

"You're at Renault? . . . Ah, it's well known in Africa, the Renault Company! You don't see anything else . . . 1,000 kilos, Dauphines . . ."

And all of a sudden Angélo, before even replying, breaks into a smile and says:

"Oh yeah? You've heard of the Renault Company? . . ."

It's inimitable!

So from the point of view of editing, my idea is the following: with some rare exceptions it is almost impossible to upset the filming order. The people evolved in such a way that, if we want to become attached to them, it is necessary to show them as a function of their evolution. In fact the whole film was conceived that way. That's how I see the film. And that's why I center it on the summer: it begins in spring and ends in autumn. It's the evolution of a certain number of people throughout events which could have been essential but which were not. We thought in the spring that the summer of 1960 would be essential for France. It wasn't, but even with this sort of disappointment, this evolution is nonetheless, to my mind, the subject of the film.

So the editing that I am doing at present, which can, of course, be changed, is much more a chronological editing as a function of the filming than editing as a function of the subject or of the different subjects dealt with in the filming.

EM: I think that we must try to maintain in the editing a plurality. The great difficulty is that there are in fact many themes. What I would like is to concentrate this collective halo around the characters. In other words, I would not, in the end, like to see everything reduced to purely individual stories, but rather there should be a dimension, not so much of the crowd, but of the global problem of life in Paris, of civilization, and so forth.

What I would like is that at every moment we feel that the characters are neither "film heroes" as in ordinary cinema nor symbols as in a didactic film, but human beings who emerge from their collective life. What I would like is not to situate individualities as we see them in normal films—in classical, fictional narrative films—where there are characters and some story happens to those characters. I would like to talk about the individual characters in order to go on to a more general problem and then come back from the general problem to the individual.

This means doing a sort of cinéma-vérité which would overcome the fundamental opposition between fictional and documentary cinema. In fictional cinema, the private problems of individuals are dealt with: love, passion, anger, hatred; in documentary film until now only subjects external to the individual are dealt with: objects, machines, countrysides, social themes.

Jean and I agree at least on one point: that we must make a film that is totally authentic, as true as a documentary but with the same concepts as fictional film, that is, the contents of subjective life, of people's existence. In the end, this is what fascinates me.

Another thing that fascinates me on the theme of cinéma-vérité is not just reviving the ideas of Dziga Vertov or things of that genre, but—and this is what is really new, from the technical point of view, in what Jean has said—it is that cinéma-vérité can be an authentic talking cinema. It is perhaps the first time that we will really end up with a sketch of talking cinema. The words burst forth at the very moment when things are seen—which does not occur with postsynchronization.

JR: In the empty Halles, when Marceline is talking about her deportation, she speaks in rhythm with her step, she is influenced by the setting, and the way she is speaking is absolutely inimitable. With postsynchronization and the best artist in the world, you would never be able to achieve that unrelenting rhythm of someone walking in a place like that.

EM: In addition, it is a film where there are no fist fights, no revolver shots, not even any kisses, or hardly any. The action, in the end, is the word. Action is conveyed by dialogues, disputes, conversations. What interests me is not a documentary which shows appearances, but an active intervention to cut across appearances and extract from them their hidden or dormant truths.

JR: Another extraordinary thing which you've forgotten, and that's understandable, is the poetic discovery of things through the film. For example: a worker, Angélo, leaves the Renault factory, takes the bus to go home, and gets off at Petit-Clamart. To get to his house he has to climb up a stairway, an unbelievable stairway, and this ascent—after all it's only a worker on his way home—becomes a sort of poetic drama.

EM: Our common base is that neither one of us conceives of this film as merely sociological or merely ethnographic or merely aesthetic, but really like a total and diffuse thing which is at the same time a document, an experience lived by each person, and a research of their contact.

