

AGAINST MYSTIFICATION
Chronicle of a Summer

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**Chronicle of a Summer (1960) as Autocritique (1959):
A Transition in the French Left
IVONE MARGULIES, 2004**

A longhaired woman nervously bites her lips, smokes and hesitates in painfully long pauses. When she does talk, it is about her sense of alienation. This image of confession sums up cinema vérité's unique modernity, its split between document and drama. Magnified through the close proximity of the camera, this long take bespeaks an unflinching attention halfway between trial and compassionate hearing.

Chronicle of a Summer (Edgar Morin, Jean Rouch, 1960) is, in fact, charged with a project of self-revision as no other film. The film was to be "an experiment lived by its authors and its actors, a sort of psychodrama carried out collectively among authors and actors" (Morin, "Chronicle" 6). At the end of our research" states Edgar Morin in his proposal for the film, "we will gather our characters and . . . will show them what has been filmed so far, and in doing so attempt the ultimate . . . explication. Did each of them learn something about him/herself? . . . Did our faces remain masks?" ("Chronicle" 6). Morin and Rouch's experiment with the consciousness-awakening potential of the medium, the projection of the scene and the debate among the participants, reveals instead a profound collective embarrassment. The probing camera is blamed for only getting the "tiniest spark of truth when the subject is on the verge of a nervous breakdown," and the vérité method is reproached for eliciting "scenes that are either artificial or indecent." Confirming that this film approach invites questions of performance and authenticity, Jean-Pierre provocatively suggests that Marceline's dramatic dialogue works only because she was acting.

The film's excessive concern with authenticity is my concern here. Chronicle of a Summer is often referred as a special moment in the technical development of light cameras and sync sound (Rouch, "Chronicle" 34; Eaton "Chronicle" 14–15), and the consequent ease in registering speech. Inspired by the improvised, non-scripted conversations in Come Back Africa (Lionel Rogosin 1959), Morin was mostly interested in "the means of dialogue, the word that this new talking cinema would bring" ("Entretien" 133). From the start, his project aimed at providing a visual evidence of emerging speech. "Until then the documentary was not truly a talkie: it was vaguely sonorous, . . . but it had never been the expression of a speech, of an individual's thought" (133). This attentiveness to the moment in which

thought becomes expression leads the filmmakers to interesting editing choices. Rather than cut following the relaying of new information, the filmmakers respect a scene's internal integrity by preserving profilmic pauses and expressive stutters. The focus on empty time lends the film a puzzling mixture of intensity—in its search for truth—and vagueness—in the questions it asks and answers it gives. Hence, despite, or because of the extensive apparatus mobilized to access truth—from the Nagra synched to a person's speech to the belief in the ultimate value of a revealing, screening mirror—the film is beset by an intriguing reticence, generating as it speaks, the need for more statements.

The Algerian war is the main, but not the sole referent for the vagueness. The film's stated purpose was to broach economic, moral and psychological problems at the end of the war. The broad question posed to Parisians—"How do you live?" ("Not only one's way of life, housing, work, leisure, but the attitude people have toward themselves and toward others," (Morin, "Chronicle" 6) would serve as the guiding scenario for the film. The authors believed that "Summer 1960" could be "a chronicle of a capital moment in history" given the recent events in Congo as well as the Melun peace conversations (Rouch, "Chronicle" 10).

The discrepancy between the film's original rushes and its final cut is extensively documented in interviews and in Morin's "Chronicle of a Film," to which Rouch wrote the footnotes. Technical and political reasons are brought up to justify the cuts and indeed constraints of censorship as well as filmmaking length are plausible alibis for such significant omissions. Instead of holding the filmmakers up to the claim to be "the only ones in filmmaking to question the war in Algeria and to thus attack the central political problem of the hour" (28), I want to consider the film's very vagueness. The hesitancy that pervades the film is not a disingenuous evasion of politics on the filmmakers' part but an indicator of the film's real find: In its reticence to spell out its political allegiances, and in its posited interest in the private sphere of everyday life, the film enacts a transition from party politics to an alternate micro-politics. I further suggest that this move is motivated by Morin's parallel trajectory as a left thinker and critic.

In his text "Post-Chronique" included in "Chronicle of a Film," Morin mentions that the film is "infra-political" leaving a whole zone of issues unexplored. They did not want, "for example, to present the worker problem at the level of political or union affiliations or of salary claims, because conditions of industrial work should be questioned at a deeper more radical level." These statements as well as the film's apparent contradictions—its obsession with truth on a private level

and vagueness about the participants' involvement with Algeria—can only be understood if we take it as evidence of a problematic moment in the Left's intellectual engagement.

Most critical considerations of the film replay Morin and Rouch's excitement with the technical and methodological experimentation surrounding the film. But the question of why the vérité mode is enlisted at this particular historical conjuncture is often overlooked. Exactly what depends on such overt display (the screening and its filming for us) of an ultimate confession and self-analysis? What does this extreme concern with authenticity tell us about France in 1960? Granting incontestable verbal signatures, visual guarantees that speech coincides and originates from the person one sees, the film seems to have a special claim to the revelation of truth. Each of its speech acts is charged with testimonial value. Nevertheless "testimony is called for when the facts upon which justice must pronounce its verdict are not clear," and as Shoshana Felman points out, "the model of the trial dramatizes in this way a contained and culturally channeled crisis of truth" (Felman and Laub 6). The film's deployment of sync sound combined with its difficulty to say it all, invites us to read it as a symptom of a crisis in the very production of truth in late fifties France. What kind of truth matters at this point is also in question.

This essay maps the cultural and political coordinates of this peculiar conjunction of self-scrutiny and judgement in *Chronicle of a Summer*. Although the film is co-authored by Morin and Rouch I dislocate my main focus from the filmmaker to the sociologist for I can best explore the film's share in the left intellectual discourse by seeing this primarily as a Morin's experiment. It was Morin who invited Rouch to collaborate in the film, and their respective statements define him as the enunciator of the film's agenda: its interest in psychodrama and in using cinema as a medium for confession. The added bonus of this use of cinema as a social mirror would be the formation of a new sense of brotherhood, as one social actor recognizes himself in another.

SYNC SOUND AND AUTOCRITIQUE (1959)

The film was inspired by ethnographic documentaries "on Westerners" (Karel Reisz's *We are the Lambeth Boys* (1959) and *Come Back Africa* screened at the First Ethnographic Film Festival in 1959 in Florence where both Morin and Jean Rouch were both jurors. (Morin, "Entretien"133) The synopsis presented to the film's producer, the Centre National de la Cinématographie suggests a strong intellectual reorientation (Morin, "Chronicle" 6). And in the essay "For a New Cinema Vérité"

Morin states their desire “to make a film, not in Africa this time but in France” (“Chronicle” 4). There is a clear move to probe deeper into urban realities closer to home. If *vérité* brings out the ethnographic film’s “honesty” revealing our common humanity it can equally turn out “films about workers, the petty bourgeois, the petty bureaucrats . . . the men and women of our enormous cities.” (“Chronicle” 5) Morin adds rhetorically: “Must these people remain more foreign to us than Nanook the Esquimo, the fisherman of Aran, or the Bushman hunter?” (5).

Morin seems to enunciate here the principles of a change in ethnographic object he perceived as aligned to Jean Rouch’s experiments. Since the mid fifties Rouch had started to layer his images with his own commentaries as well as that of his protagonists so as to undo the pseudo-objectivity of former ethnographies (Eaton 45, 48–49). He openly shares his subjects’ spotlight, and he is interested in various forms of subjective intervention, so it comes as no surprise to find him coupled with Morin to make the self reflexive *Chronicle*. His main interest is on the visible and audible clash of cultures. Scenes such as the one in which Marceline shows her concentration camp number to Landry while the camera watches intently for his reactions is an example of Rouch’s rhetorical approach.

Morin’s attraction to psychodrama has additional motivations besides reversing the focus from colonized to colonizer. It is as a sociologist, but also as a thinker in the forefront of the left’s self-revision, that we can understand Morin’s desire to make a film in which confession and critical reflection are so intertwined. *Chronicle*’s methodology and content are part of a larger trend in French thought, one that Morin is fully qualified for. The fifties are a moment of intense development of the social sciences in France. The massive urban changes and modernization that took place in this period in France generate a wave of sociological inquiries that are increasingly translated into popular forms of empirical research. Endless magazine questionnaires and statistics (of the kind present in Godard’s *Masculine Feminine* and *Two of Three things I Know about her*) appeared to offer a comprehensive and direct way of grasping current developments in contemporary society (Ross 81).

The film’s empiricism shows up in the inordinate attention given to selected and random interviews as well as collective discussions. Three main documentary strategies are employed. The first involves a record of everyday actions. The scene of Angelo’s day starts with him being awakened with stark (filming) lights as his mother brings him a cup of coffee and a toast. The camera follows him till he goes into the factory. After a few shots of their work and break, the camera picks

him up at the exit of the factory and follows him in the street, on the bus, at home . . . until nightfall. The suburban streets change from urban to rustic and we see where Angelo lives, and how he spends his time doing judo, playing guitar, and reading (a life of Danton). Angelo’s performance stands out in the film for he is the only worker introduced as such in a group consisting mostly of intellectuals (though not the only worker to speak in the film). Meant to illustrate the conditions of the daily life of a working man, this sequence, the longest without dialogue, is stranded amidst the film’s major stake in enacting its truth through long interviews. Placing the silent reenactment of a “worker’s quotidian” within an overall picture where the spoken has absolute priority, the filmmakers effectively, if not intentionally, tokenize the proletariat.

