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## AUDIOVISUAL REVIEWS

### Jean Rouch Talks About His Films to John Marshall and John W. Adams

(September 14th and 15th, 1977)

Jean Rouch was the filmmaker honored during the first Margaret Mead Film Festival, at the American Museum of Natural History, 14-16 September 1977. To date he has completed over 70 ethnographic films and though only four of them are known in the United States, in the rest of the world he is the most widely admired ethnographic filmmaker. In the recent histories of the movies he is praised as the initiator of *cinema vérité*.

At their best his films are about peak experiences and are densely packed with detail. They show individuals who display a creative spirit, a wholeness and excitement which are rare in any cinema and virtually unique in ethnographic films. Moreover they are not just about "primitive peoples" but also depict his own culture and always they are concerned with dynamic situations of culture change. They are very contingent, which is hard for many anthropologists to appreciate because our training leads us to see types, not unique events. Thus Rouch's films raise central issues about ethnographic filmmaking, its strengths and limitations as a means of conveying information. Rouch has also turned the risks of subjective involvement with, and "disturbance" of, his subjects to positive use to produce what he has styled a kind of "science fiction." The reasons for this change from several years of conventional film reporting have never been fully spelled out, though by reading between the lines of this and other interviews, it is quite apparent that Rouch in some sense feels that academic ethnographic description not only freezes the situations described, but if those situations are "tragic," as they so often are, that it is only by introducing fantasy and role-playing that the participants can transcend them and begin to discover "a way out."

Thus he films particular sets of circumstances, in which he and his friends participated, often provoking reactions by the presence of his camera, occasionally inventing



Jean Rouch with friend in Niamey (photo by Jane Rouch, courtesy of the French Film Office).



situations, but always relying on our judgment to discern what is not customary nor modal in the films. Unfortunately, Rouch gave up publishing formal ethnography about 1960 and in the absence of such description for many of the films we must rely for background on what he chooses to present in his interviews. Readers will certainly think of many questions they will wish had been posed by the interviewers—perhaps they were posed—but the questions actually raised seemed only to interrupt his train of thought and have therefore been removed as irrelevant.

He presents essentially his own story of how the films were made and his intentions and feelings about them twenty years later, in what is the self-portrait of a man who, together with a handful of other persons, has come to represent what social anthropology is all about for many people around the world. Reproduced here are virtually all of Rouch's remarks on *Jaguar*, less than half of what he said about *Les Maîtres Fous* and *The Lion Hunters*. I have kept everything which illuminated his films, insofar as I know them, all the materials which cannot be discovered elsewhere, as well as the asides and anecdotes which throw light on Rouch as an observer concerned with ethical issues and with keeping a sense of fun about them. None of the information is contained in the films. *Chronicle of a Summer* which is reviewed in this issue was not discussed since Rouch and Edgar Morin had already published extensively about its making ("Chronique d'un Été," *Domaine Cinéma* 1, 1963). Copies of the tapes and of the first corrected transcription are in the possession of Documentary Educational Resources, 24 Dane St., Somerville, Massachusetts, 02143, to whom readers should apply if they are interested in either renting or purchasing copies of the films discussed.

Jean Rouch has kindly looked over the entire text as published here and corrected our errors of transcription. [J.W.A.]

## I. Les Maîtres Fous

*Les Maîtres Fous* (1953), is perhaps the best-known film by Rouch. Within twenty minutes it shows some of the urban background of a possession cult known as the Hauka, then presents their biggest ceremony of the year, held on a Sunday in the suburbs of Accra, Ghana. There the "horses" are possessed by spirits of colonial administrators and enact a drama which becomes a reflection of that regime through the eyes of cult members. The film concludes with scenes of the "horses" next day and contrasts their happiness and tranquility on the job with the violence of the ceremony. It suggests that the ceremony is a form of catharsis. An early report, "Culte des génies chez les Sonray" (*Jour. de la société des Africanistes* 15:15-32, 1945), became the basis for research which culminated in Rouch's *Doctorat*, published in 1960 in Paris under the title *La religion et la magie Songhay*. These publications place the cult in the context of the traditional religion and show that it is a contemporary reworking within the colonial situation of themes and practices of the traditional religion. The film *Jaguar* shows more of the urban milieu within which the ceremony took place. (The reference under *Jaguar* also discusses the cult.) A review of *Les Maîtres Fous* was published in the *American Anthropologist* 73:1471-1473, 1971. [J.W.A.]

I first came across the cult when I was doing a film on hippopotamus hunting among the Sorko (*Bataille sur le Grand Fleuve*). At the beginning of that film there is a woman in trance and at the end there are three fishermen. I showed it later in Accra and I think there were some Hauka in the audience; at any rate the Hauka priests heard about it, and they cabled me in Togo, where I was at the time, to come and film their ceremony which they planned to use as part of their ceremony. I had seen maybe one hundred ceremonies and I knew the people very well, but I had never seen them eat a dog. They had only



eaten a dog two or three times before. They did that, of course, because the British would not eat dogs, just as before they had eaten wild pig, which Muslims refuse to eat.

Once I saw in Kumasi, in the center of Ghana, the military parade of the Hauka, which was fantastic. There were altogether one hundred of them possessed, with their guns, all making a parade and shouting, but unfortunately it was at night and I could not film it. Normally they go every Sunday in the suburbs, where sometimes a few are possessed. But the ceremony we filmed, the biggest one of the year, was held on a special farm. At the end of *Les Maîtres Fous* the truck driver says quite spontaneously, "Let's have one of these—major ceremonies—every six months instead of only once a year," which indicates how these possession religions come from the people; in other words, it isn't a priest who decrees. It takes them about an hour to induce trance, occasionally three hours, or even, I remember once, two days! And when they are in trance they speak a strange language which is part French. They make the foam in their mouths while they are in trance by moving their tongues and swallowing very fast at the same time, but you can't do it unless you are in trance.

The cult is an African expression of our culture. The title of the film is a pun. It means the "masters of madness," but the British colonial masters are the ones who are mad! There's an attitude of both mockery and respect in *Les Maîtres Fous*, they're playing gods of strength.

When the young African students, and those who work on salary, were schoolboys in their own villages, learning our culture, the Hauka was a fascinating kind of model to follow. Europeans are not supposed to be afraid of anything. They don't care, they break taboos, they do what they want, and I think that the Hauka represent the same behavior, which is very important: people who are afraid of nothing, people who don't care. A lot of them were possessed by Hauka when they were in school. At the peak of the movement there were maybe one hundred Hauka gods, with newcomers all the time; and there were roughly 50,000 to 100,000 boys going every year to work in Ghana, and among them maybe 30% were possessed, but all the others were followers, "the faithful," who were there every Saturday and Sunday seeing an entertainment which was better than cinema, full of fantastic things, like when they take the dog meat from the pot of boiling water and are not burned.

In the film there is only one woman who is possessed and the reason is that it was made in Accra about a particular group of migrants who were men; the only girls were prostitutes who followed them. But in the traditional religion there are more women than men and even now the majority of the gods' "horses" are women. When we were filming, there was no policy of deliberate discrimination against women, in fact it was open to everybody. Even if I had been possessed, I would have been a member of the sect, though I'm white.