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Rouch proposes to me an alternate method of working: he'll start on his own to make a preliminary selection of six to eight hours, head to tail, before he leaves for Africa in three weeks. Then he leaves me to edit during his three-week absence. And so on, from confrontation to confrontation, we will reach an agreement.

The Rouch-Dauman agreement on the editor-in-chief having not been achieved, we will work with Nina Baratier, who has been taking care of the film since August, assisted by Françoise Colin. Thus begins the first phase of editing.

Rouch comes up with a stringout of about seven hours. At the screening I see that many sequences which I consider essential have been eliminated and that others which seem uninteresting have been chosen. I feel as though everything is caving in. I, in turn, then take the editing, reestablish some of the eliminated sequences, and eliminate some of those which Rouch had retained, to end up with about four hours of screen time. Now Rouch is dissatisfied.

He takes over the editing, makes a four-hour version starting with the introduction of the characters, and follows the chronology of the film in their wake. The introductions are disappointing. I resume editing, and in a couple of days have a schema which starts with the "Are you happy?"s, follows the theme of work, political problems (Algeria, the Congo), personal life, to end up with a conclusion in which, in a few flash images, each of the characters expresses his revolt. The last image: Angélo fighting alone with a tree. The screening is disappointing. On the way we have made concessions to each other; Rouch re-established some moments which were important for me, I did not cut some moments that he is fond of.

Finally we reach an agreement on a compromise of principles. Compromise: the film will not be a mosaic-type montage as I wanted it, made up of opposing sequences, sustained by the guiding theme "How do you live?", nor will it be a biographico-chronological montage like Rouch wanted. It will be something mixed, between the two. We agree on the fundamental sequences which I, for my part, would like to include almost in their entirety, without condensing them. I propose a compromise schema, abandoning the final montage on "resistance" and the ultimate symbol of Angélo fighting with the tree, and adopting the three-part chronological order: before vacation, the vacation, after vacation.

But by now the debate between Rouch and me is no longer taking place in private. Argos Films intervenes, sometimes mistrusting Rouch and wanting to oversee his work (which he refuses), at other times being enthusiastic over Rouch. According to these alternating attitudes, Rouch is either a clumsy *bricoleur* or an inspired improviser. Dauman gives me no credit for my capacities as neophyte editor but thinks at times that my contribution is efficient and at other times that I am an abstract theoretician who is massacring the film. Dauman is sometimes Rouchist, sometimes Morinist, quite often groans to see our combined incapacities, and is constantly railing against Nina Baratier. In the beginning Nina Baratier sides sometimes with Rouch and sometimes with me

when it comes to eliminating scenes she doesn't like or keeping ones she likes; in a second phase she thinks that Rouch and she deserve total confidence.

The successive versions were shown to different people, among whom Azar and Roger Leenhardt would play a significant role. Argos wants Azar to be the editor of the film, but Rouch, already at odds with me, wants to have a free hand. Azar formulates essentially the following remarks:

(1) What is extraordinary and unique for him are moments when the faces in close-up express some emotion. The moment when happiness erupts on Marilou's face is one of the four moments in cinema which have most impressed him in his life. He also thinks that the high points of the film consist of Jean Pierre's monologue and Marceline on August 15. Gabillon is moving. He doesn't like Angélo much; he finds him to be a ham.

(2) Next to these sections, everything which is "cinéma" is not only secondary but risks killing the best parts. In any case, the section following the vacation segment is of no interest. The film should end on a strong beat, at the end of vacation. At the end of a dramatic progression, we should finish with Marceline on August 15 and Marilou happy.

Leenhardt's remarks are different. The film must be intelligible from the start the subject should be clear, the problem plainly stated. In this sense he favors the introduction which Rouch is proposing, the beginning of our first dialogue with Marceline, where we reveal our purpose. There must also (and here Azar is going in the same direction) be a dialogue at the end of the film which conveys the authors' conclusions.

