

THE COSMOPOLITAN

FILM *From Around the*

World in Eighty Days to

Making Movies Around

the World

IN ITS 1946 annual report, the Motion Picture Association of America proclaimed the global appeal of film, articulating what Hollywood hoped to achieve at the time: to reach all the world's spectators. "Because the moving, talking images on the screen have all the immediacy and vitality of life itself, film spectators all over the world come into each other's presence and live together in the same reality. The community of film spectators is a symbol of the world community yet to come."¹ That same year, in the wake of war, Hollywood resumed a steady distribution of its films abroad. But beyond that, the MPAA boldly claimed that film would create rather than simply reflect the world community yet to come. As we have already seen, nations and nationness played a complicated role in film culture during the post-war period and were constructed and deployed in often unpredictable ways: Frenchness could mean something particular to filmmakers; a film festival in Cannes could both help to launch a French superstar and internationalize film culture by decentering Hollywood without excluding it. The French-American film connection after the war also helped foster and create a context for the "cosmopolitan" film culture of the 1950s and 1960s.

During this period, European and American filmmakers turned their attention to "the world" as a place for production, as an unlimited market and as a concept to be thematized in their films. If Hollywood had once served as a magnetic geographic center for filmmakers, the postwar era witnessed a decentering of production, explained at the time by both the press and people within the industry as film's "internationalization." This chapter examines this internationalist rhetoric in relation to the changing nature of film production itself and in the emergence of the "hybrid" films made as a result of this practice that themselves self-consciously thematized the idea of a unified, transnational "world." Thus cosmopolitanism in cinema was not simply Americanization through film. It was instead a key moment in the construction of film as a global cultural practice.

The cosmopolitan film represents both a mode of production and a film's self-conscious relation to its own status as somehow reaching beyond nations and national identity in search of a global consciousness and cosmopolitanism, especially in their attempts to get beyond the nation as essential limit to identification. The film cycle consisted of a hodgepodge of films—some of which were commercially successful, others of which were positively received in critical terms or have survived to become integrated into an "auteur" canon as with the films of director David Lean. Cosmopolitan films do not constitute a genre since they do not systematically share conventions that would allow them to be meaningfully classified that way.

But they also cannot be sufficiently explained by describing the structure of their financing. One could possibly describe them as coproductions but that term is neither a sufficient explanation of the economic globalization of cinema, nor can the economic organization of film stand as the "proof" of its internationalization. Identifying the economic practice of coproduction is only to begin to describe one aspect of the cosmopolitan cinema.

Cosmopolitan film refers to the overlap of a certain mode of production (independent, location-shooting and/or shooting outside Hollywood, an "international" cast) with the thematic preoccupation of the globe or internationalism. They were hybrid films that reflected an attempt to "think and feel beyond the nation." Many of the epics made during the period, for example, fit into the category but not all the cosmopolitan films are epics (for example, the James Bond pictures, Jules Dassin's *Never on Sunday*, or the comic-thriller *Charade*). By naming the cosmopolitan films, recognizing their hybridity in national and generic terms and historicizing them within changes in film production and as part of the broader postwar culture of "internationalism," fostered as we have seen, by an interesting partnership between Paris and Hollywood, we identify an important moment in the history of film as a global practice.

The cosmopolitan film cycle emerged as part of the broader transatlantic developments in film already described in this study. When contextualized in relation to the flourish of popular Frenchness films, to the career of Brigitte Bardot and to the rising box office of foreign film in the United States, we can see how and why the route between Hollywood and France helped to forge a global film culture. But this chapter also argues that the film cycle has a very precise history in which the success of Mike Todd's 1956 adaptation of the Jules Verne novel *Around the World in Eighty Days* played a critical role in the cycle's development. Todd's only feature film defined the qualities of the cosmopolitan film cycle in terms of production, visual codes, and themes, yet it remains singular in its combination of those attributes. Almost entirely omitted from the history of film, except when embarrassed comments are made about the fact that it was awarded the best picture Oscar of 1956, its remarkable commercial and critical success also helped shape the history of the cosmopolitan film as others sought to imitate many of its elemental ingredients to reproduce its box office popularity.

Late in the 1960s, as the first wave of cosmopolitan films seemed to subside, economist Thomas Guback studied the internationalization of cinema and contended that it would inevitably lead to the "homogenization" of culture. As he put it, "the finished product will reflect universal idioms at the

expense of national ones. . . . What is happening is the extension, on an international scale, of industrial production applied to culture."² His sense of this phenomenon was categorically negative: "So many of the new international films border on dehumanization by brutalizing sensitivity, often deflecting attention from reality. They count on developing audience response with synthetic machine-made images. Their shallowness and cardboard characters are camouflaged with dazzling colors, wide screens and directorial slickness."³ Guback's position is characteristic of the retrospective analysis of what many observers at the time called film's "international" trend. In fact, there are few groups of films as denigrated as these, described by French screenwriter Jean-Claude Carrière as "middle ocean pictures." Carrière called them "those films which sought to be both European and American at the same time and which ultimately were neither, but just good for throwing into the middle of the ocean."⁴ Earlier, in 1963, a study by Jean-Claude Batz shared the French director's disdain for international production: "The internationalization of the market demands the internationalization of film content, a hybridity in intellectual view, the triumph of places in common, ideas accepted by large numbers of people, the banality of millenarian ideas. . . . in a word, international co-production consecrates a cultural potpourri."⁵ Another journalist, writing in disgust at the state of the film industry he observed while at Cannes in the late 1960s, wrote that the movies had retreated into an "increasingly international no-man's land."⁶

Since then, scholars have had trouble making sense of these films. Peter Lev described the Euro-American cinema of the period, which he identified as big-budget English-language films made by European art directors intended to please a sophisticated international audience.⁷ He also connected the films to the Cannes Film Festival, identifying it as the leading showcase for the international art film. Lev's emphasis on a commercialized art cinema, however, leapfrogs over the more explicitly big-budget and commercial Euro-American cinema under consideration here. Although he mentions that such films as *Never on Sunday* had an important launch in Cannes, he neglects to mention the big-budget extravaganzas, *The Fall of the Roman Empire* and *Doctor Zhivago*, played at Cannes in opening and closing night galas.

Rather than be dismissed as a cultural potpourri, these films deserve reconsideration for what they can tell us about how film transcended national idioms and how and why the decade of the mid-1950s to mid-1960s seemed to generate these sorts of films in rapid succession, mostly to great commercial success and sometimes accompanied by contemporary critical acclaim.

Film's internationalism had prewar roots in Hollywood. The industry's official rhetoric insisted that the success of Hollywood product abroad arose from its integration of universal themes and issues. The MPAA boasted that Hollywood had long represented the world's stories: "no other picture-making country in the world ranged so far, thematically and geographically, for its story material, backgrounds and locales. Hollywood's perennial practice of drawing on world literature, world history and the world's arena for its inspiration and material provided cogent reasons why U.S. movies continued to enjoy public support in theatres around the globe."⁸

There can be little doubt that the Hollywood filmmaking community had, indeed, drawn broadly—perhaps not from the entire world but certainly from European literature, art and history. European-born personnel, from directors to actors and editors, had worked assiduously in Hollywood during the expansion of the studios. The experiment with multilingual films in Joinville in the early sound era also produced an intense sense that film would "internationalize" as much as sound hardened national differences.⁹ Producer Walter Wanger could reasonably refer to Hollywood as a "veritable celluloid Athens" while trying to persuade the government that the film industry had much to offer as a model for American leadership after the war.¹⁰ In fact, Wanger boasted of the internationalism of the film industry, which poised it for a great role in diplomacy: "we have never been nationalistic. No one has ever been able to say that Hollywood did not want talent because it was English, French, Italian, German or Russian. There has never been any nationalistic thinking on subjects or castings and our pictures are still the most popular in the world. We have more international content in our pictures than is to be found in the films of any other country."¹¹ A decade later, in 1960, the Motion Picture Academy explained in a report, "While Hollywood is still the film center of the world, we know that ours is an international business. We are producing for the peoples of the world as well as for the American people. A global industry calls for global activity and global thinking."¹²

The increasing sense of the movie business as international did not simply come from imagining a worldwide audience. The Paramount decrees of 1948 weakened the Hollywood studios and inaugurated the first era of "runaway production." *New York Times* film critic Bosley Crowther observed the phenomenon with great interest and asked his paper to send him to Europe in 1960 to report on what he thought was the most important new trend in cinema production: "The whole European area is right now coming along with the greatest challenge to Hollywood as the prime locality of film pro-

duction that the old glamour town has ever known. . . . The big thing today and for the future seems to be this internationalization of the production of films."¹³

Crowther was not alone in his interpretation of the changes in filmmaking. By 1964, the trade press was already explaining the causes of the phenomenon rather than merely describing it: "Reasons for making motion pictures abroad: demand by present day audiences for unqualified realism; need to make motion pictures with universal appeal because of increasing dependence on foreign market; lower production costs abroad for scenes in spectaculars requiring use of thousands of extras; and the need to maintain the strength of world-wide distribution organizations through cooperative arrangements with foreign film interests."¹⁴ In short, by the mid-1960s global filmmaking had become recognized as the order of the day. When Paul Lazarus, executive vice president of Bronston Pictures, flew from Spain, where he was involved in the production of *55 Days at Peking*, to address the meeting of independent theater owners, he explained what he dubbed the "worldwide concept in picture production." He announced that his boss, Samuel Bronston, believed in "making your pictures where they should be made. . . . No community, no country holds the exclusive patent on good film-making." Bronston Pictures attempted to provide a regular supply of family features to reestablish the theater as a familial recreational center. They sought to create films "too big, too colorful, too elaborate" for television, and make films "equally acceptable and suitable on the broadest international base, not particularized by any national interest."¹⁵ In other words, runaway production for Lazarus offered a positive agenda, and cannot be understood merely as a bric-a-brac response to a variety of difficult circumstances in filmmaking.

While taking note of the phenomenon, many observers at the time derided the internationalization of motion pictures because they believed that it was motivated by economic rather than authentic artistic interests. Crowther spoke of the decline of the particular and peculiar film of national idiosyncrasies in favor of the "all-purpose entertainment film."¹⁶ Yet he was also open to the notion that the films were not simply an economic expression in cultural form. He noted that the economics of international coproduction may have instigated the phenomenon but that the results were a "curious sort of hybridization of the motion pictures of the Western world."¹⁷ This new form of production generated a range of films, some of which were commercially successful, others of which were not. By taking a closer look at the structure of cosmopolitan film production and by exam-

ining the films themselves, we can better understand the internationalization of the film industry and what visions of globalism actually looked like in film. This story begins with an American theatrical impresario directing the worldwide production of a French story about a shrinking globe.

