

THE CANNES FILM FESTIVAL AS TRANSNATIONAL SPACE

LUCY MAZDON

The Cannes film festival is an extremely important moment in the filmic calendar both nationally (in France) and globally, yet despite this it has to date been given very little serious academic attention. There are a number of French works devoted to the festival. Notable amongst these are Pierre Billard's historical survey *D'or et de palmes; le Festival de Cannes* (Gallimard, 1997), and a recent attempt to produce an ethnographic study of the festival in a collection edited by Emmanuel Ethis entitled *Aux Marches du palais: le Festival de Cannes sous le regard des sciences sociales* (La Documentation française, 2001). Within Anglo-American academia the festival is even less visible. Kenneth Turan's useful overview of film festivals *Sundance to Sarajevo: Film Festivals and the World They Made* (University of California Press, 2002) does include a chapter devoted to Cannes which provides a lucid distillation of the festival's changing identity. However, as film critic for the *Los Angeles Times* Turan avoids sustained analysis in favour of rather light-hearted reports. Whilst his work provides an engaging and suggestive depiction of the workings of the festival and what it feels like to be part of this "grueling, crowded, complicated, unforgiving [event] . . . likened by a survivor to 'a fight in a brothel during a fire'" (13), it makes little contribution to an understanding of the place of the festival in

French and global film cultures, its particular constructions and representations of cinema and the competing discourses which have shaped its agenda. Strikingly Cannes is very rarely mentioned in academic accounts of film history. Even those works devoted specifically to French cinema make little or no mention of the festival. It seems likely that this absence is partly a symptom of the festival's increasingly international and commercial reputation which sits uneasily with the tendency exhibited by the majority of these works to focus on the national and the non-commercial (the construction of a distinctly French *auteur* or art cinema). Indeed this apparent paradox—the fact that arguably the most important date on the French film calendar is an *international, commercial* festival—lies at the very heart of my interest in Cannes. It poses a whole series of questions about what we mean by French cinema, its place in a global film industry and how it sets out to construct and maintain an identity within this context.

Before embarking upon a discussion of the festival it is, I believe, necessary to say a few words about French cinema and the various discourses which have shaped its identity and indeed to underline the central role cinema plays in French cultural life. This is evidenced by a number of factors including long-standing government sup-

port for the film industry and attempts to claim cinema as a part of a specifically French *patrimoine*. Whilst most countries marked the centenary of cinema in 1996, France celebrated a year earlier, tracing the birth of the medium back to the first screenings of the Lumière brothers in 1895. Although the notoriety of Cannes may tend to eclipse other cinematic gatherings in France, it is in fact one of around 170 film festivals currently held annually in metropolitan France. The diversity of these events, both in terms of subject and geographical location, is striking indeed. Festivals include the *Rencontres du Cinéma Italien* held in Bastia in February, the *Festival International du Film Documentaire sur la Ruralité* in Ville-sur-Yron in May, the *Festival du Film Marin* in Saint-Cast-le-Guildo in September, and the *Festival International Train et Cinéma* held in Lille in November.

It is perhaps self-evident that these gatherings, for the most part, will not attract the crowds or the coverage dedicated to Cannes. However their sheer number bears witness to a thriving cinematic culture in France which extends well beyond the level of production. This is a culture of reception, of discussion, indeed of the celebration of cinema and it can perhaps be traced back to the *ciné-club* movement of the 1920s and, in particular that established by *Travail et Culture* and encouraged by Bazin in the years following World War Two.

A number of ethnographic and/or sociological studies have emphasised the central role cinema plays in French cultural life like Olivier Donnat's *Les Pratiques culturelles des Français* (La Documentation française, 1997) and Jean-Michel Guys' *La Culture cinématographique des Français* (La Documentation française, 2000). It is worth mentioning that the recent collection on Cannes edited by Emmanuel Ethis was, like the two studies named above, supported by a number of public bodies, in this case the *Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication*, the *Direction de l'Administration Générale* and the *Département des Etudes et de la Prospective*. In a series of forewords to the volume

the directors of these bodies reveal their reasons for supporting the collection. Thus Catherine Tasca, then *Ministre de la Culture et de la Communication* stresses the importance of Cannes:

Le Festival de Cannes éblouit par son prestige. Plus de cinquante ans après sa création, il ne cesse d'opérer une extraordinaire force d'attraction sur tous les créateurs et sur tous les publics du cinéma dont on sait la place éminente qu'il tient dans les pratiques culturelles de nos concitoyens. (qtd. in Ethis 7)

[The Cannes festival is dazzlingly prestigious. More than fifty years after its creation, it continues to be extraordinarily attractive to all those who create and view the cinema which holds such a central place in the cultural practices of our fellow citizens.]