The experimental screenings also bring out the fact that our few critical spectators believe much more strongly in the truth of those scenes in which Rouch and I appear in front of the camera, participating in the dialogue with our characters. They feel that the scenes in which we do not appear, like the jetty at Saint Tropez, are "acted."

These remarks have some influence on us. We will maintain our presence in the picture, which we had earlier had a tendency to eliminate (except when Rouch was considering making me the "hero" of the film, off in search of the elusive grail). Rouch will retain his introduction (the first dialogue with Marceline but immediately afterward will come the "Are you happy?" sequence. The conclusion will be our dialogue at the Musée de l'Homme (it is not until later that this will be replaced by a new dialogue filmed subsequently). Rouch will come around slowly to the idea of cutting the after-vacation, which satisfies me inasmuch as this gives more room for the trial runs, which will take a central position. As for me, I will slowly accept the reduction of the social-worker part and the suppression of any normative theme in the conclusion. We reach an agreement.

As Rouch has to leave for Africa for a while, and as Dauman demands an editor, Rouch chooses Ravel. For fifteen or twenty days Ravel works alone with Nina Baratier, following the plan which we have established together, but having a fair amount of freedom of composition. I will not intervene during this period except to insist on the need to make a quick edition in the "Are you happy?" sequence. Ravel therefore edits the first half hour of the film in the present order of succession (with the exception of the Landry-Angéolo dialogue, Angéolo's dismissal, and a few other modifications). Rouch and I will be satisfied.

Rouch comes back from Africa. He intervenes directly on the editing viewer and immediately orients Ravel on the montage of the vacation sequences. The editing speeds up, a copy must be ready for the Cannes festival. I defend my stand on the parts which I judge essential, like the Algeria discussion, the discussion on the Congo and racism. Algeria poses some particular difficulties: how to render the tumultuousness of this discussion and above all its dramatic character when we must cut the passages which might be dangerous for our young participants? How to avoid having the censors cut the scene completely? We also have many discussions about the vacation sequence, but I leave the bullfight to Rouch (I would have kept one minute or cut it entirely) and the little dialogue between Catherine and Landry about Saint Tropez. The scene of Marceline and Jean-Pierre on the jetty is edited in the conventional cinema style; it no doubt would have been better to show one long uninterrupted segment. Little by little the postvacation sequences are eliminated or are aired before the vacation. We go on to the mixing, and a copy is printed which is screened at Cannes.

This copy will not yet be the definitive version. The group discussion in the Studio Publicis is not yet included, and there are still a few postvacation episodes, like Angéolo's dismissal, Marilou's visit with her friend Jeanne, at home with her boyfriend, Marceline and Jean-Pierre waking up.

The Publicis discussion had been abandoned along the way. I was not particularly attached to it, Rouch having said that it was uneditable. But after Cannes, after a screening at the Musée de l'Homme and at UNESCO, we feel that the end of this film is weak.

For me the weakness begins at the moment when we get to Algeria; for Rouch it is only the end which needs work. He proposes to look at the screening of the Publicis discussion again, and we are finally in total agreement on this point. It is absolutely necessary. At the same time we eliminate the last postvacation element. A new discussion divides us on Marilou Happy, which I think has been sabotaged in the editing, and we reestablish in part what I ask for

However, we cannot retain the Marilou-Jeanne scene, which probably brings nothing to the film but does show Marilou relaxed and cheerful. All we have left is to film a new conclusion, an improvised dialogue at the Musée de l'Homme after the screening of the Publicis discussion and taking into account (implicitly) the reactions of the first viewers. We are in the beginning of June 1961, one year after beginning "How do you live?" The film will definitely be called *Chronique d'un été* even though the title does not reflect the subject. But Argos has decided it. "How do you live?" is too TV, it seems. I leave for Chile on June 20. Finally we film a supplementary scene, a last dialogue between Rouch and me at the Musée de l'Homme. On this occasion we used a wireless microphone and therefore did not need to carry the shoulderbag tape recorder as we walked. We were told that this conclusion scene was necessary. The day before filming it we re-viewed the final sequence of the group discussion at the Studio Publicis. Rouch and Ravel finish editing the Studio Publicis part, the final discussion, and, with a few more modifications, they put the definitive version of the film in order.<sup>17</sup>