The second form of retracing an event is exemplified by Marceline’s verbal reenactment. A long travelling shot follows her as she moves away from the camera and “privately” acts out, i.e. voices, her childhood feelings to the Nagra. Her lone silhouette disappearing into the distance coupled with her imaginary dialogue with her loved ones as she left in a deportation train with her father and returned without him, create an unusual emotional intensity. The monologue is immediately associated with the holocaust and the charged voice over aesthetics that goes with emptied out spaces and images of parting (an influence no doubt of Alain Resnais’ *Night and Fog*, 1955). As Marceline acts out her memories far from the camera but for the Nagra the film seems to achieve a perfect equilibrium in cinema *vérité*’s defining task—to provoke the emergence of privacy without disturbing a potential intimacy.

The third modality of revelation—that of on camera confession—epitomizes the film’s stated program of self-analysis. Marilou’s scene combines evasiveness and relentless probing exemplifying the film’s general tactics. Long takes lingering on elliptical answers, interspersed with long tremulous pauses, register a difficulty of articulation. When first addressed by Morin, Marilou says confirming the film’s confessional set up, “Yes, my father . . .”. Morin briefly describes who she is, an Italian bourgeois of 27 years who had come to Paris three years ago (in 1957). Marilou explains that it did her good to feel uncomfortable in Paris, since at the time she was overwhelmed by a bad conscience. Now, she says, “I’m sick of being cold in the winter, of being in the subway in the rush hour. I don’t communicate at all with others . . .”. Gradually she shows herself to be more and more tortured as she admits she now feels her behavior is self-destructive. Her sense of isolation and solipsism is critical. She reduces everything to herself: “I have not even the right to kill myself, you know it would be false

. . . absolutely false . . .”. A long, painful close up of Marilou who is silent, and on the verge of tears, follows. Marilou’s stated difficulty of communication is replicated by her delivery, comments interrupted by long unnerving silences. At this point, the camera assumes the insistent questioning function that Morin himself avoids by remaining silent. Rouch describes the relation between filming and subject matter invoking “proximity” and “simultaneity”: “She was talking so nervously that I had to react. So I took those big close ups to try to get inside her” (Rouch, “The Politics” 19).

In cinema vérité, each and every word or hesitation is telling. Its hermeneutics are aligned to that of psychoanalysis implying a symptomatic reading of reality. Part of the same epistemic attention to the minor as trustee of truth, pauses and gaps verify the *v?rit?* sought and created by *Chronicle of a Summer*. The stakes of an essentialist belief in truth are weighed more forcefully where discourse is in suspense. If truth becomes coterminous with the filming moment, it is because sync sound grants an absolute value to emerging speech regardless of what is said. Ellipses in the profilmic become, in fact, a more authentic form of truth. Her speech breakdowns become the utmost sign of authenticity, the reverse in fact of the effects of Marceline’s dramatic monologue.

In its probing manner, the film is shaped both as confessional and trial. Structurally it implicates every speaker. The spelling out of faults remains however conspicuously absent. There are no explicit or implicit indictments like the collaborationist sentiment denounced in Marcel Ophuls’s *The Sorrow and the Pity* (1971) or even the errors of judgement apparent in simpler morality tales such as Antonioni’s *Attempted Suicide* or Zavattini and Maselli’s *Love of a Mother* (*Love in the City*, 1953). If, as Peter Brooks suggests, “confessions no doubt speak of guilt, but don’t necessarily speak the guilt” (55) the film’s extreme focus on its subjects’ speech acts, deserves double attention, since it seems oversignified in relation to the interviews’ actual content. Moreover, if so much attention is devoted to a small number of individual voices, to their enunciation, rather than to what they say, their identity becomes more of a question for it is their opinions that eventually shape Morin’s vision of a “cinema of brotherhood” (Morin, “Chronicle” 5).

The fact is that *Chronicle*, conceived by Morin as “an experiment in cinematic interrogation,” (“Chronicle” 6) takes the notion of questioning oneself almost à la lettre. For the name “cinema of brotherhood” (in French *fraternité*) becomes ironically incestuous once your cast of characters is mainly composed of friends. *Chronicle* cheats on the basic issue of the film’s sample population (“The Politics” 17–

18). Instead of the general survey of Parisian mood in 1960 conducted with “individuals who are quite different from each other” the film interviews Morin or Rouch’s friends. Marceline, Jacques Mothet, Marilou, Jacques Gabillon and his wife Simone, and Jean Pierre, Marceline’s boyfriend were Morin’s contacts. (Chronicle, 7–8) Landry and Nadine had appeared in Rouch’s *La Pyramide Humaine* (1959). The rest of the interviewees are friends of friends: Régis Debray, a friend of Jean-Pierre, Angelo, and a worker at Renault introduced by Jacques.

The credits list the participants along loose categories such as workers (Jacques, Jean); students (Régis, Celine, Jean Marc, Nadine Landry Raymond); employees (Jacques, Simone), Artists (Henri, Maddie, Catherine) and a cover girl (Sophie). The credits leave Marceline, Marilou, Angelo and Jean Pierre unmarked. The cast comes close to a ciphered representation of aspects of Edgar Morin’s life and intellectual trajectory. Several of the characters in *Chronicle* were part of the anti-Algerian war movement and of various left groups; Marilou mentions she has met Morin during her leftist phase, in a debate on Stalinism; Jacques Mothet, a P2 at Renault is affiliated with *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, (Socialism or Barbarism) a dissident group from the Communist party; Marceline was deported to a nazi concentration camp as a child and has now introduced Jean Pierre to a disillusioned group of leftist intellectuals; Angelo is involved in the Renault unions. Jacques Gabillon is a long time employee of the SNCF, the national railroad, and someone who Morin knew when he was the editor of the *Patriot Resistant*, the journal of the Federation of Resistant and Patriotic Deportees and Internees. Régis Debray, Jean Pierre are students participating in anti-Algerian War movements.

One of Morin’s main claims for the singularity of the film was that it had been the first to tackle the Algerian War. Still, with the exception of one central discussion, treated as a general French problem, the protagonists make no mention of taking part in any dissident movement. There is in fact an extreme complicity between actors and filmmakers in terms of what is implicitly voiced on the one hand and clearly avoided on the other. Profilmic pauses, or extremely vague commentaries epitomize the ways in which vérité’s extreme valorization of speech serves to evade authorial voice. In addition to the editing out of the participants’ activism in the Algerian cause, the films’ allegiances are also masked for none of the interviewees is formally linked to any of the others as fellow activist for Left causes. Without identifying its characters, the film flirts with key issues for the French political consciousness. It becomes thus imperative to examine the thrust of a film that grafts a surface of political anonymity onto its

politically engaged group of characters.

In an important critique of the film, sociologist Lucien Goldmann notes the film's failure to adequately balance levels of abstraction and concreteness, Goldman measures the stakes of realist representation against a traditional social sciences approach (65). Particularities and generalities are present but at the wrong moments and in inappropriate proportions. And the interviews, which advance necessary details for any sociological inquiry, are too sparse and confined to a limited sample of the population. Although the attempt to remedy these difficulties "by replacing the characters of the habitual sociological inquiry chosen at random, with people they knew more or less," is recognized, Goldmann notes that this foreknowledge of the characters' "global coordinates" by interviewers is not shared with the spectators (65–66). Indeed, in a scene that did not make the final cut, Marilou tells how exhilarated she was when she came to Paris, how she learned French in political surroundings, how she met Morin in a debate about Poland and Stalinism. Missing the exchange where she recounts her prior engagement with Italian and French left politics, the spectator cannot fathom the nature of her relation to Morin, even though hints of a prior history between them abound. Actually it is the excess of facts known to interviewers but unknown to audience that lends an abstraction to the film as a whole.

That the group was made of acquaintances is significant. It ensured that the film would be a more focused inquest and consequently elicit a more predictable response than the general "How do you live" directed to anonymous individuals promised in the film's synopsis. It also creates a deeper complicity between interviewer and interviewee, an interesting inflection in a film that purportedly aimed at being a "confessional but without a confessor" (Morin, "Chronicle" 7). In view of the Chronicle's particular cast of characters the question of what it means to critically revisit one's own steps—the self-analysis implicit in the film's proposed final screening and discussion, becomes especially relevant. Even more to the point, the film's date, 1960, a moment of intense fragility in intellectuals' certainties as to how to be politically engaged, makes this selfinvestigation timely. What comes definitely across, in the film's general evasiveness, is Morin's struggle "to interpret [his] own past as part of history" (Poster, 215). It is his share in the confessional that informs Chronicle's hesitant staging of truth. Taking in account the political malaise of French intellectuals during the Algerian War, and, before that, with the disclosure of Stalin's purges, one finds in Chronicle of a Summer a natural segue to the confessional tone of Morin's book *Autocritique* published in 1958. There he recounts his engagement in, and progressive disenchantment

with, the Communist Party (from 1943 to 1951).

