

**Documentary**

**Film Classics**



**William Rothman**

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*Chronicle of a Summer*

The one thing which we seek with insatiable desire is to forget ourselves, to be surprised out of our propriety, to lose our sempiternal memory, and to do something without knowing how or why; in short, to draw a new circle. Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. The way of life is wonderful; it is by abandonment.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Circles"

In the concluding sequence of *Chronicle of a Summer*, the pioneering experiment in "cinéma-vérité" they filmed in 1960 and released the following year, Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin walk the corridors of the *Musée de l'Homme* in Paris conducting a postmortem of the event that has just taken place. They have screened rough-cut sequences from their work-in-progress to the ordinary men and women of various walks of life who are in it, whose everyday lives are what the film is about, and presided over a discussion, at times heated, of the film's strengths and weaknesses.

A chagrined Morin sums this discussion up by saying, "They either criticized our characters as not being true to life or else they found them too true." That is, they complained that the people in the film came across as actors who masked their true selves, or else as exhibitionists who stripped their souls bare to the point of indecency. Morin laments the audience's unwillingness or inability to recognize sincerity when it is, as he puts it, "a bit more than life-size." As for himself, he declares himself certain that the people in the film were not acting, and that there is nothing indecent about the way they behaved in the presence of the camera.

Rouch points out that people do not always know whether they are acting. He cites Marceline, who plays a central role in the film. In the discussion following the screening, she maintained that she was acting when she strolled through the Place de la Concorde, followed at a distance by the hand-held camera, and, in a monologue to her dead father, mused about the day the Nazis rounded up the Jews in her neighborhood and she and her family were separated.

No matter what she may think, Marceline did not act this scene, Rouch argues. By this he means that she was not merely pretending to be speaking

to her dead father, but was really addressing him, and that when she spoke in her childhood voice her present self was abandoned to the past, possessed by it. When Morin adds "Or if she did [act that scene], it was her most authentic side," Rouch accepts this point, for all its apparent ambiguity (is her "most authentic side" the role she was playing, or is it the actress capable of making that role her own?).

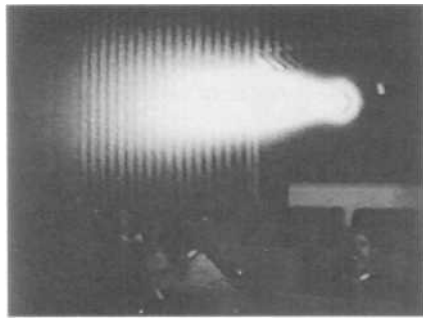
In an interview some years after the making of *Chronicle of a Summer*, Rouch reaffirmed his conviction that film has the power "to reveal, with doubts, a fictional part of all of us, which for me is the most real part of an individual."<sup>26</sup> The camera is capable of provoking people to reveal aspects of themselves that are fictional, to reveal themselves as the creatures of imagination, fantasy, and myth they are: This is a touchstone of the practice Rouch calls "cinema-verite."

In Rouch's view, *Chronicle* is not simply a documentary, because the people in the film are provoked to manifest fictional parts of themselves. And it is not simply a fiction film, because the fictions it reveals are real. Yet a fiction is also a lie. As Rouch remarks about the film in the same interview,

There is a whole series of intermediaries and these are lying intermediaries. We contract time, we extend it, we choose an angle for the shot, we deform the people we're shooting, we speed things up and follow one movement to the detriment of another movement. So there is a whole work of lies. But, for me and Edgar Morin at the time we made that film, this lie was more real than the truth.

There is a brief passage toward the end of *Chronicle* that I view as an explicit declaration of the film's practice of revealing reality by "lying." It occurs during the group discussion following the screening.

This whole section of *Chronicle* is initiated by a transition, magical in effect, from a family at a picnic spontaneously singing a folk song - the film's privileged celebration of community - to a blinding projector beam piercing a swirling haze of cigarette smoke (this is Paris, after all). The



haunting singing continues over this shot transition, linking the beam of light onscreen with the projector beam now carrying this image to our gaze. (Within the film's prevailing fiction, these two beams, these two moments, past and present, are one.) The voices fall silent, the beam is extinguished (the projected beam, not the projecting one), the house lights go on, the camera tilts down to frame a sparsely filled screening room, and Morin, in the front, turns to face the audience, a big bear of a man ready to take charge. But it is Rouch's voice, gentle and rueful, that breaks the silence, acknowledging that the vision of commu-

nity the film enabled the audience to share - and to share with us - has vanished. "Now that you've seen yourself on the screen," he says, "Edgar and I want your views. First the children. Did you like what you saw?"

A little girl - one of Morin's daughters - gives a truthful - and true - answer that lightens the mood and provokes general laughter: "Charlie Chaplin is better."

At this relaxed moment, there is a cut to three people in the audience: Jean-Pierre, Marceline, and Marilou.

Jean-Pierre, much younger than Marceline, is a philosophy student who has been her lover, although they seem to have broken off their affair or come to the recognition that they should, because they cannot make each other happy.

Marilou is a dramatically beautiful, or at least beautifully dramatic, Italian woman who has been living in Paris for some time. When Morin first interviewed her, she revealed herself to be lonely and depressed. But when he interviewed her again later in the film, he found her miraculously transformed. Then she announced - to Morin? to the camera? - that she had found love, had made the connection with reality that had so long eluded her. As she made this announcement, her hand, anxiously caressing the charm around her neck, and her proud yet trembling smile testified to the reality of her happiness and to its fragility, her awareness that happiness can be lost as mysteriously as it is found.

The transfiguring power of love is a mystery movies ordinarily make no claim to resolve. But in *Chronicle of a Summer* there is also a mystery of a lesser kind, a kind movies ordinarily do resolve, namely, Who is Marilou's new lover? (Late in the film, there are two shots in which we view the couple holding hands, but not the man's face. Why is his identity not revealed?)

But back to the moment in question.

Within this frame, Marilou passes a cigarette case to Jean-Pierre as Marceline looks on, uneasy. Offscreen, Morin asks, "What was your impression?" His daughter replies, "You tell me," at once besting her father and inviting him to assert his authority.

By now, we know Morin well enough to realize that this is an invitation he will ungrudgingly accept. He does, saying "Some say it's not true; others, it is," and thereby setting the agenda for the discussion. But immediately following this line, there is a medium close-up of Marilou. She is languidly leaning back in her seat, her gaze directed to someone offscreen.

There is a cut to Jean-Pierre. According to the conventions of "classical" editing, which *Chronicle* follows almost as consistently as any Hollywood movie, his eyeline confirms that Marilou is staring at *him*, and that he is meeting her unflinching



gaze. Marceline, sitting beside him, seems disturbed by this silent exchange. As if trying to distract herself from a disagreeable thought, she lights a cigarette, even as we hear a woman say, "What's not true? Cameras can't lie."



Read in accordance with classical conventions, this series of shots implies that there is hanky-panky going on between Jean-Pierre and Marilou, at least that Marceline imagines this. But by conspicuously synchronizing the series of shots with the words "Cameras can't lie" (an effect of simultaneity created in the editing room, it might be noted), *Chronicle* brackets this ostensible assertion, suggests that it may be a "lie." Movies do not reveal reality by acquainting us with the literal truth, this series of shots reminds us, but by awakening us to worlds of possibilities. Nothing revealed to or by the camera in any of these shots "documents" that a tense scene of romantic intrigue was really taking place here. It is the way they are edited together, and the context in which they are placed, that create this (probable) "lie." And it is the way they are edited together, and the context in which they are placed, that accord them the status I attribute to them, that of a revelation that the traditional conventions of editing on which *Chronicle* relies are capable of lying, perhaps incapable of not lying. The sequence reveals this the old-fashioned way, by lying.

A good place to turn in reflecting on what Rouch understands to be *Chronicle's* practice of telling the truth by lying is the powerful passage - it immediately precedes her walk through the Place de la Concorde - in which, in Jean-Pierre's embarrassed presence, Marceline confesses that she feels responsible for the painful failure of their relationship. Before turning to this sequence, however, we will examine the passage immediately preceding it, the first of Morin's two interviews with Marilou.

### **Marilou**

Marilou, not previously introduced to us, walks through a corridor into the foreground, the lighting and composition and echo of footsteps all expressing a sense of isolation. The camera twists as Marilou turns the corner, walks into the depths of the frame, then disappears around another corner into a blinding pool of light. In a series of shots, we view Marilou descending the stairs, walking in the street, typing in her office. She pulls a page from a typewriter, sits at a table, begins writing. Morin's offscreen voice says, "Marilou. . ." There is a cut to a nearly frontal medium close-up of her, as his voice goes on, "... You're twenty-seven, an Italian living in Paris. . ."

Synchronized with Morin's words, but seemingly not in direct response to them, Marilou looks up. Her face backlit, her eyes lustrous, she seems not so much viewing something as absorbed in a reverie. Her self-absorption is underscored by a continuity cut to an extreme close-up in which she is gazing in the same direction, her head still in the clouds, as it were. In a Hollywood movie, such a shot - a study in rapt absorption - might well be used to nominate her as a woman with whom we are to fall in love. Within this close-up, Marilou looks down, troubled, as if Morin's words (" . . .These three years are in total contrast. . .") were finally impinging on her reverie.



The cut between these two shots - like every shot transition in the sequence - gives the impression that there is no interval between the end of the first and the beginning of the second. In giving this impression, the film "lies." (Only one camera was used; every cut elides a stretch of time.)

There is a cut to Morin, who looks exceptionally unromantic. That he appears to be reading from notes, or is in any case looking down at the table, averting his gaze from Marilou, makes his delivery seem all the more ponderous (" . . .To your life in Cremona in a middle-class home. Here you live in a maid's room. You're a foreigner. . ."). As Morin's voice continues offscreen (" . . . You know men. . ."), there is a cut to Marilou.



Thus is initiated a series of alternations between these two matched setups. In the shots making up this series, the camera is on a tripod; there is no camera movement. The compositions of these static frames, as well as

the pattern of editing, emulate the form of the classical shot/reverse shot dialogue sequence. The alternations respect the "180 degree" rule, for example. The shots of Morin, which locate Marilou offscreen to the left, are alternated with shots of Marilou in which we understand Morin to be located offscreen to the right. Screen direction is preserved: Marilou is always screen left; Morin is always screen right. We always know the direction she needs to look in order to look at him, and vice versa. Thus the sequence is able to make us aware that Marilou is looking away from Morin (except on the occasions she punctuates her words by looking right at him), and that he is looking away from her (also except for specific occasions).

In a conventional shot/reverse shot dialogue, the prevailing fiction is that no camera is present. In the sequence we are considering, we understand the camera to be a real presence, if one invisible within the frame. We understand these shots to be documenting not only an encounter between Marilou and Morin, but also an encounter between Marilou and the camera, whose invisible presence represents not only Rouch (who was really present), but also viewers like us (who were - are - absent). By emulating the shot/reverse shot form within a "documentary" mode, the sequence makes us aware that Marilou is not only avoiding eye contact with Morin, but is also averting her gaze from the camera.

Indeed, the two "romantic" shots of Marilou looking offscreen precede the first shot of Morin, who to that point is manifest only as a disembodied voice. The camera stakes out its spatial relation to Marilou prior to locating Morin; we are aware that Marilou is averting her gaze from the camera *before* we become aware that she is averting her gaze from him. Not until Marilou looks down, apparently reacting to Morin's words, is there a visible indication that they are in the same space. Even at that moment, we do not know where he is located in relation to her; visually, she is relating to the camera, not to him.

