but always in the framework that puts Western individual mourning before the social.[17]

On the other hand, an increasing number of filmmakers from the West fully acknowledge that the center and periphery have shifted in whimsical and unpredictable ways, and that moving between different centers (or different peripheries) is a reality for everybody as we are in constant circulation. This implies that the white Western character is no longer always controlling signification, that positions can shift, or that self-criticism is allowed to be screened. It does not imply that power relations have become equal, but the massive migratory movements are changing these relations slowly but surely. The relation to the past in these films is not nostalgic but preposterous, referring to the necessity to put the present and future before the past (a reversal of the *normal* temporal order).[18] This implies a revision of the past in order to have a future. This is the strategy of survival of the temporality of Tangier.

The Temporalities of Téchiné

André Téchiné's film *Loin/Far* (France, 2001) presents such a preposterous approach to history. The film shows how we are all implicated in the constant circulation of people, ideas, and goods, which infuse discourse with a lot of the ambiguities that give agency to different people at different moments.[19] At the beginning of the film a clear statement is made about the transnationalism and translationalism of the postcolonial condition mentioned by Bhabha. It also shows how the "out of the sentence" of Barthes can create agency and empowerment. Serge (Stéphane Rideau), a French truck driver who travels regularly between Algeciras and Tangier, is tempted to practice *contrabande* and transport illegal merchandise to Europe. He is completely dependent upon his Moroccan contact who gives him his assignments. Serge is clearly not in control. He does not master the language nor does he know what is going to happen.

Stylistically the transnationalism and translationalism of the film can be sensed by the fact that everything is constantly in movement, everybody is constantly in circulation. The camera also moves constantly, and even fixed scenes have movement in them since the camera is handheld. Somewhere at the beginning of the film, Serge's friend Said (Mohamed Hamaidi) takes him to the house of an American ex-pat, James (Jack Taylor). Before entering the house we see the moving bodies of Africans and Moroccans in the narrow streets of the casbah, many of whom are probably burners. The house is full of movement: on the ground floor ballet lessons are taking place, people are moving up and down the stairs and the camera moves between the first and second floor. On the terrace Serge is welcomed by James who offers him tea. Several languages are spoken, people are dancing and making music, Said tells his "burner's story" to Nabil and François, a French film director (played by Téchiné's alter ego Gaël Morel). François and Serge discover they know each other from high school back in France.[20] When they tell James about this coincidence he is not surprised: "Time doesn't exist in Tangier," James says.

This remark could mean two things: James is clearly modeled on Paul Bowles. His homosexuality, his love for the city and its people but also his arrogance of knowing the city and its people better than themselves is striking and could refer to his desire for a time in which nothing changes and the past can remain fixed, a time of Casablanca, nostalgia. However, "time doesn't exist in Tangier" could perhaps also be read as "chronological time does not exist." If we can jump between layers of the past according to the needs of the present this also implies that the present can shed new light on

the past, that revisions can take place. Indeed, the constant movement of the camera, the languages, sounds, and voices: "music, conversations, chairs, glasses, Arabic, French" and English.[21] It could have been the scene that Barthes inspired for his opening up to the temporality of Tangier, where not every sign is comprehensible, where the time-lag creates ambiguity and postcolonial agency can be acquired. When Said, for instance, starts telling his story, Nabil addresses him jokingly as Sheherazade who tells a well-known story. But Said replies that he is going to change the end of his story, thus claiming agency. And Serge again is clearly not in control. He smokes too much of a joint and leaves feeling nauseous, falling down the stairs. Yet, in the course of the film as a whole he is not completely without agency either. At the end it will appear that he is tested by his Moroccan contacts, something he only discovers when the police check his truck and, contrary to his own beliefs, do *not* find any illegal goods. Instead of illegal merchandise, he will take an "illegal body" with him, when he tells Said to jump in his truck and drives onto the ferry to Europe. The film ends abruptly, but the story of transnational circulation continues, implicating everybody in a truly "becoming-minoritarian."[22]

Changing Times

And this brings me back to my starting point. The opposition I noticed initially between *The Burner's Dream* and *Changing Times* is actually a false opposition. While Kilani's film moves the burners more to the center by presenting them as cowboys who will stop at nothing to achieve their dream of conquering the border, Téchiné's film moves his French stars more to the periphery. First by introducing (like in *Far*) many other characters next to Deneuve and Depardieu (Cecile's bisexual son Sami and his Moroccan wife Nadi; Nathan, the Jewish husband of Cecile who starts a friendship or perhaps even an affair with Nadi's sister). The characters are presented in a heterogeneous assemblage that relates them explicitly to the social.[23] Second, Téchiné moves all these characters out of the old center, Paris, and brings them to Tangier, which he does not present in a nostalgic fashion. Granted, the main focus of the story is still on the very individual love story between Antoine and Cecile. But, and this is my third point, the difference with nostalgia films is that the story of Cecile and Antoine is brought into connection with the fate of the immigrants. Or, at least there is an ambiguity in the way Téchiné presents this connection that allows for a double reading. At first instance, as I said at the beginning, the scene in which Cecile and Antoine pass by a group of burners can be considered as terribly bourgeois. They are

only concerned with their own former passion, and their life has nothing to do with that of the illegal immigrants. There is no contact, they are just there as a fact of life that they discuss as though watching them on television.