ALTHOUGH MANY FACTORS contributed to the development of the cosmopolitan film cycle, one filmmaker and one film constituted an important starting point: Mike Todd's *Around the World in Eighty Days*. In May 1957, this film sensation inaugurated the tenth annual Cannes Film Festival. The festivities included the appearance of Phileas Fogg's balloon in the skies over the Croisette and the arrival of the film's producer Mike Todd with his new wife Elizabeth Taylor dressed in tiara and ermine, in her grey, monogrammed Rolls Royce (fig. 4.1). The evening showcased the European premiere of a film that had already been taking the United States by storm for over six months.



4.1 Mike Todd and Elizabeth Taylor, opening night at Cannes, 1957. Courtesy: Corbis.

Mike Todd made only one feature film in his lifetime, financed it almost exclusively with personal funds (thereby owning almost 80 percent of the movie), and died while it continued to play on screens around the world. Yet, the story of Mike Todd's *Around the World in Eighty Days* is an essential element in the history of the cosmopolitan film. Todd and his film stand as an example of the changes in the film industry that facilitated the production of cosmopolitan films. But more important, the scope of the film's economic and critical success also spurred important developments in film production, which helped drive the film cycle.

That Todd, a man with virtually no education and even less cultural capital, would turn to a story by the famous French author, Jules Verne, first published in 1873, attests to the long-lasting international fame and popularity of both the author and his tale. According to his son, Mike Todd, Jr., the story was the first book his father ever read. Like many of Verne's stories, *Around the World in Eighty Days* enjoyed great sales in serial form and then as a novel not only in France but also in England and America. Like other Verne stories, it was adapted for the stage (in 1874) and served as material for early screen adaptations as well.¹⁸

Todd's involvement with the Verne story began in 1946 with a proposed theatrical collaboration with Orson Welles, who had already produced a radio version of the tale in 1938 for his Mercury Theatre.¹⁹ Todd came to this theatrical production with a reputation as one of the most successful stage producers of the previous five years. The son of Jewish immigrants from Russia and Poland, he was raised in Minnesota and had an early career in construction, where he developed a reputation as a high-stakes gambler. By 1946, Todd had achieved his great aspiration: to become an American showman in the tradition of Florenz Ziegfeld. He burst onto the theatrical scene at the Chicago World's Fair in 1934, where he produced the "flame dance," which offered crowds a spectacular version of a burlesque strip in which a woman dressed as a moth attracts a flame and burns her costume off. A few years later, he was known for such hits as *The Hot Mikado* (starring Bill Robinson), *Harvey*, *Something for the Boys* (starring Ethel Merman), and for his Theatre Café in Chicago, which featured Gypsy Rose Lee in what Todd imagined as an American Folies Bergères show for the whole family.²⁰

Orson Welles and Mike Todd shared a vision of creating a theatrical "fairy tale for adults" by bringing the Verne story to the stage in musical form. The two imagined an over-the-top production that would rely, like many other Todd productions, on spectacular stage effects. They hired Cole Porter, with whom Todd had already worked on three productions, to write the

score. Their collaboration began in February 1946 but ended only months later when Todd walked away from his \$40,000 investment because he could not abide Welles's inability to actually write a script. As Todd explained on Tex and Jinx McCreary's radio show: "I have one superstition in show business. I do like to read a script."²¹ Welles then turned to the director, producer, and head of London Films, Alexander Korda, to provide the financing for the production, in exchange for which Korda was given the rights to the film. The stage production ran eight weeks in late 1946, and ended in financial failure.²²

The intervening years brought many changes to Mike Todd's career, while plans for a film project based on Verne's novel were discussed in a variety of filmmaking circles simultaneously. What made those years so interesting for Todd's career were the same things that put *Around the World* on the agendas of other filmmakers as well: the advent of widescreen, the preference for location shooting, independent production, international casting, and "globalism" as a point of view. In short, Todd's career and his film embodied a central point in the confluence of these different aspects of 1950s and 1960s filmmaking that are key elements of the cosmopolitan film.

CINERAMA WAS THE first of these confluent aspects. Cinerama is the name of the pioneering form among the 1950s innovations in widescreen technology whose novelty and scale would provide unprecedented spectacle at the movie theater. Because widescreen threatened to devalue the holdings in studio film libraries and possibly even make those films obsolete, it should come as no surprise that men from outside the film industry were responsible for the innovation that became known as Cinerama, but its investors also came from outside Hollywood.²³ Novelty for its own sake may have been the impetus for the development of film as a medium, as historians of early film have shown, but it became even more attractive as film would have to lure its shrinking audience out of their houses and away from their televisions in order to get them back into the theaters. Fred Waller, the inventor of water skis and the man who had successfully used multicamera technology to help train aerial gunners in World War II, has been credited with inventing Cinerama. The format approximated the depth of human vision and used three cameras and three projectors to fill a huge and deeply curved screen with the Cinerama films. Sound engineer Hazard Reeves joined the project and succeeded in stoking the interest of the well-known radio commentator, lecturer, and journalist Lowell Thomas.

Almost thirty years before, Thomas had made the travelogue *With Allenby in Palestine and Lawrence in Arabia* and toured with the film, giving lectures and turning T. E. Lawrence into a celebrity.²⁴ In 1950, Thomas was still up to the same sort of sensational journalism. This time, he had caught the attention of Todd because of an expedition that Thomas and his son made to Tibet on the heels of the Chinese invasion there. The son had planned to do a lecture tour based on the trip, and Mike Todd, casting about for projects, thought he could promote the tour. He proposed to kick it off by holding the first of the film lectures in Madison Square Garden before a crowd of thousands. Having seen the Thomas footage, which he liked, Todd worried that even blowing up the 16mm film to 35mm would not work in a space as vast as Madison Square Garden. He shared this concern with Thomas, who invited him to see a demonstration of a project with which he had recently become involved: projecting films on the largest screen ever built.²⁵

Lowell Thomas brought Todd into Cinerama. Todd saw dazzling footage of a rollercoaster ride and was convinced that Cinerama would revolutionize the filmgoing experience. He and Thomas became business partners with an exclusive license to exploit Cinerama. Next they needed to make a movie. Before he hooked up with Todd, Thomas had promised his friend, the celebrated documentary filmmaker Robert Flaherty, that he could produce and direct the first Cinerama feature. According to Mike Todd, Jr., while Flaherty worked on the concept for a film, Todd kept an opportunistic eye on the news, looking for potential opportunities to film sequences for the Cinerama movie. After observing the missed opportunity to film General MacArthur's return in the ticker tape parade in New York, Todd packed up Flaherty and crew and sent them to Chicago where MacArthur would next be welcomed at Soldier Field. The filming took place in April 1951 in a torrential downpour. Flaherty developed pneumonia and died in July. Todd stepped into the creative breach.

Todd turned Flaherty's death into an opportunity to gain experience as a globe-trotting filmmaker. The film would become *This Is Cinerama!* a travelogue of visions of Europe and America, which introduced the process to the general public. Moving beyond General MacArthur, Todd next thought the film could present cultural festivals around the world. He and the Cinerama crew went on location to Edinburgh, Salzburg, Vienna (where they botched a shoot), Venice, and Milan. Although he was able to assemble an impressive set of location shoots, as he and the crew watched the footage, Todd became increasingly concerned with the flaws of the system: seam lines, fuzzy edges, and what was probably the greatest insight into the limits of

mere spectacle by a man known for his brilliant exploitation of it: "You can't spend your life on the roller coaster. Someday someone's going to want to say, 'I love you,' and the seams are going to get in the way."²⁶ Cinerama films could be best exploited in episodic travelogues, magnificent landscape, and locomotion, and the effect remains with us today in IMAX films.²⁷ But Todd believed that the films would need to develop their narrative capacities if the format were to have any real impact. In short, he did not believe that travel and spectacle would be enough.²⁸

Todd wanted the board of Cinerama to invest in perfecting the process. The board did not want to be told what to do by Todd, who was in bankruptcy at the time. When *This Is Cinerama!* made its debut in September 1952, the Cinerama board of directors had already bought out Todd, seeking to divest themselves of his tarnished financial reputation as the company went public. The film ran 122 weeks and grossed \$4.7 million in New York alone.²⁹ Todd seized the opportunity to move forward on improving the process. While the studios battled it out in the aftermath of Cinerama with a variety of widescreen formats such as CinemaScope and VistaVision, Todd believed that it was possible to get "Cinerama" to come out of one hole, employing both a single lens and a single camera. He went to the leading optics engineer of the time, Dr. Brian O'Brien, to solve the problem.³⁰

The result of Todd's idea and O'Brien's science became known as "Todd-AO" (standing for O'Brien's American Optical company), a process that appeared so promising that the new company was able to persuade the holders of the hottest entertainment property of the era to make their Broadway show into the first Todd-AO film. They signed Rodgers and Hammerstein to make a screen version of their wildly successful musical, *Oklahoma!* Unfortunately for Todd, the arrangement granted the composers artistic control over the project, and Todd, while holding financial stakes in the process that deepened his own pockets, had to shop around for his own vehicle to produce, which would become the second film made in Todd-AO.

Todd bounced around Europe during this period looking for projects to make in Todd-AO. When he had earlier been making the rounds in Europe shooting Cinerama, he met Alexander Korda in London. Todd contacted him again in 1954 and they agreed to coproduce *Richard III* with Laurence Olivier in Todd-AO. That is, until Todd realized that he would not have artistic control if he worked with Olivier. He then tried to convince John Huston to reshoot *Moby Dick* in Todd-AO. Huston said no. He next set his sights on making *War and Peace* and went to Russia to enlist the government to par-

ticipate in this unprecedented Cold War thawing project. Todd believed the message would be antiwar, which was sorely needed for an exceptional Russian-American coproduction. When the Russians seemed reluctant, he went to Yugoslavia. General Tito consented to use his army for filming, and it seemed he would move ahead until the Russians started making noises that they had decided to make their own film version of the Russian epic.³¹

In the meantime, Todd returned to London and asked Korda for advice. It was then that Korda offered him *Around the World in Eighty Days*. He explained that he had invested in the Welles stage production in exchange for the film rights and that Welles had even shot a few scenes in Africa and Italy.³¹ Not even a year earlier, *Variety* had reported that Cy Howard and Alexander Korda would produce the film, starring Alec Guinness as Phileas Fogg.³² Reports differ as to whether Todd and Korda agreed that Korda would produce and direct the English shoots or that he would simply have nothing to do with the project. In November 1954, *Variety* announced that Mike Todd had bought the rights and all treatments and scripts from Korda for \$240,000.³³

But Welles, Korda, and Todd were not the only people interested in the story. Stanley Donen apparently spent the better part of 1948 trying to convince Arthur Freed to do an MGM musical based on the Verne story.³⁴ In the spring of 1953, John Mock wrote an interoffice memo to director William Wyler that explains the film rights to the Verne story.³⁵ The memo explains that the story was in the public domain in the United States, would become available in Europe in two years, and that Korda had had something to do with the rights, although he was not sure that was still the case. He also mentioned the stage version by Welles and said it would, of course, still be under copyright.

