

Chronicle of a Film

Edgar Morin

In December 1959, Jean Rouch and I were jurors together at the first international festival of ethnographic film in Florence. Upon my return, I wrote an article which appeared in January 1960, in *France Observateur*, entitled "For a New Cinéma-Vérité." I quote it here because it so clearly conveys the intentions which pushed me to propose to Rouch that he make a film, not in Africa this time, but in France.

For a New Cinéma-Vérité

At this first ethnographic and sociological festival of Florence, the *Festival di Popoli*, I got the impression that a new cinéma-vérité was possible. I am referring to the so-called documentary film and not to fictional film. Of course it is through fictional films that the cinema has attained and continues to attain its most profound truths: truths about the relations between lovers, parents, friends; truths about feelings and passions; truths about the emotional needs of the viewer. But there is one truth which cannot be captured by fictional films and that is the authenticity of life as it is lived.

Soviet cinema of the grande époque and then films such as *Le Voleur de bicyclette* and *La Terre tremble* tried their utmost to make certain individuals act out their own lives. But they were still missing that particular irreducible quality which appears in "real life."¹ Taking into account all the ambivalences of the real and of the imaginary, there is in every scene taken from life the introduction of a radically new element in the relationship between viewer and image.

Newscasts present us with life in its Sunday best—official, ritualized—men of state shaking hands, discussions. Once in a while fate, chance, will place in our field of vision a shriveled or a beaming face, an accident, a fragment of truth. This scene taken from life is most often a scene taken from death. As a general rule the camera is too heavy, it is not mobile enough, the sound equipment can't follow the action, and what is live escapes or closes up. Cinema needs a set, a staged ceremony, a halt to life. And then everyone masquerades—equipped with a supplementary mask on the camera.

Cinema cannot penetrate the depth of daily life as it is really lived. There remains the resource of the "camera-thief," like that of Dziga Vertov, camouflaged in a car and stealing snatches of life from the streets;² or like the film *Nice Time*, stealing kisses, smiles, people waiting outside Picadilly Circus. But they can't be seized or caught like scattered snapshots. There remains the resource of camouflaging the camera behind plate glass, as in the Czechoslovakian documentary *Les Enfants nous parlent*, but indiscretion seems to halt the filmmaker just as he becomes a spy.

Cinéma-vérité was thus at an impasse if it wanted to capture the truth of human relations in real life. What it could seize were the work and actions in the field or the factory; there was the world of machinery and technology, there were the great masses of humanity in motion. It is, in fact, this direction that was chosen by Joris Ivens, for example, or the English documentary school of Grierson.

There were some successful breakthroughs into peasant world, as in Henri Storck's *La Symphonie paysanne* and Georges Rouquier's *Le Farrebique*. The filmmaker entered a community and succeeded in revealing something of its life to us. There were some equally extraordinary breakthroughs into the world of the sacred and of ceremonies, for example Rouquier's *Lourdes* and Jean Rouch's *Les Maîtres fous*. But documentary cinema as a whole remains outside human beings, giving up the battle with fictional film over this terrain.

Is there anything new today? We got the impression at Florence that there was a new movement to reinvigorate man by means of cinema, as in *The Lambie Boys*, a documentary on a youth club in London (awarded a prize at Tours); or *On the Bowery*, a documentary on the drunkards in a section of New York; or *The Hunters*, a documentary on the Bushmen; or, of course, the already well-known films of Jean Rouch.

The great merit of Jean Rouch is that he has defined a new type of filmmaker, the "filmmaker-diver" who "plunges" into real-life situations.³ Ridding himself of the customary technical encumbrances and equipped only with a 16mm camera and a tape recorder slung across his shoulders, Rouch can then infiltrate a community as a person and not as the director of a film crew. He accepts the clumsiness, the absence of dimensional sound, the imperfection of the visual image. In accepting the loss of formal aesthetic, he discovers virgin territory, a life which possesses aesthetic secrets within itself. His ethnographer's conscience prevents him from betraying the truth, from embellishing upon it.

NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, all footnotes in this article were written by Jean Rouch.

1. The French is "pris sur le vif"—Ed

2. In fact it seems to me that the "camera-eye" experiments by Dziga Vertov and his friends ran up against equipment which was too heavy and difficult to handle. The camera in the street was visible to those it filmed, and this seemed to the authors to invalidate its results. Since then both technical manageability and people's reactivity to the camera have evolved considerably. We must also mention Jean Vigo, whose *À propos de Nice* is quite a fascinating endeavor.

What Rouch did in Africa has now begun in our own Western civilization. *On the Bowery* penetrates the real society of drunkards, who are really drunk, and the live location sound recording puts us right in the middle of a live take on what is really happening. Of course it is relatively easy to film drunken men who are not bothered by the presence of a camera among them. Of course we stay on the margin of real everyday life. But *The Lambeth Boys* tries to show us what young people really are like at play. This could have been achieved only through participant observation, the integration of the filmmaker into the youth clubs, and at the price of a thousand imperfections, or rather of the abandonment of ordinary framing rules. But this type of reporting opens up a prodigiously difficult new route to us. We have the feeling that the documentary wants to leave the world of production in order to show us the world of consumption, to leave the world of the bizarre or the picturesque in order to research the world of intimacy in human relations, or the essence of our lives.

The new cinéma-vérité in search of itself possesses from now on its "camera-pen," which allows an author to draft his film alone (16mm camera and portable tape recorder in hand). It had its pioneers, those who wanted to penetrate beyond appearances, beyond defenses, to enter the unknown world of daily life.

Its true father is doubtless much more Robert Flaherty than Dziga Vertov. *Nanook* revealed, in a certain way, the very bedrock of all civilization: the tenacious battle of man against nature, draining, tragic, but finally victorious. We rediscovered this Flahertian spirit in *The Hunters*, where pre-Iron Age Bushmen chase game which escapes them.⁴

We chose this film for an award not only for its fundamental human truth, but also because this truth suddenly revealed to us our inconceivable yet certain kinship with that tough and tenacious humanity, while all other films have shown us its exotic foreignness. The honesty of this ethnographic film makes it a hymn to the human race. Can we now hope for equally human films about workers, the petty bourgeois, the

petty bureaucrats, about the men and women of our enormous cities? Must these people remain more foreign to us than Nanook the Eskimo, the fisherman of Aran, or the Bushman hunter? Can't cinema be one of the means of breaking that membrane which isolates each of us from others in the metro, on the street, or on the stairway of the apartment building? The quest for a new cinéma-vérité is at the same time a quest for a "cinema of brotherhood."⁵

P.S. Make no mistake. It is not merely a question of giving the camera that lightness of the pen which would allow the filmmaker to mingle in the lives of people. It is at the same time a question of making an effort to see that the subjects of the film will recognize themselves in their own roles. We know that there is a profound kinship between social life and the theater, because our social personalities are made up of roles which we have incorporated within ourselves. It is thus possible, as in a sociodrama, to permit each person to play out his life before the camera.⁶ And as in a sociodrama, this game has the value of psychoanalytic truth, that is to say, precisely that which is hidden or repressed comes to the surface in these roles, the very sap of life which we seek everywhere and which is, nonetheless, within us. More than in social drama, this psychoanalytic truth is played for the audience, who emerges from its cinematographic catalepsy and awakens to a human message. It is then that we can feel for a moment that truth is that which is hidden within us, beneath our petrified relationships. It is then that modern cinema can realize, and it can only realize it through cinéma-vérité, that lucid consciousness of brotherhood where the viewer finds himself to be less alien to his fellow man, less icy and inhuman, less encrusted in a false life.