But on second and third viewing, listening to the words of Antoine who speaks with respect, hope, and even admiration for the dream of the burners to fight for a future, and considering what happens to Antoine (he becomes very much like an illegal immigrant who has only one dream: for him the future is Cecile), things appear rather differently. Like many of the burners, Antoine almost drowns for his dream, albeit not out at sea but in the earth and soil of Tangier, which literally almost buries him alive when he is at the construction site of the media center he is building. This brings the possibility of an allegorical reading of the film.[24] Cecile is Antoine's Europe, and their fate is as uncertain as that of the burners, comparable to that of Serge and Said at the end of *Far*.

Finally, the references to the media in *Changing Times* are also significant. The images that will be produced and broadcasted from the media center should not bury the sheets of the past under the soil of Tangier, but neither should one constantly want to go back to the same past. The past needs to be revised, put into a different perspective according to the needs of the present and in order to have a future that is different from the past.

As time goes by, the choice between temporalities of Casablanca and Tangier will keep on presenting itself in the image. The temporality that Tangier inspires could be seen as an indication of how center and periphery keep on changing places in intersubjective encounters in which no one can claim absolute authority. The contingency of the time lag provides opportunities for agency and strategies for survival for both the (former) centers and peripheries. Times have changed indeed.

Notes

1. See Bergson, *Matter and Memory* and Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image.* In "Passagen 2000: The City, Pace and Space," Bal and Vanderburgh refer to the layers of time that make up the city: "the city as we now inhabit or know bears bits and pieces of pasts." Bal and Vanderburgh, "Passagen 2000," 1–8, at 3.

2. Bergson, "Of the Survival of Images: Memory and Mind," in *Matter and Memory,* 133–77.

3. Deleuze, *Cinema 2,* third and fourth commentaries on Bergson, 44–126. See also Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema;* Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze;* Pisters, *The Matrix of Visual Culture: Working with Deleuze in Film Theory;* and Martin-Jones, *Deleuze, Cinema, and National Identity: Narrative Time in National Contexts.*

4. Spanish and Italian directors made similar films with titles like *Los misterios de*

Tanger/The Mysteries of Tangier (Carlos Fernandez Cuenca, Spain, 1942), *Agguato a Tangeri/ Trapped in Tangier* (Riccardo Freda, Italy, 1958), and *Requiem per un agente secreto/Requiem for a Secret Agent* (Sergio Sollima, Italy, 1967). In 1987 John Glen directed agent 007, James Bond, in Tangier the spy nest during the end of the cold war in *The Living Daylights.*

5. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 246.

6. Ibid., 258.

7. Barthes, *Le plaisir du texte,* 79. My translation.

8. Bhabha, *Location of Culture,* 261.

9. In his article "Casablanca's Regime: The Shifting Aesthetics of Political Technologies (1907–1943)," Jorge Otero-Pailos demonstrated how the film *Casablanca* aimed at uniting the American nation: "Inside the dark theatres, the camera's lens became America's prosthetic eye, and where there once was an incomprehensible and chaotic world, now a clear image of right and wrong came sharply into focus." In Otero-Pailos "Casablanca's Regime, 18.

10. Bhabha, *Location of Culture,* 261.

11. Ibid., 263.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., 264.

14. Ibid., 272.

15. Ibid., 278.

16. See Pisters, "Arresting the Flux of Images and Sounds: Free Indirect Discourse and the Dialectics of Political Cinema," 175–94.

17. Many films that present memories of colonial times from the colonizer's perspective have this nostalgic desire for a lost past. For instance, Michael Radford's *White Mischief* (UK, 1987) presents the decadent lives of the British in Kenya during the Second World War.

18. Mieke Bal has developed this term in respect to art history, where works of art that appear chronologically first operate as an aftereffect caused by the images of subsequent artists. See Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History.*

19. An example of another film that is influenced by the temporality of Tangier, albeit in a less explicit way, is *A costa dos murmurios/The Murmuring Coast* (Marida Costaderas, Portugal, 2004) about the Portuguese in Mozambique. Also films by Claire Denis would fit into this category.

20. This is an intertextual reference to Téchiné's earlier film *Les Rosaux sauvages/ The Wild Reeds* (1994), where the same actors play Serge and François in a small village in France during the Algerian Independence War.

21. Bhabha, *Location of Culture,* 258.

22. For an elaboration of the Deleuzian notion of "becoming-minoritarian" see Marrati, "Against the Doxa: Politics of Immanence and Becoming-Minoritarian," 205–20.

23. Significantly, most reviews of both *Far* and *Changing Times* reject these other characters for they distract from the "real story" of Sarah (Lubna Azabal, who plays Serge's Jewish ex-girlfriend), Said, and Serge in *Far* and from Cecile and Antoine in

Changing Times. Postcolonial sensibilities of different temporalities are not evident among these film critics. See Burg, "Drama ontbreekt in Tanger" (Drama is missing in Tangier).

24. Concerning the political significance of allegory, see Wayne, *Political Film: The Dialectics of Third Cinema,* 129–36.

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