Women are possessed by the same gods as men, there is no difference. In the film the girl is possessed by a man, Captain Salma, the first French officer to be district commissioner in Niamey (from 1901 to 1905); he was married to an African girl. And there is a man who is possessed by Madame Salma, a very well known Hauka. Women are not possessed by a discrete group, as opposed to the men. And you're not possessed by only one; you can have five gods in your panoply but most people have only two or three, and they are always the same ones. It's a question of personal character which suddenly decides what type of god will possess you.

When the cult first appeared in Niger in 1925, the priests of the traditional religion were violently against it because, for example, when the priests were asking Dongo, the thunder god, to speak of rain, all the Hauka were coming and shouting and speaking of something other than the requests of the chiefs of the village. So the chiefs complained to the French administrators. The story is that around 1928 the district commissioner of



Niamey, now the capitol of the Republic of Niger, sent his guards around to the villages to collect all the Hauka and to bring them to Niamey and when they were assembled he said, "Dance, I want to speak with Hauka." So they performed a ceremony in front of him. They became possessed, and he asked the gods to weep and to take their tears and put them on the Hauka. The possession crisis stopped immediately, of course, and the commissioner said, "You see, there are no more Hauka, I am stronger than the Hauka." Then he put them all in jail.

When they were in jail one man became possessed and said, "I am a new Hauka, I'm Corsasi" (The Wicked Major). The name of the District Commissioner was Crocchia, which is a Corsican name, and the man said, "I'm Corsasi, I'm stronger than all the other Hauka, we have to break out of jail." The jail walls were mud; they broke jail, went outside, shouting, and Crocchia had to use all his guards to keep them quiet. They were kept in jail for two months and then sent back to their own village. But when they went back the cult increased very quickly. They were martyrs, you see, and when you fight against a cult like that you just give it publicity.

The French thought the Hauka might constitute a serious threat, because often in the colonial period some priests of Islam would start to preach the holy war, the *jiha*d. I spoke to Governor Crocchia myself at the end of his life about what had happened in Niamey. He was very old and all he said was "Oh yes, I remember this boy shouting. . . . They said they were devils. . . . But we did it."

Later they had the same trouble with the British administration and in '35 or '36 the British district commissioners made exactly the same mistakes: they put all these people in jail and so on. And that very night there were fires all around the town; the Public Works Department in Accra was destroyed and the Hauka—when they were possessed—said, "We are responsible. . . ." They did it to show that they were strong. So to avoid further trouble there was a kind of *accord* among the Hauka priests to perform their ceremonies only on Saturday and Sunday, and only in certain places.

I shot the film in two days in 1954, using the old Bell and Howell which had to be re-wound every 20 seconds. Jane, my wife, was with me, so was Damouré, who did the sound recording, and we were all very disturbed. We drove back at night in a small car and it took maybe an hour. But first we had to walk half an hour to get to the car and everyone was tired. We drove Gerba, the "loco driver," back home, just like after a party and there was an incredible smell of dogs and perfume in the car because they drink perfume during the ceremony. I said to Damouré, "We really made a very bad film, it's very cruel," and it was only then that we decided to go out the next day to see what the boys were doing.

But with us among my staff was a young lad named Tallou who later acted in *Cocorico Monsieur Poulet* (1975). He was shocked: "Everything is fake. All this is fake." And Gerba said to him, "Tallou be careful. You shouldn't say that because the Hauka will take revenge." And two weeks later Tallou was possessed! It was a savage trance; it caused a lot of trouble because he was possessed in the middle of Accra and he started to fight his friends. We found him spending the night in the cemetery outside the town, and I brought him to Mountyeba the priest who said, "Yes, he's possessed, but you have to wait maybe a year before his initiation," and he also told me, "You are responsible because you brought him here. The best thing to do is to take him back to his own village." He gave me some perfume and other things and explained how to quiet Tallou if there was a crisis. So I sent Tallou with my driver Lam (who also played in my films!). They went back to Niger by train and lorry, and during the journey he was possessed two or three times, and Lam had to quiet him by pouring perfume on his head and saying "Be quiet, be quiet." It was two years before he was initiated. One of the last Hauka was a French general who was commandant during the Indo-China war. And the very last was called General Marseilles, because some African troops who were going to Indo-China stayed in



Marseilles, France. Tallou was possessed by General Marseilles, the last of the Hauka.

I couldn't show the film, first because of British censorship which equated the picture of the governor with an insult to the queen and to her authority; and I couldn't show it also because when I projected the film—I'd done experiments about this—the people who went into trance did so in an uncontrollable and almost dangerous way. It is a kind of electroshock to show a man a film of himself in trance.

But I think that the priests knew all this quite well and that they wanted to use it for its therapeutic value. Perhaps they might have been able to control it. I'm sure they knew they were playing with fire, but it was probably their intention to go beyond what had been done before. You see, when they first decided to eat a dog it was really breaking a very strong taboo. They were doing something very bad, and maybe if they had used the film there would have been a fantastic emergence of all the Hauka power at the same time. Well, they were ready to try a kind of experiment because they felt they could command any aspect of European-based technology, including cameras and films, and so it would have been a challenge. My hypothesis is that they would have used a camera in the cult just as they used a gun: a crude wooden camera, and it would have been a normal part of the cult, if this movement had not been stopped by Independence. But it was.

Well, when *Les Maîtres Fous* was first shown in Paris, at the Musée de l'Homme, by Professor Marcel Griaule, there were some African students around, keeping an eye on the museum, and they said it was an affront to their dignity. But it's now shown at the Cultural Center in Niger, and frankly I think it's better to eat a dog on Sundays and to be quiet during the rest of the week than it is to be sending people to concentration camps. In fact the uprisings in May '68 were a kind of possession by things which were otherwise inexpressible.

I remember the reaction of Claude Chabrol, the French filmmaker, who called Braunberger my distributor and said to him, "I want to meet Jean Rouch, because he's a fantastic filmmaker. What a set up! How can he direct actors like that?" Because he thought it was a fake. You see it's impossible to predict the reaction of an audience. Jean Genet's was to write *Les Nègres*. Peter Brook used it to train his actors for *Marat/Sade*—though Lacan has said it has absolutely nothing to do with our mental disease—and I asked Peter Brook if his actors became possessed and he told me that they would never admit it because they want to be only actors!

The film in fact shows the very end of the Hauka development: because it was only two or three years before the independence of Ghana. When the country became independent the Hauka still continued, but there was no more colonial power and there was never a Hauka called Kwame N'krumah. It was really a cult of the colonial period. It's very interesting because we seldom assist at the birth of a new cult and never at its death.

Five or ten years later I showed the film, not in Accra, but back in the villages, and they were very moved by it.

After Independence, the new Ghana government thought that there were too many foreign workers in Ghana so they started to control migration. Fewer and fewer boys went to Accra to find jobs, and the Hauka boys who were settled in Accra went back one after the other to their own country, and they brought back their Hauka with them to their own villages. But three years later, in 1960, their own country was independent and the Hauka no longer had the same success as before. When they came back the traditional priests assimilated the Hauka. So Dongo, the god of thunder, is now considered to be their father. And the story is that Bilali, another aspect of Dongo, when he was in Mecca, had a lot of sons who came to Africa. They say that Bilali actually sang Hauka songs and did Hauka rituals when he was in Mecca. The Hauka were the *enfants terribles* of Bilali, but now they are with us, we are all together in the same family. And even today in the very remote traditional villages the Hauka still play an important role.