Meanwhile Paul Tolila, director of the *Département des Etudes et de la Prospective* states:

Si le Département des Etudes et de la Prospective a soutenu ces recherches, c'est bien sûr parce que le cinéma tient une place majeure dans les pratiques culturelles des Français et que la culture cinématographique constitue un élément fondamental de l'éducation artistique dans notre pays . . . (qtd. in Ethis 17)

[If the Ministry supported this research, it was of course because cinema holds an important place in French cultural practices and because cinematic culture forms a fundamental element of artistic education in our country . . .]

So it seems clear that French cinema plays a central role in French cultural life and as such it is an activity which receives much support from a number of private, and perhaps more importantly, public bodies. This begs the question as to what exactly constitutes French cinema. The history of French film can be mapped out via a disparate but on-going attempt to establish a de-

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sur recettes administered by the *Centre National de la Cinématographie* and made available to first-time directors and the *SOFICA* tax shelters for film investors set up by Mitterrand's socialist government in the 1980s, have played a vital role in maintaining this distinction.

Conflict and competition are undeniably key elements of the French American cinematic relationship. The anti-Americanism which influences so many French responses to the United States can be clearly discerned in cinematic discourse in France from the very earliest days of film production. However, there is of course another side to the coin. American films attract huge audiences in France, consistently representing around two thirds of the box office. Hollywood hits feature heavily in the lists of successes at the French box office compiled by the CNC. This popular taste for American culture extends to a more high-brow championing of American *auteurs* such as Woody Allen and David Lynch whose films become *films événements* upon release in Paris. In other words, the cultural products of the United States are consumed and enjoyed in France.

Whilst this may indeed underline the need for some form of protection for indigenous cultural products it also suggests an attitude quite distinct from critical anti-Americanism as well as an audience imbued with and influenced by American movies. This consumption of the American product will in turn impact upon consumption and reception of French cinema influencing its box office career and subsequent production. Indeed, the cinema which, as we have seen, lies at the heart of French cultural life can surely not be limited to domestic production alone.

The connections between French and American cinema at the level of production are highly complex and problematize any attempts at positing a clearly defined and uniquely "French" cinema. Consider the links between French crime cinema of the 1930s and 1940s and American *film noir*, the New Wave's championing (and imitation)



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of the works of Hollywood and, more recently, Luc Besson's French films "made in USA" and we can see that this relationship is not just about "vampirisation" and threat. Indeed I would argue that French cinematic identity is not, perhaps can never be, clearly distinct from Hollywood or, more broadly, from a global film industry (which could arguably be read as Hollywood). French films are frequently shot thorough with references to American cinema. Both industries draw upon similar themes and genres, albeit at different times and in different ways. American films have a huge impact in France becoming an intrinsic part of the French audiovisual landscape and in some ways "French" themselves. Above all, the very attempt to define a French "national" cinema via the tropes of "high culture" and "Frenchness" is only enabled through the relationship to other cinemas, particularly Hollywood. In other words, a film may be defined as French because it is *not* an American production, as a "high" cultural artefact because it is *not* identical to the "mass" production of Hollywood. Distinction is enabled by forming a space within the dominant production context; French cinema and Hollywood cinema are both different *and* the same.

This brings us back to Cannes. Arguably the Cannes festival can be seen to both encapsulate and undermine the struggle described above. It is a prestigious event, located within France, which in many ways reinforces the place of cinema within a "national" culture and France's global cinematic status. The selection process for those films which will feature in the official competition tends to favour non-commercial work. In the words of Kenneth Turan "... Cannes' taste, at least as far as the competition goes, is surprisingly narrow. France is home of the *auteur* theory, which deifies directors at the expense of other creative parties, and Cannes overwhelmingly favours films by critically respectable

auteurs who've been there before, a usual-suspects group of largely non-commercial film-makers *Variety* categorizes as 'heavy-weight helmers'. It's proved to be an increasingly unpopular philosophy." (28). Thus nominations for the *Palme d'or* in 2001 included Godard's *L'Eloge de l'amour* / *In Praise of Love*, Manoel de Oliveira's *Je rentre à la maison* / *I Go Home*, Cédric Kahn's *Roberto Succo*, and Jacques Rivette's *Va*



A transnational offering of the 2001 festival: the Portuguese director Manoel de Oliveira's French and English language production of *I Go Home*.