In this medium close-up, Marilou's eyes are closed and her face bears an enigmatic smile. By withholding her gaze from Morin, she is acknowledging that she is, indeed, a woman who "knows men," who has what Morin refers to as "affairs." This acknowledgment is not addressed to Morin, who is not even looking at her, but to the camera, which is. She is acknowledging to the camera that she is withholding her gaze from Morin, and it is by withholding her gaze from the camera, too, that she performs this acknowledgment. By not looking at the camera, she acknowledges that she is the object of its gaze. She is presenting herself to the camera as an object to be gazed upon. Paradoxically, in thus presenting herself, she is revealed by the camera, reveals herself to the camera, as an active subject after all. She is not a mere object; she is a human being whose individuality and privacy call for acknowledgment.

For the first time, Marilou speaks for herself, rather than letting Morin speak for her. Her eyes downcast, she begins, "... My maid's room has had its uses. There was no heating. I'd never been cold or gone without. It

was a sop to my conscience..." She opens her eyes and looks at Morin, as if to imply that submitting to this interview is a "sop to her conscience," too. ". . . I was glad to have a hard time. It was the first time I'd ever worked. I'd wake up at seven, exhausted, almost glad of the rush hour crowd. . . ." She gestures sweepingly with her hand (she is Italian, after all). "... I think I really felt I belonged. But. . . that didn't last. . ." Again she looks up, this time in the general direction of the camera, but without addressing it; it is as if the camera were not there. (As emerged in our discussion of *Nanook of the North*, denying the camera's presence can be a way of acknowledging its presence.) ". . . Now I'm sick of my room and the cold. . . I find human contact. . . I dislike it. . . It's pointless."

Marilou has been speaking very deliberately. Having said that she has come to "dislike" human contact, to find it "pointless," she stops speaking. Having had her say, her face expresses distaste (for what she has said? for herself for saying it? for Morin? for the situation? for the whole nauseating human condition?). Her silence creates a mood that threatens - or promises - to terminate the conversation.

When Morin asks his next question, we hear his voice even before the cut to him. This sound overlap, created in the editing room, conveys the impression that he feels a sense of urgency, that he is anxious to disrupt this mood - anxious to deny that he feels drawn to it, perhaps - before it engulfs the entire scene. "But you've some aim. . . a hope?" he asks, evidently torn between wanting to convince this woman that she is not a hopeless case and wanting to observe in fascination a woman utterly devoid of hope, beyond rescue.

"To be honest, I don't know." Marilou answers, looking directly at Morin, smoke curling from her cigarette as if she were Dietrich in a von Sternberg film. Her gaze momentarily locks with the camera's - at this moment, she shows no expression - before it again seeks Morin out.

". . . When I first came here I felt stranded. . .," Marilou goes on. ". . . I was shut up in myself, isolated. When I was in Italy. . ." Her voice has become rhythmic, and she has begun bobbing her head, leaning her whole body forward and backward, in rhythm to her words, as her eyes lower and half close. "... I'd exhausted my inner resources. I wanted to come up against reality. . ."

Flicking her cigarette against the ashtray below the frame line, she lowers her gaze before she looks back in Morin's general direction. "... I wonder if this was the right way. For example, I drink, you see. . ." Finally, on her words ". . . I wanted to get rid of alibis when I came to France. . .," her eyes lock with Morin's. She gives a trace of a smile. "... I wanted to live on



my own terms. I've destroyed the false reasoning, only to find it again in drink, men. To put it baldly, in trash..." She clears her throat, raises her eyebrows, purses her lips as if to speak - but no sound comes out. This time, Marilou is not silent because she has had her say, but because she is unable or unwilling to go on. The anguish in her silence is marked by a **cut**



to her hand, tapping anxiously on the table. Again, it is Morin's offscreen voice that breaks the silence. "What do you mean by reality?"

The cut to Marilou's hand - the first break with the shot/reverse shot pattern - masks an ellipsis. This is made clear by the transcription published the year after *Chronicle* was released, which includes exchanges that were deleted from the film at a late stage of editing.<sup>7</sup> In a passage that was deleted, Morin breaks the silence not by asking what she means by reality, but by reminding her that there are people who care about her (Morin, for one?), hence that if she feels isolated she must be denying reality.<sup>28</sup> Marilou in turn explains to Morin that it is not enough for her to *know* she is in the world with others, but that she needs "in a given situation" - the present one, for example? - to "feel like I am in the real world, whereas I constantly feel like I am in the imaginary."

In any case, Morin's "What do you mean by reality?" occasions a new setup. He is in the foreground, staring into the frame at Marilou, who is leaning forward, intently listening ("...Is it a job that interests you? Doing what you like? Or is it to live with a man you love, not have affairs?").

This cut marks a definitive break with the shot/reverse shot pattern. No longer is there an alternation between "his" and "her" frames; there is only this one setup. And within this frame, Morin is no longer averting his gaze from Marilou, but is staring at her. The framing so favors Marilou that the transcription refers to it as "a close-up of Marilou from Morin's profile point of view."<sup>29</sup> But it is crucial to the expressive effect that he is not in profile, that he is looking into the frame, much as the camera is; he is an object to the camera, but is also viewing what it is viewing. This setup links Morin with the camera (with Rouch, with us), even as it emphasizes their separateness (Morin is visible, the camera is not). He is turned away enough so that we cannot see whatever reaction he may be expressing, so our



impression is that he is impassively taking everything in. In this frame, we might say, Morin becomes the camera's stand-in. Or its scapegoat.

"I want a job that doesn't scare me. . .," Marilou begins. Meeting the camera's gaze for an instant, she glances toward Morin, then, looking back down, says with a shrug, "... To live with someone for an hour. Two hours, a month, two weeks even. Just to be with him..." As she describes the relationship she dreams of having, she looks right into his eyes for a moment, as if citing their present encounter as an example of the relationships she is stuck with, which fail to make her feel connected with reality. It is as if her eyes are saying, not to Morin but to the camera, "I know this man feels connected with me, but to me this connection feels imaginary, not real."

Again looking down, Marilou adds, "... Without any ghosts to stop me loving him. . .," almost bangs on the table for emphasis, and, with a trace of a smile, levels the camera with her gaze.

This is not the first time Marilou has looked at the camera, but it is the first time she acknowledges that it is a deliberate gesture on her part. Looking at the camera at this moment bears directly on her case (a case she is making to the camera, not to Morin). It identifies the camera as a "ghost" that even now is keeping her from loving, from living, from feeling connected with reality, from being real. Almost immediately, Marilou looks down and resumes speaking, but she has made her point. Morin has failed to make her feel connected with reality. And the camera at once witnesses this failure and is implicated in it.

Visibly agitated, Marilou goes on. "... To get outside myself. To die even, provided I'm in touch with something..." In a state of great anxiety, she meets the camera's gaze, but again only for a moment. Her anxiety reveals that even now she does not feel she is "in touch with something," that the camera represents to her something imaginary, not something real.

For the first time, Marilou's voice breaks as she adds, "... instead of being forced back on myself. I've not even the right to kill myself. It would be an act. . ." She searches Morin's gaze, then lowers her eyes. She opens her lips as if to speak, closes her mouth, opens it again, this time as if gasping for breath. As if speaking now seems not only difficult but pointless (what is left to say?), she bites her lip and chokes back tears. As if enacting a fantasy of dying her



own death, or imagining she had never been born, she tilts her head, rests it on the table, slowly shuts her eyes, and seems to drift into a trance.

This time letting the mood cast by her silence sink in, Morin waits a **long** moment before he finally asks, in a melodramatic hush, "Why are you forced back on yourself?" Taken aback, she says, "What?" Her tone is petulant, even contemptuous, as if astonished that this man cannot recognize that pulling her out of her fantasy only to ask such a question *is* the kind of thing that forces her back on herself.

Yet when Morin repeats his question, Marilou answers, "If only I knew," her smile suggesting that she does know, but is not telling. Breathing in deeply, she allows herself to be engulfed by her silence. (What she knows, she will not try to explain to this man. What she wishes to know, she cannot learn from him.) Forgoing further questions, Morin views her in silence.

The published transcription describes Marilou here as "silent again, edgy, anguished."<sup>30</sup> But this does not acknowledge the ecstatic aspect of the moment. It does not acknowledge the anticipation of pleasure expressed by her secret smile, nor the pleasure she is evidently taking now in offering herself unresistingly to be viewed. It denies the pleasure she is taking in being transformed, in transforming herself, from an anguished subject into an object to be gazed upon, a mere image. And it denies the pleasure to be taken in viewing this image.

To speak of this as a moment Marilou is "forced back on herself," as I wish to do, suggests that in her trancelike state she imagines herself as having no audience for which she feels she now has to perform. To speak of her as "offering herself to be viewed," as I also wish to do, suggests, apparently to the contrary, that she imagines herself as having an audience. Is her imaginary audience, the camera, one for which she does not have to perform, to act, in order to satisfy?

It may strike us throughout this scene, and never more than at this moment, that Marilou is being theatrical, that she is playing the role - she is certainly costumed and made up for it - of a woman in the throes of Sartre-an nausea who longs for a connection to reality uncorrupted by role playing. The deep point is that it is not possible to be such a woman without playing such a woman. And in the kind of film *Chronicle* aspires to be, it is not possible to play such a woman without being such a woman.

When Marilou presents herself to the camera as an image to be viewed, she turns her face into a mask. This is an act, a "lie" - a denial that she really is a subject, that she has, that she is, a self. It culminates a series of moments in which she acknowledges the camera by withholding her gaze. By presenting herself as an object, she reveals herself to the camera, is revealed by the camera, as a subject (it takes a self to act, it takes a self to mask itself). In playing this part, she is "telling the truth by lying."

In presenting Marilou as an object, the camera reveals itself to be implicated in her self-denial, her "lie." In revealing her to be forced back on herself, the camera reveals itself to be *forcing* her back on herself. The camera

is "telling the truth by lying," too, for it reveals that to Marilou it is not something in the real world, something outside her self, but something in the "imaginary." We may say that in forcing her back on herself, the cam-

era, or Rouch behind the camera, is forced back on her, possessed by her face-turned-mask. We may also say that she is possessed by the camera, but that is another way of saying that in its presence she feels alone, that what lies behind her face-turned-mask is nothingness.

In the prints in regular distribution, the sequence ends with this silent tableau. But the transcription includes here another passage deleted in the final version of the film, which begins with what is described as the "intervention of Rouch, who, after baiting this Morin-Marilou dialogue, remained silent and out of the conversation."<sup>31</sup>

This language seems apt: We may well sense that Rouch, silent behind the camera, has somehow baited this exchange. Yet it is problematic: Morin asked the questions, Marilou answered them, and Rouch said and did nothing to bait anyone - nothing, that is, apart from filming. Evidently, it is the presence of the camera, the reality of the act of filming - it is also the absence the camera represents, its unreality - that baited Marilou into revealing herself, provoked her into enacting her fantasy of dying her own death, or returning to the womb.

Rouch begins his intervention by saying to Morin, "Ask a question now, anything, about the Pope..." Perhaps it is out of human concern for Marilou that Rouch, sensing Morin has abdicated his task as interviewer, urges him to ask a question in the hope of "snapping her out of it." Or is Rouch (also?) manifesting a filmmaker's concern to jump-start a stalled scene?