I've been working in Simiri one hundred miles north of Niamey where I have made a lot of films. One was about the drought in this area, because they are rainmakers (*Sécheresse à Simiri*, 1973-74), and when I showed the film to the people there, last year, I learned that the rain was being kept in the hat of the chief and that he was responsible for the drought. And I learned that the chief keeps a white horse in his compound who is never mounted. It's the real horse of the spirit of the village and near his stable is a black bull. Every seven years they have to slaughter the black bull and pour its blood on the horse. Of course the horse sometimes dies, and then they have to get another one. I heard that the next ceremony will happen in a year and a half and that one year before the ceremony the black bull is freed. He goes into the bush, where he spends the whole year. When the time for the ceremony arrives the Hauka of the village possess the boys and girls, and it is the Hauka who have to go into the bush and find the bull and bring him back to be slaughtered. I tell this because it shows the role that the Hauka play now in a very important and certainly very old ceremony. The Hauka are in fact not responsible for creating the ceremony, but they're incorporated into it. They still do audacious things. So the village will send Europe's best soldiers out to catch the bull!

Five years ago there were newcomers exactly as the Hauka once were newcomers. In small villages new gods appeared who called themselves Sasale. The Sasale were originally a group of ex-slaves who are very famous in Niger because they danced for the chiefs. And when they danced they took off all their clothing and they sang sexual songs and danced sexual dances. And the spectators paid them to stop. You see the idea: it's a kind of strip-tease, only you pay them *not to go on!* Well, when the Sasale possess the boys and girls they do the same thing, they start to take off their clothes and they start to make love when they are possessed. It was considered shameful, it was forbidden by the Niger police, and they were put in jail, and the same story started all over again, and of course it only became more and more important.

The Sasale were in fact the ghosts of famous singers, prostitutes, playboys, who had died some years before, and come back. The first one was named Alibiyo, which means The Black Ali. He was a young and very handsome man who had been propagandist of the RDA, the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain*, a political party in the fight for independence in West Africa. He died just after Independence in '61 and the minstrels, guitar players, fiddle players—the *griot*—composed a very famous song about him called "Alibiyo." The Niger army was looking for traditional tunes to play and chose "Alibiyo." When Alibiyo appeared three years later he said, "You are calling me all the time, even the army is calling me. Well, here I am, I'm Alibiyo the playboy," and that was the beginning.

This new religion is starting the same way: it's absolutely underground because the government is against sex. I began a film about it, but they asked me not to show it because of course the people were all, well, they were not making love in front of the camera, but all the dances, all the songs were about sex: "Look at my clitoris," "Oh, your testicles are wonderful," and so on. It was really something. You see it happens all the time. These religions are a kind of *inconscient collectif*. The people can't explain what they're doing, they can only show what they're thinking of, and it means that during these years from the 20's to Independence they were thinking of power, military, administrative, bureaucratic power, and now they are thinking of sex and death.

The Hauka introduced the idea of people who are outlaws, in the exact sense of the word. (It's important in one's myth to have people who are outlaws.) But now that the Hauka are inside the law, because they are the sons of Dongo, there are new outlaws of sex and death, the Sasale. Even in the present political situation, it's still working, it's still there.



## II. The Lion Hunters

The Lion Hunters (*La Chasse au Lion à l'Arc*, 1956-1965) opens with shots of a Land Rover entering the "land of nowhere" heading toward a village where preparations are under way for a Gow hunting party (making arrows, making poison, target practice, and so forth). In the second part, the hunters go out and kill a number of animals, including three lions, but the lion named *The American*, which they had hoped to kill, eludes them. The identity of the Gow hunters and their relationship to the other peoples in the area are not fully explained. Rouch's field notes, deposited in the *Musée de l'Homme*, have not been written up, and the only printed material is a collection of folklore (*Les Gow, ou chasseurs du Niger . . .* by Auguste Victor Dupuis-Yakouba, Paris, 1911) which suggests in the origin myth only that the Gow hunters may be illegitimate sons. Rouch elaborates on the comment in the film that the men who kill lions lose their sons, and sketches briefly something of the political relationship of the Gow to the Songhay millet farmers of the area. During the interview, Rouch drew our attention to a publication about a similar group of (Manding) hunters by Youssouf Cisse, "Notes sur les sociétés de chasseurs Malinké" (*Jour. de la société des Africanistes* 34:175-226, 1964), which explains why they fear that they will lose their sons. The Lion Hunters was reviewed in the *American Anthropologist* 74:1567-1568, 1972. [J.W.A.]

The film was made in a very specific place which is at the exact boundary of three states: Niger, Upper Volta, and Mali. There are many lions there because it's so remote. To give you an example, we left Niger in the morning, the lion killed an animal in Upper Volta, and the lion was killed in Mali, just crossing the border. There are no boundaries, no border control, only a tree.

The narration on the American version is a translation of the narration which I did for the French version. "The Bush which is Farther than Far" is a translation of "Gandji Kanga Mooru Nda Mooru," which is the actual name. We were just at the boundary of the millet farming area and the bush. The nomads go into The Bush which is Farther than Far. But "*le Pays de Nulle Part*" was a nickname that we gave the place: The Land of Nowhere. I said in the commentary that there were mountains without any name, and that we called them "Mountains of the Moon," or "Mountains of Crystal." You see, I wanted to express in the commentary the fact that we were included in this adventure, and that we put all our own fantasies into it, because we kidded around about these things, just joking. Maybe I was very ambitious, but my idea was to start from the beginning, to tell the story as they would tell it to their own boys, and it was to be the story of this particular hunt party in which Rouch was filming.

Nowadays, there are Songhay, Gow, Tuaregs, Bella and Fulani nearby. The Songhay are millet farmers. The Gow aren't a tribe, they are just a group of Songhay who hunt lions. Then there are two nomadic tribes: the Tuaregs and the Bella (who are slaves of the Tuaregs), in addition to the Fulani-Djelgodji who are the last Fulani nomads to penetrate inside the belt of the Niger River.

The Songhay own the land on which the Fulani pasture their cattle, so the Fulani have no right to the lions. The same with the Tuaregs. They pay the Gow to hunt and when they kill a lion, the Gow receive maybe two or three bulls, which they pasture with the Fulani herds. The Gow also get the heart of the lion which they can sell for as much as a thousand dollars, but the Fulani don't know that. The head of the hunters goes every year to Ghana to sell the lion hearts, the skins, and so on, and he brings back clothes and gifts to the Fulani. He is a very wealthy man.



But the Fulani don't care; to them it's a magic business. They want only one thing: to go into this area with their cattle and to be at peace with the farmers, and to be at peace with the lions. Yet the Fulani say that if there were no more lions they would have to leave the country. After the drought the lions crossed to the other bank of the Niger River and the Fulani followed. They said, "The lions know where there is good grass, small water holes. Where there are lions we have good meadows, good pasturage, good grass for our cattle, because the lions know where they can find antelopes which need the same grass."