Classic tales are always kicking about the filmmaking community but the interest in such tales also seems to reemerge in particularly meaningful historical moments. *Around the World* was an ideal vehicle for this moment in filmmaking, which may help explain why several producers and directors independently pursued it. The success of Todd's film was also a sign of the times. The enormous global profits of *Around the World* resulted from its status as an exceptional film marketed in exceptional ways. Yet the story and the film's mode of storytelling, casting, location shooting, and scale of production bear further examination. *Around the World* became an important event at the box office and thus encouraged the development of a mode of filmmaking that would be imitated for years to come. In fact, reviews at

the time lauded the singularity of the achievement while anticipating copycats. As one critic noted, "the only slight criticism I could possibly make of Mr. Todd's offering is that there are sure to be imitations of it, imitations that can't possibly be as good."³⁶

NO HOLLYWOOD STUDIO invested in the film's production. Only a few years earlier, Todd had come to Hollywood and ended up buying and losing the Del Mar horse track, which did not leave a favorable impression with the men in the movie business. Yet Hollywood powerhouse Joseph Schenck, who had been president of United Artists and cofounder of Twentieth Century Pictures with Darryl Zanuck, befriended Todd. Schenck lent Todd money on a regular basis, invested in Todd-AO, and brought in George Skouras (president of United Artists theaters, which Schenck had founded. Skouras's brother Spyros was head of Twentieth Century Fox at the time). Todd's other sources of finance were personal. He regularly borrowed money from Lorraine Manville, the asbestos heiress. With help from these private investors, *Around the World* would eventually be made for slightly more than \$6 million, and financed otherwise entirely by Todd (with money from the sale of his piece of Todd-AO) and the personal loans from these few Todd friends. Short on money late in the shooting, Todd struck a distribution deal with United Artists that reduced his personal stakes in the movie to approximately 80 percent. This personal gamble, first on Todd-AO and then with *Around the World* paid off in unprecedented ways. It has been claimed that *Around the World* made more than \$65 million in its first two years of distribution worldwide. But Mike Todd himself would never live to reinvest, spend, or lose that money; he died in a plane crash in March 1958.³⁷

Films made on the scale of *Around the World* are usually referred to as epics, although until the widescreen productions of the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, few comedies had been made on an epic scale. The film is neither an epic, nor a comedy, nor a mere travelogue, however. Todd, in any event, was determined to think outside the generic categories constructed by Hollywood. His Todd-AO process would reconceive not only the experience of the audience, but also the films themselves. Todd was a showman, and films in Todd-AO would be shows. This meant elevating the exhibition and being dedicated to the art of the pitch. In a speech he gave at Harvard Business School in the spring of 1957, he explained, "I think showmanship is about the most important single thing dramatizing the sale of merchan-

dise in business. . . . showmanship is probably the most important thing in public life."³⁸

Todd insisted on elevating the exhibition environment. In a notorious battle with exhibitors, Todd refused to allow popcorn to be sold at the screenings of films in Todd-AO. "My fight against selling popcorn in the theatre is really more a question of principle and I am not going to relax this policy regardless of the pressure put on me. I am insisting on this policy because I want to demonstrate that occasionally a show comes along that does not have to depend on popcorn to satisfy the customers. Many exhibitors have pointed out to me that popcorn saved the industry. I say that shows saved the industry."³⁹

In the place of popcorn, the theater sold "commemorative albums," which Todd called "hardcover books." "This type of book," he explained, "and the penetration that comes from the customers taking these hardcover books home with them can sell a show and even an industry much better than a discarded pop-corn bag."⁴⁰

WHEN MIKE TODD warned his Harvard audience "you can't fake it," he meant that film audiences had become so discerning that filmmakers had to deliver quality products. He also believed that the more knowledgeable and well traveled the audience became, the more location shoots would replace studio fabrications, as the audience's greater knowledge of the world would produce an inability to see "the real" in studio settings. Finally, he had invested in the notion that Todd-AO provided the best way of capturing the world's beauty. Although his belief in the wisdom of the audience may seem to be mere showmanship and guff, his actions confirm his sincerity. For example, when *Around the World* premiered, Todd sat in the audience and observed several responses, including clapping at a scene as if it had ended when it had not. Todd went back to California with the film and recut it to better match the audience's reading of the scene. He insisted to his Harvard audience that spending \$500,000 to improve the film was more effective than spending \$500,000 to advertise a flawed product.

Not only did he promise a photographic hyperrealism that respond to audience expectations, but he also stressed that the shows needed to be marketed as events. In the very year that Todd made *Around the World in Eighty Days*, one of the great directors of the silent and classical studio era, Cecil B. DeMille, was busy digging more deeply into the arsenal of movie magic

tools on the Paramount lot by devising an unparalleled number of special effects to remake one of his own films, *The Ten Commandments*.⁴¹ Mike Todd, on the other hand, believed in exploiting the world as a spectacle. While DeMille toiled in Hollywood, Todd arrived in Chinchón, Spain, where he hired the town's entire population of 6,500 residents to play extras at a bullfight. Both productions were enormously successful, especially at the box office. Yet critics complained that DeMille's film was a stagy and old-fashioned Victorian theatrical while they lauded Todd's film as novel, fresh, innovative, and ultimately worthy of many awards, including the Academy Award for best picture.

Todd's grandiose vision and the scale of the film's production projected the notion that to be part of the film was to become a part of filmmaking history and that the film's significance could also be attributed to its vast scale. The film's publicity claimed it "shattered records and precedents with Tod-dian profligacy."⁴² This material noted that the movie had been shot in 140 actual locations, as well as in six Hollywood studios and studios in England, Hong Kong, and Japan. It boasted having filmed 68,894 persons, establishing 2,000 camera set-ups and designing 74,685 costumes. The film's budget also expanded over time from a projected \$3 million to more than \$6 million. At times, simply to make payroll during the film's production, Todd had to hunt down friends with deep pockets such as Lorraine Manville and Al Streslin, who worked in "construction and real estate." Streslin ended up with 1.8 percent ownership in the film, which paid off his almost \$250,000 in loans rather handsomely.⁴³

Because Todd was first and foremost a producer, he understood his achievement in those terms: producers were the "authors of all action."⁴⁴ The scale of the project would be one of his great accomplishments. While making the movie, he also made a film documenting the making of the film, suggesting that he imagined that the film would be so important that people would have an interest in understanding how he did it. As he explained, "When I first started the picture, I had this idea. I knew it was going to be [a] very difficult task, so I thought I'd start a film called *Object Impossible*, because all the wire guys said I must fall on my face. . . . I had this idea of doing a documentary about the making of the picture and I have some wonderful shots."⁴⁵ The documentary unit is even credited in the published materials relating to the film credits. In his speech at Harvard, Todd called the documentary an "hour and a half trailer" and spoke of possibly using it for educational purposes at Cannes or a film school.⁴⁶ The film was never actually

made, although the extensive footage of the shooting of *Around the World* was used in a television special called *Around the World of Mike Todd* in September 1968 and written and produced by his son, Mike Todd, Jr. While production stills were a common feature of the studios, Todd's documentary may be the first example of an explicit "the making of" movie, and it suggests the importance Todd attached to the scale of the production and its international reach as one of its great accomplishments.

The scale and scope of Todd's casting reflected his desire to signify the film's global reach. Aside from the vast numbers of extras employed for the making of the film, Todd sought out an array of well-known film and stage actors who would play what Todd eventually called "cameo roles." His notion of the cameo was that it would be "a gem carved in celluloid by a star." Todd legitimated the onslaught of famous names by explaining that the film's story was about "four people who go traveling. When you go traveling you meet a lot of people. It's that simple."⁴⁷ Trade papers and his son's biography describe how Todd cajoled the vast number of stars—such as Frank Sinatra and the famous French comic Fernandel—into appearing in the film by using the other stars he had already signed as leverage to get them to sign on. Todd was most desperate to cast Marlene Dietrich as the madam in a San Francisco brothel, so he offered to shoot the sequence without a contract and subject it to her approval at what was close to a \$250,000 bet that she would agree to print the scene. She did.

The cameo roles brought actors from the past into the present: Buster Keaton, Gilbert Roland, Joe E. Brown, Beatrice Lillie. Lillie and other performers such as Noel Coward, Red Skelton, and Hermione Gingold were not exclusively known as movie stars. Finally, featuring such actors as Charles Boyer, Peter Lorre, and Dietrich foregrounded the stable of "international" stars that already resided in Hollywood. Critics appreciated the cameos and found the game of spotting the famous "bit players" an entertaining diversion. Robert Griffith noted that "the remarkable thing is that so few of them are really important as themselves, so perfectly do they lend color, vitality and authenticity to Mr. Todd's mighty spectacle."⁴⁸ Another noted, "It's a neat trick and it comes off socko."⁴⁹

If Todd's film would physically travel around the world, his central cast would also be drawn from around the world. The cast represented an international eclecticism. He decided immediately on David Niven to play the English protagonist, Phileas Fogg, with the cool, precise detachment that Verne had written into his spoof of the English character. Casting an

Englishman to play an Englishman in a film in English seems perfectly unoriginal. But the casting of Mario Moreno, better known as Cantinflas, as Phileas Fogg's French valet Passepartout, turned out to be a stroke of genius. Cantinflas was at the time the greatest star of the Mexican cinema, though he had never before appeared in an English-language film. His casting was both idiosyncratic and difficult to achieve, but it later proved to yield great returns. Todd had earlier met Cantinflas and his manager Jacques Gelman while vacationing in Mexico with the actress Evelyn Keyes (with whom Todd had been involved for the several years before and during the filming). Keyes knew Cantinflas from her experience making films in Mexico. Cantinflas was a nimble, physical comic who has been regularly compared to Charlie Chaplin. Todd considered him "the greatest performer I have ever in my life had the experience of being connected with" and insisted that "his comedy is universal, because it's based on pathos."⁵⁰ He had never made an English-language film, although he had been entertaining offers for years, because he refused to adapt his character to the interests of foreign producers and because he was also known in Mexico for a verbal patter that he knew would be lost in translation.⁵¹

Cantinflas made sense as Todd's choice in several ways. Todd was, no doubt, thinking about a box-office draw for targeted sectors of the worldwide audience. In fact, Todd agreed to pay the Mexican star a percentage of the gross box office in Spanish-speaking territories. Cantinflas also topped the salary scale for the film as its highest paid performer, suggesting that Todd also respected and recognized him as a star, treatment which might not have come as easily from a mainstream Hollywood producer embedded in a system that had for the most part denoted a star's value mainly within the Hollywood context.