Savoir/Who Knows?. Noticeably absent were the French films that went on to dominate the domestic box-office. However, unlike many film festivals Cannes also has a film market officially attached. The *Marché International du Film* was established in 1959 and now attracts around 6,000 participants representing some 1,500 companies from over seventy countries. The buying and selling of rights, the resolutely commercial face of cinema, is thus an integral part of this event and moreover this is commerce on a global scale. The success of the market depends on international (including Hollywood) participation and whilst this may benefit French production and distribution, it is also a reminder of the American dominated international context within and against which French cinema is defined.

With this in mind, I would like to suggest that the Cannes Film Festival is at once

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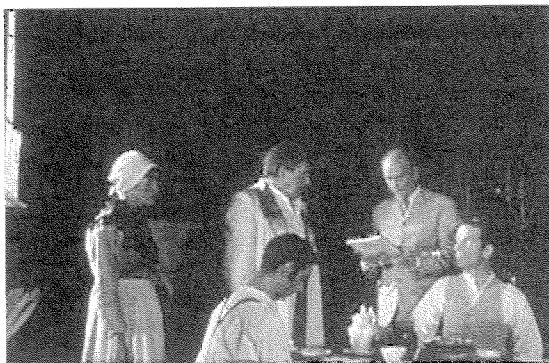
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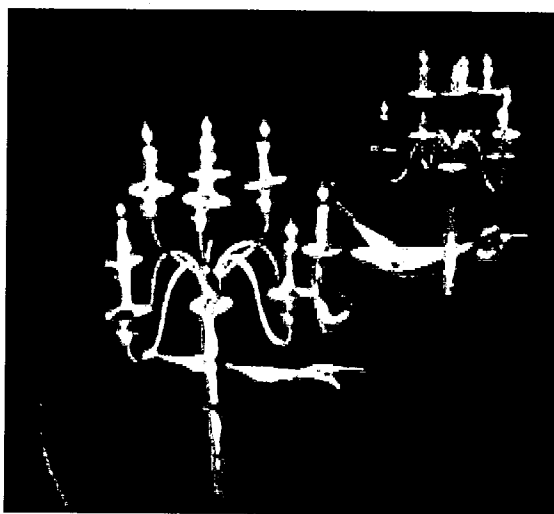
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One could argue that the very origins of the Cannes festival were transnational determined as they were by international political events, events which would ultimately lead to the outbreak of the Second World War. From 1935 there were growing accusations of Italian and German fascist

influence at *La Mostra* in Venice. The failure of Jean Renoir's *La Grande illusion* / *Grand Illusion* to win the top prize in 1937, allegedly due to its pacifist ideology, caused particular furor amongst French commentators. France, lead by Jean Zay, *Ministre de l'Instruction Publique et des Beaux Arts*, called for the establishment of a rival festival of international standing and Cannes, in fierce competition with Biarritz on the Atlantic coast, was chosen as a location. In June 1939 Louis Lumière agreed to become president of the first *Festival International du Film* which was due to take place between September 1 and 20 of the same year. The stated aim of the festival was to encourage the development of cinematographic art in all its forms and create a spirit of collaboration between different producing countries. Preparations began and by the first of September the *Casino Municipal* was ready to host the very first Cannes Film Festival. Hollywood had sent over Victor Fleming's *The Wizard of Oz* and Howard Hawks' *Only Angels Have Wings* along with stars such as Mae West, Gary Cooper, Norma Shearer, and George Raft. However, on the very same day the Germans invaded Poland and

after the opening night screening of William Dieterle's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (an interesting film choice given the transnational identity I am suggesting here) the festival was cancelled. It reopened on September 20 1946. Films shown included Jean Cocteau's *La Belle et la bête* / *Beauty and the Beast*, René Clément's *La Bataille du rail* / *Battle of the Rails*, and Charles Vidor's *Gilda*. Jean Cocteau described the festival as an apolitical no-man's land, a microcosm of what the world would be if men could make direct contact and speak the same language (Ethis 17). In other words, Cocteau emphasised the international design of the festival, clearly a gesture designed to distinguish Cannes from the recent decline of Venice. The festival was cancelled