## Post-Chronique

"Chronicle of a Summer" is finished. It is already slipping away from us. Lately we are free to add a post-script, for example, to take the unused film to make one or two supplementary films which could be shown in ciné-clubs. Or maybe we could establish a long version (four hours), again for the ciné-clubs or for private showings. Maybe we will do it, but the film is slipping away from us, that is to say, we must accept it as is.

As for me, I am divided between two contradictory feelings. On the one hand, I feel dissatisfaction in view of what I had ideally hoped for; on the other hand, I feel deep contentment at having lived this experience, adhering to the compromise which such an

17. I see that Edgar has slightly exaggerated the oppositions we faced in his chronicle of *Chronique*. "Co-authoring" is not simple teamwork where the two partners agree. It is a more violent game where disagreement is the only rule, and the solution lies in the resolution of this disagreement. It is also necessary for the arbiter (or the producer) to have an open enough mind to follow the game while sanctioning its only faults. Alas, a film producer, caught between patronizing intolerable artists and financial imperatives, cannot be impartial.

accomplishment presupposes. Without Rouch, the film would have been impossible for me, not only because it was Rouch's name which convinced the producer to try the adventure, but also and above all because his presence was indispensable for me, and there again not only from the technical point of view, but also from the personal point of view. Though intellectually I can distinguish what differentiates us, I cannot practically dissociate this curious pair we formed, like Jerry Lewis-Dean Martin, Erckman-Chatrian, or Roux-Combaluzier.

We must also express our gratitude to Anatole Dauman. Thanks to Argos Film, Rouch and I were able to carry out decisive experiments in our respective researches. It is thus impossible to dissociate the "Argonauts" from cinéma-vérité.

This film, which is slipping away from us, now appears before critics and viewers. It presents us once again with problems, indeed with new problems. These are not aesthetic problems but questions more directly related to life. Because, unlike other films, the spectator is not so much judging a work as judging other human beings, namely, Angélo, Marceline, Marilou, Jean-Pierre, me, Rouch. They judge us as human beings, but in addition they attach this moral or affective judgment to their aesthetic judgment. For example, if a spectator doesn't like one of us, he will find that person stupid, insincere, a ham; he'll reproach the character for being at the same time a bad actor and an unlikable individual. This confusion of levels at first upsets us but reassures us at the same time, because it expresses the weakness and the virtue of this film. It shows us that, no matter what, though we have been doing cinema, we have also done something else: we have overflowed the bounds of cinéma-spectacle, of cinéma-theater, while at the same time sounding the depths of its possibilities; we are also a part of this confused and jumbled thing called life.

This film is a hybrid, and this hybridness is as much the cause of its infirmity as of its interrogative virtue.

The first contradiction holds in the changeover from real time to cinematographic time. Of course the real time is not the total time, since we were not filming all the time. In other words, there was already a sort of selection in the filming; but the editing obliges us to make a selection, a more difficult composition, more traitorous. We choose the times which we find the most significant or the most powerful; of course, this theatricalizes life. On top of that, the close-up accentuates dramatization. In fact there is more tension in seeing close-ups of Marilou, Marceline, or Jean-Pierre than in being present in the scene itself, because the close-up of the face concentrates, captures, fascinates. But above all we realize that though the editing can improve everything that does not develop

through the length of the film, it also weakens and perverts the very substance of what happened in real time (the jetty at Saint Tropez, Marilou unhappy, or Marceline on August 15, for example). Additionally the compromise that Rouch and I made on the characters works to their detriment. The viewer will not know them well enough and yet will arrive at a global judgment on their personalities; they are sufficiently (i.e., too) individualized to avoid such judgment. True, Jean-Pierre, Marilou, Marceline, Angélo, Gabillon will be perceived globally by means of mere fragments of themselves.