When Rouch adds "... Ask the question now, and don't get too close to her.. .," perhaps he senses she is so upset Morin had better not crowd her. But again, his concern may (also?) be for the film: If Morin moved closer he might block the camera's view of Marilou, or alter the expressive framing that has served the passage so effectively. If Rouch's sole concern were for Marilou's well-being, would he not say something to her himself, perhaps even stop filming to go over to comfort her, rather than directing Morin to ask a question?

Obliging Rouch, Morin begins, "Okay, now listen, Marilou. . ." Rouch interrupts. "No, you're moving closer, Morin. Stay back. Morin, move back. Start the question over." As long as he is giving directions, of course, Rouch can, if he wishes, tell Morin to move farther away so as to isolate Marilou in the frame. Evidently, Rouch wants Morin to stay where he is, to keep the frame composed as it has been. Evidently, too, Rouch wants to stay where *he* is, to remain behind the camera, to continue filming.

Morin finally asks the question Rouch urged on him: "What do you think of the Pope?" This gives rise to a mostly pointless exchange. But Morin's final question is not pointless: "Do you think this film could help you say something?" Nor is Marilou's answer: "You are all very nice, that's all I can say."

If there is gratitude in Marilou's words, there is also rebuke. Morin believes that France has become a country of alienated individuals who long for community even as they are "forced back on themselves." To him, Marilou is an extreme case. Yet Morin makes no secret of his hope, and expectation, that by interviewing this woman in the camera's presence, he will tear down the walls of her "self-enclosed universe." This he fails to do.

In the camera's presence, Marilou has, indeed, "said something," has revealed a profound side of her self. But our recognition of this profound side of Marilou does not enable her to feel connected with reality. For we are not in her presence; in her world, we are invisible phantoms, ghosts. From his place behind the camera, Rouch, too, may recognize the profound side of Marilou that has been revealed. But as long as he is filming, his recognition no more than ours enables her to feel real. For when Rouch is filming Marilou, she imagines him, he imagines himself, to be no longer in the real world, to be absorbed within her imaginary world.

Marilou "lies" when she presents herself to be filmed as an object, for she is really a subject, a self. Rouch "lies," too, when he absorbs himself in filming her, for he is not a phantom or a ghost; he is a human being of flesh and blood. It is not possible for us to make connection with Marilou, but for Rouch, who is really in her presence, making connection with her is not in the same way impossible. It requires, however, that he step forward from his place behind the camera, forsake his cloak of invisibility, declare his pre-sentness. Failing this, his intervention inevitably fails. Hence Marilou's rebuke extends to Rouch, too.

Then what provokes Rouch to intervene at all? Why does he break the spell of his silent communion with Marilou by urging Morin to ask a pointless question that inevitably ends up on the cutting-room floor? I have raised the possibility that he may wish to jump-start a stalled scene. But when Marilou falls silent and Morin watches her in silence, forgoing any further attempt to reach her, the scene is not stalled; it has ended. Why does Rouch not recognize that the scene is complete, that he can now stop filming? Evidently, Rouch cannot bear the endless cry that echoes through this silence. Evidently, he feels a desperate urgency to deny what the silence reveals about Marilou, about himself, about his act of filming her, which she imagines as her death to the world, or as a return to the womb. Evidently, he feels a desperate urgency to deny the pleasure of filming her enchanting face-turned-mask. Evidently, too, he cannot bear simply to stop filming, to forgo that pleasure.

#### Marceline

The scene of Marceline's "confessions" begins with a cut from the silent Marilou to a medium shot of Jean-Pierre looking down from the balcony of his apartment. In a series of shots, the hand-held camera follows him inside, where he sits at a table and lights a cigarette. Offscreen Morin says, "Jean-

Pierre, you're twenty and a student. How do you make out in life?"

A cut to a tight close-up masks a change of location to another room. Jean-Pierre answers, "I manage perhaps better than most students. But only by horrible compromises..." There is a close-up of Morin looking off-screen, presumably toward Jean-Pierre, followed by a cut to Jean-Pierre, who looks neither at Morin nor at the camera. "... Once I accept that I can't change things I've no problems..." The camera tilts down to Jean-Pierre's hands, nervously playing with an empty glass, giving the lie to his claim he has "no problems." He adds, "... I don't think my generation, or any other, can get along until this impotence is accepted." There is a cut to a troubled-looking Marceline, puffing a cigarette. Before this cut, we did not know she was present. Even now we do not know why.



Marceline listens intently as Jean-Pierre's monologue continues ("... For example, I failed my exam. I tried to live with a woman. We tried to make each other happy, but it went wrong. It was futile. The same with politics...").

There is a cut to Jean-Pierre ("... I wouldn't take any positive action. I can justify myself intellectually..."), then to Morin as Jean-Pierre says, offscreen, "... I've seen what commitment does. I've seen so many practically reduced to tears by it. Left shattered... Helpless... It applies to almost all of you..." On this last remark, there is a cut back to Jean-Pierre, who looks right at Morin, implying that Morin is among the impotent, helpless, shattered ones. "... It's my intellectual justification to keep out..." Then Jean-Pierre contradicts himself. "... But deep down I know it's false..."



At this point we are given a view of Marceline, framed in near profile, eyes almost closed, sad face resting on gracefully curving hands. Jean-Pierre's words seem to pierce her heart.

As Jean-Pierre says, offscreen, "... It's a lack of courage...,"

Marceline turns almost to the camera. As if she were still troubled, her eyes remain downcast.

There is a cut back to Jean-Pierre as he continues, "... One's forced to realize. . . that there's no black and white. Just varying shades of gray." On these last words, he turns to Morin as if to solicit his agreement. Morin nods, then, quite surprisingly, addresses Marceline. "Do you have something to say, Marceline?"

Authorized to speak by Morin's question, Marceline begins by confessing to him, "I feel responsible for it all. . ." Then she shifts to addressing Jean-Pierre ("... I introduced you to people broken by political experiences. . ."). There is no change in Marceline's voice or expression or even in the direction of her gaze when she shifts from addressing Morin to addressing Jean-Pierre. This creates the impression - an impression underscored when she adds "... Not excluding myself. . ." - that no matter whom she may ostensibly be addressing, her "confessions" are a monologue, as if she were really talking to someone absent (the way she does when she walks across the Place de la Concorde, that most public of Parisian spaces, completely absorbed in speaking to her dead father).

Caressing her neck in a manner worthy of a Method actress, Marceline drops what for us is a bombshell (it is the film's first disclosure of the fact, already known to Morin and Rouch, that she and Jean-Pierre are lovers): "... When you talk of making a woman happy, I know you mean me. So I feel responsible because, in a way, I took you out of your own world. . ."

Morin takes this occasion to intervene (or, in the editing, this is taken to be an appropriate place to insert this intervention). "When Jean-Pierre says 'impotence,'" he intones, "Marceline thinks of the word 'failure.'"

When we cut back to Marceline, her face is a picture of sadness as she confesses, with a bitter laugh, "I've felt a failure for a long time. . ." Once more referring to Jean-Pierre in the third person - again, without a perceptible shift in her voice or the direction of her gaze - she adds, "... When I met Jean-Pierre . . ." There is a long, painful pause, as if she is fighting back tears,



struggling to keep from being overcome by the feeling she is invoking.

"... I did so want to avoid it for him.

I didn't want him to feel like me. . ."

Marceline lowers her head, as if in shame at having failed to keep Jean-Pierre from feeling the sense of failure she wanted to keep him from feeling.

The moment Marceline raises her head again to speak ("... I

thought. . . I would make him happy. . ."), the camera begins slowly tilting down, apparently with a purpose, but one we cannot surmise. As if this framing disclosed its purpose, the camera holds on Marceline's hands,

which are anxiously clenching and unclenching, eloquent testimony to her feeling of failure.

But on Marceline's charged words ". . . In spite of everything, I loved him so much. I still do . . .," the camera moves again. It pans slightly to the right along her arm, then tilts down a bit, first revealing, then dramatically displaying, the concentration camp number on her arm. This is a privileged moment in the film; prior to this dramatic disclosure, we had no way of knowing that the sad-eyed Marceline was a death-camp survivor. The camera holds this framing a long time, letting its significance sink in.

Finally, as Marceline goes on ". . . But it was another failure. And not only a failure for me, but a painful experience for him. . ."), there is a cut to Jean-Pierre; back to



Marceline, who once again bows her head; then lastly to Jean-Pierre, who

turns away from Marceline as we hear her whisper, ". . . Because I think he still loves me." Remarkably, the sequence ends with this vision of Jean-Pierre in the act of turning away from Marceline.

When the camera first tilts down to Marceline's hands, its calm deliberateness conveys a sense that it knows what to look for, where to find it, and what finding it would mean. Yet this movement also appears to be a spontaneous response to Marceline's lowering of her head, as if the camera is not acting on its own but following the cue of her lowered gaze, which leads it to her clenching and unclenching hands. When it momentarily holds on Marceline's eloquently expressive hands, we have no reason to doubt that the camera's gesture, attuned to her feelings, has fulfilled its purpose (especially in its doubling of a similar movement - the camera's tilt down to frame Jean-Pierre's hands - early in the sequence).

When the camera moves again to disclose the number, and when it hastily reframes to display it more dramatically, these movements are roughly executed, and seem like afterthoughts, if inspired ones. It is as if the camera, once it

frames Marceline's hands, finds itself so close to the number, which has all along been in plain view ("Far yet not so far," like the world on the other side of the fence in *Night and Fog*), that it is only natural for it to take this small further step. And what better moment for it to do so? What better way for the camera to show it is not deaf to this woman's "endless cry" than to connect her present feeling of failure with the fact that she once looked out from behind a death camp fence, not knowing whether life would know her again?

When it makes this connection between Marceline's present and past, the camera's gesture seems spontaneous. Yet the apparent spontaneity of the camera's movement may also strike us as disingenuous, as if this were a *coup de theatre* Rouch has been waiting for the perfect opening to spring - a moment that allows the disclosure of the number to appear unpremeditated, yet to have the most dramatic possible impact. And it may also strike us that, although Marceline seems to do nothing to provoke this dramatic disclosure, it may nonetheless be solicited by her (as it may strike us that by lowering her head she solicits the camera to follow her gaze to her clenching and unclenching hands).

To view Marceline as soliciting the camera to disclose the number on her arm, it is necessary to imagine that it is her self-consciousness about this visible mark that motivates her to choose - from all the ways one can express anxiety - to clench and unclench her hands, to draw the camera so close to the number that it can be expected to take that small further step - as, indeed, it goes on to do.

In imagining this gesture as solicited by Marceline, we can imagine that she provokes the camera, without consciously meaning to, to make a connection she believes she wants it not to make. We can also imagine that she deliberately provokes the camera to make the connection she wants it to make. To view her as deliberately provoking the camera to disclose the number is to view this marked woman, who appears so vulnerable to the camera, so easily exposed, as (also?) possessing a cunning, and a power, equal to the camera's own. (To be sure, the camera, or Rouch behind the camera, can in turn be imagined as provoking Marceline to express her feelings by clenching and unclenching her hands, as provoking her to provoke the camera's gesture, as it were. But Marceline can also be imagined as provoking the camera to provoke her.)

When Rouch's camera frames the number on Marceline's arm, it can be viewed as affirming her humanity, as calling upon us to imagine ourselves in her place. (We all have numbers tattooed on our arms, metaphorically, and we are all responsible for tattooing numbers on the arms of others.) But the gesture can also be viewed as saying, emphatically, "It is not possible to imagine being in this woman's place," "Her feelings cannot be imagined," "She cannot be revealed by the medium of film." In identifying Marceline with the mark by which the Nazis denied her humanity, the camera can be viewed as denying her humanity. (Insofar as her anxiously clenching and unclenching hands reveal how Marceline imagines this moment, they reveal

i "fictional" part of her self, the "most real" part, in Rouch's view. But the number on her arm is not a "fictional" part of her self. It is no part of her self at all; it is a *denial* of her self.)