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In Florence I proposed to Rouch that he do a film on love, which would be an antidote to *La Française et l'amour*, in preparation at that time. When we met again in February in Paris, I abandoned this project, as it seemed too difficult, and I suggested this simple

3. This image of the filmmaker-diver always pleased (and flattered) me, the filmmaker with his equipment does indeed look like a deep-sea diver or like an interstellar voyager but one who navigates in a "non-silent" world.

4. *The Hunters*, produced by the team of the Film Center of the Peabody Museum (Harvard University), comprised of John Marshall, Professor Brew, and Robert Gardner.

5. The French is "cinéma de fraternité" - Ed.

6. This notion of the play of truth and life before the camera, pointed out by Edgar in 1959-60, is a capital one. Starting, no doubt, at the moment when Edgar sensed it in the drafts presented in Florence, it has been possible to pursue this play, no longer with only men who are alien to our culture (thus exotic to the spectator), but with men of our culture (thus brothers to the spectator). From this contact in Florence came the experience of *Chronique d'un été*.

theme: "How do you live?", a question which should encompass not only the way of life (housing, work) but also "How do you manage in life?". "What do you do with your life?"

Rouch accepted. But we had to find a producer. I laid out the idea in two minutes to Anatole Dauman (Argos Films), whom I had recently met. Dauman, seduced by the combination of Rouch and "How do you live?", replied laconically, "I'll buy it."

I then wrote the following synopsis for the filming authorization, which we had to request of the C.N.C. (Centre National de la Cinématographie).

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This film is research. The context of this research is Paris. It is not a fictional film. This research concerns real life. This is not a documentary film. This research does not aim to describe; it is an experiment lived by its authors and its actors. This is not, strictly speaking, a sociological film. Sociological film researches society. It is an ethnological film in the strong sense of the term: it studies mankind.

It is an experiment in cinematographic interrogation. "How do you live?" That is to say, not only the way of life (housing, work, leisure) but the style of life, the attitude people have toward themselves and toward others, their means of conceiving their most profound problems and the solutions to those problems. This question ranges from the most basic, everyday, practical problems to an investigation of man himself, without wanting, a priori, to favor one or the other of these problems. Several lines of questioning stand out: the search for happiness; is one happy or unhappy; the question of well-being and the question of love; equilibrium or lack thereof; stability or instability; revolt or acceptance.

This investigation is carried out with men and women, of various ages, of various backgrounds (office workers, laborers, merchants, intellectuals, worldly people, etc.) and will concentrate on a certain number of individuals (six to ten) who are quite different from each other, although none of these individuals could rightly be considered a general "social type."

Considering this approach, we could call this film "two authors in search of six characters." This Pirandellian movement of research will be sensitive and will serve as the dynamic springboard for the film. The authors themselves mingle with the characters; there is not a moat on either side of the camera but free circulation and exchanges. The characters assist in the search, then dissociate themselves, then return to it, and so on. Certain centers of interest are localized (a certain café or group of friends) or are polarized (the problems of couples or of breadwinning).



Edgar Morin and Jean Rouch: "two authors in search of six characters"

Our images will no doubt unveil gestures and attitudes in work, in the street, in daily life, but we will try to create a climate of conversation, of spontaneous discussions, which will be familiar and free and in which the profound nature of our characters and their problems will emerge. Our film will not be a matter of psychodrama acted out or of interviews but of a sort of psychodrama carried out collectively among authors and characters. This is one of the richest and least exploited universes of cinematographic expression.

At the end of our research we will gather our characters together; most of them will not yet have met each other; some will have become acquainted partially or by chance. We will show them what has been filmed so far (at a stage in the editing which has not yet been determined) and in doing so attempt the ultimate psychodrama, the ultimate explication. Did each of them learn something about him/herself? Something about the others? Will we be closer to each other or will there just be embarrassment, irony, skepticism? Were we able to talk about ourselves? Can we talk to others? Did our faces remain masks? However, whether we reach success or failure in our communications during this final confrontation, the success is enough, and the failure is itself a provisional response, as it shows how difficult it is to communicate and in a way enlightens us about the truth

we are seeking. In either case, the ambition of this film is that the question which came from the two author-researchers and was incarnated by means of the real individuals throughout the film will project itself on the theater screen, and that each viewer will ask himself the question "How do you live?", "What do you do in your life?" There will be no "THE END" but an open "to be continued" for each one.

In the course of subsequent discussions, Dauman, Rouch, and I reach an agreement to proceed with some "trial runs." I propose some dinners in a private home (this will be in Marceline's apartment). The starting principle will be *commensality*, that is, that in the course of excellent meals washed down with good wines⁷ we will entertain a certain number of people from different backgrounds, solicited for the film. The meal brings them together with the film technicians (cameraman, sound recordist, grips) and should create an atmosphere of camaraderie. At a certain given moment, we will start filming. The problem is to lift people's inhibitions, the timidity provoked by the film studio and cold interviews, and to avoid as much as possible the sort of "game" where each person, even if he doesn't play a role determined by someone else, still composes a character for himself. This method aims to make each person's reality emerge. In fact, the "commensality," bringing together individuals who like and feel camaraderie with each other, in a setting which is not the film studio but a room in an apartment, creates a favorable climate for communication.

Once filming begins, the actors at the table, isolated by the lighting but surrounded by friendly witnesses, feel as though they are in a sort of intimacy. When they allow themselves to be caught up in the questions, they descend progressively and naturally into themselves. It is pretty difficult to analyze what goes on. It is, in a way, the possibility of a confessional but without a confessor, the possibility of a confession to all and to no one, the possibility of *being* a bit of one's self.

7. At the beginning, this fine meal idea was destined more than anything to satisfy the demonic gourmandise of Morin, thus to get him in the mood for conversation. In fact it allowed a feeling of trust to develop among the actors and the crew, which was indispensable for suppressing inhibitions before the camera (always present and ready to record at any moment).

8. This is one of the major obstacles in this cinema based on complete improvisation. When we do not film a scene as a result of carelessness, or when the filming fails for technical reasons, the new takes are never as good as the original. We eliminated all of them in the final editing. (In *La Pyramide humaine* I also suffered terribly from this difficulty; certain remade scenes had to be kept, these are the worst in the film.)