These judgments, as in life, will be hasty, superficial, rash. I am amazed that what should inspire esteem for Jean-Pierre or Marilou, namely, their admission of egoism or egocentrism ("egoism" for Jean-Pierre; "I reduce everything to my own terms" for Marilou) will paradoxically produce a pejorative judgment of them. It seems we have underestimated the hypocritical reaction, and as a result I tell myself that the real comedy, the real hamming, the spectacle, takes place among the petty bourgeois who play at virtue, decency, health, and who pretend to give lessons in truth.

But I must not let myself follow that miserable downslide of the human mind which always transfers blame to others. Errors in judgment of which the characters in the film are victims, are provoked because we both over- and underindividualized our characters because certain tensions whose origins are unclear emerge in the course of the film; because there is a whole submerged dimension which will remain unknown to the public. Without intending to we have created a projective test. We have only provided a few pieces of a puzzle that is missing most of its parts. Thus each viewer reconstructs a whole as a function of his own projections and identifications.

As a result, while this film was intended to involve the viewer, it involves him in an unforeseen manner believed that the viewers would be involved if they asked themselves the question "How do you live?" In fact the reactions are more diverse, and this diversity is not just the diversity of aesthetic judgments; it is a diversity in attitudes toward others, toward truth, toward what one has the right to say, and what one should not say.

This diversity marks our failure as well as our success. Failure, because we did not come away with the sympathy of the majority, because, thinking we were clarifying human problems, we provoked misunderstandings, even obscuring reactions. Success, because to a certain degree Rouch and I gave these characters the chance to speak and because, to a certain degree, we gave the public a liberty of appreciation which is unusual in cinema. We did not merely play the divine role of authors who speak through the mouths of their characters, but we also gave them

the sentiments they should feel, their norms of good and bad. It is also because there is this relative freedom, and not only because we filmed under the least cinematic conditions possible, that we have approached the cinema of life. But in approaching thus we have also approached all the confusion of life.

We have also modified the relationship between actor and spectator, which is like the relationship between an unseen God and a passive communicant. We have emerged from mystery, we have shown ourselves, present, fallible, men among others, and we have provoked the viewer to judge as a human being.

Whether or not we wanted it so, this film is a hybrid, a jumble, and all the errors of judgment have in common the desire to attach a label to this enterprise and to confront it with this label. The label "sociology": is this a film which (a) wants to be sociological, (b) is sociological? Those for whom sociology signifies a survey of public opinion on a cross-section sample of the population, that is to say, those who know nothing about sociology, say: we are being tricked, this isn't a sociological film, the authors are dishonest. But we have in no way presented this film under the label ethnographic or sociological. I also do not see why film critic Louis Marcorelles denounces my "false sociological pretenses." I never introduce myself as a sociologist, neither in the film nor in real life, and I have no prestige among sociologists. We have not once, to my knowledge, pronounced the word "sociology" in this film. Our banner has been "cinéma-vérité" and I'll get to that. Our enterprise is more diffuse, more broadly human.

Let's say in order to simplify things that we're talking about an enterprise that is both ethnographic and existential: ethnographic in the sense that we try to investigate that which seems to go without saying, that is, daily life; existential in that we knew that each person could be emotionally involved in this research. Any filmmaker could have posed the question "How do you live?", but we wanted this interrogation to be minimally sociological. This minimum is not just an opinion poll, which not only achieves only superficial results when dealing with profound problems, but also is totally inadequate for our enterprise. This minimum is first of all a preliminary reflection on the sociology of work and daily life. Next it is an attitude which is engraved in one of the fundamental lines of human sciences since Marx, Max Weber, and Freud. To simplify: for Marx it is crisis which is revealing, not normal states. For Max Weber, a situation is understood not by starting at a middle ground, but with extreme types (which Weber constructed theoretically by the method of utopic realization and which he named "ideal types"). For Freud, the abnormal reveals the normal as one exacerbates that which exists in the latent or camouflaged state of the other.