That the camera's gesture denies Marceline's feelings seems to follow from taking the form of a brilliant success, when what Marceline is confessing is her feeling of abject failure. However, what it is that the camera's gesture so brilliantly succeeds in accomplishing is an acknowledgment of its own failure - its failure to "welcome her back to life," to "open all the doors." But if the camera's success is the measure of its failure, its failure is also the measure of its success. We may say that the camera fails to tear down the fence that makes Marceline's world a self-contained universe; we may also say that it succeeds in rebuilding that fence, at least in keeping the fence standing.

The camera's gesture coincides with Marceline's confession of her failure to keep Jean-Pierre from feeling like her. But what does this mean, "feeling like her"? Evidently, it means feeling like a victim. But insofar as Marceline feels responsible for taking Jean-Pierre out of his own world, she feels she has victimized him as the Nazis victimized her. "Feeling like her" also means feeling like a Nazi, or, rather, like a Nazi, failing to feel. When she confesses her failure to keep Jean-Pierre from "feeling like her," she denies his humanity even as she denies her own. Her failure, too, is the measure of her success - her success in consigning Jean-Pierre, as well as herself, to a "self-contained universe."

For years, I viewed the camera's disclosure of the number simply as a denial of Marceline's humanity, as if she were only the camera's victim, not also its accomplice. I have come to view the gesture as also a frightening demonstration - at once Marceline's and Rouch's - of the way she uses this ble mark, with the camera's complicity, to force Jean-Pierre back on himself, to turn him away, to make him turn away, to make him deny her humanity, thereby denying his own. The concentration camp number on her arm is provocative the way the act of filming is provocative. In filming Marceline, Rouch discovers a frightening equivalence between the way she is marked by the visible number on her arm and the way he is marked by the act of filming, by being behind the camera, invisible. When Rouch films Marceline, he consigns her, conspires with her to enable her to consign herself, to a "self-contained universe" that renders the real world an image. Symbolically, he builds a death camp for her, and for himself.

## II.

### Cinema-Verite

In enumerating some of the "intermediaries" that make *Chronicle of a Summer* "a whole work of lies" ("We contract time, we extend it, we choose an angle for the shot, we deform the people we're shooting, we speed things up and follow one movement to the detriment of another movement"),

Rouch primarily has in mind formal devices the film borrows from classical movies (continuity editing, "eyeline" matching, and so on) to weave its views of reality into "fictions" while leaving reality itself - the world offscreen, not the world on-screen - unchanged.

Yet in the process of making *Chronicle*, the filmmakers also alter reality, make it other than it would have been had they not made the film. The filmmakers intervene by interviewing their subjects, for example, and by thrusting them together hoping sparks will fly (as in the "screening" sequence, or the passage in which they introduce Angelo, the Renault worker, to the African, Landry).

Morin, who is never behind the camera, primarily intervenes by interrogating people, sometimes very aggressively (at one point, Rouch half-jokingly refers to him as "the bully"). When Morin is on-screen, he reveals himself to the camera, is revealed by the camera, no less than the people he is interviewing. Rouch is more fugitive and elusive. When he is on-screen, he, too, reveals himself to the camera, is revealed by the camera (not always in a flattering light). But his impact is most strongly felt when he is behind the camera. Ordinarily, when Rouch is filming he does not intervene the way Morin does (or the way he himself does when on camera). This is not to say that then he does not intervene at all, but that the act of filming itself, not some act he performs over and above filming, is his *way* of intervening.

In his useful monograph *Anthropology - Reality - Cinema*, Mick Eaton argues that Rouch's aim in filming is not to make people comfortable so they will reveal themselves honestly and directly to and through his camera. "In the disjunction caused by the very presence of the camera," Eaton observes, "people will act, will lie, be uncomfortable, and it is the manifestation of this side of themselves which is regarded as a more profound revelation than anything a 'candid camera' or 'living cinema' could reveal."<sup>32</sup>

Eaton's language suggests that Rouch, believing his subjects to be less likely to reveal themselves if they are comfortable with the camera, deliberately "shakes them up" so as to cause their comfortably fitting masks to slip, forces them out of their practiced routines of acting and lying so they will act and lie in unpracticed, more revealing, ways. But if it is the very presence of the camera that causes the "disjunction" in which "people will act, will lie, be uncomfortable," why need a filmmaker do anything to "shake up" his subjects, to provoke them into revealing themselves, other than simply filming them?

Sometimes Rouch's subjects are uncomfortable when he films them. When Simone feels left out of her husband's animated conversation with Morin, for example, the camera's presence adds to her discomfort in that she has to decide how she should relate to it, whether to try to hide her discomfort from the camera. Other times, Rouch achieves profound revelations from subjects who are comfortable with the camera, like Landry; who are too comfortable, like Morin himself (he is so trusting - or compla-

cent - he never seems to suspect the way he is being revealed, the way he is revealing himself); or who, like Marilou and Marceline, are comfortable only with the camera.

It is not that people reveal themselves more profoundly when the camera provokes them than when they behave candidly. The point is that in our world people have to be provoked to behave candidly, that candor is not - any longer? - our "natural" mode of being in the world, but must be achieved. Similarly, it is not that the camera achieves more profound revelations when it provokes its subjects than when it is a "candid camera." The point is that the camera cannot truly become a "candid camera" - cannot fulfill its promise of revealing all and only what is revealed to it - without provoking its subjects to be candid.

Rouch's oft-quoted remarks on the need for the camera to provoke its subjects should not be taken as authorizing filmmakers to adopt an "in your face" attitude toward their subjects, to throw their weight around like Morin, rather than to try to become a "fly on the wall." As the sequences we have studied make clear, no one knows better than Rouch that sometimes, perhaps always, filmmakers best provoke their subjects by doing nothing - nothing other than filming them.

Eaton seems to acknowledge this when he speaks of the "disjunction" in which people reveal themselves as being "caused by the very presence of the camera" rather than by anything the camera does over and above its mysterious work of filming. However, to characterize the camera as a "provocateur" or a "catalyst," as Rouch often does, is to envision its presence not as causing a "disjunction" - whatever exactly a "disjunction" is - but as provoking one to become manifest, to manifest itself. (If there were not already a "disjunction," how could the presence of the camera cause one? If people were not already acting and lying, how could the camera's presence cause them discomfort?)

Rouch is fond of saying that he does not film reality as it is but reality as it is provoked by the act of filming. It is this new reality, which would not exist apart from the making of the film, that the filming "documents," revealing a new truth, a cinema truth. Cinema-verite.

It has become a critical commonplace to assert a clear-cut distinction, even opposition, between "cinema-verite," as Rouch understands and practices it, and what has been dubbed "direct cinema" - what Eaton calls "living cinema" or "candid camera" - as practiced by such filmmakers as Richard Leacock or D. A. Pennebaker. Rouch himself has never subscribed to this view, it may be noted; he has always considered such filmmakers to be fellow practitioners of "cinema-verite." The distinction between "cinema-verite" - a cinematic practice in which the camera engages in provocation - and "direct cinema" - a cinematic practice in which the camera refrains from being provocative - is rendered moot by the fact that it is the very presence of the camera, when it is doing its mysterious work, that constitutes the kind of "provocation" that most interests Rouch.

In his important recent study *The Cinematic Griot: The Ethnography of Jean Rouch*, Paul Stoller attempts to flesh out this problematic distinction by defining "cinema-verite" as cinema that is both "observational" and "participatory" (implicitly opposing it to "direct cinema," which is presumably observational but not participatory).<sup>33</sup> The problem with this definition is that Rouch's practice undermines it. In Rouch's practice, as surely as in Leacock's or Pennebaker's, observation is the camera's way of provoking its subjects to manifest profound sides of themselves, the camera's way of participating.

For Stoller, nonetheless, "participation" is a skeleton key that opens all the doors of Rouch's work. Stoller writes, for example,

Flaherty's most important lesson for Rouch is that of participation. Flaherty's participation went beyond living with the people and understanding their ways. He not only asked Nanook for feedback, but taught him about making films - about the necessity of staging some events. With Flaherty, filming becomes a joint enterprise, narrowing the gulf between filmmakers and the people they film.<sup>34</sup>

But filming, like hunting, is always a joint enterprise, whether or not the resulting film fully acknowledges the participation of the camera's subjects in its making. Even the Hurdanos in *Land without Bread* participate in their own filming when they submit to the condition of being filmed. Nor is the "gulf between filmmakers and the people they film" really any narrower in Flaherty's film than in Bunuel's. When Nanook, consuming the flesh of the walrus he has killed, pauses to confront the camera's gaze, the gulf between Flaherty and his protagonist/star is as wide as the gulf between Bunuel and the Hurdanos, as wide as the gulf between Rouch and Marilou or Marceline, as wide as the gulf between two people can be. As the penultimate passage of *Night and Fog* declares, the goal of the art of film is not to create a gulf between filmmakers and subjects, but neither is it to deny the real gulf between them, the reality of their separateness. All the filmmakers whose works are discussed in this volume aspire to acknowledge the humanity - the individuality, the privacy - of the people they film, the particular individuals who are their cameras' subjects. All of these filmmakers recognize that such acknowledgments cannot be achieved without acknowledging the subjects' participation in the filming, participation that emerges from their privacy - their unknownness - and from their individuality, which is an expression of their privacy. These filmmakers all recognize, as well, that there is no "method" that automatically guarantees such an acknowledgment.

When Stoller characterizes Rouch's filmmaking practice as "participatory as well as observational," he is making a number of claims we might usefully distinguish. One is that in the act of filming Rouch participates in the events being filmed rather than simply observing. Another is that Rouch's subjects participate in the filming rather than simply being

observed. Because filming is Rouch's primary way of participating in the events he is filming, as we have argued, and because filming is always a joint enterprise, which we have also argued, these are distinctions without a difference. Yet another claim is that not only do Rouch and his subjects participate jointly in the filming, but that the resulting film, rather than being an end in itself like a traditional work of art, participates in a larger enterprise that may be called "shared anthropology." This is a distinction *with* a difference. We will return to it.

#### One Take/One Sequence

When Rouch wrote, long after the making of *Chronicle of a Summer*, that "at the time" its "work of lies" was "more real than the truth" to him, he was acknowledging that in the ensuing years his understanding had changed.

Rouch was already a veteran of over a decade of filmmaking among the Songhay and Dogon peoples of West Africa at the time his sociologist friend Morin asked him to collaborate on a film about the way Parisians live their everyday lives. Subsequent to the making of *Chronicle*, Rouch returned to his practice of filming the Songhay and Dogon rituals that have been his abiding subjects for almost half a century. The new lightweight synch-sound equipment with which he experimented in *Chronicle* became an indispensable tool in this lifelong cinematic enterprise.

Formally, Rouch's *post-Chronicle* films are very different from his *pre-Chronicle* films. In this respect, *Chronicle* is a pivotal work. As he incorporated the use of portable synch-sound equipment into his films among the Songhay and Dogon, and no doubt partly as a response to his experience making *Chronicle*, he developed a new method of filming (it is also a new method of editing, or, rather, of avoiding editing). What he calls the "one take/one sequence" method enabled him increasingly to forgo the classical

mentions that made *Chronicle* a "work of lies."