For the French left intelligentsia the mid-to-late fifties is a time of heated debate about the future of Marxism, or the viability of the communist party. The revelations of Stalinist atrocities, from concentration camps to show trials (in Bulgaria in 1947, in Hungary from 1947–49 in Czechoslovakia from 1950–52 and in Romania up to 1954) reached such a critical mass in 1956, with the invasion of Hungary, that it demanded some response on the part of left intellectuals. During and especially after WWII communism becomes the essential reference point for committed intellectuals, whether they were members of the communist party or not. Although the Moscow trials of the mid-thirties were common knowledge given the urgency of the fight against fascism in which Stalin was an ally they could comfortably be ignored during the war itself. Once the war was over, the Cold war replaced the fight with fascism as the main excuse for the French Communist Party's justification of Stalinism (Judt, *Past Imperfect* 101–156). Morin asks guiltily in his *Autocritique* how he could "leave the party in the middle of the Cold War . . . wasn't it like leaving the ship threatened by the atomic bomb, like a rat! We do not leave the party when it is persecuted. But precisely" he adds pensively ". . . I wanted to quit because it [the party] was persecutor" (156). Morin was expelled from the communist party in 1951 for his lack of militancy and his contention with the party's Marxist vulgate. The expulsion was prompted by his essay for the journal *L'Observateur* considered to be an organ of the Secret Intelligence (*Autocritique* 161–172). The procedures of exclusion from the French Communist Party partially echoed those of the Stalinist purges. Even more interestingly, the forced confessions of communists tried in the Soviet block were matched by spontaneous revelations on the part of French intellectuals. As Mark Poster notes "with the mass exodus of intellectuals from the CP in the 1950's, confession became a new genre in the pilgrim's progress from Stalinist mystification to intellectual liberation" (215). A number of such "self studies" were written later in order to analyze and exculpate the intellectuals' partisan statements made at the time of the Stalinist atrocities. Among these Judt cites Julien Benda's *Les Cahiers d'un clerc*, 1936–1949 (1950); Jean Cassou, *La Memoire courte* (1953) and Vercors (*For the Time Being*, 1960 [Paris, 1957, *Pour Prendre congé*]) (*Past Imperfect* 332–33). Morin's relatively early self-criticism in *Autocritique* is one of the most trenchant of such self-studies and his attempts to "empty" himself, to "cleanse" himself, to render himself "transparent, so that he may see clearly . . ." are pursued under a lively prose that returns again and again to the issue of guilt:

“Once I understood that something in me always found itself guilty (inside the communist party, all the executions that I was the accomplice of, outside the party, all the crimes of the capitalist society), the problem was not to avoid this culpability, but . . . to say what corresponded to my feeling, to all my truth . . . I decided to practice the “self-ethic”. . . to be nothing besides a vouchsayer of my own words, but decided to always say my truth, . . . as much as possible in its totality.” (180)

A similar wish for total truth guides *Chronicle of a Summer*. While the content of the book *Autocritique* is quite distinct from that of *Chronicle's*, the fact that the works were created so close together as well as their similar emphasis on solipsistic self-analysis are deeply revealing. The film expands, through a selected company, in this case Morin and Rouch's friends, a work of self-analysis with film as the very instrument for self-evaluation and improvement.

Morin's critical writing and editing in the period also matches *Chronicle* in its clear attempt to enunciate an “infra-political” area of study. After his exclusion from the communist Party Morin was part of a group clustered around the journal *Arguments* that he directed from 1957 to 1963. This group “strove enthusiastically to construct a decontaminated Marxist politics capable of dealing directly with contemporary moral issues” (Judt, *Marxism and the French Left* 189). In that respect the Algerian War's relevance, as a signifier of political commitment cannot be underestimated. As the left gets disillusioned with the Communist party, it dislocates its “matrix of interpretation and intervention from the pair proletariat/bourgeoisie to the binomy ThirdWorld/Imperialism” (Sirinelli, 19). Moreover, the Algerian War raised clear-cut ethical issues concerning the French army's violent tactics of torture thus offering a welcome platform for intellectuals who had stifled their impulse to engage in ethical critique after years of rationalizing Stalinist terror. Sartre's statement that “we may be indignant or horrified at the existence of the camps . . . but why should they embarrass us?” is but one example of an absurd denial of obvious facts. In 1952, Claude Bourdet expressly states his intention to give the crusade against France's colonial wars priority over any investigation into Soviet crimes (Judt, *Past Imperfect* 115). The Algerian War becomes the catalyst of a new leftist engagement. Its progress as an issue in the French intellectual consciousness can be mapped in the various manifestos (the 121 manifesto demanding French soldiers' defection in March 1960) (Rieffel, 191–217) as well as in the more and

more frequent mention of the “French crisis” in the journal *Arguments*.

Another important sign (and many others deserve study) that the film's inquiry into everyday life is in fact a form of leftist self-critique is the presence in the film of Jacques Mothet. This is the character that brings Angelo aboard and Morin describes him as “the only one since Navel to describe what goes on in a factory in an illuminating way.” Mothet is invited to participate in the film, but his links to Socialism or Barbarism are not mentioned in the film. This oblique affiliation that goes unmentioned is significant given the important role the group had in a revision of the French left. *Socialisme ou Barbarie* (Socialism or Barbarism, the journal founded in 1949 by Cornelius Castoriadis and Claude Lefort) was, along with *Arguments*, the main voice of dissidence within the French Left. Although Morin was not a member of the group itself by 1968 he had strong affinities with Lefort and Castoriadis, jointly publishing essays that reflected on the events of May in Mai 1968: *La Brèche* (Morin, Lefort and Coudray). Even earlier than Morin, Castoriadis had perceived and denounced the petrification of social relations under Stalinist dictatorship. To the left of the Trotskyist Fourth International, the group and the journal were engaged in an intransigent critique of Stalinism that eventually led to a theoretical reevaluation of Marxism. Moreover, the group's political engagement went beyond their theoretical writing as attested by Jean-François Lyotard, who, prefacing the republication of his political essays on the Algerian Question, reaffirms his debt to the group's continual critical spirit: “it was my lot, as it was of many others . . . to lend practical ‘support’ to the militants of the FLN [National Liberation Front] in France at the very same time that I was making theoretical criticisms of the organization in the journal. It was just for the Algerians to enforce the proclamation of their name upon the world; it was indispensable to criticize the class nature of the independent society that their struggle was preparing to bring about” (Lyotard 166–67). The group's radical attack on the notion of power through delegation remains its principal legacy.

Even more illuminating than the Socialism or Barbarism agenda is Morin's own editorship of *Arguments*, which also dealt with cultural questions bypassed by the Communist Party. In an essay on “La question micro-sociale” Morin and Georges Lapassade make reference to the field of research and action called psycho-sociology. What seems to attract Morin and Lapassade to J.L. Moreno's sociometric revolution (Moreno was the main theoretician and practitioner of psychodrama) or to Kurt Lewin's studies on group dynamics was the possibility of a form of “clandestine socialism.” (*Arguments* 1956– 62, 25–6). What interests Morin in such formulations of experimental psychology is the

notion of an informal group which can, because of its flexibility, escape the system's bureaucracy, be it one of the left or right.

In *Chronicle of a Summer* the issue of political representation, of who speaks for whom, a question central to left intellectuals in their relations to the communist Party but also to the workers, is not explicitly addressed. And yet, the film's project of self-analysis is fully infused with a similar effort to dissolve authority and authorial control. The film's excessive reliance on the interview mode, which so clearly enacts the opening up of oneself to another's opinions, becomes an important strategy in this regard. The technical development of sync sound is, along with the interview instrumental in this distribution of authority.

INTERVIEW AND TRANSFERENCE: THE GENERATION PASSAGE

One of the most striking features of *Chronicle's* reflexive project is the lack of interviews with either Jean Rouch or Edgar Morin. Who Morin or Rouch are, how they live their lives, are obvious questions for a project which calls itself reflexive. The film focuses instead on a younger generation. Although we listen to the statements by men of Morin and Rouch's generation, the bulk of the interviews are conducted with a group of people in their twenties. In fact when Rouch addresses a group at the table he places the burden of thinking through the Algerian question onto them, the generation which is directly threatened by conscription. Jean Pierre reacts by saying that he has an idealized vision of the youth.

Earlier on, Jean Pierre separates himself from Morin directly by confronting the issue of Left generations: "I've seen those of your [Morin] generation . . . I've seen what their political involvement produced . . . their powerlessness. . . . I've seen too many people like that . . . reduced to the point of tears by all that, to the point of not knowing what to do any more. You are almost all like that." Marceline excuses herself for having introduced Jean Pierre to "all these people who were brought to tears as a result of their political experiences . . .". In his twenties, Jean Pierre inherits an already discredited left. That Rouch and Morin may be actually learning from their interviewees is also a possibility. In fact Morin has declared that the film taught him an increased "faith in adolescent virtues: denial, struggle and seeking. Marceline, Marilou Jean Pierre and Angelo have" he claims "inspired [him] to resist the bourgeois life" (Morin "Chronicle" 28).