This experience also takes on meaning for the person being questioned because it is destined for the cinema, that is to say, for isolated individuals in a dark theater, invisible and anonymous, but present. The prospect of being televised, on the other hand, would not provoke such internal liberation, because then it is no longer a matter of addressing everyone and no one, but of addressing people who are eating, talking.

Of course, no question is prepared in advance. And everything must be improvised. I propose to approach, through a certain number of characters, the problem of work (the laborers), of housing and vacations (the Gabillons), of the difficulty of living (Marceline, Marilou). Rouch chooses the technicians: the cameraman Morillère, who works with him at the Musée de l'Homme, the sound recordist Rophé, the electrician Moineau. We start at the end of May, as soon as Rouch finishes *La Pyramide humaine*.

The first meal concerns Marceline, who also plays the role of all-purpose assistant during this preliminary phase. In spite of the dinner, all three of us are very tense and intimidated. It is the beginning of this meal which appears in the first sequence of the film (the essential part of the rest of that conversation is also reproduced in this volume). At the screening of the rushes, we are disappointed. Marceline has narrated episodes of her life, but she has not revealed herself. My first questions were brutal and clumsy; Marceline closed up, and I went back in my shell. It's Rouch who revived the dialogue.

At the second meal we have Jacques Mothet. Jacques is a P2 at Renault and belongs to a group called "Socialism or Barbarity." I think he is the only one since Navel to describe in an illuminating way what goes on in a factory. I do not share the views of "Socialism or Barbarity," and Mothet considers me with a certain distrust. It was upon my insistence that he agreed to participate in this trial. In the course of the meal a lively discussion pits him against Moineau, our electrician, who scorns factory workers, having emancipated himself to find an independent profession. We get so caught up in the discussion that it does not occur to us to film; we realize too late that we have let something essential escape. We ask Jacques and Moineau to take up the debate again. We film, but there is no longer the same spontaneity.⁸ [A short fragment of this scene was integrated in the film. Moineau is cut out; Jacques talks about workers who unsuccessfully try to leave the factory. This fragment is edited together with a later discussion which brings together Jacques, Angélo, and Jean.]

The third trial run is with Marilou. Marilou has been adrift for several months, and during this time I have not had a conversation with her. To my mind, Marilou confirms the idea that the best are those who live with the most difficulty. It suffices here to say that for me

the question "How do you live?" necessarily and fundamentally implicated Marilou. The naive viewer will be surprised if I say that ordinarily and especially in public, Marilou is shy. What happened that evening was an unforeseen and distressing plunge, of which the camera evidently only recorded that which emerged in the language and on the face of Marilou.⁹ (in the filmscript that follows we have almost fully restored my dialogue with Marilou that was cut from the film.)

For the fourth trial we invite Jacques Gabillon and his wife, Simone. I knew Gabillon during the time when I was the editor of the *Patriot Resistant*, the journal of the F.N.D.I.R.P. (Federation of Resistant and Patriotic Deportees and Internees). From Bordeaux he came to Paris, where he had great difficulty finding work and housing. Since then he has been an employee of the S.N.C.F. (the national railroad) for several years. I have the impression that Simone and Jacques invest a large portion of their aspirations on vacations, which are made easier for them by the availability of free railroad tickets. In fact they are leaving this very evening to spend the Pentecost holidays in Brittany, and we are hoping to hold them here right up to the last minute, so that the camera could record live their fear of missing the train. Through them we plan to raise the issue of modern-day vacations. But I start by talking to them about the question of housing and the conversation takes an unexpected turn (bedbugs). At this point there is a camera failure and they leave without attacking the question of vacations. [A section of this scene was put in the film at the beginning of a second Gabillon interview, which we filmed later, at the end of June or early July.]

We want a student. Marceline insists that we take Jean-Pierre. I hesitate because he is too close to Marceline. Rouch says Jean-Pierre is okay. I give in to their opinion (I won't regret it). At the same time it will eventually be a matter of a new trial run with Marceline, who had overcomposed her character in her first trial. We do not forewarn Marceline that she will be included in the course of this dinner. We only

tell her to remain seated next to Jean-Pierre. We find that it is difficult to begin a conversation with him. I try to ask him what his reactions are to people of my age. After a few abstract exchanges, Jean-Pierre talks about his feeling of impotence and evokes the woman that he had been unable to make happy. Then I address myself to Marceline, who is very moved. [The last part of this interaction is almost totally preserved in the film.]

Finally we film an encounter between Marceline and Marilou in the presence of Jean-Pierre. Marceline and Marilou had met a month or two earlier and liked each other. Then there was a cooling of this friendship, which I attributed to the first trial runs. (We had been moved by Marilou's trial run, disappointed with Marceline's.) I thought it healthy to open up an explanation in front of the camera, during a dinner, of course, in hopes of provoking a revival of the lost friendship by means of a frank explication. In fact, I provoked an even more marked confrontation, in which each one in turn retreated into her solitude. Nothing from this discussion, perhaps the first real argument which has been recorded on film, was included in the final film.¹⁰

The "trial runs" are finished. We don't know yet that what will end up being the essence of our film has already been shot. The producers have decided to continue but on the condition that Rouch agree to take on a cameraman of great talent (Sacha Vierny) and a master editor (Colpi). I myself would agree, as I accord small importance to such matters, but Rouch, who can only work with technicians that he gets along with well, wants to choose his own. After exhausting discussions, Rouch accepts Viguer (cameraman for *Lourdes* by Rouquier) and Tarbès.

At the same time Rouch is negotiating with Pierre Braunberger, producer of his preceding films, who does not want Rouch to undertake anything before reworking the editing of *La Pyramide humaine*.

Besides this, Rouch and I are beginning to have our differences. For him, the words spoken in the course of the trial runs should illustrate the images.

9. I was behind the camera during this scene. We were then using an Arriflex camera with an enormous soundproof case ("blimp"). Morillère was at my side, holding focus. When Marilou spoke of suicide, the silence which followed was so necessary that no one spoke. Morillère and I exchanged a glance which meant "we won't stop" and when Morin finally broke the silence, everyone breathed again.

10. This beautiful scene had to be eliminated because the pretext of the discussion was the screening of the film *l'Etoile*, which Marilou and Marceline had just seen. The references to this film were too frequent to avoid making this section an overly specific discussion.