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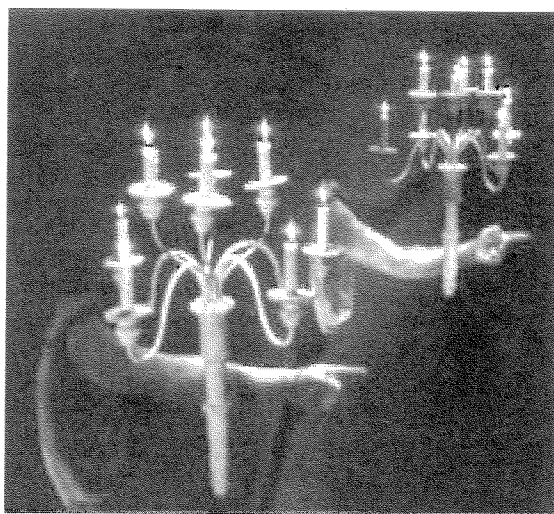
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again in 1948 and 1950 for a number of financial and administrative reasons. However from 1951 it became established as an annual event and the myth and reputation of Cannes began to develop.

In his history of Cannes, Pierre Billard argues that the early festivals had relatively little to do with cinema; they were *fêtes mondaines* which used cinema as a pretext for their existence:

L'évolution du Festival de Cannes pourrait être racontée comme l'histoire d'une fête touristique à prétexte cinématographique peu à peu dévorée par le dieu dont elle mimait le culte et finalement possédée par l'art dont elle s'était fait un drapeau. (24)

[The development of the Cannes festival could be described as the history of a tourist festival with a cinematic pretext gradually devoured by the god whose religion it imitated and finally possessed by the art form whose flag it had waved.]

As Jean-Louis Fabiani points out, a number of factors can be seen to support Billard's description of this gradual journey from relative cinematic absence to absolute presence (65-78). He cites the growing recognition of innovative and creative filmmaking (for example via the establishment of the *Caméra d'or* in 1978, awarded by an independent jury to the best overall film and an essential tool in the support and recognition of new cinematic talent) and the affirmation of a policy of prestige which, whilst only rarely supporting radical innovation, sets out to reward films and film makers able to combine significant box office potential, cultural status and an acknowledgment of "serious" sociological or geopolitical issues (72). Particularly striking in terms of this trajectory is the shift we can perceive in the composition of the festival jury. In its early years and throughout the 1950s the jury was led by members of the *Académie française*, in other words part of a non-cinematic, high cultural establishment. Whilst figures such as Jean Cocteau (1953,

1954, 1957) and Marcel Pagnol (1955) were both writers and film makers, others including Jules Romains (1949), Jean Giono (1961) and André Maurois (1951, 1957) had no involvement in filmmaking and were selected purely due to their status as *académiciens*. What this perhaps suggests is an attempt to bestow cultural authority and prestige upon the festival whilst, as Billard points out, limiting the status of cinema itself. Not until 1964 when Fritz Lang became President of the Jury was this role accorded specifically to a filmmaker.

Interestingly Billard also describes the early festivals as a touristic event. This connection between the film festival and tourism is one I find particularly suggestive. We may recall that Cannes as chosen location for the first festival met fierce competition from Biarritz, another *station balnéaire* and a key location in France's developing tourist industry. In their overview of the festival, *Hollywood on the Riviera: The Inside Story of the Cannes Film Festival* (William Marrow, 1992), Cari Beauchamp and Henri Behar quote from a contemporary journalistic account of the first festival, "Here the streets are so jammed that one would think that one is still in Paris. The shops are full of stuff at astronomical prices and . . . on the *Croisette*, it is a constant parade of cars. It's the rendezvous of stars and celebrities, a whole world, half naked and tanned to a perfect crisp" (21). This description suggests an enthusiastic response to that first event and indeed a festival not apparently dissimilar to that of today. However the references to half naked bodies and sun tans also emphasise the festival's Mediterranean location and tourist associations. The poster created for the inaugural festival in 1939 is striking from this point of view. Painted by Jean-Gabriel Domergue it represents a highly stylised rear view of an elegantly dressed woman and her male companion. Whilst the poster does include the words *Festival International du Film* there is nothing in its visual imagery to suggest cinema. Instead it is evocative of the type of *fête mondaine* cited by Billard in his account of

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the early festivals. Domergue was born in Bordeaux in 1889 but moved to Cannes in 1927. He studied under Adler at the *Salon d'Artiste Français* from 1906, achieving an honourable mention in 1908. He then set out on a career as a landscape painter, however before long his paintings of nudes and semi-nude *coquettes* became extremely popular and his aggressively modern style secured his reputation and his fortune. In many ways Domergue can be seen as a successor to Toulouse-Lautrec through his studies of can-can dancers, prostitutes and fashion models. However he is now perhaps best known for his *Côte d'Azur* images including stylised nudes and advertising images for resorts such as Monte Carlo and of course the Cannes festival. Thus both in terms of its visual imagery and its place within the oeuvre of the artist, this first and arguably best-known publicity image of and for Cannes has little to do with cinema and a great deal more to do with tourism, glamour and the "social high life."