Paradigmatic of the "one take/one sequence" method is *Les Tambours rants: Turu et Bitti* (*The Drums of Yore: Turu and Bitti*) (1971). In this remarkable ten-minute film, not just one "sequence" but the entire film con-

sists of a single continuous take that lasts the duration of the camera magazine. Within the single shot that constitutes the film, Rouch walks with the camera on his shoulder into a Songhay village in which a possession ritual is underway. Rouch focuses his camera on the dancers who have been waiting for many hours without yet being possessed by invisible spirits, then on the musicians. Just as it appears that nothing is going to happen, he again turns his camera on the listless dancers, whose demeanor suddenly changes, this transformation seemingly precipitated by the attention of the camera. (No moment better epitomizes the camera's ability to undermine the distinction between "participation" and "observation," to provoke revelations by its very presence.)

In classical cinema, there are conventional categories of shots - close-up, two shot, point-of-view shot, and so on - and conventions for their use. Even in the forties, when the "long take" style flourished as an alternative or complement to the analytical editing of the thirties, the long takes tended to take the form of stable framings - each virtually a separate shot, conventional in format - linked by reframings instead of cuts.

Unlike *Chronicle*, which emulates classical conventions, *Turu et Bitti* is shot in one continuous take, as we have said. Everything is viewed from the perspective of a fixed focal-length lens; there are no zooms that create an illusion of movement through space. As fully as possible, the camera becomes an extension of Rouch's own body - a closer view means the filmmaker/camera has moved closer, a more distant view means the filmmaker/camera has moved further away. Except for the narration - a crucial exception, to be sure - in which Rouch explains the "one take/one sequence" method and speculates that the act of filming precipitated the possessions he was filming, nothing is added after the fact, nothing edited out, no effects are created on the editing table, no "lies" told of the kind *Chronicle* tells.

In a "one take/one sequence" film like *Turu et Bitti*, the frame is never stable or fixed. The camera is never completely motionless, but most of its movements have no significance apart from their status as indicators of two conditions, which are linked. First, the incessant movements of the camera indicate that the camera *is* hand-held, that it is an extension of the filmmaker's body. Second, these movements, with their accidental jostlings, hesitations, revisions of focus and framing, indicate that this is not a scripted film, that the filmmaker is an embodied human being, not an omniscient "author."

The camera's normal state of incessant motion in a "one take/one sequence" film contrasts strikingly with the motionlessness that is the camera's normal state in classical "fiction films" or in the sequences in *Chronicle* that emulate classical conventions. At any given moment, the classical camera's fixity of position has no particular significance apart from sustaining the prevailing fiction that no camera is present (in "fiction films") or apart from simply marking the camera's presence (in *Chronicle*). The classical camera's motionlessness is broken only when it is moved to declare itself in self-possessed gestures that call for acknowledgment. In *Turu et Bitti*, the camera's incessant motion binds it to a human hand and eye, a human body this motion continuously manifests.

Convinced it was his act of filming that precipitated the possession trances of the dancers, Rouch was moved to write "On the Vicissitudes of the Self: The Possessed Dancer, the Magician, The Sorcerer, the Filmmaker and the Ethnographer," an essay that attempted to explain how this was possible.<sup>35</sup> How could the camera's presence have had this effect, not only on the mediums (who were possessed when the camera was filming them . but also the spirits (who possessed the mediums precisely then)?

We may well believe that these "spirits" are imaginary, not real, or even that these mediums were not really possessed at all, but only acting. But then it still requires explanation how invisible spirits can be so much as *imagined* to be capable of being provoked by a camera into manifesting themselves. What do the mediums believe the camera to be that they understand its presence to be capable of provoking them to fall into a trance, to abandon themselves, so as to enable, as they imagine it, invisible spirits to possess their bodies?

According to Rouch's essay, the Songhay believe that when a medium is possessed he or she is approached by an invisible spirit carrying the bloody skin of a freshly slaughtered animal. The spirit wraps the skin around the medium's head, at the same time capturing and protecting the "self" of the medium, who is now in a deep trance. Then the spirit enters the medium's body. When it is time to leave, the spirit lifts off the bloody animal skin, liberating the medium's displaced "self."

When filming *Turu et Bitti*, Rouch suggests, he fell into a trance - a "cine-trance" - comparable to the trances that enabled the mediums to be possessed. Walking with the camera on his shoulder, he became other than the person he ordinarily is; he became the being that Stoller, in his eloquent account of the film, calls "Rouch-the-camera." Filming *Turu et Bitti*, Rouch-the-camera walked among the villagers gathered for the ceremony, and also among invisible spirits, who recognized him as belonging to their realm as well as to the realm of the visible. Evidently, invisible spirits and human mediums alike wanted Rouch-the-camera to be present - observing, filming - at the moment of possession.

"While shooting a ritual," Rouch wrote some years after writing "On the Vicissitudes of the Self," the filmmaker "discovers a complex and spontaneous set-up." To record it, he

. . .only has to "record reality," improvise his frames and movements. . .If, by chance, while shooting a . . . trance dance, I happen to accomplish such a performance, I can still remember the acute challenge of not wobbling, not missing focus nor exposure, in which case the whole sequence would have to be resumed, therefore be lost altogether. And when, tired out by such a tension, the soundman drops his microphone and I abandon my camera, we feel as if a tense crowd, musicians and even vulnerable gods who got hold of trembling dancers were all aware and stimulated by our venture.<sup>36</sup>

As Rouch here describes it, he became so distracted filming *Turu et Bitti*, so absorbed in the technical details of pulling off this performance, that he fell into a "cine-trance." It is this state that made it possible for his "self" to become displaced, his body to be possessed.

This is as far as Rouch takes his analysis in his published writings. Keeping in mind our discussion of the images-painted-on-skin in *Night and Fog*, however, perhaps we might venture a further speculation. The camera, sym-

bolically, skins its subjects alive. Then perhaps, in Rouch's terms, it is the camera/machine that, capturing and protecting the filmmaker's "self" within the bloody skin of the world, possesses his body, becomes fused with it. enabling the camera's subjects, each a medium capable of being possessed, or the spirits that possess them, to possess the entranced filmmaker. (Perhaps we might also venture to speculate, in this spirit, that if Marceline was acting in the Place de la Concorde sequence of *Chronicle*, the only difference between her "real" self and the character she was playing is that the latter has no need to perform an act, to deny the present, in order to feel connected with the world of the past, the only world real to her. The only difference between Marceline's "real" and "fictional" selves is that one is an actress and the other a medium through whom her past self was capable of speaking. But if Marceline was acting, was consciously absorbed in the mechanics of pulling off her virtuoso performance, perhaps she was so distracted, so entranced, in effect, that the "fictional" Marceline was able to steal upon her, possess her, even as she remained unaware she was doing anything but acting. Once she abandoned herself to the role she believed she was only acting, the difference between her "real" and "fictional" selves dropped away.)

"Whatever the mechanism, the paramount fact of possession is that the medium's [self] is displaced," Stoller writes. And the paramount fact of the filming of *Turu et Bitti*, he goes on, endorsing Rouch's own formulation, is that "Rouch literally attached himself to the ritual and entered a 'cine-trance of one filming the trance of another.'"<sup>37</sup> But it is quite without support from Rouch's words that Stoller adds, "Cine-trance, however, is entered only by filmmakers who practice cinema-verite, who hunt for images in the real world."<sup>38</sup>

Rouch's profound insight, gleaned from his investigation of the way the Songhay understand these matters, is that filming and being filmed are akin to phenomena of possession, that filmmakers as well as the people they are filming are capable of becoming possessed, or, at least, capable of undergoing a metamorphosis so profound as to be meaningfully compared to possession. In truth, this insight is capable of illuminating a wide range of films, perhaps all films, not only films we might associate with the term "cinema-verite," much less films shot by the "one take/one sequence" method. All filmmakers "hunt for images in the real world," after all. (Where else are they to find them?) Can we not say that Resnais is possessed by those who scratched and clawed their marks in the ceiling of the gas chamber? that Hitchcock is possessed by Norman Bates (as Norman is possessed by his mother)? that Chaplin is possessed by the Tramp, who is also his own image? that Rouch is possessed by Marilou and Marceline, even though he does not use the "one take/one sequence" method to film them?

The centrality of the "one take/one sequence" method to his later work, along with the central roles concepts like "self," "trance," "possession," "authenticity," and "revelation" have played throughout his career, suggest

that it would be wise to take with a grain of salt Rouch's repeated claims that Vertov, along with Flaherty, is one of his "cinematic ancestors." Without denying Vertov's importance as a role model for Rouch (who borrows his term "cinema-verite" from "*Kino-Pravda*," after all), it is important to keep in mind the ways Rouch's theory and practice of cinema are antithetical to Vertov's.

Following Eaton, Stephen Feld, and others, Stoller takes Rouch's remarks about Vertov at face value. Stoller writes:

Whereas Flaherty's creative influence on Rouch is fundamentally methodological, Dziga Vertov's cinematic contributions lead to the heart of Rouch's cinematic art, to Rouch's practice of cinema-verite, in which one edits film as one shoots it - in which the camera becomes an extension of the filmmaker's body.... Vertov's aim was to plunge the cinema into the stimulating depths of real life, a construction of the real prompted by the camera.<sup>39</sup>

But Vertov's practice is at a far remove from "editing in the camera." For Vertov, montage is almost everything, and the function of montage is not to enable the camera to become an extension of the filmmaker's body (the way it increasingly does for Rouch, who comes to forgo montage all but completely); rather, the filmmaker's body becomes an extension of the camera/machine, which liberates the body, allows it to assume more than human powers.

As Feld notes, Rouch is fond of citing Vertov's passage,

I am the kino-eye, I am the mechanical eye, I am the machine that shows you the world as only a machine can see it. From now on I will be liberated from immobility. I am in perpetual movement. I draw near to things, I move myself away from them, I enter into them, I travel toward the snout of a racing horse, I move through crowds at top speed, I precede soldiers on attack, I take off with airplanes, I flip over on my back, I fall down and stand back up as bodies fall down and stand back up.<sup>40</sup>

Rather than follow Vertov's flight of fancy, Rouch brings the camera down to earth, grounds its powers in the finite limits of his human body. He never ceases to be inspired by the simple fact that it is possible for a human being to *walk* with the camera. (Rouch brought Michel Brault from Canada to shoot part of *Chronicle* so he could learn from him how to "walk the camera.")

Vertov is a Constructivist. Like Bunuel, Rouch is a filmmaker whose artistic roots are in surrealism. (The "one take/one sequence" method is designed to enable filmmakers to achieve what may be thought of as a kind of "automatic writing.") Rouch's project, like Bunuel's, also has a Nietzschean aspect to it. Rouch's goal is for us to become more fully human by acknowledging our humanity, by discovering - or rediscovering - the possibility of freedom within the limits of our condition as human. Vertov's goal

is to deny the constraints of being human. For Vertov, a film like *Man with the Movie Camera* is a simulacrum of a revolutionary new society; what matters most is the revolutionary reality being constructed. For Rouch, reality needs to be provoked to manifest its full profundity, but reality as it is counts for everything.