He has had enough of filming in place, in a room with a camera on a tripod. He has had even more than enough of seeing that everything filmed so far is sad; it needs joyful things, gaiety, the other aspect of life. He thinks the film should be centered on two or three heroes; otherwise the spectator runs the risk of being lost in a succession of images, unable to relate to characters he knows nothing about. If necessary, we would establish a plausible plot, as in *La Pyramide humaine*. On top of this, Rouch wants to finish up some research which is close to completion: to film in the street with synchronous sound, that is, for example, to capture the conversation of two friends who are walking down the Champs-Élysées. Finally, in this end of June, beginning of July, Rouch thinks that some considerable event may evolve in the course of the summer (generalized conflict starting with the events in the Congo? peace in Algeria with the conversations of Melun?), and that we must film *Summer 1960* as a chronicle of a capital moment in history.¹¹

As for me, I think that the trials are only interesting if the words emerge from the faces, in close-ups, of Gabillon, Marceline, Jean-Pierre, Marilou, Jacques. I think that we must now go to Jacques's actual workplace, that is, to the Renault factory, and maybe film other places of work, like the offices of the S.N.C.F. where Gabillon is employed. We should also go to leisure places, in the streets of the city. We should attack the political problems which weigh down this summer of 1960—the Congo, the war of Algeria—but I would not like the theme of "How do you live?" to dissolve into the "chronicle of a summer." Neither would I like it to dissolve into two or three people, nor would I like it to be characters, but multiple presences. This means pursuing a survey on three levels: the level of private life, internal and subjective; the level of work and social relations; and finally the level of present history, dominated by the war in Algeria. The film should be a montage of images in which the question "How do you live?" is transformed into "How can one live?" and "What can one do?" which would bounce off the viewer.

11. It was a gamble, we lost. Indeed the summer of 1960 was to represent for us an essential moment in the history of France, and to show the repercussions of this adventure on the heroes already associated with our enterprise seemed to me to become the principal subject of the film. Nothing remains of this except for the Algeria-Congo discussion and the title: *Chronique d'un été*.

Pressed from all sides, in different directions by two producers, and by me, Rouch establishes a *modus vivendi* with Braunberger and accedes to the wishes of Dauman. While I am far away from Paris, he films on the Champs-Élysées with synchronous sound, Jean-Pierre and his friend taking a walk; introduces them to some other people, among whom is Marilou; finally he films the fourteenth of July dance with Jean-Pierre, Rémy, Marilou, Landry, and Marceline.

After the Champs-Élysées filming, a triangular discussion opposes Dauman, Viguier, and Rouch. Dauman complains about the poor quality of the film. From that point on, he wants to block any further technical improvisation and threatens to abandon the film if "drastic" measures are not taken.

I take advantage of the crisis to revive the theme of this time collective meals. At the discussion concerning the film, in addition to Jean-Pierre, Régis, and Marilou, Rouch introduces Jean-Marc, a young filmmaker. I introduce Céline, a Communist student. This discussion was in fact quite lively, violent, and at certain moments pathetic, at others comical (I was drunk halfway through the meal); Viguier and the sound recordist, Guy Rophé, participated quite spontaneously. [Only a few pale tatters of this discussion remain in the film, since we have omitted the scenes where certain of the young people got very nervous.]

The discussion on the Congo is filmed in three parts, on the terrace of the Totem, the restaurant Musée de l'Homme. Rouch has introduced Nadine, Landry, and Raymond, who appeared in *La Pyramide humaine* while they were high school students in Abidjan. Two discussions result, one unforeseen discussion on sexual relations between blacks and whites and the other on the Congo, the first ending at the moment Marceline explains the meaning of the number tattooed on her arm.

At this moment, Viguier and Tarbès leveled the camera at Landry's suddenly solemn face; they framed the face of Nadine, who has begun to cry. Landry. At that second the film in the camera went out, and we could only capture the beginning of Nadine's emotion, as she hides her face in her hand.

Two remarks: (1) In this type of filming, the filmmaker must follow the event. In ordinary films the event is circumscribed by a preestablished frame composition. Here, however, everything depends on improvisation on a sort of telepathic communication which is established between the cameraman and the scene. It is the cameraman's responsibility to capture the significant face, which is not necessarily the speaker's, in the course of filming. Morillère, Rouch, Viguier, Tarbès, and (later) Brault all had some of these inspired moments which involved more than talent, sympathy and communication.

(2) The expression on a face in tears is radically different in acted cinema and in lived cinema. In acted cinema, the actor forces the expression on his face to *signify* his tears; even when he is really moved, he exaggerates his emotion so as to convey it. In real life, we make tremendous efforts to disassemble tears: we hold back sobs, tighten our facial muscles; we inhibit instead of exhibit. This was revealed at the playback projection of the scenes where Marceline (the dinner with Jean-Pierre), Marilou, and Nadine (fleeting, because there was no more film) are in tears.

Around the twentieth of July we lose our cameraman. However, I have already made arrangements with Renault Corporation so that we can film in their factory workshops. We have to film before July 28, the date when the factory closes for vacation. I had already asked Jacques to pick out some young workers to do a discussion-dinner on their work, and there was only one evening—or night, rather—when we could get them together after work let out.

Argos Films assigned us a director of production, who has the disagreeable job of overseeing the technical conditions of the filming. He is ordered to authorize filming only if a clapstick slate is used: this order was not always respected. It is a director of shorts, Heinrich, who accepted this job so as to watch Rouch film and to get to know his methods. As I insist on the need for the workers' meal, Heinrich calls on two television cameramen. We go to the factory exit to look for Jacques, who introduces us to Angélo and Jean. The technical preparations are difficult. It is late. We are tired. We film at around three in the morning a discussion which reveals Angélo and Jean to us. [Only a thin fragment of this discussion is integrated in the film.]

We have forty-eight hours before vacation closing to film in the Renault factories at Billancourt. We hire Coutard, who worked with a hand-held camera in Godard's *A bout de souffle* and who is free for a few days before he has to begin *Le petit soldat*. What we have to film, unlike industrial documentaries, is not machines but the faces and hands of the workers. The vacant faces of those who do mechanical work, the specialized workers, appendages of their machines, eternally repeating the same gestures. We should also film the relationships between boss-foremen and workers, but this is impossible; we would have to camouflage microphones and cameras in every corner of the shops.

Following Jacques's indications, I keep an eye out for the most significant scenes. While Coutard's assistant cameraman, Beausoleil, sets up a camera on a tripod with a microphone fixed next to it, Coutard and Rouch wander among the machines. Coutard, with 35mm camera in hand, ultrasensitive film (which needs no lighting), and telephoto lens, shoots scenes of the factory without being noticed. We also film the great vacation exodus from the factory, with three cameras set up at different points. We accumulate almost an hour and a half of film. We have not filmed Angélo, Jean, and Jacques at their machines, for fear of unfavorable reactions from the management, either for them later or for us at the moment.

Shortly thereafter—or shortly before?—we have a dinner with the Gabillons, again at Marceline's apartment, where we bring up several different subjects about happiness and about work. Jacques Gabillon talks about "two men" who are in him and of the modern-day man, "a bunch of identity papers." [Part of this meal makes up the second half of the Gabillon sequence.]

In the meantime Rouch and Dauman reach an agreement to hire the Canadian cameraman Michel Brault. Brault had shot some short films with a hand-held camera and in synchronous sound for the Canadian National Film Board. Rouch knew him and admired his work. After several intercontinental telegrams and phone calls, Brault agrees to come and arrives in Paris at the end of July, beginning of August. This is the chance for Rouch to victoriously resume his filming experiments in the street, in nature, with synchronous sound. This time Rouchian "pédovision" will replace my "commensality." (This is what we call the two methods used in this film.)