Emmanuel Ethis remarks that unlike

Venice and Berlin, also the hosts of important film festivals, Cannes is essentially known for the festival alone, indeed is defined by that festival:

Cannes s'évoque tel un signifiant pour l'imaginaire cinématographique; stars, strass et montée des marches en assurent la plus pérenne représentation et trempent la manifestation d'une sorte de savoir partagé dans un sens commun qui dissout la ville dans quelques mètres de tapis rouge flamboyant foulé par des escarpins noirs et brillants. (19)

[Cannes signifies the cinematic imaginary: stars, glitter and the walk up the steps to the Palace ensure this continuing representation and give the festival a kind of shared knowledge which reduces the town to a few metres of flamboyant red carpet trodden by shiny black stiletto heels.]

Whilst I agree in many ways with this assertion, indeed the way in which the very word Cannes can be seen to connote cinema



A fundamental element in the myth of Cannes, La Croisette, which during the festival becomes the primary staging-ground for the spectacle of publicity.

the early festivals. Domergue was born in Bordeaux in 1889 but moved to Cannes in 1927. He studied under Adler at the *Salon d'Artiste Français* from 1906, achieving an honourable mention in 1908. He then set out on a career as a landscape painter, however before long his paintings of nudes and semi-nude *coquettes* became extremely popular and his aggressively modern style secured his reputation and his fortune. In many ways Domergue can be seen as a successor to Toulouse-Lautrec through his studies of can-can dancers, prostitutes and fashion models. However he is now perhaps best known for his *Côte d'Azur* images including stylised nudes and advertising images for resorts such as Monte Carlo and of course the Cannes festival. Thus both in terms of its visual imagery and its place within the oeuvre of the artist, this first and arguably best-known publicity image of and for Cannes has little to do with cinema and a great deal more to do with tourism, glamour and the "social high life."

Emmanuel Ethis remarks that unlike

Venice and Berlin, also the hosts of important film festivals, Cannes is essentially known for the festival alone, indeed is defined by that festival:

Cannes s'évoque tel un signifiant pour l'imaginaire cinématographique; stars, strass et montée des marches en assurent la plus pérenne représentation et trempent la manifestation d'une sorte de savoir partagé dans un sens commun qui dissout la ville dans quelques mètres de tapis rouge flamboyant foulé par des escarpins noirs et brillants. (19)

[Cannes signifies the cinematic imaginary: stars, glitter and the walk up the steps to the Palace ensure this continuing representation and give the festival a kind of shared knowledge which reduces the town to a few metres of flamboyant red carpet trodden by shiny black stiletto heels.]

Whilst I agree in many ways with this assertion, indeed the way in which the very word Cannes can be seen to connote cinema



A fundamental element in the myth of Cannes, La Croisette, which during the festival becomes the primary staging-ground for the spectacle of publicity.

is partly what drew me to this project in the first place, we should not forget that before becoming the site of the film festival Cannes was an important tourist space. In other words, it had another identity before that bestowed by the festival, also an identity known both within and beyond the boundaries of the nation. In December 1834 Lord Henry Brougham, British Lord Chancellor, set off with his daughter, Eleonore Louise, to visit Italy. Unfortunately the King of Piedmont had closed the border with France in an attempt to contain a cholera epidemic. Forced to retrace his steps, Lord Brougham spent the night in Cannes at an inn run by the Pinchinat family in today's *Rue du Port*. The story goes that Brougham was so charmed by his surroundings and the welcome he received that he prolonged his visit and decided to build a home in the village (Cannes-on-line). Two years later the cream of London society flocked to Cannes for the opening of Brougham's Villa Eleonore and the reputation of Cannes was born. Within a few years the small fishing village had undergone a series of transformations. Brougham founded a company which would convey water to Cannes, enabling the flower beds and green lawns so beloved of the English visitor abroad. This led to the building of the *Canal de la Siagne* which still provides the city's water today. New districts were constructed with elegant villas and *châteaux*. By 1838 work had begun on the construction of the first port and the small trail that ran along the shore line had been broadened and rebaptised the *chemin de la petite croix*. It would of course later become *La Croisette* that Cannes space par excellence. In 1848 Alexandra Feodorovna Skrypitzine, the wife of the French consul to Moscow, Eugène Tripet, fell in love with Cannes and brought with her many members of the Russian aristocracy.