Chronicle's dependence on interviews for producing truth can be likened to the emphasis on the process of initiation in ethnography.

In historicizing Marcel Griaule's practices (Rouch's main ethnography master), James Clifford describes how the moment of revelation enables the fiction of an encounter where the ethnographer plays the role of an initiate. It is only the progressive experience of being instructed by qualified members of the community that empowers the ethnographer to speak on behalf of the community's truth or reality. An intricate choreography is necessary to carefully tune the ethnographer's participation to the authority of another (Clifford 83-4). The image of a shared intimacy in the conducted interviews is borrowed from an ethnographic paradigm of initiation, and in a different way from the psychoanalytic model of transference. As Clifford also makes clear this "view of the emergence of truth may be contrasted with a conception of ethnography as a dialogical enterprise in which both researchers and natives are active creators, or to stretch a term, authors of cultural representations." And he concludes by defining the stakes here: "Dialogical paradigms tend to disperse ethnographic authority while narratives of initiation confirm the researcher's special competence" (84).

Cinema vérité's relation to voice and authority hinges on its attempt to vest its search for truth (modeled on initiation) in dialogical intervention. Who speaks the film is what matters in *Chronicle* as had been made so flagrantly clear in Rouch's earlier ethnographic films. Much in the style of liberal ethnographers such as Griaule, Rouch had, in his earlier films, adopted irony as one of the solutions for the uncomfortable position of being an outsider who speaks about another's culture. Rouch's early work, filmed in Africa faced the crucial question underlying ethnographic practices: the issue of translation, in its broad as well as restricted sense. Few Europeans could understand the African dialects that comprised Rouch's ethnographic stories and depending on the target audience (Africans or Europeans) to let one speak in his own voice (language) meant alienating the rest of a potential audience (Eaton 49; Rouch *The Camera and Man* 58-59).

Rouch in *The Camera and Man* (58-59) acknowledges the complex issue of informing about, and mediating between different cultures. Rouch's voice over was used as a counterpoint to images offsetting the sense of illustrated background characteristic of 30's documentary. His commentary (at times in heavily accented English) asserted the need to be understood by non-French audience and also defined his role as observer. In *Moi un Noir* (*I a Black Man*, 1958), and later in *Jaguar* (1967), Rouch has the participants narrate their own actions on screen, their accents designating the distance between a colonized and a colonizer's French. In *I a Black Man*, Oumarou Ganda's voice over allows Rouch to deflect his authorial voice, and thus truly

create a reverse ethnography. (Eaton, "Chronicle," 8; Ganda 9). This approach generates a gap and analytical perspective much harder to get with synch sound.

One could say *Chronicle* is excessively earnest: its use of synch sound disallows irony and makes especially apparent the ethical quandary which always mars the politics of cinema vérité—the impossibility of speaking through another's mouth. *Chronicle's* overreliance on the spoken word designs a rite of transference. As in initiatory ethnography, what is at stake, as much as the content of the revelation, is the surrender of authorship from the native to the researcher (or interviewee to interviewer). Morin describes one of the film's scenes emphasizing precisely this point: "when they allow themselves to be caught up in the questions, they descend progressively and naturally into themselves. It is difficult to analyze what goes on. It is . . . the possibility of a confessional but without a confessor . . ." ("*Chronicle*" 7).

Sync sound allows *Chronicle* to stage a transitional politics. Even as we witness painfully cryptic revelations, it still matters that we witness this difficulty, which lies precisely in the filmmakers' refusal to talk over the tentative voice of the interviewees. Most significantly, while the figure of the listener grows in its validating function, the film performs a related shift in subject matter moving continually from grand political issues—the holocaust, Algeria, worker's conditions—towards an interest in recording the thought and way of life of a younger generation. The interview with Henri and Maddie, for instance, in which they mention their disregard for money, and how rich they feel surrounded by their library or record collection, is exemplary of this descriptive focus on work and leisure. The film had been seriously criticized for its superficial representation of major issues—the deportation of Jews in France, the Holocaust, and the Algerian War (Dadoun 10). And indeed the film's split between a light approach to the summer and personal experience—halfway into the film the characters go to St. Tropez—and grand issues hovering at the edge is marked. The unresolved differences in Morin and Rouch's approaches to the film, with Morin standing for the heavy hints and silences and Rouch for the tourist-as critic perspective, explain these variations in tone.

The film's gaps, possibly justified by the cuts needed to shape 25 hours of footage into the producer's requested 90 minutes, are an obvious compromise between filmmakers and producer. Self-censorship is also apparent and the filmmakers admitted they had to cut an entire sequence in which young students in an age to be conscripted (Jean Pierre, Rophé, the sound man and Régis Debray) air their views on

the Algerian situation (Morin, "Chronicle" 25). In her book on the representation of history in postwar France, Lynn Higgins relates that "during 1960 and 1961 the Algerian conflict reached a turning point and an antiwar movement of decisive proportions developed in France" leading the government to actively banish information about antiwar sentiment and activities (98). This accounts for the film's skirting of explicit references to the Algerian question.

These elided mentions to antiwar sentiment are only the most patent erasures. A number of unsettled issues take shape in the film's vérité project. The wavering between general and particular exchanges noticed by Goldmann corresponds to the film's very real indecisiveness whether to paint a broad picture of the social sphere, or to privilege instead the everyday representation of personal identities. On the other hand the vagueness of the film could also be ascribed to the vérité's method dependence on the participant's speech for the articulation of ideas. The abstraction of the film, criticized by Goldmann and Dadoun, is finally the key to the vérité this film is after. The complicitous tone of the interviews, one in which Morin appears as an understanding avuncular conduit for disclosure, ends up mattering more than what is said. The film's turns from inane generality to incomprehensible specificity, from saying everything and then nothing, are due in part to the self-censored speech of politicized personages. But these shifts also reflect the need to express an alternate, personal politics.

Morin's Autocritique decision to be "nothing besides a vouchsayer of his own words" (Morin, Autocritique 180) provides a tentative response as to what this move towards a politics of the everyday and the personal experience means. The avoidance of speaking for others is prompted by his experience with the French Communist Party and his refusal to promulgate its Dogma any longer. As a symbolic reaction to this forced alignment cinema vérité seems a perfect vehicle for a forcefully novel and diverse expression of "total truth." Marking a distinct break from prior documentary uses of voice over commentary, synch sound and the interview format authenticate each person's words by registering it visibly in their own voice.

"Commensality" (the term used by Morin to describe how a climate of communication would be facilitated by crew and actors sharing "excellent meals washed down with good wines." is the appropriate setting for Morin's truth distribution. The wish to do without authority is so pervasive as to make roundtable discussions or extended silences a viable substitute for, as well as evidence of, collective representation. Most importantly these discussions need to account precisely for those aspects that communist representations of collective actions had repressed. The participants' private lives (the

more radical level of the “infrapolitical”) become therefore, as much as their political opinions, the subject of the film. Confirming the fact that present is a problematic tense in redemptive projects the filmmakers had trouble ending the film. Time cannot evolve for the ethnographic object, for it is this “synchronic suspension,” that distinguishes the object’s time from the historical present that includes and situates the ethnographer, the other and the reader. This impasse, intrinsic to textualization, characterizes most acutely the “allegories of salvage” put forth by ethnography and cinema vérité (Clifford “On Ethnographic Allegory” 111, 112–18).

From neorealist reenactment in the 50’s to the early 70’s feminist documentaries modeled on consciousness raising, filmmakers’ interventions are allegorized in different ways. Still, what recurs is the narrative trope of before and after. In *Chronicle* we find the usual figuration of change. Each character appears at least twice before the final collective screening, and they seem to have gained in awareness—after their contact with the filmmakers, that is. Moreover in subsequent interviews, as if foreseeing the interest in self-improvement suggested by the film’s therapeutic project, both Morin and Rouch give out information about the characters. Hence we learn that Marilou’s happiness is due to her meeting someone (Jacques Rivette), that Marceline married Joris Ivens, that Régis, alias Debray, went to Cuba, that Angelo was fired from Renault and attempted to organize a strike at Les Éditions du Seuil where he had been subsequently hired by Morin. We also learn that Morin and Rouch were interested in filming these same characters twenty years later.

While direct sound affords an unprecedented authenticity to the filming record, this earnestness is more than this project can accommodate. The surplus of present invoked by synch sound needs to be contained, narrativized. For the synchronicity of object and subject, within the same historical moment, means the ultimate demise of textual authority. This authority is clearly in question by early 60’s (that of the Communist Party, that of France, that of intellectuals). What is at stake in this attempt at translating “mankind” through the restricted prism of intellectual life, of saying all that can be said while allowing the unsaid to stand for a political commitment that is never made clear, is the intellectuals’ problematic share in power. The film condenses painfully the quandaries of the intellectual’s attempt to be the representative of collective consciousness.