Casting Cantinflas shaped the film's episodes in important ways. As Ernest Anderson, who worked for Todd, wrote in a letter to John Huston at the end of April 1955:

Coming in from the airport, I gathered the director will be John Farrow, Harry Tugand is writing the script, Cantinflas plays Passepartout and David Niven, Fogg. And, says Mike, wait'll you see the bullfight scene. Knowing that Spain or Mexico were never locations for 80 days and since Mike's dialogues were so fragmentary and sporadic as we drove in, I quite innocently asked, "What's the name of the picture? Mike says, "what are you a wise guy or something? Around the World in 80 Days." So I guess they are interpolating some of Cantinflas' block comedy numbers. The picture goes into production June 6.⁵²

The film did not start its production in June, but two months later for its ninety-two days of shooting.

Cantinflas played Passepartout as a "Hispanic" Latin and not a French one. The character's name and origins remained opaque in the context of the film. In the hands of Verne, Passepartout's Frenchness anchored the story as an observation of both the world and the imperturbable British, seen from the French point of view. The fact that the story was French in origin but played otherwise suggests the porous way in which French culture could be easily assimilated into a generalized "Western" culture.⁵³ In casting Cantinflas, Todd must have been thinking about the various "spectacular episodes" of physical comedy he would film that did not rely on dialogue, thus facilitating the translatability of the film worldwide.

Other casting choices also would have been unlikely studio choices. The role of Inspector Fix, Fogg's nemesis, went to a well-known English character actor with a well-known drinking problem: Robert Newton, who died right after the film was shot. Finally, Todd decided, two weeks before shooting was scheduled to begin, to cast Hollywood newcomer Shirley MacLaine in the female lead as the British-educated Indian Princess Aouda, who joins Fogg and Passepartout for the second half of their journey. None of the production materials suggest that Todd ever considered hiring an Indian actress but, it must also be said that in this way the film repeats Verne's literal elevation of Aouda through her "whitewashing" since the novel describes her as "white as a European."⁵⁴

And yet, in other ways, the film's global aspirations were many. Its comprehensive quality suggests an encyclopedic kind of globalism. Yet it also integrated elements of many cultures to project the image of covering the globe in its content. One effect of this "kitchen sink" approach was that reviewers pondered the nature of the film as such. At a moment when the very value of films and filmmaking seemed up for grabs, this film that was not a film (Todd called it a "show") appeared to reviewers as something that could help "save" the film industry. "In any formal, disciplined sense *Around the World in Eighty Days* is hardly a movie at all, but it is a wonderfully entertaining grab bag of treats and surprises produced on a scale reminiscent of Cecil B. DeMille and the Emperor Nero. It is a spectacular show."⁵⁵ *Newsweek* struggled to label the film and so described it as "a travelogue, a circus, a costume piece (1870s), a review, a two-reel comedy, and an all-star revival."⁵⁶ A week later, in an article that attempted to account for the phenomenal attention the film seemed to be getting, *Newsweek* this time cited one review that insisted that it was "A movie so new that nobody could describe

it.”⁵⁷ The hybrid nature of the production was part of the film’s critical interest. Jacques Doniol-Valcroze paused on the paradoxical nature of the transnationalism of the production: “The film is made by Americans who show America from the critical perspective of an Englishman . . . all of it invented by a Frenchman.”⁵⁸

If the film’s hybrid quality struck the critics, they also applauded the film’s comedic elements: the witty vignettes written by S. J. Perelman, who had penned scripts for the Marx Brothers; the “British” blasé attitude of Phileas Fogg in the face of remarkable sights and adventures; and the physical comedy of Cantinflas. “It is delightful entertainment and a grand spoof with plenty of delicious satire on the English and on movies themselves.”⁵⁹ The novel’s original characterization of Phileas Fogg was a French spoof on English restraint and obsessions about time and precision. The film played this to the hilt: Fogg never looks out a window in all his travels and seems blasé about the remarkable beauty of the sunsets seen from the boat, never admires the marvels of the American Western landscape, never appreciates the picturesque quality of the Asian ports. By playing it as comedy, the film also spoofed the nineteenth-century novel’s bet as a bold dare. How else could a film about the impossibility of traveling around the world in eighty days be made in 1956, when one could travel the world in fewer than eighty hours?

The film winked at the history of the movies. Parodies of an early Western’s train attack and rescue (fig. 4.2), of an adventure film’s rescue of a maiden in distress (Fogg and Passepartout save Princess Aouda from sati, the ritual burning of a widow on her husband’s funeral pyre in India), of the Marx Brothers (a buffet mime between Cantinflas and Red Skelton in the San Francisco saloon) drew spectators into a familiar idiom, while their placement as episodes facilitated the audience’s recognition that this was part of the joke. These comic opportunities not only winked back at silent film. Geared for a worldwide audience, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, cleverly integrated visual gags to broaden the film’s appeal to audiences who could then follow the action without reading the subtitles. Thus, while the droll dialogue could appeal to a certain sector of the audience, the film never turned on the dialogue and easily moved forward without it. Todd had in Cantinflas a physical comic who would entertain audiences without saying a word: he would dance Flamenco, fight bulls (fig. 4.3), shoot Indians, perform in a Japanese circus, ride an ostrich, and tour Japanese temples, all without speaking.



4.2 Cantinflas / Passepartout as cowboy. The Western episode from *Around the World in 80 Days*, 1956.



4.3 Cantinflas / Passepartout as bullfighter, *Around the World in 80 Days*, 1956.

Of course the big scale of production matched the notion that the world itself was big (all those people and places), but it also suggested that film would make the world not so much smaller as more accessible. Todd knew that location shots would display the virtues of Todd-AO. But the film's globalism was quite literal, and shooting covered thirteen different countries and 140 locations.⁶⁰ The locations would deliver not only a punch of realism that exploited the Todd-AO process but would also serve as the best travelogue ever seen. Initially, skeptics raised doubts about the project of location shooting a film that was set in 1872. It was one thing to shoot on contemporary European locations as they had for *Three Coins in a Fountain* (Rome) and *Summer Madness* (Venice), but another thing altogether to use locations to shoot a historical film like *Gigi* or *Moulin Rouge*. As Todd explained, "most people said it was impossible to capture 1872 on location today, because of all the signs, Coca-Cola signs and telegraph poles."⁶¹ But Todd insisted on shooting in every country depicted in the film to achieve authenticity in the film's look and feel. When discussing on-location extras in a radio interview, he insisted that "people act, react different in different countries. . . . In that Greco scene—you know, you've got to have Spanish people. In the bullfight—they, they act different, scream and they, they're all—they're just different and—it looks—it's more real."⁶² In fact, Todd believed so much in the authenticity of the location extras that he fired his original director, John Farrow, when Farrow attempted to coach the Spanish extras.⁶³

There were those who, having seen the film, doubted the success of this location strategy. One of the film's rare tepid reviews (in the *Nation*) noted that the close-ups had all been staged because the action is supposed to be some eighty years ago and there are few corners of the world today where a jeep or a neon sign wouldn't spoil the illusion.⁶⁴ This comment is, however, false. For example, in Japan, Passepartout visits a large Buddha on location and even steals an apple from his altar. The Paris arrival is also shot in the streets of Paris and provided one of the great location stories from the film's production. Although Todd's crew had earlier paid off the local police to post "no parking" signs for the Sunday morning shoot, this did not prevent forty disobedient French people from parking anyway. Todd arrived with his own tow trucks, ready to take them away. When the French police refused to tow the cars, Todd did it himself, causing an uproar, which was facilitated by the fact that Todd had also invited the French press to attend the shooting of the sequence and they, instead, reported the towing of the cars. To make matters worse, the next week, his crew climbed up to the top

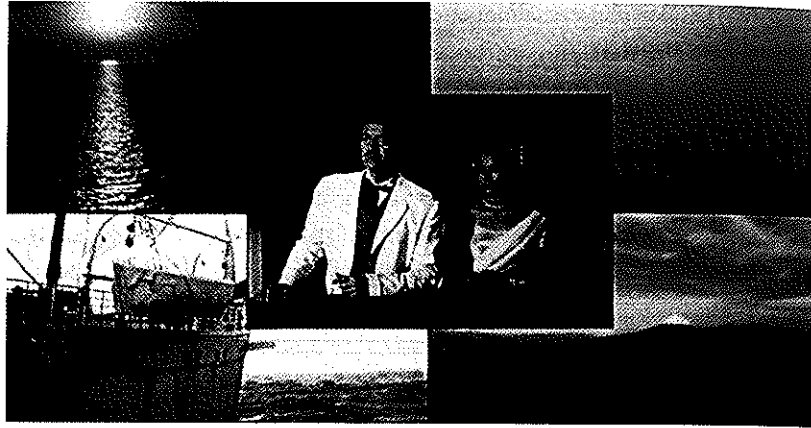
of Nôtre Dame to shoot a sequence of the balloon ride for which they used a smaller-scale model flying by the cathedral and over the roofs of Paris. The sequence was shot as the French police chased the camera crew (figs. 4.4 and 4.5). The Paris police prefect warned that he would not allow the city to be turned into a film set and would be more vigilant about granting permissions to shoot on the streets of the French capital. Thus, while the spectacular vistas and sunsets and the aerial views of the countryside would exploit Todd-AO, the other location shots contributed to the overall achievement of the production's grand scale.