In 1858 the first luxury hotel was erected on *La Croisette* marking the launch of Cannes as a resort town. On 10 April 1863 the Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée railway reached Cagnes-sur-mer bringing an early form of mass tourism to the area and be-

tween 1867 and 1878 the population of Cannes trebled, doubling again by 1901 (Blume 57). Cannes' reputation and popularity did not wane with the start of the twentieth century. In 1910 the architect Marc Mayère was asked to build the Hôtel Carlton. It is claimed that Mayère was fascinated by the breasts of the famous courtesan *La Belle Otero* and this inspired his design of the hotel's cupolas. The hotel played a significant role in confirming Cannes as a site for luxury and pleasure as it attracted members of the aristocracy from across Europe. During the 1930s the Aga Khan and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor were among the many prominent habitués of the resort.

It is then clear that long before becoming the city of cinema, Cannes was known as a tourist space, a site of glamour and luxury. The relationship between cinema and tourism (understood in its broadest form) is, I think, particularly suggestive and makes this aspect of Cannes ripe for analysis. Both film and tourism and/or travel can be perceived as journeys of desire and fantasy, as forms of displacement and/or othering, as processes of commodification. As Giuliana Bruno argues in her wonderful study of the complex connections between film, architecture, and human presence, tourism and travel were integral to the development of early cinema:

At the onset of cinema, spatial boundaries and cultural maps were stretching. In the movie house, film spectators were enthusiastic voyagers experiencing the new mobility of cultural transportation. It is not by chance that in the early days of film the movie house was called in Persian *tamâshâkhânâh*: that house where one went sight-seeing and "walking together"—that is, literally, went site-seeing. Film spectators were travellers thrilled to grasp the proximity of far away lands and expansions of their own cityscapes. (77)

To consider the dual identities of

Cannes and how another potential also signified the Côte d'Azur. French of How Cannes discoursed fascination mentioned extremes and Sain Nice and the Riviera. All of the ties of Cannes study of Cannes. Recall may be seen as consider the fishing vessel that the process of Cannes led to Cannes ing to the of what should be it would and other out, not mythess. The name La Côte d'Azur Burgundy lished in

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Cannes as both cinematic and tourist space and how they intersect and penetrate one another could then reveal much about this potentially fascinating relationship. It is also significant that Cannes is part of the *Côte d'Azur*, that mythic space so central to French constructions of tourism and leisure. How Cannes and the festival contribute to discourses of the *Côte* is another potentially fascinating area of study. Indeed it is worth mentioning that the *Côte d'Azur* is also an extremely cinematic space: consider Bardot and Saint Tropez, the Victorine studios in Nice and the numerous filmic depictions of the Riviera both in France and elsewhere. All of this makes the geographical specificities of Cannes highly important if a serious study of the festival is to be undertaken. Recall my earlier assertion that Cannes can be seen as a transnational space. If we consider the transformation of Cannes from fishing village to tourist resort it is apparent that this was an absolutely transnational process as visitors from across Europe travelled to Cannes and reconstituted it according to their own tastes, identities and notion of what a Southern French resort town should be. Like the festival today, Cannes it would seem, has long been both French and other. Moreover, as Mary Blume points out, not only is the *Côte* a myth but it is a myth essentially invented by outsiders (10). The name itself comes from a work entitled *La Côte d'Azur* written by a minor poet from Burgundy, Stéphen Liégeard, and published in December 1887. As Blume states:

The different parts of the *Côte d'Azur* have in common only the lies they tell about their good weather and their mistrust of each other; as parts they do not make a whole except in strangers' minds. As its fabricated name suggests, the *Côte d'Azur* is an entity only to the foreigners who took over an impoverished strip of land and transformed it into the landscape of their dreams, a place to bend the rules and sometimes break the law. Illusion is its chief industry. (10)

Cannes then is a plural place of myth, of fantasy and invention both cinematic and other. This has probably been true for many years, certainly since the arrival of Brougham and his ilk in the nineteenth century. However, as the film festival grew in stature and reputation throughout the 1950s so this process of invention became increasingly predominant. This was partly due to the increasing ceremoniousness of the festival, the establishment of structures and rituals which would lend it a particular and recognisable identity.