The final screening of the film, at the Studio Publicis and the ensuing filmed discussion, had been meant as an instrument for collective self-recognition: “More than in social drama this psychoanalytic truth is played for the audience who emerges from its

cinematographic catalepsy and awakens to a human message. It is then that we can feel for a moment that truth is that which is hidden within us beneath our petrified relationships” (“*Chronicle*” 5). Instead the participants blame the vérité method for its almost obscene probing of personal drama, and, confirm the strict relation between vérité and theatricality. The filmed discussion after the screening is the last stage of truth but not necessarily one in which all participants agree. Some are truly shocked with the emotional baring that takes place in the film, others state they would like to meet and befriend Marilou, for instance. Little, but relevant differences reveal Morin’s preferred direction for the film. He states the scene between Angelo and Landry is his favorite because there we see a nascent friendship, while Marceline scoffs at the idea they may even have common concerns.

Endless confession becomes the moral correlate of synch sound. The issue becomes, at this point in the film whose confession this is. Rouch and Morin film themselves chatting and walking up and down the corridor of the Musée de l’Homme in an attempt to dispel the authority that, at the end of the day, underwrites their film work. They translate the prior discussion into a self-congratulatory proof of the film’s pluralism. This final scene signals the desire to make the film cohere, to foreclose the difference of opinion that emerged earlier. The disseminatory economy of confession passing as reflexivity discloses, in this film, much of their common motives. The production of truth in *Chronicle* is presented as an embarrassment of those who detain power. Hence the obsessive mise-en-scène of shared discourse and of authentic speech. If *Chronicle* promotes as its sharpest image one of silent complicity it is because it does matter who speaks the film: Morin needs to have the last word but also share it with Rouch and us. Self-criticism, autocritique, is too private and anti collective an event to deserve absolution. Particularly if one has the added, discredited function of father confessor.

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**Jean Rouch and the Birth of Visual Anthropology:
A Brief History of the Comité international du film
ethnographique
LUC DE HEUSCH, 2007**

The true scope of Jean Rouch's international activities for the advancement of visual anthropology is little known. Few in the field today are aware that he was for more than 10 years the driving force of the Comité international du film ethnographique, where he was secretary-general as of 1958. It is thanks to his initiative, backed by UNESCO, that the first anthropologist-filmmakers were able to present their films and often see them hotly debated) in Paris, Brussels, Prague, Venice, Florence, and Locarno. He was, together with sociologist Edgar Morin (with whom he would produce the influential film *Chronique d'un été*), one of the collaborators of the Florence Festival dei Popoli, then entirely devoted to ethnographic and sociological films. Here Luc de Heusch, closely associated with Jean Rouch throughout those intrepid times, chronicles the seminal years of visual anthropology.

I was Jean Rouch's friend for half a century. In 2004, he died tragically in a car accident in Niger, in the Africa he loved and whose traditions and constant state of upheaval he had tried to understand since the closing years of French colonization.

I witnessed at his side the birth of visual anthropology half a century ago. Now a flourishing realm of activity, its borders with socially inspired documentary cinema have become blurred. Jean Rouch was involved since its inception in the Bilan du film ethnographique that caps the Festival du Cinéma du Réel, with its somewhat broader objectives. The Bilan is held every year in the cinema of the Musée de l'Homme. The reasons for this singular association of "ethnographic" films with other genres have never been spelt out. For a long time now, ethnography (or anthropology, to adopt the Anglo-Saxon term that is increasingly taking its place) has ceased to be an exotic science. Its boundaries with the other human sciences are progressively fading, most notably those with sociology, as researcher-filmmakers would come to realize when a significant upsurge in membership of the Comité du film ethnographique provided an occasion to become

acquainted. There is but one methodology and one frame of mind, despite the theoretical disagreements, which are always lively in the human sciences.

Not only are specialized festivals on the increase, but the technological revolution has made the camera universally accessible. Today, we are at liberty to record sound and image together and at little cost. This was scarcely possible before World War II, without recourse to cumbersome equipment. After the armistice, a faltering few advocated the use of the 16mm camera for field work, André Leroi-Gourhan in particular [1948].

I recall a memorable day in Vienna, in 1952, shortly before my departure for Africa. It was my first furtive encounter with Jean Rouch. Before the astonished and admiring participants of the IVe Congrès international des Sciences Anthropologiques et Ethnologiques, he was showing footage from one of his first films, *Cimetière dans la falaise*. He had just completed it among the Dogon with a little 16mm silent camera, on the request of Marcel Griaule, a master he admired. It was then that the decision was taken to create a number of national ethnographic film committees in several countries. The French committee took things in hand under the presidency of André Leroi-Gourhan and under the leadership of Jean Rouch; a committee was founded that same year in Belgium under the presidency of Professor Henri Lavachery, who earlier, as an archaeologist, had accompanied Alfred Métraux to Easter Island. In 1955, as soon as I was back from the Congo, I became involved in the new venture taking shape: the birth of European visual anthropology.

The Institut pour la recherche scientifique en Afrique centrale (IRSAC), which had just been created, gave me responsibility for one of its first scientific ethnographic investigations: I was sent among the Tetela-Hamba, in the heart of the Congo, then a Belgian colony. Filmmaker Henri Storck, whose assistant I was, advised me to take one of the sturdiest 16mm cameras then available—a Bell & Howell. So equipped, I undertook a sort of filmed monograph, following Storck's astute counsel: don't expect to capture reality without having studied it first.

There weren't many of us at the time with 16mm cameras in our baggage. It was Jean Rouch's idea to invite us to present the films we had more or less clumsily recorded in the remote countries we had visited (ethnography was generally quite exotic at the time), and to discuss them in the cinema of the Musée de l'Homme. This seminal encounter brought together a handful of French, Belgian, and English ethnographers who discussed their cinematographic essays. The event, held May 9–14, 1955, was the first of its kind.

I presented a copy of *Fête chez les Hamba*. All the shots were silent, since there was at the time no system for simultaneous synchronized sound recording. The more fortunate among us had the first machines (mine American) that recorded sound on smooth magnetic tape. But they were equipped with a spring that frequently needed cranking up. Cameras were similarly wind-up spring-action affairs, and we were unable to take shots lasting more than 20 seconds. It was in these difficult technical conditions that Jean Rouch produced that chef d'oeuvre of documentary cinema, *Les Maîtres fous*, superbly edited by Suzanne Baron. The film was still without sound, and Jean Rouch provided the commentary himself at the microphone, clearly explaining the ins and outs of this recent cult ritual that took place on the outskirts of Accra. It created quite an uproar. Rouch unleashed a storm of protest from elder seasoned ethnographers and African intellectuals alike. These latter felt the film presented a degrading image of themselves, when in fact it was a degrading image of colonization. Seeing this, the Governor of the Gold Coast banned the film (enlarged to 35mm commercial format) from his country's movie theaters. It was but a few years before the independence of the African colonies, and nerves were raw. I was particularly shocked by the negative reaction of our common master, Marcel Griaule. But Rouch didn't hold it against him, and never stopped displaying affection for the man to whom, as is well known, we owed our acquaintance with the Dogon. Rouch put his camera at their service, at the side of Germaine Dieterlen, who tirelessly pursued Griaule's research project after his death in 1956. Germaine maintained that an investigation is never complete, and she was right to oppose the academic practice of the time that set a fixed term (one or two years) on all so-called intensive field inquiries. Fortunately, *Les Maîtres fous* was not destroyed, as some had suggested. The film won the first prize for film documentaries at the Venice Film Festival two years later, in 1957.

We also saw at this first international gathering, in a more serene atmosphere, two other Rouch films: *Les fils de l'eau* and *Mamy water*. I presented (a working copy of) *Ruanda: une féodalité pastorale*, which I had based on a scenario by Jacques J. Maquet. Henri Brandt's film *Les Nomades du soleil* on the Bororo Peul shepherds impressed us greatly. *Carnaval de Binche* by Jean Cleinge won back the support of the African students who had considered *Les Maîtres fous* an affront. They applauded our paganism wholeheartedly, though they relentlessly let fly scathing remarks against ethnographers who had the bad taste to show faces deformed by religious possession and redden the screen with sacrificial blood. Had not our own teachers taught them to see these things as barbarous? The truth is, these students, whose

consternation I can well understand, were uncomfortable with their own rituals and carnivals, for they had set off from home in search of Reason, while we were a bit weary of this mistress, whom we had no doubt served too long. We were looking for all sources of life itself.

A few diverse films from the professional circuit had been chosen, eclectically but with infallibly good taste, by Jean Rouch: *Me'lodie du monde* by Walter Ruttmann, *Que Viva Me'xico!* by Sergei Eisenstein, and *Land without Bread (Las Hurdes)* by Luis Buñuel. And above all, the famous *Nanook of the North* by Flaherty, who was elected the spiritual father of our common passion. In the wake of the *Cine'ma du Re'el* festival, in the same hall several years later, the Nanook Award for the best ethnographic film of the Bilan would be awarded. We were nonetheless aware that Flaherty had asked the Eskimos to be actors, enacting their social roles. Before a sparse audience as impassioned as ourselves, most of the themes that were to feed the interminable debates that followed over the next several decades were raised for the first time: they centered on the particular Jean Rouch and the Birth of Visual Anthropology, conditions in which the ethnographer-filmmaker worked and the problems posed by the acting of nonprofessionals. There were those of us who envisaged limiting the role of the camera to that of a complement to the notebook, and others who aspired to a more polished composition. And so began the eternal dilemma between the pure document and its elaboration. As if the ethnographer didn't also elaborate by means of articles and books the hard data gathered in the field.