I wanted to make a film about the Fulani, but it was impossible. You cannot go with them at night when the cattle are there because they are speaking with the lions, fighting them. They tell you the story of these encounters, but you cannot film them. Even very small boys, perhaps seven years old, come back and say, "Tonight I fought a lion with my club."

The Fulani have no right to kill lions because they are shepherds, so the only thing they can do is to fight them with their clubs and stones, and hope the lion will go away. But if they use spears, it's finished, the lions will attack. You see, there's a kind of agreement between the lions and the shepherds, a kind of contract: the lions can kill the cows or the bulls who are not in good condition, but if a lion kills, not to eat, but for its own sake, then they can call the Gow to kill it. Technically, of course, they could do it themselves, though it's not so easy.

Normally the Gow stay home and wait for one of the shepherds to come. When there is a lion the Gow know what happened, they know exactly how many lions were there. If they know the lions they know the track, they know the way the lion kills the animals, they know exactly what is the mood of the lion, and so on. That is the magic knowledge of the bush, to know this kind of thing and decide to, well, to go in this direction to find him. But for example, I was in Yatakala when a man came from Mali maybe sixty kilometers away. "Well, there is some trouble with a lion." So Tahirou sent one of the Gow on horseback to see what was going on. And two days later the man came back and said, "There's a group of lions there, but they are absolutely normal, we must not interfere with them."

The hunters are recruited because they are interested. Anybody can be a Gow if he has enough courage and enough technique to kill a lion. That's the difference between a Gow and other groups: they are not a descent group, they are just hunters, a professional caste, but not like the blacksmiths because a blacksmith has to be the son of a blacksmith. It's just an open caste for people of knowledge. In the beginning of the area the hunters played a very important role as leaders, and what was important was that their power was not hereditary. The narration of the film says: "If you kill lions, you will lose all your children, all your boys will die." So you cannot have descendants. The chief was the best hunter but there were no "sons of the best hunter" to succeed him because he had no sons. (In fact it happened that Isiyaka lost one of his sons during the next year after killing the lion in the film but he knew that was the risk he ran.) They say that in the very beginning the founders of state power in West Africa were hunters. And one day they preferred power to hunting. Then their sons could live, and when they died they asked the people to take their sons to be chiefs instead of themselves. That was the end of this wonderful time when there was no hereditary power. There was power only in the sense that the best hunter was the chief.

The Gow don't own the lions on their land. They are hunting lions; the lions are hunting something else, and sometimes the lions are hunting Gow, to kill them! It happens. There are not many lions now but twenty or thirty years ago there were. All the people farmed but during the dry season, when they had nothing to do, the men made war or went hunting. To hunt a lion is to be a really big hunter. And the lions are considered almost like domestic animals.



They say that the lion was the model of human society. The lion is polygynous: he lives with his son and the lioness very often does all the work for them. But the lion is the chief of his territory and he has to fight against the other lions, just to keep the place for a lioness. And they say that when the cubs roar there is rivalry between the lion father and his son, and at the same time the lion has to fight against his son. Normally, though, the son goes out with his twin sister to found a new family. And they say that in ancient time men's communities started in the same way, all the children were twins. And the first marriage was between twins, it was the beginning of the family. In the human social organization the males were hunters, doing exactly the same thing as the lions, and it was a model they followed. And sometimes the young lion, if the father lion is old, fights against his father, and if he can kill his father, he has to eat him. Then he is a chief. And they say that when you find the body of an old lion, in the bush as if it had been eaten, that it is not the hyena or the jackals who did it, for they cannot eat lion meat, but it was the lion's son. Well, that's the myth.

The story is that the poison, the *boto*, was given to the first man by a female elephant who gave him the secret because she was jealous of another female elephant who was in love with her husband. And the female elephant asked the man to prepare poison. The man became a close friend to this elephant and when everything was ready he said to his father, "Tomorrow I'll go and kill the big elephant." And his father said, "Tell me the whole story." And he said, "I saw the female, she gave me the *nagyi* and everything to make poison, and I have to put it on my spear." And the father asked his son, "How many spears did you bring with you?" "Only one, that's enough." And the father said, "My son, take two and be careful." Then the boy went into the top of a tree. The female asked her husband to come this way and when he was under the tree the man threw his spear and the male elephant died. And then the female elephant tried to attack the tree with the hunter in it but fortunately he had a second spear and with the second spear he killed the female who gave him the secret of the bush. That's the story.

They prepare the poison inside a magic circle to avoid all influence of the bush. There are certain small bush spirits, *atakurma*, who are the shepherds of the wild animals, and who spy on the Gow for the lions! When the Gow prepare the poison they are not really invisible but they are secret. The poison itself is strong enough to kill a lion, from a chemical point of view, but they put in something else and that's their own magic. And maybe the small *atakurma* see that and go tell the lion, "Well, there is no way out." But when I asked the Gow to explain it they just laughed, which means, "We don't want to give you the answer."

When it's finished they break the jars which had contained the poison, and walk around on them. I said to one of them, "If you are hurt, you'll die," and he said, "Yes, of course, I'll die." But that's the game: to play with the poison to show that you are stronger than the poison. Actually, though, they have an antidote because when they shoot a lion there are spent arrows on the ground and if they are barefoot they can be hurt by an arrow and die. So they carry this counter-poison with them. I asked them what it is, but they wouldn't tell me. Only that they take the charcoal which is used to make the fire to boil the poison. That's all, this charcoal is the counter-poison. Which in fact is not true. There is something else. But they don't want me to know the secret, because when these people were warriors, they prepared the antidote to cure people hurt by the poison. That's the big secret.

The Gow poison is really very effective, an alkaloid to stop the heart. After ten minutes the lion is absolutely stunned. What's strange is that this alkaloid (from the fruit of a *Strophantus* tree) contains some of the same chemical components as cortisone. It's been analyzed. And they use the fat of the lion to cure rheumatism. Which means that when you kill a lion his body becomes a kind of laboratory when he's dying, producing this fat



to cure rheumatism. Maybe we can use it in the pharmacy! It'll be a blessing to the lion population, a boom on lions!

Among the Gow there is only one person who knows the secret of the poison, Tahirou, who is very old, and is now ready to give the secret to another man. At the beginning of the film when he is speaking the "initiation chain" he says, "Bulason gave the secret to Koro and Koro gave it to me." Koro was his father, but Bulason was not his grandfather. Of course Tahirou will try to give his secret to one of his kinsmen, a nephew for example, but it's the hunters themselves who decide.

I don't know how they decide but it's certainly the one who "knows" and who has luck. It's very important to have luck. It won't be Isiyaka because he has no luck, though he's a good hunter and he's a good fiddle player. Wangari, the younger brother of Isiyaka, has good luck because he's laughing all the time. When you have a jolly fellow like that around, it's good. And he knows more than Isiyaka about the bush. Tahirou in fact is not a very good hunter; he knows things, he has contact with lions, can read their tracks and so on, but actually he is a very bad archer, though the commentary does not say so. But at the end of the film when they all come back to the village the lion is *said* to have been killed by his arrow because he's the chief. Every hunter knows quite well, though, that he had absolutely no arrow in the lion when they killed it, but he gets the heart which will be sold for a very big amount of money. The villagers say, "O Tahirou is the best, he's the chief, his arrow was in the heart. . . ." But we knew that it was Isiyaka. The narration says only that Isiyaka, the fiddle player, is really the best shot. But he isn't a "good hunter" because he has no luck.