A key moment in this process was of course the construction of the *Palais du festival* in 1946. This building, planned and built in haste, had a rather one-dimensional, impermanent look not dissimilar to a film set. However, as its name suggests, it was to play a central role in establishing Cannes as the place where cinema was celebrated, in which the glamorous world of film and celebrity could find its home. The *Palais* was replaced in 1983 by a much more solid structure nick-named the "bunker." Significantly, the opening of this new building coincided with a strike on the part of the festival's photographers, protesting at draconian working conditions which they believed favoured television. In the words of Gilles Traverso, part of the Traverso dynasty which had dominated photographic coverage of Cannes and its festival from the outset:

Le nouveau Palais a cristallisé le changement. [...] Le fait d'être dans l'ancien Palais, avec son style rococo, nous rattachait encore à la nostalgie des années antérieures, même s'il y avait déjà plus de télévisions et de médias. Le lien avec le passé était encore possible. Le nouvel édifice a cassé les anciennes références. Et l'entrée dans ce nouveau lieu est allée de pair avec la multiplication des télévisions. Dès que nous y sommes entrés, il était clair que nous, les photographes, n'y avions plus notre place. (qtd. in Toubiana 6)

[The new Palace crystallised these changes [...]] Just being in the old

Palace with its rococo style attached us to the nostalgia of earlier years even if television and other media were already much more involved. The link to the past was still possible. The new building broke these connections. And the move into the new building went hand in hand with the increase in television. As soon as we went in it was obvious that we, the photographers, were no longer needed.]

Cannes of course has always been about the confrontation between myth and reality, appearance and essence, as Edgar Morin had remarked as early as 1955 (qtd. in Ethis 22). Photography played a central role in the creation of this myth, producing images of the festival and arguably, the notion of celebrity itself. A photo taken by Traverso in 1967 showing a crowd of photographers fighting to get a shot of a barely visible Bardot speaks volumes about the growing international cult of celebrity and the creation of a myth specific to France and the Côte d'Azur. Nevertheless the inauguration of the new Palace and the reaction of the photographers underline the increasingly prominent role of television in dissemination of the festival and the expanding globalisation of this coverage. The Traverso photographs are striking from this point of view. Although originating in Italy the Traverso family had lived in Cannes since 1850 and were registered as photographers from 1919. Whilst they sold their work to a number of different publications and individuals, they were firmly rooted in the local community, displaying and selling their photos in the shop in *Rue de Bône* they had inhabited for four generations. This local dimension shines through many of their early photos in which we see the international celebrities attending the festival playing *pétanque* on the *plage de la pantière* or enjoying a bucolic lunch *Chez la Mère Terrat, A la Napoule*, etc. (Toubiana 50-51; 54-56).

This movement from the local to the

global encouraged by television's increasing role in the festival is then another aspect of the transnational status of Cannes and of the festival's central role in French audiovisual culture. Whilst it is clear that early photographic images of the festival were disseminated internationally, this process has been furthered by television, notably through its ability for live coverage. However television coverage also reinforces the festival's role in national culture. A survey at the *Institut National de L'Audiovisuel* in Paris revealed that between 1995 and 1999 over 800 hundred programmes or extracts devoted to Cannes were shown on French terrestrial television. Around a quarter of these were shown on Canal Plus, perhaps not surprisingly given the channel's identity as a film channel and its investment in the film industry. The majority of these programmes are devoted to brief accounts of the films shown at the festival (frequently in an attempt to publicize their merits) and there is much stress on the glamour of the event (the red carpet, the clothes of the stars, the luxury yachts moored in the bay and so on). Thus this coverage seems on the one hand to reduce film to the marketing jamboree which many claim Cannes has become and on the other to reveal the glamour, the excitement, the sheer exoticism of the world of film and its stars. One could then argue that this televised coverage actually undermines the specifically filmic in favour of an arguably more populist account of celebrity. Indeed Jean-Louis Fabiani argues that, "... *le Festival est le théâtre d'un rite mortuaire, qui célèbre la disparition du cinéma au profit d'autres modes de circulation de l'image*" (Ethis 68) [... the festival is the enactment of a funerary ritual which celebrates the disappearance of cinema in favour of other means of disseminating images]. Either way it seems clear that this vast array of televisual imagery must increase the prominence of the festival nationally whilst simultaneously revealing much about relations between film and television in contemporary France.