The fifteenth of August approaches. Rouch wants to film Marceline alone in the streets of deserted Paris on August 15. Marceline proposes going to the Place de la Concorde where Dmytryck is making a film about the German occupation. It is studded with Wehrmacht direction signs: there are extras dressed up as German soldiers. We arrive at the Place de la Concorde on August 15, but Dmytryck's filming ended the day before, the German signs have disappeared, no more Wehrmacht.

Rouch inaugurates the new methods: Marceline will have a tape recorder slung across her shoulders, connected to a clip-on lavalier microphone brought by Brault; she will walk along, talking to herself in a low voice. Brault films her from Rouch's 2CV with Rouch at his side. Heinrich, Rophé, his assistant, and I push the 2CV for the dolly shot. We continue at the Place de l'Opéra, hardly deserted: August 15 was quite populated this year—not only tourists, but Parisians as well. I propose a quiet street in the Sentier, rue Beauregard (where a few unknowns begin to gather) and then Les Halles where the

strangely dead setting, a sort of station from a nightmare, makes Marceline recall the transport to Auschwitz and the return. To establish contact with normal life, Rouch makes Marceline walk under the Arcades on the rue de Rivoli, where she continues to talk to herself whenever inspired by the store windows. [In the film we have kept the Place de la Concorde and Les Halles sequences from this filming.]

Once again Rouch is struck with the desire to leave the "sad" problems and look for something else. He takes advantage of a meeting in Saint Jean de Luz with Braunberger to take off with Nadine, Landry, and Brault. He films several scenes between Nadine and Landry on the road, at the seashore, where Nadine and Landry are supposed to be two student hitchhikers who take off to the south of France on vacation. [From this shooting there remains a fragment of the bullfight in the final film.]

Rouch wants to film Saint Tropez, continuing the hitchhiking adventure of Landry and Nadine, and reintroducing Marilou, Jean-Pierre, and Marceline. As this idea holds absolutely no appeal for me, he tries to win me over by saying that we'll film my little daughters in Saint Tropez, discovering some new starlets. What finally makes up my mind is the idea of Landry as "black explorer of France on vacation."

Meantime Rouch has the idea of a pseudo-Brigitte Bardot, whom we will put in the setting Saint Tropez. This idea appeals to Dauman, who sets out to look for pseudo-Brigitte Bardots; his associate Lifchitz goes off on his own hunt. We run the risk of being inundated with false B.B.'s, but Argos Films, to economize, only hires one—the real Sophie Destrade.

While the Saint Tropez expedition is being prepared to Rouch's great joy, I learn that Marilou is leading a new life. She no longer feels as lonely as before and has met a young man with whom she is in love. I propose a new dialogue with Marilou, which takes place in my home. Marilou has forewarned me that she will not talk about her friend, her apprehension makes her very nervous (We had to wait two hours before the equipment was ready to function, and she had to get back to her office.) As she spoke her facial expression changed from joy to fear to the sadness of memory to hope. ["Marilou is Happy" sequence.]

Marceline has stayed in Paris while Jean-Pierre is on vacation with Régis in the south. She thinks Jean-Pierre is drifting away from her. She has family problems. We film a conversation with her but she has been, unconsciously, influenced by the rushes she has seen of Marilou. [This dialogue with Marceline was not integrated into the film.] From this point on, we no longer show the rushes to the participants, except to Angélo, who has a skeptical, even ironic, interest in our enterprise.



Landry, "African explorer of France on vacation," at Saint Tropez



Sophie at Saint Tropez

Jean-Pierre and Marceline
during their final dialogue
at Saint Tropez



Rouch, Brault, Marilou, Landry, Nadine, and Catherine take the "Caravelle" airliner. Rouch introduces Catherine, who is a happy woman: she has no problems, says he (unfortunately she will have some problems in Saint Tropez). In the plane, Rouch films a conversation between Catherine and Landry, who pretend they are just meeting. He films Marilou and Landry. In the train from Nice to Saint Raphael he films again. [Nothing of all of this is preserved in the film.]

At this point Rouch and I have a clear difference of opinion. Rouch wants to film a surrealist dream with Marilou, where she wanders alone in the night, dances, goes for a walk in the cemetery, meets a man who is wearing the mask of Eddie Constantine; the man pursues her, unmask himself, it's Landry. I tell him that I am against this scene, as any fiction falsifies the very meaning of what has already been filmed. Rouch films Catherine waterskiing. I grumble. Finally we reach an agreement: I'll stick to everything having to do with "Landry, black explorer," I'll stick to the false Brigitte Bardot and to the staged publicity

photographers attracting the crowd of tourists; I propose a collective discussion on the theme of Saint Tropez, and I maintain that we must film a dialogue between Jean-Pierre and Marceline.¹²

The Saint Tropez discussion takes place on the terrace of a hotel, but the film used to record this discussion was, by mistake, mostly ultrasensitive film. [The film retains a brief moment of the usable segment, and Sophie's comments in the discussion are used as voice-over while she walks at l'Épi beach.]

I revive the theme of happiness in a conversation filmed with my two daughters, with Landry intervening. [A fragment of the conversation was preserved in the film.]

During these two days of filming, Marceline and Jean-Pierre are having difficulties in their relationship. I ask them again if they would agree to try to work out their relationship in front of the camera. I tell Jean-Pierre separately that this scene, where for the first time the camera would film a couple's discussion, would only be meaningful if it were not thought out in advance. Since for some time Marceline has had the

12. Though all this Saint Tropez period was terribly depressing for Edgar, who felt threatened by the fiction of psychodramas, it was terribly exciting for Michel Brault and me, as we invented our new tools. We came back from Lausanne, where Stephan Kudelski, inventor of the Nagra tape recorder, excited by the enthusiasm of Michel Fano (sound engineer), Michel Brault, and me, let us glimpse the cinema which was to be born a year later: Marilou's dreams, fake encounters in the plane and the train, the false B. B. —these were as much experiments in synchronous sound filming in a plane, on a train, in a crowd, etc.: the first in the world and since much imitated.

tendency of composing her own character, Jean-Pierre would have to avoid allowing the climate of their dialogue to become too literary. What would Marceline and Jean-Pierre decide? I don't know. We waited until the last moment to tell Jean-Pierre and Marceline that it was their turn, and Rouch chose a little nearby jetty. There is a strong mistral on the embankment. Jean-Pierre and Marceline sit side by side. Rouch is listening in through headphones: he's the only one who can hear the dialogue. Brault is lying three meters away with the camera, and I myself at three meters' distance can hear nothing. Jean-Pierre has the clip-on lavalier microphone. From time to time Brault says "cut," he changes angle; Jean-Pierre responds by clapping his hands to slate the next scene. [This scene was condensed in the editing, not by choosing one continuous segment, but by selecting and juxtaposing different moments. The viewer also sees frequent shot changes, and under these conditions it is difficult to escape the idea of staging, especially since it is difficult to believe that a couple could agree to give themselves up in such a way to the camera. This sequence, which was cut out by Argos in the copy passed on exclusively to the "Agriculteurs," is kept in the other copies.¹³ It shows much more pointedly than the other sequences the problems of conventional cinematic editing in relation to our filmed material. In spite of the misunderstandings it might engender, I think this scene necessary, because it witnesses an extreme point of our enterprise.]¹⁴

We return to Paris. Argos (in a new repressive phase) wants to limit our filming days. Rouch cannot film if he feels pressured. I suggest to Rouch that he accept the limits; if we have not completed our program, Argos will be obliged to make us finish the film. But interminable discussions continue.