The hard work of the London, Paris, and Yokahama street shoots prevented the film from being a mere travelogue of beautiful sunsets and aerial shots (although there is no shortage of panoramic views in the film either) (fig. 4.6). The film's spectators also watched landscapes of India and the American West through a train window. In these scenes, Fogg remains blasé and often simply plays cards; it is Passepartout who serves as the audience's double. When the audience assumes the tourist gaze, we are looking through the eyes of the simple and likable Passepartout as opposed to the



4.4 Paris, 1956 becomes 1872, *Around the World in 80 Days*, 1956.

4.5 The view from Nôtre Dame, *Around the World in 80 Days*, 1956.



4.6 Views at sea, designed to show-off Todd-AO, *Around the World in 80 Days*, 1956.

haughty and distant Fogg. This might have seemed like a gamble with Euro-American audiences, hardly used to imagining seeing the world through the eyes of a “Mexican.” Todd wisely banked on the universality of the clown in casting Cantinflas to occupy the position that would most assume the audience’s gaze. In the same way that Chaplin had functioned in an “everyman” role worldwide, so would Todd use Cantinflas’s skills as a great mime to universalize his perspective.

If the film attempted to display a catalog of cultures, its globalism can be understood in its literal and constant representation of the globe. The film depicted a trip around the world and thus featured not merely travel itself but also many modes of transport, as if to counteract the fact that the audience was, in fact, going nowhere. Almost every vehicle for transport imaginable circa 1872 appears in the film: bicycle, balloon (not in the novel), train, elephant, royal barge, steamboat, ostrich, rickshaw, horse, stage coach, sailmobile, sidewheeler, handsome cab, an Asian junk with red sails. These mechanisms of transport emphasize the novelty of the mobility of the modern world that such a journey underscored when Verne wrote the novel at the end of the nineteenth century.

The film begins, however, with a prologue that makes the globe itself one of the film’s subjects in a fairly explicit manner. Prologues were not unusual for “roadshow” movies and often set the stage for films in a preachy and pompous way.⁶⁵ For example, Cecil B. DeMille comes out from behind a red velvet curtain to begin *The Ten Commandments* with a speech about “the birth of freedom.”⁶⁶ *The Agony and the Ecstasy* begins with a fifteen-minute tour of St. Peter’s and a lecture on the work of Michelangelo. The prologue of *Around the World* connects the past to the present, flaunting our own prog-



4.7 Edward R. Murrow in his study, globe on right. *Around the World in 80 Days*, 1956.

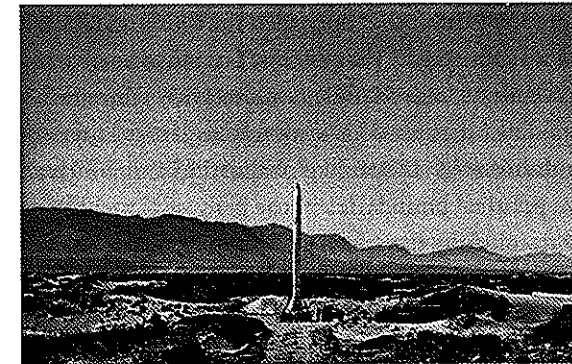
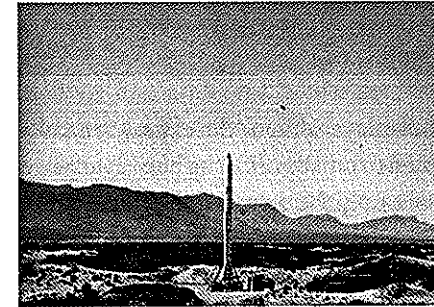
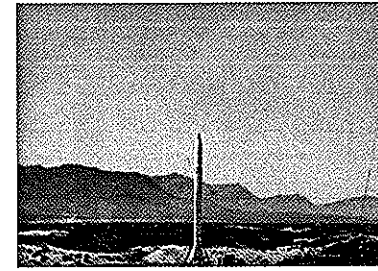
ress as well as the possible dangers of the shrinking world, and seems to turn what will be a comic adventure film into something of importance, reflecting Todd’s sense that the film itself was making history. The picture opens in a square, 35mm image of America’s great television news journalist, Edward R. Murrow, sitting at a desk, surrounded by bookshelves in the background and a globe conspicuously placed to the right of the desk (fig. 4.7). The choice of Murrow suggests an immediate identification with internationalism as he was a well-known wartime correspondent in London. His association with American liberalism and a “truth” effect had become synonymous with “news” on television by the time the film was being made. The camera cranes into a medium shot of Murrow, who identifies Jules Verne as a fantastic fiction writer whose predictions had become fact: “flying machines, submarines, television, rockets.” Yet, Murrow explains, not even Verne’s fertile imagination could shrink the earth to the point it had reached in 1956. He then shifts to a discussion of another of Verne’s stories, about a trip to the moon, and introduces “the authentic genius” Georges Méliès and his film *A Trip to the Moon* made at the turn of the century. Todd bought what was probably the best existing copy of the film from the Méliès family. The silent film plays for about three minutes, with Murrow narrating the action and with the introduction of the movie’s theme music, which audiences will later hear played over and over again throughout the film. This musical connection links the cinematic past with the present and in that way repeats the Frenchness films pattern of turning to France as America’s past.

Also like those films, the prologue underscores the medium’s progress when it cuts away from the silent pictures of fin-de-siècle France as Murrow describes the characters as about to “return to earth, a minor planet, where fiction lags behind fact.” At this point, the image goes from black and white to color and (in the dead center of the screen) displays a missile in the desert preparing for launch. While the missile remains in the center of the frame, the frame expands at the sides, as the film goes from the 35mm format to

70mm in widescreen, using the Todd-AO cameras, while the soundtrack features a countdown followed by a launch. The audience witnesses the wonders of Todd-AO in the context of the impressive launch (figs. 4.8–4.11). Images of the missile are followed by images of the earth taken from the inside of the missile. Murrow, however, grows solemn in tone, mitigating any triumphal assumptions by warning, “Speed is good only when wisdom leads the way” and that the earth’s future would be “determined by the collective wisdom of the people who live on this shrinking planet.”

The prologue functions as more than a narrative mechanism to ease viewers into the film’s historical setting. In fact, a different prologue was initially shot that simply sketched the continuity between past and present by grouping the cameo players on an airplane in small vignettes. Niven and Cantinflas in that version were seated together and the former, with the blasé attitude that characterizes Fogg, ignores all the chaos of the loading of the plane and opens his book, *Around the World in Eighty Days*. Todd envisioned this prologue as a chance to feature the films’ star power at its start while beginning the cameo recognition game.⁶⁷ Sometime between then and the film’s opening in late October, Todd replaced this with the more serious prologue featuring Murrow, Méliès, and the missile launch, which obviously took advantage of the Todd-AO process. But it did more than that. By showing the Méliès film, Todd placed his film in the context of the medium’s origins in Europe and then connected that history to notions of a shrinking globe. Murrow reminds the viewers that Méliès had put the earlier Verne story about a trip to the moon onto film, “35 mm just like you are watching now.” This would, only minutes later, underscore the novelty and innovation of the 70mm process as a watershed for film: from 1900 to 1956 and from Todd-AO forward.

The images of planet earth from the rocket are replaced by a cut to Murrow’s hand on the spinning globe (fig. 4.12). He reminds us that learned men used to think the world was flat. He pauses and changes tone: “Jules Verne’s classic already had a sense of a shrinking world back in 1872,” and the film dissolves to London in 1872 and the changing of the guard, the first of the travelogue scenes enhanced by Todd A-O. Each location also featured a variety of crowd scenes that usually included parades and dances and some sort of locally associated activity: in London, we view the changing of the guard; in Paris, people strolling in front of the Tuileries; in Spain, a flamenco dance and a bullfight; in India, a parade that includes music and dance; in Hong Kong, a parade with dragons and fireworks; in San Francisco, a political rally with musical fanfare and fireworks. This repeating pattern not only turned



4.8–4.11 Expansion of the image from 35mm to 70mm. *Around the World in 80 Days*, 1956.



4.12 Murrow's hand on the globe. *Around the World in 80 Days*, 1956.

people into cultural displays, akin to the exposition culture Todd knew so well, but also attempted to universalize the human experience: everyone has music, dances, parades, only the themes and colors change. The film sought to put the globe's diversity on ready display while drawing attention to the structural similarities of the human experience. In this way, we see a 1950s vision of globalism in keeping with Edward Steichen's blockbuster *Family of Man* photography exhibit that opened at the Museum of Modern Art the year that Todd was filming.⁶⁸ That exhibit has since been analyzed extensively in negative terms. Blake Stimson has recently summarized that view that says the exhibit functioned as "a sort of humanist Trojan horse sneaking American-dominated economic globalization and political hegemony past restrictive political boundaries in the belly of a maudlin cultural embrace." Stimson rightfully has taken another look at the exhibit and asked about the significance of a liberal ideal of a single global identity in the 1950s and the role photography played in shaping it.⁶⁹

Like the *Family of Man* exhibit, *Around the World in Eighty Days* achieved both commercial and critical success in its initial American release. Although United Artists bought the film's distribution rights, Todd determined the unusual terms of the initial two-year release: the film would play only ten times a week in 125 theaters in cities selected by Todd. United Artists would advance him \$4 million and take only a 10 percent distribution fee, as opposed to the customary 30 percent for the road show before the film went into general distribution. UA would also get 10 percent of the film's profits.⁷⁰ It is virtually impossible to determine the film's profits except to be sure that slightly less than 80 percent of those profits went directly to Mike Todd. A window into its San Francisco run gives us a sense of its staying power. It opened there at the Coronet Theater in January 1957 (three months after the New York and Los Angeles premieres) and played

ninety-five weeks until the end of October 1958, grossing \$1,756,453 and \$985,000 in rental fees.⁷¹ The rental earnings for the film during 1957, according to *Variety*, were \$16,200,000 domestic.⁷² According to one source, it grossed \$65,000,000 in its first two years of worldwide release.⁷³ When Elizabeth Taylor, Todd's widow, sold the film's rights to Warner Brothers in 1982, *Variety* reported that it was the fourth highest grossing film of all time.⁷⁴

Hollywood also responded to the film on Oscar night. The film was nominated for eight Oscars and won five for best color cinematography, film editing, music score, screenplay and, finally, best picture, prevailing over nominees *Giant*, *The King and I*, *The Ten Commandments*, and *Friendly Persuasion*.⁷⁵ At the ceremony in March 1957, whose set featured a globe sitting atop a reel of film, the president of the Academy announced that film was "truly a global medium." Todd grabbed the top honors. Literally. He leapt out of his seat and towards the stage so quickly that he had to return to kiss his wife Elizabeth Taylor. His acceptance reminded Hollywood of just how big he and his film were: "I'm especially thrilled, this is my first time at bat. I'd like to thank you on behalf of the sixty-odd thousand people who worked on this show."⁷⁶

Only a few months later, Todd, Taylor, and *Around the World* appeared at the 1957 Cannes Film Festival, eagerly solicited by the festival's organizers. What better film to open the festival than a spectacular presentation of a well-known tale by a Frenchman that explicitly linked the cinema to the shrinking of the world?