### Shared Anthropology

Stoller writes of *Turu et Bitti*:

In ten minutes of footage it indexes a radical method, that of a shared, participatory anthropology. In a sense the subtext of "shared anthropology" runs through most if not all of Rouch's films. "Shared anthropology" is the story of Rouch's films. It is a story in which Rouch has used the medium of film to share with the "other" the results of his work.<sup>41</sup>

Inspired by Flaherty's practice, Rouch regularly screens his footage to his subjects, asks them questions about events he has filmed whose meaning he does not already fully understand, receives answers that help him to film in ways that will enable him to ask further questions, to receive further answers. Films like *Turu et Bitti* are at once fruits of his commitment to "shared anthropology" - without his long-term immersion in studying Songhay society, he would not have known how to film this possession ritual - and fruitful sources for asking further questions, receiving further answers, and making further films that advance the enterprise of "shared anthropology."

In the "shared anthropology" Rouch champions, film occupies the central place that, writing has occupied in traditional anthropology. By making films that beget films (as Vertov also envisioned himself as doing), Rouch aspires to usher in a revolutionary anthropological practice that acknowledges rather than denies the medium of film, that transforms traditional anthropology into a discipline no less rigorous for acknowledging the magical, the strange, the fantastic, the fabulous.

That Rouch aspires to transform traditional anthropology from within means that he must establish his credentials by publishing writings meant to be read by other anthropologists. That Rouch's writings do, indeed, establish his legitimacy as an anthropologist is a leading claim of Stoller's book. (This is one of the many things that make Stoller's writing such a major contribution to the critical literature on Rouch's work.)

In transforming traditional anthropology from within, Rouch's goal is to make anthropology accessible to people from preliterate cultures - to enable them not only to have access to the results of research, but to participate in the research in ways going far beyond the traditional role of "informant." We might say that Rouch's goal is to enable "ethnographic others," the objects of anthropological study, also to become subjects who make this study their own.

Rouch understands that the "ethnographic others" change through participating in this new "shared anthropology."

The field changes the simple observer. When he works, he is no longer one who greeted the oldtimers on the edge of the village; to take up... Vertovian terminology, he "ethno-looks," he "ethno-observes," he "ethno-thinks," and once they are sure of this strange regular visitor, those who come in contact with him go through a parallel change, they "ethno-show," they "ethno-speak," and ultimately, they "ethno-think".... Knowledge is no longer a stolen secret, which is later devoured in western temples of knowledge. . . [It] is the result of an endless quest in which ethnographers and others walk a path which some of us call "shared anthropology."<sup>42</sup>

For almost a half-century, Rouch has developed his theory and practice of "shared anthropology" by extensively filming two West African peoples: the Dogon of the Bandiagara cliffs of Mali, the people studied by his mentor Marcel Griaule, whose rituals are spectacular achievements of *mise-en-scene*, of staging; and the Songhay of Niger, whose rituals of possession have been the subject of Rouch's own ethnographic publications.

Rouch's many years of filmmaking among the Dogon culminates in a series of films (1967-74) about the epic "Sigui" ritual, staged once every sixty years to commemorate the invention of death, and in two feature-length films that may be his artistic masterpieces, *Funeral at Bongo: The Death of Old Anai* (1972) and *Ambara Dama* (1974). (The last of these works closes a circle: Rouch films the mask dance ritual first filmed by Griaule, and in the narration Rouch speaks his teacher's own words.)

In filming a Dogon ritual, Rouch's primary interests are its theatricality inherent drama, value as spectacle) and its texture of meaningfulness (in every step of every dancer, a system of cosmology is inscribed). Rouch's interest is in the esoteric knowledge inscribed in the ritual (rather than, say, the personal thoughts or feelings of the individual performers).

At one level, Rouch films Dogon rituals in order to vindicate Griaule's claim, rejected during his lifetime by the French anthropological establishment, that this African people has kept alive the knowledge of what its ancient rituals mean. But Rouch also films these rituals in order to vindicate his own practice of "shared anthropology." It is because Griaule's claim is true, Rouch believes, that it is possible for him to show the Dogon the footage he has shot, ask questions, and receive answers that will enable him to know better how to film - how to create new films that enable him to ask new questions and receive new answers, furthering the quest for anthropological knowledge.

*The Death of Old Anai* opens with a glimpse of Anai Dolo, filmed two years before his death in 1971 at the age of 122, protected and warm within his little hut. In his poetic narration, Rouch speaks of the old man's condition as a return to the womb (Anai lived through three Sigui rituals, Rouch tells us; during the first, he was literally in his mother's womb). Deaf

and blind and unable to walk, he is no longer an actor on the world's stage, no longer even a spectator, but he remains a valued member of a community that acknowledges and appreciates the life he has led, a life that began in 1849 and spans so much of the history of the Dogon people.

This history comes alive in the funeral that follows, which takes several days to play out. The story of Anai's life, the story of the Dogon people and the story of the Creation of the universe are reenacted in a spectacular piece of theater, staged without author or director, in which all the inhabitants of Bongo and the surrounding countryside have roles to perform.

We know only those meanings that Rouch's narration explains to us. This is what makes *Anai* a work of anthropology: The way of thinking it "documents" belongs to "others," not to ourselves; we cannot search within ourselves to discover the meaning of what we are viewing. Yet in our lack of knowledge, we share the condition of most of the performers, only a few of whom are initiates. The ritual's power as theater does not depend on the esoteric knowledge possessed by the Dogon elders, perhaps none of whom possesses it in full. Rouch possesses this knowledge to a limited degree, and communicates some of what he knows to us, but it is not his aspiration to provide answers to all questions we may have about the meaning of what we are viewing. He does not have all the answers; he makes this film hoping to learn things he does not already know.

*Anai* presents us with a spectacle at once strange and uncannily familiar. This ritual is familiar because it is only a funeral, after all, and we have funerals, too. But Rouch's film brings home to us something we have forgotten about what a funeral is (what it once was to us, perhaps what it can once again be). That our rituals have become degraded is hardly news. But Rouch makes it news by allowing us to view a ritual more alive than any we had imagined. *Anai* is meant to expand our capacity to imagine, not to "document" a dying way of life.

Rouch's dream is that the human race may one day cherish its diversity and value its oldest traditions most of all. For Rouch, the Dogon are an ideal society; without written laws or central government, they sustain ancient beliefs and rituals - they antedate Judaeo-Christian civilization -which create an authentic sense of community we have lost. It is a mystery that the Dogon know how to stage spectacles that help free their society from the alienation and fear of death that haunt our own. Rouch communicates to us above all his wonder at what these people know, that we do not, about how human lives may be lived.

What the Dogon know is something about theater, about conquering the fear of death. What the Songhay know is something about possession, about accepting the limits of self-control, about abandonment, about overcoming the fear of enchantment. Songhay rituals are not staged spectacles. The Songhay do not don masks and play gods and mythical beings; they *become* those beings. Songhay rituals are not reenactments of history, mythical or otherwise; they enable the invisible deities always in their midst to

make themselves manifest so they can answer questions, here and now, about matters of life and death.

The Songhay and Dogon to whom Rouch shows his films-in-progress have their own ways of understanding what films are, what becomes of Rouch when he goes into a "cine-trance" and films their rituals. Because his acts of filming are capable of playing profoundly meaningful roles within these rituals, Rouch cannot fully comprehend the systems of thoughts that underlie the rituals without comprehending how the camera appears, how his acts of filming appear, when viewed from within those systems. As we have seen, one Songhay idea that strikes Rouch as profoundly revelatory is that in the act of filming he straddles the realm of the visible, of the living, and the realm of the invisible, of spirits, deities, ghosts. Equally revelatory to Rouch is the Dogon idea that film has an intimate connection with masks, with spectacle, with theater.

In *Anai*, the ritual Rouch is filming fuses with his own act of filming. This occurs, for example, during the reenactment of the Dogon battle against the French in 1895, a battle in which Anai was wounded by a French bullet, when some participants aim their old flintlock rifles directly at the camera, or at Rouch behind the camera. However sincere he may be in making this film to share with the Dogon his quest for anthropological knowledge, Rouch remains a Frenchman. He is implicated in the history of the Dogon people, and this fact is not lost on them, nor on him.

But if the shooting at the camera acknowledges that Rouch is a Frenchman, not a Dogon, it also acknowledges something else. The point in reen-acting the battle, its function within the funeral as a whole, is to help provoke Anai's soul to leave the village and begin its long journey to the land of the dead. A soul separated from its body is very vulnerable, the Dogon believe, and also very dangerous. However much it wants to stay in the village that was its home, Anai's soul must be made to leave, even if this requires frightening it away. Shooting their rifles at the camera not only reveals that the Dogon place Rouch on the French side of the colonial war they are reenacting, it also reveals that they connect the camera, or Rouch behind the camera, with the ghost of Anai, a spirit haunting the world in which it can no longer dwell, longing to die its own death yet reluctant to sever its ties with the living.

In *Ambara Dama*, too, the ritual Rouch is filming and his own practice of filming are profoundly linked. The performers in their spectacular masks dance for the villagers in the audience, and also for the souls of the dead that may be lingering around the village. The dancers hope not to frighten these souls, but to enchant them so they may safely be led to the land of the dead. The masks and dances are so seductive, however, that there is a danger that the living may be enchanted, and may die. Rouch's camera is at once in the position of the living, for whom enchantment is dangerous, and the dead, for whom it promises release from their attachment to the living. The "veracity" of the Dogon beliefs cannot be separated from the question of whether these masks projected on the screen enchant *us*.

Rouch is not the author of what such films show us, although his acts of filming play a role in what he is filming. What makes it possible for us to view what we are viewing is a mystery linked to the mysteries on view. In the climactic sequence of *Anai*, Rouch invokes this mystery directly.

I am thinking of the remarkable passage in which a Dogon elder, in a cave whose darkness is penetrated only by the flashlight Rouch has strapped to his camera hoping it would provide enough light to film, recites the sayings that recount the history of the universe from the Creation to Anai Dolo's death. As if under the spell of the myth being chanted, the film suddenly avails itself of the powers of montage, which Rouch developed the "one take/one sequence" method of filming in order to forgo. Liberated from its connection with the filmmaker's body, we magically depart this claustrophobic setting to encompass a series of visions of the world outside, each vision serving to illustrate an aspect of the Dogon myth. The series culminates in an awesome vision of heaps of bones of animals killed by uncounted generations of Dogon hunters, a vision that takes us back to the beginning of time.

At one level, this passage distills the intellectual charge of the film. Rouch means *Anai* to be a critique of Claude Levi-Strauss's view that myths are structures of oppositions. A structuralist account forgets that a myth is a tale told by human beings to human beings on particular occasions for reasons that are matters of life and death to them. What Levi-Strauss omits - the scene of the telling - is what Rouch wishes this passage to invoke.

The passage is also an explicit declaration of the power of film - a power film shares with theater as the Dogon practice it - to transcend the bounds of space and time. As if by magic, film is capable of connecting the visible and the invisible, the living Anai, 122 years old, and the soul of the dead Anai, whose funeral is itself capable of connecting one man's life, the historical struggle between the Dogon people and their French colonizers, and the Creation of the universe.

This passage links the mystery of film's power to connect the living and the dead, the visible and the invisible, with the universal mysteries of Creation, death, and rebirth meditated upon by the ancient Dogon sayings. At the same time, the passage is an intensely personal one in which Rouch finds poetic words for the feelings this sublime spectacle arouses in him. The Dogon account of the Creation illuminates the creation of this film, too, for the words Rouch speaks in French to express his own feelings are literal translations of the words the elder chants in his people's ancient ritual language, words that inscribe the knowledge the Dogon hold sacred.