To return then to my original hypoth-

esis, Cannes national symbol, *Marché du film*, *des réalisateurs*, some of the cinema for attention, for Fleming, premature, Jean-Luc Godard, Louis Malle, as a mark elsewhere remark:

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esis, Cannes is both a hybrid and a trans-national space. It is a space in which the *Marché du film* sits alongside the *Quinzaine des réalisateurs*, in which the presence of some of the most respected *auteurs* of world cinema confronts the celebrities competing for attention on the *Croisette*. This is the festival which, in May 1968, opened with Victor Fleming's *Gone With the Wind* and closed prematurely on 19 May after figures such as Jean-Luc Godard, François Truffaut, and Louis Malle insisted upon its interruption as a mark of solidarity for those on strike elsewhere in France. Truffaut would later remark:

Je sais que beaucoup de gens nous reprocheront longtemps notre attitude à Cannes, mais je sais aussi que deux jours plus tard, alors qu'il n'y avait plus d'avions, plus de trains, plus de cigarettes, plus de téléphone et plus d'essence, le festival continuant à fonctionner se serait formidablement ridiculisé. (qtd. in Toubiana 175)

[I know that for a long time many people criticised our stance at Cannes but I also know that two days later, when there were no more planes, no more trains, no more cigarettes, no more telephone and no more petrol, the continuation of the festival would have been overwhelmingly ridiculed.]

Whilst Truffaut's political convictions may well be admirable, his take on the festival is not so convincing. If any part of France could continue to function during that tumultuous period, it was surely Cannes, a place of myth, of fantasy, a place apart.

And of course Cannes is also a central place for the construction and dissemination of French cinematic prestige whilst simultaneously fostering the various forms of international exchange which identify contemporary film and film industries. Cannes indubitably celebrates French cinema and reinforces its presence within the national and global cultural landscape. Yet it simul-

taneously participates in the televising of the cinematic and thus in a process which has been described as reducing or limiting the cinematic experience. Cannes plays a major role in the construction of art or *auteur* cinema and yet also hosts a resolutely commercial film market and relies to a large degree upon the presence of the Hollywood big players and their crowd pleasing products. Arguably the presence of the first type of cinema would not be possible without the participation of the latter.

Above all Cannes is part of a national construction of film and yet is rooted in a local geography and extends to a global arena. This regional/national/global nexus is central to contemporary cinematic production and, perhaps more interestingly, to the various ways in which audiences make sense of it. Cinema is crucial to the construction of the modern nation state. The very cultural significance of the *septième art* in France made manifest in various forms of state support, prominent celebrations of different aspects of film and numerous other attempts to raise French cinema's profile, bears witness to its perceived use as a means of disseminating the nation on the part of those who shape such agendas. If we compare these efforts to a relative lack of enthusiasm for the national product and indeed for cinema in general on the part of general population (cinema attendance figures are not consistently high and the French production that holds its own at the domestic box office tends to consist of a small number of extremely successful films) it becomes extremely clear that whilst cinema is indeed important in France, this importance is very much bound up with discourses of nation and national identity. However this national process must of course be set within the global context of both the broader geopolitical environment and the film industry specifically. Any attempt to construct a national cinema is essentially about carving a space in a broader international arena and cinema production, exhibition and reception inevitably involve negotiation of these inter- or trans-national relationships.

We may perhaps like to think about this global/national/local interface by imagining a French cinema spectator. She watches a film, French, American or other, in a cinema in her home town. She brings to bear upon this viewing her own identity, shot through of course with local, national and global influences. In other words her understanding of, and responses to a given cinematic text can not be defined simply in terms of that text's apparent "national" identity. To understand the contemporary film industry, the movies it makes and the ways in which audiences make sense of them it is vital to understand this complex intertwining of spatial relationships. Thus I would like to finish my mapping of the plural identities of the festival by suggesting that Cannes can perhaps be seen as a synecdoche both for French audiovisual industries and for their global counterparts. If we accept this, then the kind of analysis I have proposed here, an analysis which takes into account discourses of history, geography, culture, celebrity and so on, will not only reveal much about the multifarious event which is the Cannes film festival but will also say something about cinema in general.

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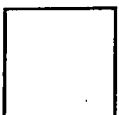
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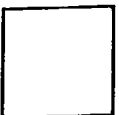
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