It was with this memorable session that the *Comité international du film ethnographique* acquired substance informally. On September 19, 1956, the *Ve Congrès international des Sciences Anthropologiques et Ethnologues* would adopt a resolution announcing its official constitution. It was composed of members of the existing national committees and was to be completed with committees that remained to be formed. But most of these committees were cruelly lacking in means. In his letter to me after the Philadelphia Congress resolution, on September 28, 1956, Jean Rouch confided:

as for the International Committee, a very provisional board with many vacant places was sketched out. We'll need to talk about this. The idea is to have many distinguished but slightly senile presidents and vice-presidents, with a secretariat-general slightly less distinguished, but active. In other words, a collection of chaps like you and me.

He suggested notably the name of John Marshall, who had just finished that ethnographic classic *The Hunters among the Bushmen*. I didn't know him yet. Rouch, who liked him very much, characterized him affectionately as the "young cowboy at the Peabody Museum" (Harvard University). It was by letter that I learned that the Film Center of that institution had two intimately linked projects, the first of which was unquestionably close to ours: to develop a theory for making anthropological films and undertake the long term production of a series of films devoted to the !Kung Bushmen, of which John's mother Lorna Marshall was an excellent ethnographer [letter from J. Marshall, July 29, 1957].

Jean Rouch had formerly spent hours at the *Cine'mathe'que franc,aïse*, and its curator Henri Langlois had understood that Rouch was opening the cinema to new horizons. In his letter of July 19, 1956, he invited Jean Rouch to participate in the Congress of the *Fe'de'ration Internationale des Archives Cine'matographiques (FIAF)*, to be held September 9–15 at Dubrovnik in Yugoslavia. The 13th was indeed to be devoted to ethnographic film, "enabling a meeting of ethnographers and filmmakers from different countries." But already Jean Rouch, an anarchist at heart, showed his distrust of official bodies. He wrote me on July 22, 1957: "We must be very prudent regarding all propositions if we want our young organization to function." He was aware of the need to "form an active nucleus able to escape from the habitual international sterility." The international committee was in formation; its members were hungry to see the ethnographic films produced around the world. We were staunch supporters of a specialized archive, in alliance with the *Fe'de'ration Internationale des Archives Cine'matographiques*. The creation of this archive posed—and still poses—serious problems, whose resolution would have been most beneficial to university education. Unhappily, the project never came to fruition. But it must also be said that Jean Rouch, ever on the move, was as enthusiastic for his undertakings as he was little talented for administrative matters, which he looked upon with contempt. Invited to participate again in the 12th Congress of the FIAF, this time held in Antibes during October 20–29, 1957, Jean Rouch delegated Anne Philippe. In a letter to Rouch on October 15, Langlois severely admonished his friend. He used official language to impart his displeasure:

Legally, the CIFE cannot be considered as an associate member of the FIAF. As it stands, the CIFE has not submitted its candidature for membership, has not accepted by letter FIAF's statutes and regulations, and has not signed with it any gentleman's agreement. 2)

You will inquire why we received you at the congresses. And may I say that I have asked myself as much since Dubrovnik.

Langlois also alleged, and with reason, that the CIFE at the time was not yet legally constituted in accordance with the decision taken in 1956, at the Philadelphia Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences. A first provisional council had met on July 10, 1957, at the *Muse'e de l'Homme*. The president was Georges Smets, professor emeritus at the University of Brussels, where he taught an outstanding ethnography course. At his side sat Jean Rouch, secretary-general, Luc de Heusch, assistant secretary-general and representative of the Belgian Committee, and Adrien A. Gerbrands, treasurer and also, as curator of the National Museum of Leiden, representative of the Dutch committee. It was thanks to him that Jean Rouch, pioneer in the young discipline of visual anthropology, would become a few years later Doctor honoris causa of the ancient University of Leiden. The executive secretary of the *Comite' international du film ethnographique* being formed was the very diligent Monique Salzmänn. The provisional board elaborated the association's draft statutes and appointed *Mai'tre Bouthoul*, solicitor at the Paris court of justice, to put it into legal form and have it registered. I don't know if these legal procedures were ever completed. (In any event, the project was ratified a short time later by the first general meeting.) More or less embryonic national committees were formed in 10 countries (France, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, England, Canada, Israel, Germany, and Yugoslavia). The provisional board decided, at the suggestion of the Belgian committee, to sponsor the production of an international film devoted to "the Gestures of Man," as suggested by Henri Storck. Thanks to a subvention from the Belgian government, I produced the pilot version, devoted to mealtime gestures; it would be the first and last chapter of what should have been, as imagined by its advocate, a vast international encyclopedia.

The existence of many committees was precarious and their composition unstable. However the French, Belgian, Italian, and Dutch committees organized screenings on a regular basis. In the cinema of the *Muse'e de l'Homme*, Jean Rouch presented his own films together with those of other filmmakers. He also screened films produced by novice, experienced, and professional filmmakers. Among those seen in Paris were the Swiss Claude Goretta's first film (*Nice Time*), Henri Storck's masterpiece (*Symphonie paysanne*), and Joris Ivens' presentation of the pre-edited version of his film on Mali.

I was able to present in Brussels (in association with the

Institut National du Film Scientifique), in addition to the films of Jean Rouch and Mario Ruspoli, *The Hunters* by John Marshall, *Les Nomades du soleil* (Henri Brandt's film on the Bororo), *Dead Birds* by Robert Gardner, *On the Bowery* by Lionel Rogosin, *People of the Australian Western Desert* by Ian Dunlop, films by Italy's young documentary school, and French- and English-language Canadian films. Jean Rouch also established close ties with John Marshall and Robert Gardner of the Peabody Museum (Harvard University) and with the Flaherty Foundation. Thanks to Rouch, I would one day meet, in the cinema of the Muse'e de l'Homme, a certain Richard Leacock, who had come to present his film, *Primary*. One could put into Rouch's mouth Leacock's comment on Flaherty, whose cameraman he had been: "From Flaherty I learned to feel things, rather than look at them in the camera." Rouch also discovered the young Canadian cinema, and in particular the filmmaker Michel Brault, who would be his astute cameraman for *Chronique d'un e'te'*.

If conservation and exchange problems were not to be resolved by the international committee, nonetheless several assemblies where we held our initial debates were organized in Europe, thanks to the support of UNESCO, and of Enrico Fulchignoni in particular. But already in 1955, the IXth International Film Festival of Locarno expressed its interest in ethnographic film, inviting the international committee, which was operational for better or for worse, to present various films over four days, July 10–13. Two series were programmed. The first, a retrospective, plunged into cinema history, including Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (and *Man of Aran* as well as extracts from *Moana*), Eisenstein's *Que Viva Me'xico!* and Bu~nuel's *Las Hurdes* (*Land without Bread*). The second series was devoted to a few recent films—an occasion to see once again Jean Rouch's *Cimetie're dans la falaise* and *Les Mai'tres fous*. The discussions around this last brought together, among others, Germaine Dieterlen and, for the first time, the sociologist Edgar Morin. The journalist Denis Marion expressed skepticism as to the size of the potential audience for ethnographic films, no matter how fine their quality. If *Nanook* was a great success, *Man of Aran* (by the same Flaherty) recorded a total failure. That is why, Jean Rouch replied, "the production of inexpensive films must make possible in the near future the launch of uncompromising films." He expressed his confidence in the developing potential of converting 16mm into 35 mm, and added, "Either films will achieve popular success, or they will remain in museums and archives, which is fine."

Enrico Fulchignoni, a psychologist and ardent defender of ethnographic film, was a personal friend of Jean Rouch. He had himself authored a film short on pre-Columbian art. He convinced his

colleagues at UNESCO's Bureau of Information of the need to publish an initial catalog of French ethnographic films. It first appeared in 1955, and was put together by the French committee, coordinated by Jean Rouch. It includes analyses of 106 films; its authors assert that their evaluations of the films are "strictly in relation to their ethnographic value and exclude judgments based on all other criteria." Moreover, Jean Rouch tells me in a letter of August 19, 1955, that UNESCO is very favorable to the idea of kitting out an editing and mixing room, which was indeed soon to materialize at the Muse'e de l'Homme. Rouch added with humor: "Soon we will be making our own cameras and film stock." It was the height of the cold war and UNESCO was looking for a politically neutral subject to make itself known in the Eastern Bloc countries. That is no doubt why Enrico Fulchignoni and Alfred Me'traux, who belonged to this institution, actively encouraged the Karlovy-Vary festival president M. Sedlacek in his desire to organize a week of study devoted to ethnographic film, from June 28 to July 5, before the opening of the official 1957 festival. He wanted to invite CIFE representatives to Czechoslovakia to present ethnographic or folkloric films produced in their respective countries. It didn't take me long to understand the significance of that proviso. The Communist Party cultivated popular culture of the most chloroforming variety: Eastern Bloc filmmakers were obliged to direct dancing peasants, neatly decked out in their traditional costumes, in the most insipid operetta decors. Such was their principal contribution to "ethnographic" cinema.