Rouch's Dogon films revolve around the quest for knowledge. His Song-hay films are about something else, call it the limits of knowledge. In *Turn et Bitti*, it is not film's utility as an instrument of science that is demonstrated, but film's power as a medium of possession. This is why it seems strange to single out *Turu et Bitti* from among all of Rouch's films as

"indexing" the method of "shared anthropology." The Songhay villagers who are participating in this event seem hardly to be "ethno-thinking," hardly to be motivated by a quest for anthropological knowledge. What they want to know - the prospects for the next harvest, for example - only the invisible spirits can tell them. (Stoller is perhaps being a bit sentimental when he suggests that the spirits possess the mediums in the camera's presence because they honor Rouch, and that they honor him because he has honored them. The moment the first possession occurs, the spirit announces - who is to doubt him? - that what he wants is *meat*.)

It is not to further the goals of "shared anthropology" that the mediums allow themselves to be possessed, and the deities choose to possess them, precisely when Rouch-the-camera is present. Rouch describes their motivations more plausibly, and reveals something about his own, when he writes that the trembling dancers and vulnerable gods were "stimulated" by his virtuoso feat of filming, and characterizes himself as so absorbed in pulling off a technically difficult performance that his conscious mind abandoned itself to a trance-like state.

What *Turu et Bitti* "indexes" is less a joint quest for anthropological knowledge than an acknowledgment of the limits of knowledge, of the value of abandoning oneself, overcoming the fear of enchantment, becoming possessed. If Rouch's films are in pursuit of knowledge, they also acknowledge the value of the transcendental, the unknowable, the unsayable. Rouch is a poet as surely as he is an anthropologist. Like Buñuel, he is also a Nietzschean prophet, as we have said. The new world Rouch heralds is also an ancient world, a world older than our Western civilization. To arrive at this new/old world is to create or re-create a human form of life in which the invisible is at every moment manifest, a form of life in which every event, however "ordinary," at once expresses what we know, and acknowledges what we cannot know, about being human.

This visionary aspiration of Rouch's project separates him from other major "ethnographic" filmmakers, who stand apart from him, respecting but not following him - from the late Timothy Asch, for example, and others who retain their faith in rational analysis; from the skeptical Mac-Dougalls, who envision their subjects as playing out an all too familiar human comedy unaltered by being set in exotic landscapes and acted by so-called primitives; from Robert Gardner and John Marshall, who view human existence in poetic, yet tragic, terms.

For both Gardner and Marshall, who worked together on *The Hunters* before they went their separate ways, the tragedy is the failure of all human society to fulfil the human longing for acknowledgment and love; society is the mask by which we veil from ourselves the truth that we live inhuman lives.

For Gardner, culture is the system of masks and lies humans create to deny the truth of our condition, a truth that nonetheless can be recognized by anyone with eyes to see. It is the system by which we hide our cruelty,

and our tenderness, from each other and from ourselves. Films like *Dead Birds*, *Rivers of Sand*, *Deep Hearts*, and *Forest of Bliss* are sublime and beautiful poems in which each society Gardner films becomes a metaphor for the tenderness and cruelty of all human existence, the tenderness and cruelty we all are capable of recognizing when we look deep into our own hearts. Gardner's "ethnographic" films are about people he does not claim especially to love. The human need for love, which is the other face of the human resistance to loving and being loved, is the subject of his films.

Marshall's subject is the powerlessness of love in the face of forces that are transforming the world into a place unfit for human habitation. His "ethnographic" films are about a people - the Bushmen of the Kalihari Desert - and a person - N!ai, whom he first filmed when she was a precocious eight-year-old - he loves but is powerless to save. Marshall's own story (son of the anthropologist Lorna Marshall, he lived among the Bushmen from his childhood) is inseparable from the story of this people and this person. And this story is a tragedy: This nomadic people is being herded into "camps," dying out *as* a people, and what he loves about N!ai is dying out, too.

The words "dying out" suggest that this is occurring naturally, that no one is responsible, that what is happening is not murder or genocide. Marshall's films point no accusing finger, but their premise and conclusion is that this is a tragedy for which no one is completely exempt from guilt - including Marshall himself, whose films inscribe his knowledge that his fate is to tell this tragic story, hence that he plays a role within this tragedy, that he, too, is a figure of tragedy, a tragic figure. His powerlessness to avert this people's fate cannot be separated from the tragedy that is their fate, and his.

Gardner's and Marshall's films bear an intimate relationship to one another. Gardner turns to a particular people to make a film that speaks an unspeakable truth about humanity, then moves on. (That humans are nomads is one of these unspeakable truths.) Gardner films others to formulate statements that are really about himself, that unburden his own heart by creating cruel and tender poetry capable of moving us beyond words. But Marshall's films, too, are implicated in the cruelty, as well as the tenderness, that is an alienable part of being human.

As far as the MacDougalls are concerned, we are to be skeptical of the very idea of change; we are what we are, we have always been that way; we are not really all that bad, but we should be under no illusions that what is merely economically determined is "sacred." In a film like *The Wedding Camels*, the MacDougalls accept the absence of the sacred with good humor, as if it never amounted to much in the first place. Gardner and Marshall are inconsolable in mourning the loss of the sacred. Christians in despair, they, too, are skeptical of the possibility of change. Rouch is not skeptical, and he is not in despair. But neither is he a Christian, even a lapsed one.

As we have observed, when Rouch films Dogon rituals, he is not concerned with the realm of the private, the everyday, which is the primary focus of *Chronicle of a Summer*; he is concerned with everything that bears on the esoteric meaning of the ritual, that reveals its underlying cosmology, and with nothing that does not. Rouch is especially attached to the Dogon cosmology, first, because he believes it has enabled the Dogon people to sustain a way of life not haunted by alienation and fear of death, as *Chronicle* reveals ours to be. Second, because Rouch is attracted to the Dogon vision of a cosmos not eternally in the throes of a terrible war between good and evil, as Christianity envisions, but animated by the joyful give and take between a God who stands for order and the mischievous Pale Fox who takes pleasure in sowing disorder, in subverting God's script. To see the gleam in Rouch's eye when he talks about the Pale Fox, whose antics provoke God to manifest profoundly revealing sides of himself, is to recognize that this is a figure he aspires to emulate (when he is behind the camera, and when he is not).

In *Land without Bread*, the impoverishment of the Hurdanos - it is our impoverishment, too - is a sign that in its attempts to wall out nature, humanity has altered nature against itself, has rendered nature - hence human nature - unnatural, a horror. The Dogon are not the Hurdanos. They have never built walls to try to keep nature out. Worshipers of the Pale Fox, they have always been "beyond good and evil" in Nietzsche's sense. Even today, their rituals reveal that they have kept alive their ancient way of thinking, a way of thinking that predates Christianity, predates the birth of Western civilization itself, which in Nietzsche's vision coincides with the birth of tragedy. Nor are the Songhay the Hurdanos. In the presence of Rouch's camera, they do not suffer in stolid silence; like Dionysian revelers, they abandon themselves, overcome their fear of enchantment, become possessed.

No less than Bunuel, Rouch believes that our way of life must change, that our way of life cannot change unless we change, and that we cannot change unless our way of thinking changes. We must awaken to, awaken from, the horror to which we have condemned ourselves and our world. We must tear down the fences we have built, the fences we continue to build, to deny that nature exists within us as we exist within nature. But Rouch does not share Bunuel's faith that art is capable of awakening us, capable of reconciling us with nature, with our own nature, from which we have become estranged.

In the world of *Night and Fog*, as we have seen, the reality of the death camps reveals that a further estrangement has taken place. We have altered art against its own nature, too, have rendered art itself unnatural, a horror. Resnais refuses to consent to the horror of the world that built and operated the death camps and still denies their "true dimension." The present cannot be made the real world again without acknowledging that art lies, and art kills. Death camps were built with fences around them not to contain nature, but to contain art, to keep art at bay. If death camps are works of

art, **art** cannot reconcile us with nature, with our own nature, unless art participates in tearing those fences down. In Resnais's modernist vision, overcoming art is the new end for art; overcoming the art of film is the new end for the art of film.

But Rouch does not share Resnais's modernist faith in art, either. In Rouch's understanding, the fences we build around art, the fences works of art build around themselves, must be torn down, to be sure, but this cannot be achieved by art alone - by objects to be treated as self-contained, as ends in themselves. Rouch treats neither the rituals he films nor his films of those rituals as works of art in this sense. He understands the rituals he films to be of value insofar as they participate in ways of thinking and living that are meaningful to the human beings who think and live these ways. And he understands his films to be of value insofar as they participate in the meaningful way of thinking and living he calls "shared anthropology."

*Chronicle of a Summer*, made largely in the editing room, assumes the form of a traditional work of art; in editing the film, the filmmakers (at least to the degree that they succeed in reconciling their differences) stake out their authorship of the work, assume responsibility for its composition. *Turu et Bitti*, exemplary of "shared anthropology," is not in the same way a "composition"; it is improvised. The rituals Rouch films likewise have an essential element of improvisation. This is obviously true of the ritual *Turu et Bitti* "documents," in which the Songhay must be responsive to the whims of invisible spirits if the possessions are to take place at all, and in which those spirits, once they manifest themselves, speak words that are not scripted in advance (otherwise there would be no point in going through this rigmarole). But it is no less true of the elaborate rituals the Dogon stage, in which everything appears to follow an age-old script. When the participants in the mock battle that is the centerpiece of Anai's funeral point their flintlock rifles at the camera, at Rouch, they are not following a script; these are improvisations provoked by the act of filming.

In the "one take/one sequence" method of filming Rouch develops after *Chronicle of a Summer*, and partly in response to his experience of making that film, the camera becomes an extension of his bodily presence. Sequences edited according to the conventions of classical movies give way to continuous "long takes." In his post-*Chronicle* films, Rouch does not treat editing as a way of asserting authorship. *Turu et Bitti*, which consists of one shot, is not edited at all. The editing of a longer film like *The Death of Old Anai* is simply a matter of splicing together a series of "one take" sequences. (The climactic montage is the exception that proves this rule.)

A film created by the "one take/one sequence" method respects the spatiotemporal integrity of the filmed event in the way championed by Bazin. It does something else, as well: It invokes an "original" scene in which the filmmaker was present as the "first viewer." When Rouch completes such a film by recording a narration, he does not treat the voice-over (any more than the editing) as a way to assert authorship. A Rouch narration, essen-

rially improvised, is his response to the film, spoken by one viewer to other viewers. By virtue of the narration, the film also invokes a second scene of Rouch's presence: He speaks to us as if he were now in our presence, viewing with us. The figure who silently filmed these events in the past is the bearer of the voice that speaks to us in the present: This is the mysterious reality the narration declares, both by the words spoken and the hushed, poetic tone of the voice that speaks them, a tone that bespeaks the sacred-ness of the ritual we are viewing (and the ritual of our viewing).

When Stoller suggests that Rouch's films participate in the enterprise of shared anthropology, he primarily has in mind the filmmaker's practice of screening the footage to his Songhay and Dogon subjects, asking questions and soliciting answers that instruct him how he should make further films, films he can screen to his subjects in order to ask further questions and receive further answers. However, in such scenes of instruction, his own and his subjects', it makes little difference (to him, to them) whether the footage screened was filmed by the "one take/one sequence" method.