While *Around the World* emblemized many of the recent developments in Hollywood, its very success also fueled the cosmopolitan cinema that would take off on the heels of its vast commercial triumph. By foregrounding the history of a single film, we have been able to look at the various contexts that shaped cosmopolitan films and filmmaking. Embedded within *Around the World* are the historical changes that had a particularly important impact on films, such as increased travel and ideas about the "Family of Man." The film also is a telling example of the shifts in the industrial organization of the film industry itself (such as independent, footloose production). Its 70mm Todd-AO format captures film's heightened competition on the American market for leisure dollars. Finally, the film was tailor-made for what was in the 1950s clearly becoming a fundamental hub of the international film business: the Cannes Film Festival, which functioned as both an international publicity machine and a market for film distribution. Yet the critical and financial acclaim of the film also had an impact on filmmaking itself as filmmakers sought to replicate the film's success.

SAM SPIEGEL'S OSCAR acceptance for best picture for *Bridge on the River Kwai* evinced the new globalism in filmmaking and its further decentering of Hollywood power. "The soundstages of Hollywood have been extended in recent years to the farthest corners of the world," said Spiegel. "No land is inviolate to the glare of our camera. Yet it is fitting and proper that people the world over are waiting for a decision which only you in this community are able to render."⁷⁷ Worse pandering would be hard to find. Spiegel, an independent producer, had always had rocky relations with the Hollywood filmmaking community. In fact, his career as an independent producer, and the increasing number of films made entirely outside of Hollywood such as his *Bridge on the River Kwai*, stood as evidence of the declining power of Hollywood-based filmmaking. But his comment also underscores the notion that Hollywood in the 1950s managed to radiate outwards physically while maintaining a seemingly coherent identity in the face of the world. Although Spiegel's language suggests a sort of Hollywood imperialism—"No land is inviolate to the glare of our camera"—his films were hardly proof of Hollywood's extended gaze. Rather, his comments suggest the increasingly porous national boundaries of well-financed filmmaking in the West.

The loosening of the studio system encouraged what was then being called "runaway production"—a term that itself implied that production was naturally based in Hollywood. The reasons for making films outside of Hollywood were complex. Even at the time, observers were trying to explain its causes. As early as 1953, an article in *This Week* by Louis Berg called "Movies on the Move!" noted, "the film industry is going global." The phenomenon extended beyond Hollywood: the French star, Michèle Morgan, who left France during the war, had repatriated but was shooting a film in Vera Cruz, Mexico, while Fernandel, the French star, was in Chicago shooting *Public Enemy Number One* with Zsa Zsa Gabor, of Hungary and Hollywood—"proof that the movies are on the move not only from Hollywood, but all over the place and in every direction."⁷⁸

Incentives for footloose production included being able to spend studio assets and profits that had been frozen in Europe (this had also contributed to the Frenchness films). In addition, a new tax law remitted American income taxes for anyone working abroad seventeen out of eighteen consecutive months. This was a boon to independent production companies, and stars such as Kirk Douglas and his company Bryna Films immediately set out to take advantage by making films such as *Act of Love* (1953) and *The Vikings* (1958) in Europe. This dodge would also be taken to new heights

when, in 1958, *Suddenly, Last Summer*, set in New Orleans, was shot in England and on the Costa Brava in Spain because of Elizabeth Taylor's complex salary and tax shelter schemes.⁷⁹

Production by nominally American companies in Europe doubled between 1950 and 1957 and the proportion of American films filmed abroad went from 5 percent to 15 percent, according to one source.⁸⁰ Most of the filming initially took place in Italy, France, Germany, and Spain, although the most spectacular examples were locations in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) for *Bridge on the River Kwai* and Jordan for *Lawrence of Arabia*. Those locations were hardly vehicles for saving money, as they were difficult, time-consuming, and grueling.

The dispersion of blacklisted and other left-leaning personnel abroad during the 1950s also created a pool of professionals who were available and needed to work abroad. For example, screenwriters such as Dalton Trumbo (*Roman Holiday*, *Exodus*, *Spartacus*), Michael Wilson (*Friendly Persuasion*, *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, and *Lawrence of Arabia*) and Carl Foreman (*Bridge on the River Kwai*) could work for producers under easier cover when production was going on outside the United States. Director, actor, writer, and producer Jules Dassin moved to Europe in 1950 after being named by Edward Dymtryk as a Communist. There he made the highly successful film *Rififi Chez les Hommes*. Later, he met and married Melina Mercouri and made the successful "multilingual" film *Never on Sunday* in 1960. Betsy Blair, who left both her husband Gene Kelly and the United States in 1957, worked in French movies and eventually moved to England and married the Jewish Czech-born "English" director of such films as *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, Karel Reisz.

If in the 1920s and 1930s Hollywood had drawn the world's talent to it (in part because of the instability and anti-Semitism of Europe during that period), the reverse happened in the 1950s and 1960s when talent left Hollywood to work with independent production and its multinational financing, crews, locations, talent, even languages. A closer look at the phenomenon suggests that to describe it as a regime of "coproductions" is not sufficient. Coproduction may well describe the multinational origin of a film's financiers but companies, not countries, were often doing the investing. For example, American-based studios such as Columbia and United Artists had a propensity for investing in productions made abroad, but usually through an independent producer. Sam Spiegel's Horizon Pictures received financing from Columbia to make both *The Bridge on the River Kwai* and *Lawrence of Arabia*. MGM financed the Italian Carlo Ponti to make *Dr. Zhivago*.

Many of the producers and directors of the cosmopolitan films were cosmopolitans themselves in the sense that they were people born in one place who eventually made their home in a different place, or even in several places. Many of them were polyglot European Jews who had bounced around because of Hitler's rise. Directors such as William Wyler (born in France of German-Jewish origin) and Otto Preminger (born in Austria) were part of the émigré tradition that shaped the studios before World War II. Lesser known among directors were people such as Andrew Marton, the Hungarian-born quintessential second unit director who worked mostly for the studios directing big location shoots such as *King Solomon's Mines*, the chariot race in *Ben-Hur*, the production numbers in *Cleopatra* and *55 Days in Peking*. Even Terence Young, the British director of the early James Bond movies, was born in Shanghai.

Polish-born Sam Spiegel, who lived in Austria and Palestine before coming to the United States, left and never returned to Hollywood because of his shady dealings. Instead, Horizon Pictures, the company he originally formed in partnership with John Huston when they made *The African Queen*, operated out of London, with American financing largely from Columbia Pictures. Samuel Bronston, the Rumanian-born producer, began his career working for MGM and Columbia in France before he set out on his own and helped establish Spain as a shooting location for English-language films in 1961–64, during which he produced *King of Kings*, *El Cid*, *55 Days at Peking*, and *The Fall of the Roman Empire*. In France, Belgian-born Raoul Lévy, worked in Mexico for his cousin, the Russian-born, French-raised producer Jacques Gelman (the very same Gelman who was Cantinflas's agent) before returning to France where his films, including *Et Dieu créa la femme* and the explicitly multinational *The Fabulous Adventures of Marco Polo*, were financed by Columbia and MGM.⁸¹

The casts of these films were often as multinational as the production crew. In European coproduction ventures, films might feature a star from each country as in the 1952 *Fan-fan la tulipe*, which starred Frenchman Gérard Philippe and Italian Gina Lollobrigida. The cosmopolitan film, on the other hand, did not operate in such formulaic “package unit” terms in part because independent production facilitated the assembly of a cast and crew that could be drawn from a wide pool of talent. The films usually had a requisite American star: William Holden in *Bridge*, Anthony Quinn in *Lawrence*, Charlton Heston in *El Cid*. The films favored Anglophone actors. While the films did not have a nationality, they did have a language: English. Even then, dubbing actors became more common during the cosmo-

politan film moment. For example, Claudia Cardinale was dubbed in *The Pink Panther*, Ursula Andress in *Dr. No*, and Gert Frobe in *Goldfinger*. Other linguistic strategies included multilingualism on screen, as in *Never on Sunday*, which featured Dassin playing an American speaking English, the bilingual Mercouri in both Greek and English, and subtitles for English translations of the Greek actors. *Le Mépris*, Godard's engagement with cycle of the “cosmopolitan” film produced by the Italian Carlo Ponti, the American Joseph E. Levine, and the Frenchman Georges de Beauregard, underscores both the possibilities and limits of this form of multilingualism with its hodgepodge of translations and subtitles.

The transnationalism of production, settings, and subjects produced a new kind of star. If the *après-guerre* witnessed a flurry of European settings in American movies, the war itself produced the mobility of such stars as the Hungarian Gabor sisters, Zsa Zsa and Eva, and, more famously, Belgian-born and London-dwelling Audrey Hepburn. During the heyday of the studios, the relationship between a star's origins, cultural context, and roles had been quite complex. Charles Boyer, for example, became a Hollywood actor, as did both Garbo and Dietrich, although their origins outside the United States contributed to their allure as stars. In contrast, Maurice Chevalier, who in his day was one of the best-paid performers in Hollywood, milked and exploited his Frenchness despite the fact that he remained, one could say, actually more cosmopolitan than other non-American born actors by going back and forth between France and America rather than simply quitting France for Hollywood. Decades later, Brigitte Bardot became an international star but never set foot in Hollywood.

Historical epics, a subset of the cosmopolitan films, facilitated international casting since they required not only casts of thousands but also great suspension of disbelief in the first place. British actors such as Alec Guinness (English) and Stephen Boyd (Irish) often played Romans, and Canadians such as Christopher Plummer were also able to play a variety of nationalities precisely because non-American origins combined with anglophony facilitated his familiar “otherness.” Actresses such as Sophia Loren could be more comfortably believed as the emperor's daughter in *The Fall of the Roman Empire* or as Jimena, the wife of *El Cid*, than in more contemporary roles that required less suspension of disbelief and thus where her Italian identity would have been more of a problem.