Tahirou decides when to start the hunt and he stops it when there is something wrong. For example, when they killed the hyena, he said "It's very bad, we have to be careful. . . ." They say the hyena is the most intelligent animal in the bush and that it's very dangerous. The men were absolutely terrified of it and stopped for two hours, but it was not necessary. Of course the hyena was very angry, but it was not dangerous at all. They said, "The hyena should die very quickly." They never did that with the lion later on. They shot in a second arrow very quickly just to finish him off. We came back to the Fulani camp and that was the beginning of our bad luck. Tahirou was not speaking. And for two weeks, nothing happened, everything went wrong. We "lost the tracks" and for the Gow "to follow the track" means to go out alone to kill a lion one-on-one. That is the correct—the Gow—way to do it, but they told me I couldn't go on a real hunt till I'd been on a hunt like this. So they kept saying "we cannot follow the track and see where the lion is."

You see my filming of the hunt was my own initiation as a lion hunter, and my intention in editing the film and in the commentary was to try to give the audience a feeling of what I myself felt as I was learning the way of the lion hunt. I said all this in the original French version, but the American distributor cut out the parts where I explained it! Twenty minutes are missing and there are also two reels absolutely out of sync: when the boys are training with bows and arrows, and the last reel.

The missing reels come just after the making of the poison. The Gow gather together to decide what kind of hunt they will make and then they show some of the different ways. For example they build a kind of mud bunker just in front of the water hole where the lions come to drink; it's not a reconstruction, but they are playing. However when the hunters are inside the bunker at night, they have no lights so it was impossible to make the film that way. The other way is to sit on top of a tree near where a donkey or some other animal has been killed by a lion, and just wait there at night. But again you cannot film it because it's dark. They said, "We cannot go out alone because you're not lion hunters." So we decided to make a film showing them using traps. I follow them to Ghana where they buy their traps, and I show the men making the traps in Swedru.



(They are European traps by origin: the Portuguese brought the technique.) Then we start the hunt. But every time it's failed. So they went to see a man who tells the future by throwing cowrie shells, who said that there was a member of the staff who was against the hunt because he was acquainted with the lioness and did not want to hunt. And when he described this man, everybody knew who he was, but we had to stop. Then you see the cable (which was actually sent) and the film continues as I made it.

I had authorizations to make the film from Upper Volta, Mali, and Niger. And they sent an officer there from Mali with two frontier guards with guns. But the Gow asked us never to have a gun with us because it's so dangerous. They said, "If the lions smell the odor, they will attack the man directly." Well, I don't know if that's true but there was some anxiety on the part of the Gow. So we had absolutely no guns, nothing. I was very annoyed because when the lion charged, the two guards with their guns ran away very quickly, and Damouré had to cure them afterwards because their legs were full of thorns from the grass in the bush. It was a shame. (If you look carefully at the film, you can see one of these men with a gun. I kept it in because it was true. But it was shameful for them to have behaved like that, and we had some trouble about it later with the authorities.) At the beginning of my filming the Gow smelled the camera and they said "That's exactly the same odor as a gun, you have to be careful." So for the entire time I put herbs on my camera just to avoid the smell.

In fact my presence among the Gow was the cause of an accident with the Fulani herdsman. He saw me with the Beaulieu camera, which had a small zoom, and thought I had a magical weapon with which to kill the lion. He said, "Well, this man is not a Gow, yet he's following the Gow, so we can go along too." They wanted to know what would happen. That was the real cause of the trouble, because they are not supposed to follow the Gow.

The reason why the film took so long to shoot is that year after year we went there but it was impossible to start the hunt because there was no *scandale*, as they say, for example, that a lion had killed a camel and then did not eat the camel. The lions would eat more cattle if the Gow just killed lions without any reason. That's the tradition.

For dramatic or esthetic reasons we changed the actual order of events. The first shot of Isiyaka playing his fiddle in syncsound was maybe the last shot I filmed. I used it at the beginning and at the end, when the boy fell asleep, but I shot them just at the end of the shooting. The last hunt in the film, for the lioness of Fitili, happened one year *before* the hunt for the other lioness. Every year that I was shooting the film I would go with a copy and a projector to Yatakala and show the film to the Gow. After seeing the first cut they said, "Well, it's a pity you can't see more lions. We'll have to go out and get some more lions." So then we made the part in which the lion "vomits his death." But we decided to stop the film there because the Gow kept asking us to come every year and make a kind of annual report of the lion hunt!

The narration of *The Hunters* was truly wonderful, John, the way you made a film tell a story, and in the French version I tried to do it the same way. My commentary was improvised as usual, and I spoke it myself. The idea was to remove myself because I am not an actor. I wrote out the main things to say and I roughly knew the text; then I improvised in front of the screen, in five minute sequences. And I was very impressed by the fact that when you do it that way, just trying not to make mistakes, just trying to speak good French, that if you are in good voice, you are very moved. I think that's why I hate the English language version, because it was by a Canadian who tried to play a role. It's not too bad but I don't like the way all that false drama intrudes. But anyway, that's why I recorded the commentary for *Les Maîtres Fous* myself, even in my bad English, but the trouble was that it was not improvised, I had to read it.

When I started the film in '57, I shot the first poison preparation using only the small



Bell-and-Howell camera, which meant nothing was syncsound; and all the shots were very short because I had to rewind the camera constantly. From my point of view the film was edited in the camera during the shooting. I would change my angle all the time, so that there would not be too much to do in the editing. But when I finished the film, syncsound, in '65 using the Beaulieu, I had a problem editing it because all the sequences of technical processes in the first part of the film were shot with this new camera and the shots were much longer.

For example, the preparation of the bow and arrow was made after the rest of the film itself, and the shots with the blacksmith were very long. But we edited it in the same way as the first footage because it was in the same part of the film. I was upset because there was a very good sequence which lasted maybe three minutes in which you can see the making of an arrow from beginning to end in one shot. But I had to cut it up because I had to respect the first shooting. So the editing style is very *elegante*. I like the girl (Josée Matarassa) who did it very much because it's difficult to edit a film like that, and there was important work which she had to do on it. But when I made this film I realized that there was a big difference in the two approaches: silent film and sound film. In the last film I showed yesterday night (*L'Enterrement du Hogon*, 1972.) the shots are very long because it's the only way to film now, I think.

I regretted having to reedit the footage in *The Lion Hunters* so much that I made the second film about hunting The American [called in Songhay simply The Whiteman, ed. note] entitled *Un Lion Nommé l'Américain* (1968) just to use the long sequence about the death of the lion and to show exactly what happened during the whole time in syncsound. In it you see us going out in the Land Rover, and Damouré asks the hunters to tell us when they are on the track, and Isiyaka says "You see, that's the track of The American, because when we were with Rouch he had a leg caught in the trap, and you can see where he was hurt. That's The American." It's all very clear and at the end of the film Damouré interviews Isiyaka and there is the lioness, dead, and he says to Isiyaka, "Well, it's not The American." And Isiyaka says, "No, The American went into another bush. But maybe next year we will kill The American." And it was the beginning of the myth of The American. But I think all that's very difficult to put in a film. It was the last attempt to kill "The American." We killed another lion, yes, but The American was killed by a Mali hunter, using a gun, one year later.