If a good part of the film's viewers refuse, reject, or expel from themselves what they consider a "pathological" case which is in no way representative or significant, this does not indicate an error in our method, but rather the difficulties involved in consciousness of certain fundamental givens of being human. The real question is not whether Marilou, Angélo, Marceline, and Jean-Pierre are rare or exceptional cases, but whether or not they raise profound and general problems, such as job alienation, the difficulty of living, loneliness, the search for faith. The question is to know whether the film poses fundamental questions, subjective and objective, which concern life in our society.

*Psychoanalysis, therapy, modesty, risk.* I have written that in certain conditions the eye of the camera is psychoanalytical; it looks into the soul. Critics have reproached us for doing false psychoanalysis, that is, of knowing nothing about psychoanalysis. Here we are dealing with a myth of psychoanalysis, just as there is a myth of sociology. Psychoanalysis is a profession and a doctrine with multiple tendencies, all strongly structured. Our venture is foreign to psychoanalysis understood in its professional and structured sense but does go in the direction of the ideas which psychoanalysis has helped to bring into focus. Otherwise, we have gambled on the possibility of using cinema as a means of communication, and the therapeutic idea of our plan is that all communication can be liberation. Of course I was aware, and am even more aware since the film has been screened, of all the difficulties of communication, the boomerang risks of malevolent interpretations or of scornful indifference; I know that those I wanted recognized were sometimes disregarded. I know that if I were to do it again, I would do it differently, but I also know that I would do it. And I reaffirm this principle: things which are hidden, held back, silenced, must be spoken; J. J. Rousseau is worth more than Father Dupanloup; *Lady Chatterly's Lover* is worth more than the censure which prohibited it. We suffer more from silencing the essential than from speaking.

The need to communicate is one of the greatest needs which ferments in our society; the individual is atomized in what Riesman has called "the lonely crowd." In this film there is an examination of stray, clumsy communication, which our censors have called exhibitionism or shamelessness. But where is the shame? Certainly not in those who make themselves the crude and ostentatious spokesmen of shame; shame does not have such impudence.

But finally one question is asked: Do we have the right to drag people into such an enterprise? I will answer that it is first a matter of characterizing this enterprise, that is to say, the risks it involves. Is it an enterprise of vivisection or poisoned psychoanalysis? Or is it, on the contrary, a game of so importance?

Does it involve the same sort of risks as taking passengers in a car on vacation roads or leading an expedition into a virgin forest? How can they judge the harmful consequences, those who know neither Marilou, Angélo, nor the others? Having thought it all out, I'd say that the greatest risk depends on those who criticize Angélo, Marilou, etc.; that is to say, their inability to love them. Of course we exposed Angélo, Marilou, Marceline, and Jean-Pierre to this risk because we overestimated the possibilities of friendship. But even in the case of Marilou and of Jean-Pierre, unknown friends are born to them.

In the end, anyone who lives with a woman, has children, recruits adherents to his party, whoever lives and undertakes anything makes others take risks. Each of us risks the destiny of others in the name of their interests and their morals. The ultimate problem is that of each of our own morals.

*Bourgeois or revolutionary film?* This film is infrapolitical and infrareligious. There is a whole zone left unexplored by the film. If we had been believers we would not have neglected belief. On the political level the question is different. We did not want, for example, to present the worker problem at the level of political or union affiliations or of salary claims, because conditions of industrial work should be questioned at a deeper, more radical level. Taking into account this infrapoliticism, we were the only ones in filmmaking to question the war in Algeria and to thus attack the central political problem of the hour.