Nonetheless, I establish a filming schedule in a spirit of compromise with Rouch: since Rouch wants some "heroes," I make an effort to put some emphasis on the worker-heroes Angélo, Jacques, Jean. At the same time, in order to revive the theme of "How do you live?", which has already been considerably

compromised, I propose interviews in the street where Marceline and Nadine stop passersby and them "Are you happy?" Again I take up the theme had already planned, of encounters among our characters: worker-student encounters, encounters of women among themselves, encounters of men, to lead up to the grand final encounter. To start, we go to approach the question of the return from vacation. Rouch accepts this program: He also wants film conversations on the terrace of a café (Les Dr Magots), in a department store like Galeries Lafayette, and an encounter in the women's shop Catherine has on the Left Bank. The film crew for the last shooting period is made up of: cameraman: Brault; sound: Rophé (in his absence either Rouch or Boucher take care of it); and general assistants: Morillère and Boucher, who are attached to the committee on ethnographic film. Rouch has arranged with the engineer Coutant the possibility of working with his new prototype electronic 16mm camera, which is lighter and, more important, *soundproof*, that is to say, we can film anywhere, without a "blimp" to absorb camera noise.

The end of vacation means first of all back to school: we film Irène, Véronique, and their little friend Dominique leaving the Fenelon high school during their first days of school and walking home on rue Soufflot. The Rouch technique is in full force here. Véronique has the clip-on microphone and a tape recorder slung over her shoulders; they walk freely. Brault, guided by hand signals from Rouch, follows or precedes them, filming up close with a wide-angle lens. Thus in this procession where filmers and filmees are most form one body, the normal movement of passersby is almost undisturbed, the characters in movement feel at ease with the camera, their comments are directly related to the spectacle in the street (a *France-Soir* headline, a cinema poster, a shop window, etc.). The sound leaves something to be desired: every step Véronique takes jostles the tape recorder; we can hear a sound like a heartbeat; certain words are barely audible. We also film Véronique and Irène doing their first homework, questioned by Nadine on their first days back to school and on the characters in the film. These scenes were not included in the film. I would have liked to see them ask more about the opinion of the two little girls on the world of adults, on their own "How do you live?"

The end of vacation is also Jean-Pierre preparing for his philosophy exams, which he failed in June. An important theme: if Jean-Pierre fails them again in October, he will lose his deferment and be called up for military service, that is to say, Algeria. We film a discussion scene at Jean-Pierre's desk with Régis. They talk in ironic terms of philosophy, they consult the list of signatures for the call of the 121, they

13 "Les Agriculteurs" was a movie theater known for screening experimental and innovative films. The scene mentioned here is included in the film script that follows; it does not appear in English subtitled prints of the film circulated in the United States.—Ed.

14. To my mind, this scene is one of the most beautiful in the film, along with the one of Marceline on August 15 (of which this is the opposite). We made the error, in editing, of trying to condense it (it lasted almost half an hour in the rushes), respecting a certain cinematographic language (changes of angles between different shots).



Michel Brault films Régis and Jean-Pierre on the Champs-Élysées

blame Rouch and me for not signing, trying to get a rise out of us. Then we film Jean-Pierre coming out of his exam; he leaves the Sorbonne. Régis is waiting for him in the square with the tape recorder over his shoulder and clip-on microphone on his lapel. Brault films their encounter and follows them. While they head toward the Seine or small side streets, they talk about the written dissertation, then about one thing or another in a half-serious, half-joking tone. On the quays of the Seine, Régis asks Jean-Pierre what his plans are for the future and whether he imagines himself joining in. Jean-Pierre does not want to join in. They walk away along the quays toward the east, toward the future, says Régis, who will, in the next year, belong to the Communist party. When Jean-Pierre finds out he has passed, we film Rouch, Moin and Jean-Pierre walking in the gardens of l'Observatoire. Jean-Pierre is questioned about his plans for the future. [None of those scenes is included in the final film.]

The end of vacation is Marilou returning home; her fragile happiness seems to have consolidated a bit. We shoot a scene in a hotel room on rue Gir-le-Coeur where she goes to see her friend Jeanne, whom she hasn't seen since she got back. Jeanne asks her questions about her vacation, her plans. Marilou is relaxed, cheerful. [This scene, kept almost up to the last moment, was finally not included in the film (to my great regret, since it showed Marilou smiling and joking) as with almost all scenes dealing with the return from vacation and events which follow the vacations.]

The end of vacation is also the Gabillions returning with souvenirs and photos of their vacation in Spain. We go to the Gabillions' apartment, in their low-cost housing development in Clichy, and we film their breakfast and ask them to bring out their photos and talk about their vacation. [This scene was not included in the film.]

In filming the return from vacation, we took advantage of the chance to film daily life. Marilou and her boyfriend getting washed and dressed in her little room, the camera follows them down the service stairs (the longest stairway traveling shot that has ever been done. Brault's camera following Marilou's hands on the banister rail), in the street, then Marilou walking up the Champs-Élysées, going into her office (at Cahiers du Cinéma), working on some letters, and typing. [Some of these shots were included, one at the beginning of the first Marilou sequence, the other at the end of the second Marilou sequence.]

Daily life, that means filming the life outside work. Angelo, Jean, Jacques. We start with Angelo, whom we meet at the exit of the factory and who is then followed by Brault in the street, on the bus, at home, without interruption until nightfall. We don't know where Angelo lives, and we discover the interminable stairway which goes up to the Clamart plateau (we could not have found such a setting if we had searched for one like it), the suburban streets which change from urban to rustic, and finally the little cottage where Angelo lives with his mother. We also discover how Angelo spends his time, doing judo

exercises (he is a judoka amateur), playing guitar, reading (a life of Danton), then dinner and bed. Since Angélo gets up at 4:45 the next morning, he goes to bed early. We tell him to leave his key in the door so we can film him waking up. At three in the morning Morillère comes to wake me up while Boucher waits in the street. Completely naked, haggard, I open the door for him, he flees. I catch up to him and then call Rouch. I tear him from his sleep. Rouch phones Brault. We pick up Rouch and Brault in Dauphine, and, cursing the film, empty-stomached, we hurry to Clamart. In the darkness we penetrate like burglars into Angélo's little garden. Boucher steps in manure, stifling his curses. We finally enter the bedroom on tiptoe, holding back our laughter. Brault hoists his camera up to his shoulder and that's the signal: we turn on the lights. While Brault shoots, we see Angélo coming out of sleep under the effects of the light. When he discovers us, flabbergasted, he curses at us, and we burst into laughter. [This shot of his waking is retained in the film. It does not strike the spectator, who cannot tell the difference with a fake movie alarm-clock ring.] Angélo has his coffee with milk, brought to him by his mother, then gets up, washes, gets dressed, leaves the house, takes the bus, etc. . . . the camera follows him up till the moment when he disappears into the factory by the great door on the Place National, while we see, as though a director had prepared everything, two guards in uniform watching the entrances and, in front of the door, a worker distributing leaflets. [A certain number of shots from this Angélo filming were preserved and edited into the final film.]