At the Prague Congress, Western conceptions of ethnographic film were going to be confronted by a conception inspired by an authoritarian ideology. But a few weeks before that, Professor Maxia, director of the Anthropological Institute of Cagliari in Sardinia, invited the committee to participate in the International Week of Ethnographic Film that he organized in his country, May 1–4, 1957. Brimming with humor, the professor declared of his own accord that he was a little bird; but his project certainly lacked a solid branch upon which to land. In the absence of Jean Rouch, the French committee was represented by Germaine Dieterlen and four other members. The short time given the organizers explained the small number of experts in attendance: a Dutchman, an Italian, and an Israeli. In addition, technical glitches prevented the projection of several films. Nevertheless, this somewhat improvised week reflected the growing interest ethnographic film was generating in Europe. Germaine Dieterlen presented that somewhat forgotten cinematographic trailblazer *Masques dogons*, on which Marcel Griaule had collaborated in 1935.

The Prague conference, under the patronage of UNESCO, was

on the contrary well organized by two official institutions: the Czech commission for UNESCO, and the Czech Academy of Sciences. Monique Salzman traveled to Prague to arrange details with the provisional Czech committee, under the presidency of Prof. Karel Plic`ka. It was held September 16–23, 1957. With Jean Rouch detained in Africa, the organizers decided to give me the task of moderating the debates. Professor Plic`ka inaugurated the discussions by presenting the questions fundamental to ethnographic film. The French committee presented

a detailed report on the role of “the cinema in ethnographic investigation and in the teaching of ethnography.” A singular mixture of lucidity and illusion characterized this report. It underlined the interest of “cinematographic notes” taken in the course of an investigation, enabling one to re-view the same ceremony and deepen one’s analysis, as the authors put it. But one also sees in this report a certain overestimation of the objectivity of the lens, intended to capture that little bit of reality we rightly or wrongly call “objective.” “The camera can note more thoroughly, more rapidly, and more faithfully than can the ethnographer equipped with only pencil and notebook.” But this only applies to ceremonies or technical complexities—not to more fluid, or indeed invisible, realities.

Alfred Me´traux, in the name of UNESCO’s social sciences bureau, completed Professor Plic`ka’s inaugural discourse with a penetrating expose´. This renowned ethnographer rang the alarm bell:

The rapid expansion of Western civilization was dealing a mortal blow to the fragile structures of archaic cultures. Each one of them represented a unique experience, born of the collective efforts of innumerable generations [. . .] The cinema is undoubtedly the most reliable and precious instrument for recording the exterior aspects of so-called ‘primitive’ cultures.

Me´traux announced prophetically the end of a certain classical ethnography that, while expanding its field of action, would later prove to be in complete disarray. He foresaw the arrival of a future task, not unreminiscent of that accomplished for a long time by specialists in defunct civilizations: ethnographic cinema was called upon to constitute the “archives of human behavior that would be consulted and studied using we can only vaguely conceive of at present.” This cry of distress deserves to be heard by all the world’s producers, now that it has been discovered that the very photographic support of the cinema is subject to deterioration. Yet, documentary or fiction, is

not the commercial cinema our civilization’s witness? Me´traux was nevertheless full of hope for the immediate future of ethnographic film as a means of investigation. He cited the example of the film shot in Bali by Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, which allowed them to “confirm through the image the hypotheses they had formulated using other investigative methods.” The question of the cinema as a research tool would be thoroughly debated over time. Jean Rouch and Germaine Dieterlen, who, for seven years, filmed from village to village the Dogon celebrating the ceremonies of the Sigui, considerably enriched our awareness of this ritual held only every 60 years. It was noted that Griaule, who in 1938 could rely only on the oral tradition, had committed to writing an incomplete description.

Me´traux also put his finger on an obstacle rarely mentioned, and that the practical instruction in visual anthropology given in a few universities does little to mitigate:

The film industry is too developed, and its technical norms are too high, for us to expect the amateur to be able to produce a quality film. The best we can do is ask the anthropologist to shoot as much footage as possible, so that a gifted editor can draw from his documents sequences suitable for a large public. In this respect, one can’t emphasize enough the importance of gathering an abundance of material.

Let’s take a moment to discuss this radical position. Lightweight shooting equipment and the video image have undoubtedly strengthened Rouch’s pet hope to see an increasing number of ethnographers make use of the camera. Regrettably, this beneficial evolution has fed the illusion that the cinema is an art within everyone’s grasp, after some brief tuition. It’s also true that innumerable written works leave much to be desired, stylistically speaking. We may deplore this as well.

Me´traux offers some judicious advice:

he ethnographic film is only accepted by the public if it is built on a central theme. [. . .] Nothing is more dangerous than to impose on a group of natives a through-line invented by a filmmaker. [. . .] The “story” to be told must be attached as far as possible to a certain number of individuals, who become the actors to all intents and purposes.

Are these not the aesthetics of Flaherty under whose patronage

Jean Rouch had placed the ethnographic film from its beginnings? Naturally Me'traux envisaged other uses for the ethnographic film than the commercial movie theater; he did not, however, dwell on its role in education, which seemed to him self-evident. In formulating the hope every ethnographer nurtures in his heart, he was perhaps deluding himself in accordance with UNESCO's optimistic outlook:

The ethnographic film represents one of the best instruments for awakening in themen of our time a sense of cultural diversity and creating a certain psychological flexibility that is essential if we are to survive in an ever-shrinking universe where cultures constantly meet head on.

As it happens, the forum Exploration du Monde enabled me to present Fe'te chez les Hamba to a broad public in many Belgian villages. In my commentary, I dwelt on the relative nature of the notion of civilization. Neither the text nor the images convinced the majority of the audience that the Hamba weren't savages. . .

It seemed to me regrettable in Prague that so many of the so-called "folkloric" films produced on local cultures in the Eastern Bloc countries didn't take heed of Alfred Me'traux's other piece of advice: "A too exclusive quest for the picturesque and a too rigid attachment to the archaic aspects of a culture risk falsifying the image one seeks to give of a people."

Undoubtedly Karel Plic'ka kept his distance from the fossilized vision that so many of the official films produced under the yoke of the Stalinist regime were stamped with. Already in 1928, this pioneer had produced a film on the pastoral games of Slovakia. His most important film is his 1933 medium-length film called *La terre qui chante*, which he considered a film poem, built on the rhythms of nature. For him, the ethnographic film is above all a dramatic art: but this one is a portrayal of leisure time—a time of songs and dances. One can well understand that the regime preferred using his talent to exalt a certain form of popular culture in order to conceal its darker aspects behind a smile. Completely alien to this tendency is the remarkable Yugoslav film *A Day in a Large Croatian Family*, by Drago Chloupek and Aleksandar Gerasimov, produced in 1933; it's a touching portrait of the more diverse aspects of the *zadruga*, the famous Slav traditional extended family, living in a virtually closed economy.

The first general meeting of the Comite' international du film ethnographique finally took place in Brussels on July 28, 1958. The French, Belgian, Dutch, Swiss, Italian, Yugoslav, Canadian, and Polish

Committees were either present or represented by proxy by one of the others. Three new committees were formed (in Czechoslovakia, the U.S., and Canada). They were represented by Professors Pli_cka, Brew (of the Peabody Museum), and Rioux, respectively. Our administrative secretary had left us and was succeeded by Catherine Darquier.

The elections confirmed the mandates of the president (Prof. Georges Smets), the secretary-general (Jean Rouch), the assistant secretary-general (Luc de Heusch), and the archivist (Jacqueline Veuve). They also saw the election of Prof. Marcel Rioux (Canada) as co-vice-president and Messrs. Gardner (U.S.) and Bochenek (Poland) as co-assistant secretaries-general. The resigning treasurer, Dr Gerbandts, was replaced by Robert Gessain (Paris). The meeting voted unanimously the draft statutes elaborated by the provisional board, with a few modifications.

The general meeting congratulated itself on the increasing number of meetings, but lamented the lack of an exchange policy between countries. UNESCO had not followed up on the projects submitted by the CIFE. In light of this attitude, characterized as "sterile," the assembly decided to exercise the greatest prudence regarding this institution in future. It decided to adopt the same attitude towards the creation of an International Film Institute. But on the other hand, it favored close collaboration with the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAP) and the Association internationale du Film Scientifique (AIFS).