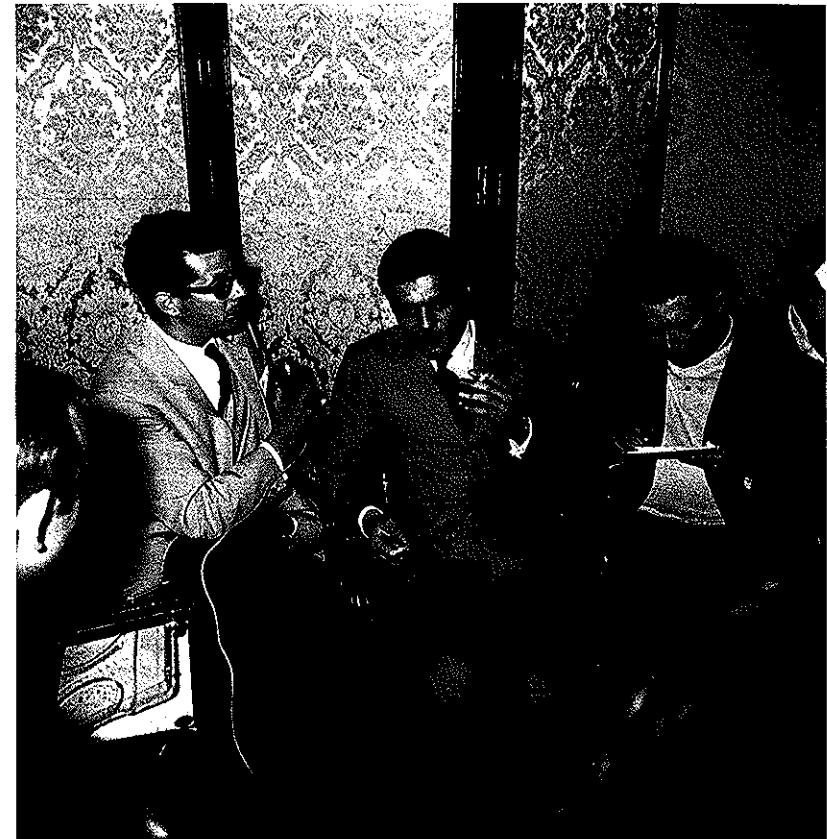
No actor seems to have ridden the cosmopolitan film wave better than the man born as Michel Chaloub, who became known as Omar Sharif. As he put it in his memoir, *L'éternel masculin*, “I live abroad. I am never at home

where I am.”⁸² Sharif grew up in a French-speaking household, in Alexandria, Egypt, where he attended French and then English schools. He attended a British university in Cairo, after which it was assumed he would join his father in his lumber business. Although he claims to have been raised a Catholic, and it has been said his family was also Lebanese, rumors have also circulated that he was actually an Egyptian Jew. By the time he was in his early twenties, he could speak French, English, and Arabic—although in his memoirs, written in French for the French market, he insists on his cultural identification with France.⁸³

Sharif’s career in Egyptian movies began with a boom. He changed his name to one he considered more “Oriental” that could be easily spelled and said. He married the co-star of his first film, Egypt’s premier film actress, Faten Hamama. Their film, *The Blazing Sun*, directed by the Egyptian-born and Pasadena Playhouse-trained Youssef Chahine, played at the Cannes Film Festival in 1954. The film earned a special mention by the jury and the young and beautiful “Omar el Cherif,” as some of the French press called him, became a much photographed and talked about newcomer at Cannes. He would become a regular and in 1966, he would again be featured as part of the festival’s headliners when *Zhivago* opened the festival that year (fig. 4.13).

Sharif’s first Hollywood screen tests came when William Dieterle saw his face on a poster advertising *The Blazing Sun* while he was in Cairo scouting locations for his upcoming film, *Joseph in Egypt*. The project was shelved along with Sharif’s screen tests. It was not until 1960, when Sam Spiegel began to search for Arab actors (for *Lawrence of Arabia*) that Sharif came to his attention. Although Sharif eventually won the role of Sherif Ali, it was only after Spiegel had run through three other swarthy European actors, (the German Horst Buchholz, and two Frenchmen, Alain Delon and Maurice Ronet). Spiegel signed Sharif to a seven-film-contract between Columbia and Horizon, though Columbia did not like the seven-year gamble with an actor virtually unknown outside the Middle East and France. Spiegel understood that you no longer had to be tested and proven in Hollywood to have a lucrative career in the movies.

Sherif Ali was the only Arab role that Sharif played in his career in the cosmopolitan cinema. During the peak of his stardom between 1960 and 1968, he played the king of Armenia in *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, a Spanish civil war exile in *Behold a Pale Horse*, the title lead in *Genghis Khan*, a German in *Night of the Generals*, the Austrian archduke Rudolph in *Mayerling* (a film made in both French and English), a Jew in *Funny Girl*, and, probably most



4.13 Omar Sharif at Cannes Film Festival 1960s. Courtesy: BIF

famously, Yuri Zhivago (complete with straightened hair and taped eyes to make them look more Russian) in the 1965 film *Dr. Zhivago* directed by David Lean.⁸⁴ His good looks and his accent evoked a general sense of foreignness to audiences who simply didn’t know better. (One might also argue that Sharif’s roles stand as evidence of the limited number of parts for Arabs in English-language cinema.) But Sharif also carefully cultivated this sense of indeterminate cultural identity. The only parts he would never play were “Anglo-Saxon” roles. As he put it in his memoir, “I speak six languages the same way, with an accent that allows me to seem like a foreigner without exactly defining my origins, something that has served me well in my career.”⁸⁵ His multilingualism, combined with the variety of roles he played, contributed to his construction as the “international actor, Omar Sharif,” as one French reviewer called him.⁸⁶ Unlike the Frenchness films, which drew deep lines of affinity across the Atlantic between France and America by

underscoring nationality, the cosmopolitan films thrived on stars such as Sharif and on a hodgepodge of actors from many nations who seemed “un-marked” enough to play any number of nationalities.

The mobility and travel discussed earlier in *Around the World* became a staple of the cosmopolitan films whose narratives often began by establishing that the story begins in different places, although the plot will eventually have people from those places converge. For example, *The Pink Panther* begins with a fantasy Indian backstory and cuts to contemporary scenes in Paris, Rome, and Los Angeles. By the end of the film, everyone is at a ski lodge in Cortina in the Italian Alps. While audience demand for location shooting no doubt helped fuel cosmopolitan filmmaking, the practice also reflected the abilities of those making the films to actually work around the world. Studios had always sent second units to film establishing shots abroad, and each time such a crew went abroad, it also took a variety of shots to be stored in a studio’s stock images library.⁸⁷ Prior to the 1950s, filming on foreign locations was rare. There had been extraordinary projects such as MGM’s *Trader Horn* (1931), which was the first time a studio took principals to Africa; the next was almost twenty years later in late 1949 when MGM filmed *King Solomon’s Mines* in color in Nairobi.⁸⁸

Studios and cameramen liked to boast about the feats accomplished while shooting on location and those challenges began to be integrated into the films’ publicity materials. Trailers touted the locations, from the Norwegian fjords in *The Vikings* (1958) to the ports of Cyprus and Israel in *Exodus* (1960). Although it was impossible to film *Doctor Zhivago* in the Soviet Union in 1965, producer Carlo Ponti and director David Lean produced the film’s winter scenes in Finland, as close to the Russian border as they could get. They also rebuilt Moscow and the Russian steppe in the studios and suburbs outside Madrid.⁸⁹

As jet travel began to extend transatlantic voyages within the reach of the middle classes beginning in 1958, the movies kept a step ahead by going to even more exotic locations: Jamaica and Istanbul in the first two James Bond films, Greenland in *Savage Innocents*, the Jordanian desert in *Lawrence of Arabia*, and the jungle of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) standing in for Thailand in *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. But jet travel also enabled these location shoots themselves and the peripatetic quality of the cosmopolitan film production, as cast and crew could travel far distances more quickly, and daily work could be shot, developed, and sent back for evaluation.⁹⁰ For example, during the shooting of *Bridge* in 1956–57, David Lean lived in a hotel within a short drive of the prison camp set where he shot much of the film. By the

1960–62 shoot of *Lawrence of Arabia*, cast and crew flew into the desert each day; O’Toole and Sharif were even given a plane to go to Beirut on the weekends to enjoy the women and drinking binges they could have there.⁹¹

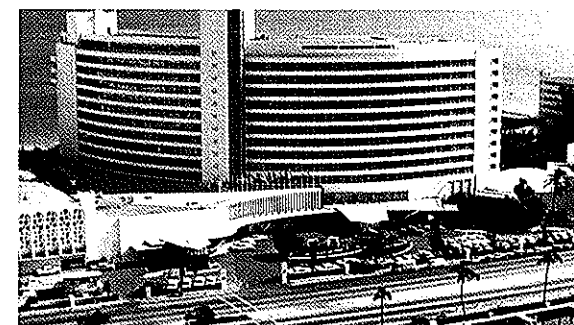
If jet travel made it easier for cast and crew to participate in the location shoots, the films also foregrounded travel as a theme—across time and space. The films were more than travelogues that take you elsewhere, they underscored the journey itself. Like *Around the World*, which featured a variety of Victorian modes of transport, the cosmopolitan films set in the present—such as the James Bond films, the Pink Panther movies, the comic whodunit *Charade*—feature hip hotels and airports that signal both a contemporary feel and luxury in travel. For example, *Charade’s* opening scene was shot at a brand new luxury hotel in the French Alps, complete with indoor pool (fig. 4.14). In *Dr. No*, James Bond arrives in Jamaica at the state-of-the-art airport on which the camera dwells seemingly gratuitously (fig. 4.15). In *Goldfinger*, the 1954 Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami Beach, known at the time as the ultimate in modern luxury, is the setting for the film’s opening minutes (fig. 4.16).

