On the surface, the French cinema industry is in rude good health. It produces more films per year than any other European country. It exports well. Its policy regime and particularly its capacity to extract money from cinema exhibition, television or DVD sales and channel it back into French film production is a model for others to envy or follow. Targeted supports allow France to bring on a wealth of young directors. Other countries have allowed multiplexes to sweep all before them and to offer a McDonaldised pseudo-variety at the box office. France has maintained a more diverse cinematic terrain, regulating multiplex construction and putting money into other cinemas so as to keep a rich art et essai sector alive. French cinema professionals have played an important role in the defence of cultural diversity from their mobilisation around the GATT talks in 1993 to the ratification of the UNESCO charter in 2007. At the same time, France has participated heavily in co-productions, welcomed foreign film-makers and been very active in generating support for European and other cinemas. Beneath the surface, there are, however, a series of crisis tendencies: increasing concentration of distribution; dramatic inflation in the cost of marketing a film; too many films chasing too few screens with too few able to afford the big advertising budgets that would allow them to achieve public visibility; blockbuster releases, the favourite fodder of multiplexes, occupying a large proportion of the country’s screens. The export health of French cinema is also deceptive: an increasing share of what is sold abroad is made up of English-language, ‘post-national’ films chasing too few screens with too few able to afford the big advertising budgets that would allow them to achieve public visibility; blockbuster releases, the favourite fodder of multiplexes, occupying a large proportion of the country’s screens. The export health of French cinema is also deceptive: an increasing share of what is sold abroad is made up of English-language, ‘post-national’ films produced by such as Luc Besson. The burgeoning festival circuit seems the best place to promote a different kind of film but festivals are also increasingly costly to participate in. French success doesn’t simply need celebrating. It needed to be questioned and perhaps defended.

The following free articles provide telling insights into these issues:

**Heritage, history and ‘new realism’: French cinema in the 1990s** Phil Powrie

**Figures of Vampirism: French Cinema in the Era of Global Transylvania** Martine Beugnet

**Post-1995 French cinema: Return of the social, return of the political?** Martin O'Shaughnessy

**Beur N the Hood: The articulation of Beur and French identities in the Thé au harem d'Archimède and Hexagone** Carrie Tarr

**New Clothes for Temporary Transvestites? Sexuality, Cross-dressing and Passing in the Contemporary French Film Comedy** Darren Waldron

Further discussion of the different questions raised above can be found in the following:

**Strategies for a ‘Transnational’/French Popular Cinema** Isabelle Vanderschelden

**Sub-Saharan African Cinemas: The French Connection** Teresa Hoefert de Turégano

**Screening the ‘other’ Paris: Cinematic representations of the French urban periphery in La Haine and Ma 6-T Va Crack-er** William Higbee

**Transnational Identities, Transnational Spaces: West Africans in Paris in Contemporary French Cinema** Carrie Tarr

**Locating the Postcolonial in Transnational Cinema: The Place of Algerian Émilé Directors in Contemporary French Film** Will Higbee

**Virtual Poaching and Altered Space: Reading Parkour in French Visual Culture** Neil Archer

**The problems of immigration as shown in the French cinema of the 1970s** Alison Smith

**Memory, Trauma, and the French-Algerian War: Michael Haneke's Caché (2005)** Nancy E. Virtue