It was possible to judge this film variously reactionary or revolutionary, bourgeois or leftist. I don't want to get dragged into defining right now what I understand by reactionary, bourgeois, left; nor to polemicize with those who find the film reactionary. I would say only that the meaning of the film is clear if one conceives of it as contesting both the reigning values of bourgeois society and Stalinist or pseudoprogressive stereotypes.

#### *Optimism? Pessimism?*

It is true that Rouch was naturally carried toward what is cheerful and light and that he was the spokesman of "life is beautiful," while I was naturally carried toward what is sad or sorrowful. The reason for my quest to approach the difficulties of living is not just that happy people have no story to tell, but also because there are fundamental problems which are tragic, ponderous, and which must be considered. But to confront these problems is not to despair. What disheartens me, on the contrary, is that everyone who is not subjected to the piecemeal without responsibility or initiative, that is, typical of the laborer or the civil servant, readily takes it for granted.

What disheartens me are those people resigned to the artificial, shabby, frivolous life which is given to them well defined. What disheartens me are those who make themselves comfortable in a world where Marceline, Marilou, Jean-Pierre, and Angélo are not happy.

That these may be "my" problems, that my problems should have taken form in this film (at least in elementary fashion), does not mean that they cease to exist independently of me. That I may have difficulties in life, that I may not really be able to adapt, this does not necessarily mean that I cannot step outside of myself; it may also sensitize me to the problems of others. In any case I drew two "optimistic" lessons from this experience. First, an increased faith in adolescent virtues: denial, struggle, and seeking. In other words, Angélo, Jean-Pierre, Marilou, and Marceline have inspired me to resist the bourgeois life. The second is the conviction that every time it is possible to speak to someone about essential things, consciousness is awakened, man awakens. Everyone, the man in the street, the unknown, hides within himself a poet, a philosopher, a child. In other words, I believe more than ever that we must relentlessly deal with the person, denying something in the person, revealing something in the person.

#### *Cinéma-Vérité?*

Finally we come to the problem of cinéma-vérité. How do we dare speak of a truth that has been chosen, edited, provoked, oriented, deformed? Where is the truth? Here again the confusion comes from those who take the term cinéma-vérité as an affirmation, a guarantee sticker, and not as a research.

Cinéma-vérité: this means that we wanted to eliminate fiction and get closer to life. This means that we wanted to situate ourselves in a lineage dominated by Flaherty and Dziga Vertov. Of course this term cinéma-vérité is daring, pretentious; of course there is a profound truth in works of fiction as well as in myths. At the end of the film the difficulties of truth, which had not been a problem in the beginning, became apparent to me. In other words, I thought that we would start from a basis of truth and that an even greater truth would develop. Now I realize that if we achieved anything, it was to present the problem of the truth. We wanted to get away from comedy, from spectacles, to enter into direct contact with life. But life itself is also a comedy, a spectacle. Better (or worse) yet: each person can only express himself through a mask, and the mask, as in Greek tragedy, both disguises and reveals, becomes the speaker. In the course of the dialogues each one was able to be more real than in daily life but at the same time more false.

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This means that there is no given truth that can simply be deftly plucked, without withering it (this is, at the most, spontaneity). Truth cannot escape contradictions, since there are truths of the unconscious and truths of the conscious mind; these two truths contradict each other. But just as every victory carries its own defeat, so every failure can bring its own defeat. If the viewer who rejects the film asks himself "Where is the truth?", then the failure of "How do you live?" is clear, but maybe we have brought out a concern for the truth. No doubt this film is an examination whose emphasis has been misplaced. The fundamental question that we wanted to pose was about the human condition in a given social setting and at a given moment in history. It was a "How do you live?" which we addressed to the viewer. Today the question comes from the viewer who asks "Where is the truth?" If for a minority of viewers the second question does not follow the first, then we have both supplied something and received something. Something which should be pursued and thoroughly investigated. To live without renouncing something is difficult. Truth is long-suffering.