It's very strange because Tallou was working with me when I made *Un Lion Nommé l'Américain*. (You remember he became possessed by the Hauka.) And when we were right in front of the lion ready for action (he was carrying the Nagra) he became possessed again and his new god was called The American! And Tallou started to roar like a lion: "The American!" And the lion was very astonished. Tallou was possessed because he was afraid, you see that assimilation. He was mimicking The American. Now The American is a kind of myth: every big lion is The American and the spirit of The American is, I don't know, perhaps a Hauka.

There's nothing profound about the second film. Wangari and Tahirou sing for the lion and for the hunters and so on. It is based essentially on a very long five minute shot of the death of the lion. But the film is not dramatic, and that's the trouble: truth is less dramatic than editing. I know that. But I go for the truth and then try to find drama inside the truth. It will happen, but it's unpredictable. For instance, I made a small film, only ten minutes long, of a possession dance in one shot (*Tourou et Bitti*, 1967). I started to shoot just five minutes before the trance began. It's dramatic because something happened in the middle of the shooting. That's the way to make films: you have to start just before the event and the fact that you are shooting evokes the event. But when you shoot like that, very often it's a mess. One time I started and just when there was no more film in the camera, the trance happened. But anyway, I think that's the way you can film the drama.



As I said, the correct way to hunt a lion is one-on-one, one hunter, one lion. Well, you can do it if you have the courage. I didn't know the way to do it, not really, and there was the question of sound equipment. If you could use a Nagra in your pocket and could be alone with a hunter like that you might be able to film it, but I cannot say that I would stay in front of a lion who is charging. When I was shooting the lioness hunt I was using the Beaulieu and a Nagra but it was not syncsound. It was too difficult at that time. But if I could use a crystal system, with an Eclair and a Nagra, and could be absolutely independent, certainly, I would try to shoot the whole film, everything, even if I was frightened. Even if I was running, I would continue my shooting. Maybe it would be a very strange film but the drama would be inside!

When I was shooting the Fitili lioness I really was frightened. She was jumping around like a grasshopper. Even a small lion is dangerous, and if you are hurt, it's very infectious. When she started to jump, I stopped the camera, but the sound man didn't stop, so there was something in the action that I missed. Of course I hoped audiences would believe me, but many people don't believe that it actually happened that way. Well, I think there's less than one minute lost between the moment I stopped and the death of the animal. Isiyaka got his arrow in very quickly, but at the time I didn't know exactly what to do. I was a student in lion hunting, too! I didn't know the way.

They say that if you stand absolutely still, you're all right. If you are afraid you can take a small tree, or just a branch, and hold it in front of you, and the lion will just roar and die there like a dog. In the bullfight there are clowns who stand quietly in the middle of the arena and if the bull is just standing around they have only not to move, and they're safe. I think it's the same thing, but well, if you are making a film. . . . I even thought of using a helicopter, but what would that mean? A helicopter would make it all very stupid. Besides, I'm very happy to know that there is something like that which nobody can film. I've never seen a kill one-on-one, but they tell the story all the time. Tahirou killed one hundred lions that way, he killed ten lions a year, alone, and came back alone.

### III. Jaguar

*Jaguar*, filmed at the same time as *Les Maitres Fous*, marked a departure by Rouch from straightforward recording of factual information. In it three of his friends play the roles of young Africans who go down to the Gold Coast each year during the dry season and it shows them responding to other ethnic groups along the way, and to the city where they find work. It was filmed as part of Rouch's study of these migrations which has been published principally in "*Migrations au Ghana (Gold Coast) (Enquête 1953-1955)*" (*Jour. de la société des Africanistes*, 26:33-196). *Jaguar* was reviewed in the *American Anthropologist* 76:697-698, 1974. [J.W.A.]

I think there are two kinds of truths: dramatic truth and documentary reporting, but pure documentary is very rare, and maybe it's inevitable that a film have some drama in it. A film like *Jaguar* was fun. It was shot as a silent film, and we made it up as we went along. It's a kind of *journal de route*—my working journal along the way with my camera. We were playing a game together, we were all in the same car going down to the coast. I remember I had a big discussion with my wife Jane, who was with me at the time (it was her first trip to Africa), because she said "The Truth is more important: why aren't you making a documentary instead of asking these people to play roles which are not their own?" And I explained to her how very difficult it is to show all the things I wanted to show about these migrations in a documentary.



I asked them to act and it was very easy for them to do it but we were always in a false situation. For example, when the boys were crossing the border at the customs office by the police station I just went up and said, "I am shooting a film of some people, do you mind?" And they said, fine. They didn't know what was going on: when the boy crossed the border I was actually filming the man in front and he didn't see what happened behind him. So they did cross the border illegally but I was with the camera and if something happened, everything would have been all right, they had identity cards and so on. But we were so happy about it that we never went back to cross legally. We were absolutely happy because we knew that it was possible.

A second example in the film: Suddenly you see Damouré Zika with a Rolleflex taking photographs of Kwame N'krumah. Well it's absolutely unbelievable that a migrant would be able to do that. Where could he find a Rolleflex if he was working in timber? But we decided to do it and he came there with his Rolleflex and was filming among the staff of the so-called "international photographers." He was making photography so he was invisible, and we were so happy to be there with absolutely no newspaper card, or anything like that. But the people knew me and they knew that I was making a film of the election (*Baby Ghana*, 1957). So we were using the camera as a kind of passport to fantasy or to truth, I don't know which exactly.

We shot the film like that in one year. The narration was done later on, and the film was not edited on a bench but was actually filmed in the camera in the final order you see on the screen. I brought the film back two years later and projected it to the boys in Accra. We improvised the commentary in one day and it was first-class. The man in charge of the film unit in Accra was an English filmmaker, Sean Graham, who worked with Grierson, and he was very nice, and very kind. He said we could use the auditorium to make the recording. And I projected the print and at the same time recorded the commentary on a Nagra (the first model which was powered by a spring that you had to wind). Sean said, "Well, I never saw such genius in improvisation." Because the boys were like that, they were just improvising this. That was the film. The sequences were not very long and then the reason of their narration was the reason of the frame and that was very good. But I'm sure, for example, that if this film had dialogue, there would have been long explanations about everything.

There is a wonderful scene, that I love, when they are on the beach just before crossing the border. They discover the sea; they are swimming in the surf. There's a sunset, and walking back along the beach they see a sea star. They really had not seen one before. And Damouré actually looked at it and put it on his head. That was what he did when the film was shot. But when he recorded the narration he said, "You see that's the star of the sea, the snow star, *l'étoile des neiges*." At this time there was a very popular tune in France called "*L'étoile des neiges*," and he said "it's *L'étoile des neiges*," the snow star in the middle of the sea. That's what I call natural poetry. I don't remember what he said at the time he was putting the star on his head but he certainly didn't say that, only when he saw the film later on.