This same morning Angélo is called in by the management of his shop, where he is informed that he has been transferred to another, very tough shop. Did this bullying have anything to do with our cinematographic intervention the day before, at the factory exit? (The shop foreman said to him, "So, we're making movies now?") The next morning Angélo comes to find me and explains the affair. As Rouch is supposed to come with Brault a bit later, I tell him that we absolutely must film. They arrive and Angélo explains what happened to Rouch in a three-sided discussion. They ask him about his future. Angélo, discouraged, wants to leave the tool machines. Could we find him work? We'll have to look around. [An important part of this scene was included in the film. Even though chronologically it takes place after vacation, we put it in before the vacation sequences, given that we wanted to include it and that we wanted to end the film at the end of the vacation.]

Following this incident, Jean, the young worker-turned-draftsman, no longer wants to be filmed. He will only agree to participate in a discussion between students and workers. We film Jacques waking, getting up, leaving for the factory; he lives in Montmartre and goes by motorbike to Billancourt. We follow him

in two cars, one behind lighting him with its headlights, the other either beside him or slightly ahead, with Brault filming. [None of this is included in the film.]

Taking advantage of the last weeks of good weather, Jacques, his wife, their children, Angélo, and sometimes other friends often go to Fontainebleau forest, near Milly, for the weekend. Even though Rouch is again deeply involved in worker life, I insist that we go to Milly-la-Forêt. Rouch organizes a parallel expedition with Nadine, Catherine, and Landry. We leave in several cars and with two cameras (Brault and Morillère). We have a picnic and film what is going on (rock climbing, climbing down with ropes, children's games, songs). [One part of what was filmed here constitutes the Milly-la-Forêt sequence in the film.]

Are you happy? Since the beginning of the film, Rouch has thought that Nadine could be a sort of woman-sphinx who would ask a riddle of passersby in the street. To my mind, this question should be "Are you happy?" asked by Marceline and Nadine together (one alone would be intimidated) in different areas of Paris. The camera would be hidden in a car; the microphone would be visible. We film at Place du Panthéon, rue Soufflot, Place de la Bastille, at Ménéilmontant, at the Passy metro, at Place Victor Hugo. [A certain number of these interviews constitute the "Are you happy?" sequence.]

At the same time we envisage several surveys in greater depth on the theme of "How do you live?" Marceline obtains the consent of a postal service employee to interview him and his wife in their home [not included in the film] and of a garage mechanic whom she interviews in his shop [a good part is included in the film]. Rouch knows a happy young couple, the Cuénets, who are also interviewed [this interview is, for the most part, included in the film]. At around the same time we record a walking dialogue between me and Rouch at the Musée de l'Homme where we try to tie things up. [This dialogue was not included in the film.]

I am keen on the encounters, and I envisage an encounter between workers and students, an encounter among the women who participated in the film, and an encounter among the men, before the general encounter. Material obstacles and the time factor (Argos makes it clear that everything must be finished by the end of October) prevent us from organizing all but the student-worker encounter. One Sunday noon we organize a lunch at the restaurant of the Musée de l'Homme with Angélo, Jean, Régis, and Jean-Pierre. After some embarrassing slow starts, the conversation livens up.

EUROPE



Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin during the filming of their final dialogue in the halls of the Musée de l'Homme

Angelo and Jean attack the students for their arrogance with regard to workers. Jean-Pierre and Régis explain themselves. [This discussion was not included in the film.] At a neighboring table sat Landry. Rouch wants Angelo and Landry to meet each other. We all go to my house, and Rouch sets them face to face on a step of the stairway. Angelo had very much liked the rushes where Landry appeared, commenting on the bullfight, moralizing to the little girls, talking about his black skin. Angelo seemed like a good guy to Landry, who had likewise seen him on the screen. In fact, a friendship was born before our eyes, under the eye of the camera. At the same time Angelo fully expresses his protest against both the conditions of the workers and what he sees as the false compensation for these conditions, this embourgeoisement symbolized by the possession of a car.

Rouch prepares the filming in Catherine's shop, where Nadine, Sophie, and Marceline are supposed to participate. There is a tension between Marceline and Catherine ever since Saint Tropez. On top of that, Marceline is critical of Catherine's bourgeois life-style. I tell Marceline that she may "attack," but I also tell her that it would be better not to touch on

any private problems. The camera is hidden in the back of the shop; the microphone is also hidden. Marceline, Nadine, and Sophie are among the clients (who are unaware of the filming); they try things on. Suddenly Marceline attacks. Her accusations become more and more precise and intimate, whereas Catherine is very relaxed. Nadine, feeling uneasy, says to Marceline "we're leaving," and they depart. [We baptized this sequence "Thunder over the Petticoats." It was not included in the film. A part of the sound track is pretty inaudible; the shop door left open for several minutes, and the street noise drowned out the words.]

A few days later Rouch films a conversation on the terrace of the Deux Magots, without disturbing the regular customers (camera camouflaged in a car parked on the sidewalk, microphone camouflaged under a handkerchief). Marceline and Nadine comment on the outburst that occurred at Catherine's. One afternoon, a couple of days later, we film at the Café de la Navy, a café where Marceline is a regular. We record a conversation between Marceline and Mariou on the terrace using the same method. Marceline talks to Jean-Pierre; she says that they have reached a new agreement, founded on freedom and mutual trust. We also film a breakfast in bed with Marceline and Jean-Pierre, then their rising and morning ritual. [None of these scenes, each of which uncovers a new aspect of Marceline, was included in the film.]

At last we shoot the final encounter. I had dreamed of a sort of confrontation in a large room after producing the film, with multiple cameras and microphones recording not only the reactions to the film, but also the conversations that would start up spontaneously and according to the affinities among the different characters. A big final scene where the scales would fall and consciousness would be awakened, where we would take a new "oath of the tennis court"¹⁵ to construct a new life.

Of course this is no longer feasible. It is no longer possible to show the entire film. Of course nothing has been edited, and we must hurry to finish before the deadline. We choose the short cut of using the rushes which were specific to each of the characters: Marilou happy, Marceline—August 15, Jean-Pierre

¹⁵ The "serment au Jeu de paume" was sworn on June 20, 1789 by the deputies of the Third Estate not to separate after giving constitution to France. Because the king prohibited access to the Salle des Menus Plaisirs where they usually met, they went to the nearby Jeu de Paume. — Ed.