Travel is also prominently featured as a theme of the epics within the cosmopolitan film cycle. The bridge that will span the River Kwai and facil-

4.14 Hotel in Megève, with indoor pool, *Charade*, 1962.

4.15 Sparkling and new, the airport in Kingston, Jamaica, *Dr. No*, 1962.

4.16 Fontainebleau Hotel, Miami Beach, *Goldfinger*, 1964.

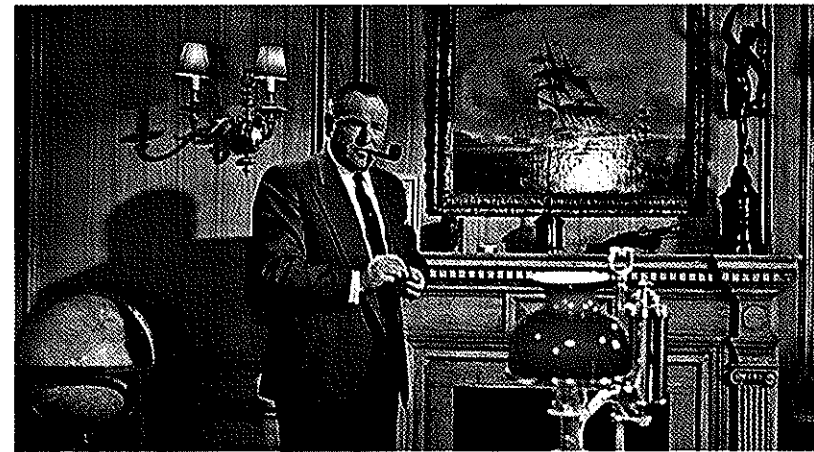
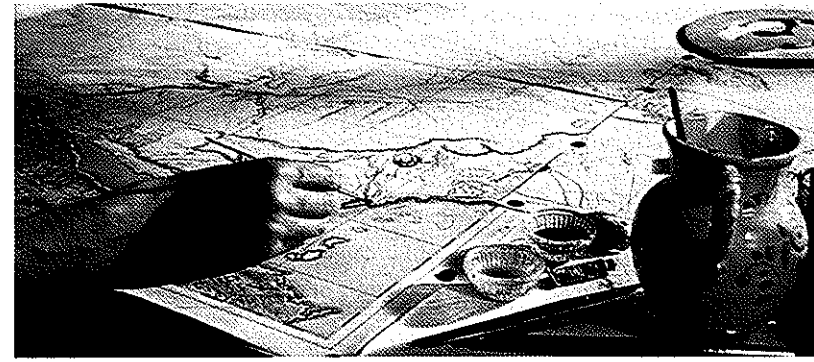




4.17 Goggles in trees after motorcycle accident, *Lawrence of Arabia*, 1962.

itate rail travel from Rangoon to Bangkok is the main element in that film; in *Lawrence*, Colonel Lawrence rides camels, jeeps, blows up train tracks, and meets his end by falling off a motorcycle, an accident chronicled in the film's opening sequence. The motoring goggles suspended in a tree (fig. 4.17) point to the irony that a man who could so ably ride camels through the scorching desert would meet his end on a modern and convenient mode of transport in his own serene English countryside. The films even portrayed elaborate travel in antiquity. In *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, the first spectacular scene features a summit of leaders of the provinces of the Roman Empire, from the king of Petra to Egypt to Judea to Britannia, each arriving on horseback or by chariot to assemble in front of Marcus Aurelius.

The films also heighten the audience's awareness of geography by displaying maps and making reference to transnational experiences. *Lawrence of Arabia's* flashback begins with an image of T. E. Lawrence painting a map (fig. 4.18). In *Dr. No*, when Bond visits M, the set includes a large map on the wall of Moneypenny's office and a prominently featured globe in M's office (figs. 4.19 and 4.20). The meaning of the maps is reinforced by the films' internationalism and transnational consciousness. In the Bond films, Honey Ryder, the daughter of a scientist, has lived all over the world; Dr. No is the child of a German missionary and a Chinese mother. The organization he represents, SPECTRE, which is an invention of the film series, is an international organization that transcends the East-West divisions of the Cold War.⁹² In fact, SPECTRE, which stands for Special Executive for Counter-Intelligence, Terrorism, Revenge, and Extortion has no headquarters and in that way mimics the film industry itself. In *Bridge on the River Kwai*, when the British assemble the team to blow up the bridge, a young Canadian joins them, acknowledging how perfect he is for the mission by saying that his presence is in keeping with the "international nature of the outfit." This sort



4.18 Lawrence drawing map, *Lawrence of Arabia*, 1962.

4.19 In M's office with globe on the left, *Dr. No*, 1962.

4.20 Map across the wall in Moneypenny's office, *Dr. No*, 1962.

of international team figures in part of Marcus Aurelius's vision of the Roman Empire in *Fall*. He explains:

you do not resemble each other, nor worship the same gods. You are the unity, which is Rome. Two hundred years ago, Gauls were our fiercest enemies and now we greet them as friends. . . . We come now to the end of the road, here within our reach, golden centuries of peace . . . wherever you live, whatever the color of your skin . . . will bring the supreme right of Roman citizenship . . . no longer provinces or colonies but Rome everywhere, a family of equal nations . . . that's what lies ahead.

Although it would be simple to see Rome as a stand-in for an emerging American empire, the statement is fraught with the much broader "family of man" rhetoric of the period. This same perspective is alluded to in *Bridge*, as the two commanding officers Nicholson and Saito, the former held prisoner by the latter, salute each other as they share a sense of accomplishment at the completion of the bridge.

These films had no vested interest in the American empire per se. Rather, they articulated a vision of transnationalism that matched a postwar internationalist idealism with what mattered to filmmakers with big-budget pictures. They were also commercially driven to create the globe as a whole in order to establish it as a marketplace.

This view itself is not global but is very much attached to an Occidental culture that posed identity itself as potentially enigmatic and thus up for question. James Bond insistently declares his identity: "Bond, James Bond." In *Lawrence*, the issue of the protagonist's identity is at the heart of the story. The film poses the question of identity and manages to offer both the usual host of clichés about the Middle East and what anthropologist Steven Caton rightly identifies as a much more complicated text: an allegory about anthropologists and cross-cultural identification, a film at once imperialist and aware of the limits of imperialism. "Who are you? Who are you?" a British man screams across the Suez Canal to T. E. Lawrence, dressed in his Arab garb. By raising identity itself as an issue, the films may have opened themselves up to broader identification among their transnational audiences.⁹³

As a group, the films above survey some of the myths, legends, and cultural continuities that had been part of the story of civilization in the West. After *Around the World in Eighty Days*, audiences that watched the cosmopolitan films would have also seen, between 1956 and 1966 alone, a range of Biblical and Ancient histories: *The Ten Commandments* (1956), *King of Kings* (1961), *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1962), *Barabbas* (1962), *Ben-Hur* (1959), *Spartacus*

(1960), *Cleopatra* (1963), *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (1964). Then there were the myths, legends, and events of a "civilization" narrative: *Genghis Khan*, *The Vikings*, *The Adventures of Marco Polo* (1965), *El Cid*, *The Agony and the Ecstasy* (1964), *War and Peace* (1956), *55 Days at Peking*, *Khartoum* (1966), *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Exodus* (1960), and *Doctor Zhivago*. Taken together, these films reiterated and helped construct a canon of important texts, events, and legends for audiences worldwide that are sometimes international, sometimes transnational, all globe-trotting and in that way "global" cultural products. Rather than serve any one nation, these films surely engaged in a triumphant Occidentalism by creating a popularized canon of Western civilization in film. In its own moment and now later seen through the prism of our increasingly globalized film production, the cosmopolitan film cycle underscores that producers also took on the messy business of representing a hybrid culture designed to be projected on screens around the world.

The development of films as that hybrid culture cannot be reduced to the postwar developments of increased travel and tourism nor to the internationalism of organizations such as the United Nations, nor to the ideology of Occidentalism taking aim at Communism during the Cold War nor can they be thrown off as meaningless function of an expanding market or expansionist marketing. The cosmopolitan cinema that arose in the mid-1950s embraced mobility across national borders and boundaries at the level of financial investment in production, in the act of filmmaking itself, in using multinational casts, and in telling stories that foregrounded both travel and the world itself as a theme and object. The films are a cultural potpourri whose very incoherence underscores their attempt to represent cultural hybridity and transnationalism. They are the "bastard" children of an odd union of Hollywood and Paris, conceived (to continue the metaphor) in the shade of the Promenade de la Croisette in Cannes. The films and their narratives "traveled" in ways that have made them obscure as a film cycle and also obscured their important role in the development of "global" film practice.

Around the World in Eighty Days is now largely forgotten for many reasons: Todd never made another film; the film loses much of its visual power when not projected in 70mm let alone in Todd-AO. In addition, today's audiences probably cannot suspend enough disbelief to accept Shirley MacLaine as an Indian princess or the Mexican Cantinflas as a Hispanico-Gallic Passepartout. Their characters make no sense in the terms of identity and identity politics that have developed since the 1960s and they could be easily dismissed as absurd at their most benign and offensive and racist at their worst. Yet this film and the cosmopolitan cinema shed light on a cinematic

imaginary of the 1950s and 1960s when film seemed like an ideal medium to help advance a brighter future in which the destructive forces of right-wing nationalism would be surpassed by an idealized and more “cosmopolitan” world. Although this may now seem like a naïve pipedream as a way of imagining relations between people the world around, it still makes business sense for the movies. What else can explain the 2004 Disney remake of *Around the World in Eighty Days* starring Jackie Chan as Passepartout?

Conclusion

WHETHER IN ITS uncanny capacity to capture the past for future generations; whether in its profound ability to shape the consciousness, experiences, and beliefs of those living in the present; whether in its vastly influential set of social practices dedicated to its consumption; whether in the enormous sums of financial and human resources dedicated to its production and distribution, film matters in the context of any history of the twentieth century. We can understand why movies matter by looking at why and how a certain set of influential films and their related institutions generated and re-generated a set of images and clichés that became a mass cultural entertainment to form a “global imaginary.” While I was writing this book, two of the films discussed within its pages were re-made: *Moulin Rouge* (2001) and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (2004). Movies are, of course, frequently remade, but the new versions of these films highlight how important the French fin-de-siècle and its visual culture have been in shaping the cinematic century. At the very least, I was encouraged by the fact that I was clearly not the only one thinking about Frenchness films from the 1950s at the start of the twenty-first century.

Moulin Rouge opened the 2001 Cannes Film Festival, of course. Director Baz Luhrmann explained why he chose to make a film with a Belle Epoque Parisian setting: “I had really wanted to do an 1890’s musical because I thought it would be a great way of looking at our millennial moment. The