It was just at the beginning of independence in Africa and all the scenes with Kwame N'krumah are absolutely unique nowadays. About five years ago I saw the son of a minister of Kwame N'krumah, who is now working for the Ghana TV system. He said to me, "Jean, you have to keep your film very firmly because when there was *le coup d'état* with General Ankra they destroyed all the films about N'krumah. All the records, all the old photographs were destroyed, even in the laboratory in London." Sean Graham said to me last year that he had saved a part of his own films (1977). We were very close to N'krumah at this time and I knew him quite well, and there was no trouble. It was the beginning of a fantastic *fête révolutionnaire*, an explosion of joy, with people dancing in the streets, and so on. And there was no problem for us, and maybe that's the difference



between *Jaguar* and, say, *Come Back Africa* (1959). Because I think that when Lionel Rogosin made his film about apartheid in South Africa he was in a very difficult position himself. I'm not sure, but I suspect that he was trying to put his own feelings about discrimination and racism in the film, more than the people themselves did.

I think also that in *Come Back Africa* the ending is highly dramatized: it says "there is no way out." In *Jaguar* there is not that feeling: something could happen. It was maybe also the difference of my own feelings. I think that when Lionel was making his film he felt guilty. And when I look at *Come Back Africa* I'm sad, I feel guilty myself. In *Jaguar* we are not guilty.

When I was in Johannesburg two weeks ago, my first visit to South Africa, I was there like a migrant because I had no passport. I had no right to go to Johannesburg and walk the streets to see what was going on. And really I had exactly the same feeling as I had when I met some German people just before the war: to be in front of a group of men who had decided to stay there, not to move, and who had the law with them.

At the same time I discovered something I did not know: the majority of these people in Johannesburg were Jews. And for a man like Lionel Rogosin, who suffered racism in this country, it was very difficult, he said, to discover that Jews, among all the others, were responsible for *apartheid*. He felt guilty, and that may be the point. You see when I made *Jaguar* I didn't feel guilty. It's not my fault that my father or my grandfather came to conquer West Africa. I'm not guilty, that's the difference. Maybe it's because — well, not education — but maybe because I "did a war" that I have nothing to do with all that. Lionel has not, you see. If I were making a film in South Africa I'd try to make it in the *Jaguar* way to show that there is a way out, just on the margin. If you are marginal you can go on.

Recently I shot in Maputo in Mozambique two reels (*Makwayela*) about a group of people who work in the mines of South Africa. They were working in a bottle factory at the time and they were singing and dancing the story of their migration to South Africa. I shot the film in 16mm as a study film for the people of the New Institute of Cinema of Mozambique. I was there with some people who had escaped from Brazil, from Portugal and so on; and they were trying to find their own revolution in Mozambique. We were confronted by workers who went to South Africa under difficult conditions but who were singing. And I realized that they were the same as the boys in *Jaguar* and that I knew all the tricks they knew. And it was fun because they do exactly the same tricks. For example when I was in Ghana I discovered that the people who work in the gold mines thought that it was too exhausting to work in them all the time, so they used only one labor card for three friends. Which means that every day it was another worker of the same name. Because you can afford to work in the mines only one day instead of three. But if you want to do that, you have to have the same bed which means that you have to share everything. That's the *Jaguar* way. These guys did exactly the same thing.

And curiously all these young people from Mozambique were absolutely afraid because we were joking about such conditions. They said, "But Jean, they were living in slums" and so on. So I asked them — I don't speak Portuguese, but someone was translating — and they said, "Well but that was the only way to save money, and that was the only way to save our health, we just found tricks." It's the same thing in Paris in the Renault factory. Everywhere they find a way. The best testimony we had about concentration camps after the war was from people who discovered that having fun was the only way to get out alive; that was the most important testimony: fun among death. But it's very difficult to put that in a film, really difficult, but maybe that's also the challenge. Well, my dream would be to make a film about South Africa but I don't know how to do it because the situation is tragic. It's a terrible situation but I'm sure that human beings can find in any situation a small path to go out and you only need one. (I had exactly the same idea — this



kind of psychodrama—in my film *The Human Pyramid*, which is about racism.) You see I think that if you want to show a very dramatic situation you have to show at the same time fun happening, even if its very tragic.

I remember during the war when we entered Germany. I was in a small force and some people said that there was an SS group in a monastery and we went there, and we were maybe twenty or twenty-five, some American soldiers and some young French soldiers who had escaped from Paris, with two half-tracks and a small tank. But they were not German, they were *French SS*. And the man who was in command of the SS was a colonel in the French army and his name was de Turenne, which is of course a very important name in France. He had only one leg and was really a kind of "last soldier." It was a very dramatic moment because they were one hundred and we were very few. But they had no way out and this man knew very well that he was a prisoner and that he would be shot in the coming days. It was very dramatic.

I said to him, "Well, you must ask your boys to come here." It was really a meeting of all the French people who were with the German occupation army against the French patriots. They were ugly people and they started to bring their guns, their *matraques* every horrible weapon they used, and the man turned over to me a French flag which had a black Greek letter gamma in the middle. It was really horrible, but suddenly it was very quiet.

There were two incidents that I remember quite well. The first was an old gentleman in civilian clothes who said to me "*Mon lieutenant*, I'm not a fighter I'm only a *collaborateur*!" That's so strange, a man who's in that kind of business saying "I'm only a *collaborateur*!" Well it was impossible not to smile. . . . And the second thing which happened was that a sergeant from Paris, with a fantastic Parisian accent, opened a window and shouted "*Mon lieutenant j'ai trouvé des Gauloises*." I've found some Gauloises! Even the Colonel de Turenne was obliged to laugh and he was laughing perhaps for the last time of his life because he was dying.

Well, of course I was very courageous for this time because we laughed and something happened in the middle of all that horror. Maybe that's the reason why I always try to find situations like that but I don't know if it's right, I don't know if I'm following the right track. You see it was the same thing with the Hauka in prison, exactly the same thing. And you see we share this, Damouré, Lam, and I, because we did that all our lives. We are *en marge*, we are marginal, and that may be the reason I have this feeling.

But anyway, it was very amusing.

### Review of *Chronicle of a Summer*

**Chronicle of a Summer.** 1960-61. Written and directed by *Edgar Morin* and *Jean Rouch*. Black and white, 90 minutes. Rental and lease, apply Corinth Films, 410 East 62nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10021.

Jean-Paul Dumont  
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*Vérité* may begin at home. I am trying to remember. It was the summer of 1960—that is, almost eighteen years ago to the day—when, age 20, I left my provincial and parental abode

to rush to the conquest of Paris as a neo-Balzacian Rastignac. De Gaulle had seized power two years before and the Algerian war was still raging and lagging, bringing the bursts of its plastic explosions to the doorsteps of even the least committed Parisian.

When I scheduled a routine screening of *Chronicle of a Summer*, which I had never seen before, I had not anticipated its power of evocation, its ability to involve me so much, to force me to react so strongly. In other words, that film went right to the roots of my cultural being, maybe because I was both native and anthro-



pologist. My reaction, of course, is not idiosyncratic, for the film's commercial success—highly unusual for an ethnographic film—could not be explained otherwise.