Marceline and Catherine
at the store



and Régis coming out of exam, return from vacation...Gabilon, Milly-la-Forêt, and a few other fragments. The reunion takes place in the projection room of the Studio Publicis, in the basement. After showing the film, we open the discussion. [This was abridged in the film, but all of the critical aspects were retained]

In this sequence, voluntarily or involuntarily, Angélo, Marceline, and Marilou all say something essential about themselves, each one revealing in a word just what they had done in the moment when the camera's eye was trained on them. I feel that Rouch is distressed by the criticisms. We separate at the Champs-Élysées; it is raining; it's the last reel. Brault films the wet, glistening sidewalk, which reflects the passersby. The unfinished film is completed. Nearly six months of effort, of passion, of arguments, of camaraderie, of experience, of research abruptly become memories. I will no longer wake Rouch at 8 A.M., Brault will take off for Canada. Each person goes off on his own. It is autumn.

The film is finished.

Renault lays off 2,000 workers, Angélo is one of them. I tried to find him work, first doing odd jobs for some friends, while waiting. He almost learned how to make tapestries in the studio of a friend, Yvette Prince, but the studio was going through a difficult period; he did a stint as a warehouse man for a publishing firm, where he began to show his demanding spirit; he was fired ("What do you want?", he asks me philosophically, "I'm a revolutionary"). Nina Baratier, a film editor, found him a place as stagehand at the Billancourt studios in the early spring. He wants to get away from the machines, and we are trying to help

him. One day Angélo disappears from the studios. He had found a skilled worker job in a little metalwork factory, much smaller than Renault. He was supposed to get married. He has since gotten married.

The intervention of the film has thus had a pretty powerful effect on Angélo's life. In the first phase, it crystallized his revolt against the alienation of manual labor, in the hopes of escaping machines. For several months he experienced other types of work (warehouse man, stagehand). He was able to see the possible significance of a choice between an independent but chancy job and a subordinate but regular job: between his qualification as a machinist and those of other jobs for which he had no technical training. Of course I did not push him in any particular direction; I always looked in the direction he indicated. If he does finally return to the machines it will be less by force than by his own choice.

Marilou is trying hard to hold the ground she has gained. The couple has some difficult money problems. Recently, Marilou has had the opportunity to learn a skill that is much more interesting and freer than secretarial work, studio photography.

Marceline, the film finished, could not return to her applied psychosociological surveys. Argos helped her out. She is looking for work she would like; in fact she could be an actress. Jean-Pierre lives with her.

Jean-Pierre passed his exams and is pursuing his degree. He is looking for a job that would not keep him from preparing for his next exams.

Landry, after having spent the last year in a provincial high school, is taking a private course in Paris. Nadine is going to take her baccalaureate exams in philosophy. Gabilon took a trip to Greece. He would like a more interesting job and hopes to get into the European railroad agency. Régis went on vacation to Cuba and upon his return joined the Communist party. The Cuénets are going to have a baby. All of them regret that the film only showed a one-sided view of themselves. They all feel they are richer, more complex, than their images on film. This is obviously true.

Editing

We have more than twenty-five hours of film, almost all of it 16mm. Now we have to extract a film of normal length (1 ½ hours). It's not only a technical problem (the transformation of real time into cinematographic time, the new significance presented by images when edited, the type of editing to choose, etc.); it's also the problem of the meaning of the film. Anything is possible with our enormous corpus of multiple, uniform material.

Everything becomes complicated, and once again a three-sided crisis breaks out. Argos Films wants to have one "editor-in-chief" who will give the film an "incontestable technical and artistic quality." Rouch refuses the editors they propose and wants to choose the woman who edited his earlier films. Rouch can only work with people he chooses according to his affinity and compatibility. At the same time, Rouch announces that he has to go to Africa for two months; Argos opposes his departure, which would immobilize the editing. For my part, I want to work on the editing from a position of equality with Rouch, because I fear that the "How do you live?" sense of the film might disappear.

For Rouch, the guiding thread should be one or two "hero" characters in the film. He even suggests me as the hero of the film, off in search of the unfindable truth. General ideas bore him; what he is always interested in is the living detail, spontaneity. He wants to proceed by approximations, that is, by successive elimination of images until the normal duration is reached, just as he did in *La Pyramide humaine*. He does not want to feel bound in advance by any norm, any idea. On the contrary. On the other hand I feel that a large part of the richness of *La Pyramide humaine* was lost in the editing, to the benefit of the heroine, to the benefit of the plot. I value those themes I would like to see expressed.¹⁶

I don't have a real plan, but a sort of structure to rediscover at every stage of the elaboration of the film. Thus, for example, at the end of July, Argos Films asked for a schema of the editing, as assurance that we were not simply filming at random. I provided a text where the following themes were presented in succession: (1) monotony: shades of grey; (2) factory and office work; (3) the difficulties living (loneliness and happiness); (4) love; (5) the sounds of the world in summer, 1960; (6) on the road again.

Later on, once the editing had begun, Rouch would be interviewed by *France Observateur*. This interview conveys our differences as well as our agreement, as evidenced in the following extract:

Question: What is the importance of the editing of film, given that you have twenty-five hours of rushes

JR: There's the crucial point! We are in conflict, Ed and I—a temporary and fruitful conflict, I hope. My position is the following: The interest of this story is the film, it's the chronology and evolution of the people as a function of the film. The subject itself is not very interesting. It is difficult to bring together the testimonies, because they are often heterogeneous. There are people who cheat a little, others not at all. To bring together their testimonies would be to falsify the truth. I'll take a simple example: We asked people one question, among others: "What do you think of your work?" Most of these people said they were bored in their jobs. The reasons they give are very different: intellectual reasons, sentimental, physical reasons, etc. Bringing these reasons together, in my opinion, is less interesting than the individuals themselves and finding out the motives behind their responses. There are some marvelous contradictions in certain scenes of the film; sometimes people contradict themselves in a fantastic way. For example, Angélo, the worker who has been let go by Renault is talking with Landry, the young African. Landry says to him:

16. In fact I felt the same anguish over the making of *Chronique* that I had earlier felt with *Moi, un noir* and *La Pyramide humaine*, that of amputation. This is, no doubt, the greatest stumbling block of all these improvised films, with no scenario or preplanned continuity: to reduce to one hour thirty minutes an enormous body of material whose value is its authenticity, that is, the length, the hesitations, the awkwardnesses. In a film shot in silence, like *Moi, un noir*, the problem is already difficult; in a film shot with direct sound, like *Pyramide* and *Chronique*, it's an incredible headache. I knew only one effective method of approach, successive approximations which alone allow us to "see" the film reduced to a human screening time. This was my greatest fear about having one editor-in-chief who would rethink the film.