But there is another scene of instruction in which Rouch's films are meant to participate. And in this "other" scene of instruction, the "one take/one sequence" method makes a crucial difference. I am thinking of the innumerable occasions in which Rouch has presented his films to students in schools, museums, and libraries all over the world. Those who have had the experience of viewing a Rouch film on an occasion in which the filmmaker introduced it and presided over the subsequent discussion, much less those who have taken part in one of the many intensive seminars he has conducted all over the world, know that this is how most of his films are meant to be viewed. To some degree, Rouch's narrations create the illusion that he is in the room with us, but that is a pale substitute for his presence in the flesh, which completes the experience of his films, or, rather, enables us to experience them in a way that transcends experiencing them as self-contained works of art. Unlike Flaherty, Bunuel or Resnais, Rouch makes his films *to be* transcended this way.

If Rouch makes his films to beget films, part of what this means is that he uses them to win converts to the enterprise of "shared anthropology" to which he has dedicated his life, to inspire others to emulate his practice. This does not mean he wishes for others to join him in filming Songhay or Dogon rituals - those are *his* subjects, not theirs. It means he wishes as many people as possible to discover subjects they might film and be instructed by in this way that has freed him from the alienation, the despair, the joylessness, to which our society would otherwise have consigned him, to which he would otherwise have consigned himself. Rouch wants his audience to emulate his way of thinking, which is also his way of living, a way that taps into sources of ecstasy that have become lost to our society. Above all, I take it, it is to facilitate his films' usefulness as exemplars of "shared anthropology" that Rouch considers it a "must" to use the "one take/one sequence" method.

As we have said, it makes little or no difference to the Songhay and Dogon whether the footage Rouch shows them was shot in accordance with the "one take/one sequence" method. He is committed to the "one take/one sequence" method because it makes his films not only "documents" of the events he filmed, but of his filming as well. The reality his films "document" is one in which he did not merely witness these fabulous spectacles; in filming from his place behind the camera, he was possessed by the spirits animating them, was able to abandon himself and pull off performances so thrilling that the gods themselves were compelled to take notice.

When Rouch discusses his films, he shares knowledge with the audience, but he also banks on his presence - he is the man who has not only witnessed but participated in these events, the man who has pulled off these performances that reveal him to have been initiated into the mysteries he has filmed, the man whose presence among us is itself a mystery. On such occasions, Rouch unfailingly projects an infectious joyfulness. But his boyish enthusiasm is always tinged with melancholy, as if he were at the same time a young man filled with hopes and dreams and an elder whose life has stripped him of his illusions, perhaps a bit of his once boundless energy, though not his sense of wonder. We might also say that his melancholy acknowledges that his irrepressible enthusiasm is an act, part of a "*shtick*," as it were. Of course, the melancholy may itself be part of his act. Surely, however, if this joyfulness-tinged-with-melancholy is an act, it is one that manifests a profound side of Rouch.

It is part of Rouch's act, if it is an act, always to be friendly and approachable, good-humored and down to earth, but also to be a bit distant, as if part of his self remained among the Songhay and Dogon, or as if, in our presence, he were viewing us from a place behind the camera in which spirits invisible to us are visible to him. And it is part of his act, if it is an act, always to be a bit elusive as well, never to offer revelations unless they are solicited, in the manner of a Songhay or Dogon teacher who forth-rightly answers every question but refrains from so much as hinting that there are further questions that remain to be asked. Rouch, the most charismatic of teachers, is the kind of teacher who teaches by example. His way of thinking, of living, is the example he teaches his followers to emulate.

*Chronicle of a Summer* provides glimpses of Rouch's trademark joyful-ness-tinged-with-melancholy. I am thinking of the moment, for example, in which he initiates the discussion following the screening. However, there his manner does not have its full effectiveness. First, because the ensuing discussion is hopelessly unfocused, largely because the questions Morin expected the film to answer (how do Parisians live their lives? are Parisians happy?) so obviously remain unanswered, unanswerable, by a film divorced from the rigorous intellectual framework characteristic of Rouch's Songhay and Dogon films. Second, because at this moment of *Chronicle*, Rouch does not step forward as the filmmaker - ostensibly, Morin, who was never behind the camera, is no less this film's "maker" than Rouch, who was

sometimes behind the camera, but who even then did not employ the "one take/one sequence" method.

When Rouch, aspiring to further the goals of "shared anthropology," screens his films for the Songhay and Dogon who are in them, there is an asymmetry in their relationship. Although he never explicitly acknowledges this asymmetry, it is reflected in his language when, mimicking Vertovian terminology, he writes that the observer "ethno-looks" and "ethno-observes," but that what the "other" does is "ethno-show" and "ethno-speak." The result, Rouch maintains, is a conversation in which observer and "other" jointly pursue knowledge. But from the point of view of the observer, the "other" remains other; the conversation of "shared anthropology" is about the "other," not about the observer. The observer pursues knowledge about the way the "other" thinks and lives, while the "other" pursues knowledge about his or her own way of thinking and living. What for Rouch is anthropology is not anthropology at all for the Songhay and Dogon participants, but, rather, a pursuit of self-knowledge akin to philosophy. And what is philosophy for them is for him not philosophy at all, but, rather, a pursuit of anthropological knowledge, knowledge of the way "others" think and live. (Rouch has taught his method of filming to Africans. However, insofar as they go on to film their own "others," they become observers, no longer "others." And if they film people who think and live as they do, they are, again, not participating in anthropology.)

Putting a positive face on this asymmetry, we might say that "shared anthropology" effects a marriage between anthropology and philosophy, disciplines that have barely spoken to each other since the time of Kant. We might also say, less positively, that for the Songhay and Dogon, "shared anthropology" entails a denial or avoidance of pursuing knowledge of the way Rouch thinks and lives, and that for Rouch it entails a denial or avoidance of pursuing knowledge of his own way of thinking and living.

And yet when Rouch screens his films to Western students the asymmetry is reversed. It is his way of thinking and living, not theirs, which becomes the object of their study. Insofar as they pursue this study by asking questions about his way of filming, respond to his answers with further questions, and so on, their questions are capable of provoking Rouch to manifest a philosophical perspective of self-reflection, to articulate aspects of his way of thinking and living he may never before have put into words. What for his students is a training in anthropology becomes for him, at least potentially, a pursuit of self-knowledge akin to philosophy. That Rouch must be provoked to manifest a philosophical perspective, however, underscores that "shared anthropology" otherwise resists self-reflection.

In the summer of 1978, my wife, Kitty Morgan, who was Director of the University Film Study Center Summer Institute on the Media Arts, arranged for Rouch to offer a seminar on film and anthropology. I regularly sat in, as I did when she brought him back to the Institute in 1979, and when she coordinated the seminar the following summer at Harvard. During those

years, I was writing *Hitchcock - The Murderous Gaze*, and was deeply immersed in philosophical issues intimately related to Rouch's work. Recognizing that I was able to provoke Rouch into addressing questions of philosophy he would otherwise have passed over in silence, and sensing - or imagining - that he appreciated my provoking him to overcome his resistance to speaking about such matters, I took it upon myself to draw him out philosophically. Every page of this book, and not only the present chapter, is profoundly indebted to those memorable seminars.

I do not share Rouch's faith that participating in "shared anthropology" gives his films a value that transcends their value as works of art. Rouch's resistance to treating his films as objects of value in and of themselves has had the regrettable consequence of leading him to neglect the real-life fate of his films, most of which have no distributors, commercial or otherwise, and are thus difficult or impossible even for educational institutions to obtain. No doubt, part of this apparent neglectfulness is a resigned acceptance of the depressing realities of nontheatrical film distribution. Rouch shot some of his greatest films on reversal stock, and it takes money to make negatives, money it is time-consuming to raise. But I cannot doubt that Rouch also takes satisfaction in knowing that he is screening the only print of a film he prizes, that every time he runs it through a projector he risks permanently mutilating or obliterating it. Rouch wants his films to be mortal, to have finite life spans, to be vulnerable to the whims of the Pale Fox.

In the climactic passage of *The Death of Old Anai*, as we have seen, Rouch breaks with his self-imposed "one take/one sequence" discipline, and discovers or rediscovers resources within the medium of film that enable his work to equal in beauty and power the elder's recitation of the Dogon myth of Creation. I take this to be, in part, an acknowledgment that this film's creation did not proceed of its own accord, that this film is a work of art, that the maker of this film is a master of the art of film, that he has made this art his own.

Rouch might deny this by saying that when he edited the sequence he was entranced, possessed (by Anai's spirit? by the spirit of the Pale Fox?). But he can hardly deny that the gesture he was possessed to perform is one that manifests a profound side of himself. And part of what this confirms is that, as I have argued, the applicability of such concepts as "cine-trance" and "possession" is not limited to films made in conformity with the "one take/one sequence" method. When Rouch avails himself of the powers of montage at this most charged moment of perhaps his greatest film, he is acknowledging that there is a profound side of film - and of himself - that the "one take/one sequence" method is not capable of manifesting. Evidently, Anai's funeral provoked Rouch to make manifest this profound side of film, this profound side of his own art.

Rouch's reluctance to treat his films as works of art may help him to charm audiences for whom he screens them, but there is something about the art of film, something about his own art, his own self, that it denies.

Many Rouch films are enhanced, not diminished, when he uses them to win converts to "shared anthropology." But that is because such films were already diminished by being made to be used for this purpose, diminished by the way they were made. *Anai* is not one of those films capable of enchanting an audience only when Rouch is present to screen it. For Rouch to treat it as if it were would be for him to diminish the film, to deny something about what it is, something about who he is. In truth, it must be admitted, only a few of Rouch's dozens of films are in this category; only a few Rouch films merit comparison, as examples of the art of film, to masterpieces like *Land without Bread* or *Night and Fog*. Viewed as an example of the art of film, even *Chronicle of a Summer* is at times slapdash and incoherent, and not only because Rouch and Morin so often worked at cross-purposes. That is why I chose to write about the film by singling out two perfectly crafted sequences, rather than by addressing its overall form or structure or "message."

Noting that the films that preceded it were very different from the films that followed it, I characterized *Chronicle* as a pivotal work in Rouch's career. It might seem, rather, to be an anomaly, for it differs in crucial ways from all his other films, early or late. No Rouch film before or after *Chronicle* treats the people in it as characters in depth, takes such an interest in them as distinctive individuals worthy of acknowledgment in their own right. No other Rouch film focuses so intimately on the realm of the private - on the ways people quest for love, the ways they pursue happiness, the ways they work, the ways they live and think about their everyday lives. Not coincidentally, no other Rouch film is so passionately involved with the lives and thoughts of women.

*Chronicle*, for all its distinctiveness, is not really an anomaly, however; mythically, as it were, its making is profoundly meaningful within the context of Rouch's career. In *The Rules of the Game*, Andre persuades his friend Octave (played by Renoir himself) to stop whatever he is doing in order to initiate - against Octave's better judgment - a chain of events that ultimately leads to Andre's death and Octave's banishment or self-banishment. On the occasion of the invention of the lightweight synch-sound camera, Morin similarly persuaded his friend Rouch, against Rouch's better judgment, to stop filming Songhay and Dogon rituals long enough to return to his own village to make a film about ordinary Parisians, a film promising to change the way they live and think.

Within *Chronicle*, Rouch may appear the optimist and Morin the pessimist. But it is Morin who expected that their film would spread love, and Rouch who entered into the project believing that the people they were filming - like all of us in Western society - were hopelessly stuck in "private traps." *Chronicle* not only confirmed Rouch in this belief, but revealed something further. In filming Marilou, he was enchanted by her, even as she was being forced back on herself, was being possessed not by a spirit hungering for life but by nothingness. And in filming Marceline, he consigned