As described in the American distributor's brochure, *Chronicle of a Summer* "focuses on the moods and emotions of Parisians during the Algerian war. Through cinema vérité technique, the filmmaker takes the viewer into the lives of a group of Parisians—some, average citizens, others, highly individual types—as they lived through the summer of 1960." This is fair enough, but which Parisians? Most fortunately, Rouch the ethnographer and Morin the sociologist eschew the pitfalls of typologies, samplings, and generalizations. Marilou is no more the archetypal secretary than Landry is the archetypal black African student. They are themselves, no more, no less. Angelo is not the worker, but a worker at the Renault factory. If I may paraphrase the Geertzian aphorism, Rouch and Morin did not study Paris but in Paris. As a consequence, there is no reification of the characters in the film. Similarly, the geographical location is not confined to Paris administrative boundaries but is coextensive with the sociocultural reality of the Greater Paris, of which Clichy and Billancourt are parts; St. Tropez and the Riviera are even drawn in because Parisians take their vacations there. The "Parisians" involved may not have a legitimate claim to this appellation and indeed may not even consider themselves to be such, but they are defined as people who interact in Paris, hence the African student and the Italian secretary. What the viewer is left with is a series of vignettes which document in the most phenomenological way the sociological ambiance of Paris. There is no necessity implied in the film, in the sense that other people could have interacted as well to give a different final product. Ultimately, the necessity of the film derives from its contingency, if I may risk this paradox.

From the outset, Morin and Rouch know what their method will be but not what it will lead them to. They start from street interviews on the themes of happiness. The encounters are brief, spotty, superficially amusing or pathetic. The camera is never candid or hidden, and nobody is ever caught by surprise. The focus quickly changes to scheduled interviews and in front of our eyes deeper characters "make a gift of their life experience," as Morin puts it. At this point, it comes in very handy that orality in general and passion for logos in particular are parts of the Parisian ethos. Angelo calls upon

the misery of factory-working, Jacques and his wife their almost-happiness, Marilou her fight to grasp reality, Jean-Pierre his feelings of frustration, failure and impotence for which Marceline feels responsible, and all this with infinitely more depth, more substance, than the reviewer's impoverishing enumeration can reveal.

Strikingly, no one has yet mentioned the Algerian war when, by the middle of the film, Rouch and Morin realize that the film is bending toward the "situation" during the summer of 1960, to which the rest of the film is devoted. In Rouch's mouth, situation means evidently political situation—the Algerian war, the Belgian intervention in the Congo—but it is also a more global context: Bastille Day and the summer holidays at St. Tropez, antisemitism and racism. Such is the context in which Landry discovers that the tattooed number on Marceline's arm is neither her telephone number nor a cosmetic touch. Marceline reminisces about her life in a Nazi camp; Marilou finds that love has "changed everything"; Angelo is harassed by his foreman; Landry "becomes an African explorer of holidays in France." "Rouch finds life sort of fun: I don't" says Morin who asks children how they feel about it.

Questions begin to press hard in the viewer's head, but they are soon answered by the filmmakers who have also shot the reactions of the "actors" to their product. "It is alright," says one of the children interviewed, "though not as much fun as a Charlie Chaplin." But adults are certainly less poised in their reactions. They react, indeed, but rather negatively. Jean-Pierre puts it well in saying that it is embarrassing, either boring or indecent. Marilou is accused of having stripped herself too bare and Marceline to have acted out her evocation of the Nazi camp, to have even staged it as an actor would have done.

In the very last scene, Rouch and Morin, pacing the floor of the Musée de l'Homme, attempt to draw conclusions. The participants viewing themselves and each other have two opposite reactions. Either the characters are not true enough or they are too true; they are either ham or exhibitionist. Morin and Rouch even come to question their whole enterprise: "Have we failed?" And this is precisely where in my opinion the film is an anthropological success. Morin and Rouch have been able to capture a slice of life, even though in reality the film has been edited and constructed. It is not of course a neutral slice of life, but the way they have



perceived it. Here it is offered to the viewer with little effort on their part to be didactic about it. It is not a thesis; it has little to prove; but it is a documentation of the way in which Parisians of 1960 lived. And yet, of course, Rouch's and Morin's biases, their personalities, their sensibilities are there also. After all, they too have something to say about antisemitism, racism and class-consciousness.

Were it that only, the film would be important enough, but in fact it transcends the "situation" of its production, and by the same token provides a good lesson to anthropologists. Anthropology is the experience of other human beings as well as an experience with other human beings; it is not an experiment. What was novel in the film, when first released, was Rouch and Morin's ability to take the experience seriously. The artificial aspect of the medium is not denied, on the contrary. But it is taken literally,

and in this process, the topic of the film is strongly pulled toward an intersubjectivity in gestation, whereby the construction of meaning is a process which takes place right in front of my eyes. In this sense, the film is not representative of anything, but it represents less what it was to live in Paris in the summer of 1960 than the ideology of what this experience was.

The film is also an effort toward reflexivity since it starts with the filmmakers shooting themselves and Marceline who is about to interview people in the street; in other words, the film is a sort of hall of mirrors, which sends us back images of ourselves in the field situation. It will ring true to any fieldworker because it shows self-consciously how we discover social meaning and construct it at the same time. For this reason alone, I would recommend that every socio-cultural anthropologist watch carefully the *Chronicle of a Summer*.

### Notes on Four Rouch Films

**Batteries Dogon, Eléments pour une Etude des Rhythmes.** 1964. By Jean Rouch and Gilbert Rouget. 25 minutes. A film primarily of hands which uses slow motion to demonstrate drumming techniques and rhythms. This was much admired by ethnographic filmmakers at the Festival. (Cf. Gilbert Rouget's article in *L'Homme*, 5:126-132, 1965.) [John W. Adams]

**Sigui 1969: La Caverne du Bongo.** 1969. 40 minutes. By Jean Rouch and Germaine Dieterlen. Ceremonies of the third year of a seven-year ritual, held every 60 years by the Dogon. The men go into the bush and are reborn from the earth at the sound of the bull-roarer, then return to the village and tour the lineage area. The film was not edited beyond trimming the edges of each shot as it came from the camera. [John W. Adams]

**L'Enterrement du Hogon.** 1972. By Jean Rouch. 40 minutes. One morning a few minutes

after the death of a Dogon priest, Rouch was up and out with his camera to film the funeral. Only 20 shots, by my count, are used, some of which are extraordinarily long during which Rouch walks with the crowds as a participant, filming as he goes. Of great technical interest for its use of the camera. [John W. Adams]

**Cocorico! Monsieur Poulet.** 1974. Written and directed by Damouré Zika, Lam, Ibrahim Dia, and Jean Rouch. Song by Tallou Mouzourane. 90 minutes. Damouré, Lam, and Rouch formed their own company (DALAROU) to produce a humorous feature-length story film about a market peddler (Lam) who takes a friend (Damouré) into the countryside for a day, but who meet with a series of supernatural adventures, and don't return to Niamey for a year. The nearly defunct 2CV they drive is the "star" and enables Lam to display incredible virtuosity repairing it in the bush. [John W. Adams]