Committee representatives at the Brussels meeting presented their productions and their programs. Seen from the perspective of visual anthropology, some aspects of this meeting are no doubt of historical interest. The Dutch committee undertook the re-editing and ethnographic commentating of their considerable stock of footage shot in Indonesia before the war. The Canadian committee was seen to be very active production-wise, thanks to the collaboration of the National Film Board (Office national du film canadien). With commercial production ties, the Italian committee had produced six ethnographic films in 35mm on Italy's Calabria region. The U.S. committee, composed of members of the Peabody Museum under the direction of Robert Gardner, undertook the completion of new films shot by John Marshall among the Bushmen of Southern Africa. The French committee had produced a dozen or so films, most of them, unfortunately, with sorely deficient funding. The Belgian committee had backed the production by Luc de Heusch of the film *Les Gestes du Repas*, and had begun cultivating broad public interest in a series of major ethnographic films in collaboration with the Institut National du Film Scientifique. The assembly regretted the poor finances available

to the CIFE, but decided nonetheless to maintain until further notice a manned office, with the administrative secretary working one day a week in Paris. Prof. Lavachery, who presided over the session as its organizer and as the president of the Belgian Committee, expressed pleasure that the CIFE, despite its financial instability, was on the right road: displaying minimum bureaucracy, but rapidly expanding cinematographic activity.

Invitations to participate in the general meeting addressed to the various national committees were facilitated by the directors of the 1958 World's Fair, held in Brussels. I was asked by those in charge of the Belgian Congo Pavilion to organize an international conference devoted to the theme "The cinema and Sub-Saharan Africa." Naturally, I invited many friends hostile to the colonial project and especially to the official propaganda films, as well as to those characterized as "educational" (but which were above all moralistic), produced by Catholic missionaries in Belgian Central Africa. Jean Rouch wrote a statement that perfectly defined the position of the ethnographer-filmmaker in the field during the colonial period, "trapped between two clashing worlds." He courageously held that ethnographic cinema must bring about a emystification, fed as it was solely by truth [Rouch 1958].

THE CIFE CHANGES SKINS, WITHOUT LOSING ITS SOUL

For a long time, Jean Rouch dreamed of a 16mm camera that would make synchronized sound recording possible. After the Locarno Festival, he went to visit Kudelski, the ingenious Swiss inventor of the Nagra, that Rolls-Royce of the smooth magnetic tape recorders which sound engineers knew so well. He explained the problem: he wanted to see a system developed for recording actors' speech at a distance, without being linked to the camera by a wire. I accompanied him and can vouch for the fact that he played a major role in the genesis of this development which was to prove so decisive. Meanwhile, in Paris, Coutant worked for E'clair on the construction of the professional 16mm camera that bears his name. A generation of camera operators would depend on this new equipment, which would be used by television stations until the advent of electronic systems.

It was then that the young sociologist Edgar Morin appeared on the scene. He wanted to do a film with Rouch composed of casual interviews with various actors, talking of their social condition. The result is a sort of portrait of French society through a series of filmed socio-dramas, allowing what Morin called "the emotional tissue of human relationships" to surface. While doubting the "ethnographic"

validity of the enterprise, Rouch acquiesced and participated in order to experiment with the new E'clair camera (which he entrusted to the Canadian Michel Brault) and the wireless neck mikes (linked to the latest Nagra) worn by the improvised actors who were assembled and interviewed by Morin. The film resulting from this collaboration, *Chronique d'un e'te'* [1961], was astonishing for its total novelty. It was launched under the banner of *cine'ma-ve'rite'*, a movement initiated by Dziga Vertov in the U.S.S.R. shortly after the 1917 Revolution. Rouch admired this Russian filmmaker as much as he did the Irish-American Flaherty. The conclusions of the experience of *Chronique d'un e'te'* would be borne out in *La Pyramide humaine*: to wit, that in an atmosphere of absolute confidence, there is a moment when a man, any man, reveals his deepest and most secret personality before the camera. Television presenters would soon transform the lesson of this teaching into a showcase for exhibitionism.

If the truth be said, Jean Rouch's work is situated somewhere between that of Vertov and Flaherty. *Les Maîtres fous* is arguably the chef d'oeuvre of the *cine'ma-ve'rite'*, captured on the fly as Vertov understood it. But it owes much to the electrifying editing of Suzanne Baron.

The various films Rouch shot on possession trance among the Songhay of Niger are in the same register, for there is, as is widely known, a strict rule against simulating or performing out of context this type of ritual, which is characterized above all by a devouring passion, whatever the measure of theatricality involved. Here we discover the absolute advantage of film over writing; that of being able to capture an overpowering and literally indescribable reality. But this applies to all rituals, as it does to work-related gestures. The same is not true of the issues at work in *Moi, un noir*.

What are these? We are in Treichville, the proletarian neighborhood of Abidjan. Rouch is staging both real and imaginary situations. Three Africans, improvised actors, themselves tell their own tragi-comic stories, without directorial input. They relate who they are and the heroes they dream of being. The director limits himself to establishing the broad lines of the dramatic canvas. After the silent filming, the actors comment on the action they have themselves imagined, in the recording room. In *La pyramide humaine* [1961] Rouch goes further still. Using the sophisticated sound recording equipment he experimented with in *Chronique d'un e'te'*, he interrogates the "actors" off the cuff, but in a jointly elaborated dramatic framework, on interracial relations in their last year at an Abidjan secondary school. Rouch brought together girls and boys, white students and black, in this filmed socio-drama that would profoundly change their attitudes

toward each other. In both cases, the filmmaker is playing with fire, as he sets in motion unsuspected psychological mechanisms without the slightest idea of what will ensue.

It was during the 4th International Sociology Congress, where we were invited in 1959, in Milan-Stresa, that the CIFE general meeting of September 12 decided to change our organization's name to Comité du film ethnographique et sociologique (CIFES). Henceforth, the committee was officially an emanation of the International Association of Sociology, as well as of the Congrès internationaux des sciences anthropologiques et ethnologiques. It should be said that, as of its previously unpublished creation, the Italian committee, under the impulsion of Tullio Seppili, professor at Perugia University, had annexed sociology into the title of his organization, having called it Centro italiano per il film etnografico e sociologico. And in May 1959, this committee had organized a seminar in Perugia under the joint patronage of the Comité international du film ethnographique and the Association internationale de sociologie.

The new Comité du film ethnographique et sociologique then included national committees, in Germany, the U.S., the U.K., Belgium, Canada (where the secretary-general of the committee was also a member of the National Film Board), France, the Netherlands, Greece, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. When Prof. Smets passed away at the beginning of 1961, the presidency of the international committee went to Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, who had gained notice for his research in Afghanistan and India. An ephemeral contact was established with the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain, which had created an ethnographic film section of its own. Approached by our president the Institute's new secretary, Anthony Christie, said he was ready to reorganize the British committee, which was in total decline.

CIFES' COLLABORATION WITH THE FESTIVALS OF FLORENCE AND VENICE

The principal activity of the committee was concentrated in Florence, where, thanks to an initiative of the Italian committee, CIFES had collaborated as of its inception in 1959 in the Festival dei Popoli, whose initial vocation was "the international presentation of ethnographic and sociological film." The jury included seven members, two of whom were designated by CIFES and two of whom by the International Sociology Association. Independent U.S. production was in the spotlight. The gold medal was awarded to John Marshall and Robert Gardner for *The Hunters*, a film that reaffirms Flaherty's great

Nanook tradition, "in spite, and inclusive, of a certain clumsiness in the production." The jury also honored two other U.S. films: *All My Babies* by George Stoney and *On the Bowery* by Lionel Rogosin. It was during a later Florence meeting, organized by the Festival dei Popoli, that CIFES' general meeting members would discover with wonder the exceptional films produced by Australia's ethnographers. In May 1961, an agreement was concluded in Paris between CIFES and the directors of the Florence festival, consolidating the links between the two organizations. It was decided, most notably, that CIFES would be involved in the film selection process. Jean Rouch proposed during this meeting to establish contact with the Flaherty Seminar, which played a similar role in the U.S. as Festival dei Popoli did in Florence. CIFES was also directly associated with the film festival that took place in Athens on September 1-7, 1961, under the initiative of the Greek committee, directed by Roussos Coundouros, and with Greek government backing. The exact title of the public event was "40 years of ethnographic and sociological cinema, from Flaherty's Nanook to Jean Rouch's *Chronique d'un été*."

CIFES seemed to fizzle out over the years. Only four committees were present (and only one represented) at the general meeting held in Florence on February 8, 1965. The Prince of Greece and Denmark resigned. No general meeting had been held since Athens, 1961. Nonetheless, UNESCO had recognized CIFES as a nongovernmental organization (NGO) in 1962. Thanks to contracts finalized with this institution, Monique Salzman, CIFE's administrative secretary from 1956 to 1957, was able to ensure CIFES's operations once again. It contributed to the film selections and the organization of seminars by the Festival dei Popoli in 1963, '64, and '65. A catalog of films on Africa was in preparation. But it has to be said that only the French, U.S., and Canadian committees had become regular producers of ethnographic films. Universities remained indifferent to this initiative. The few members, gathered in Florence in 1965, approved the suggestion, made by Jean Rouch, to entrust the CIFES presidency to Hampate Ba, a great African figure, who accepted the post.

The French committee remained very active. At the end of 1965, Marc Piault proposed to organize a little seminar during which recent ethnographic films could be screened and discussed in the Cinéma-thèque française (November 22-25). In parallel, the coordinators of the Festival dei Popoli decided to organize in February 1966, after the closure of the 12th edition of the public sessions, a seminar where all the films sent to Florence, regardless of whether they were selected, would be discussed. This first seminar proved a great success. Sixty or so films of ethnographic interest were screened,

commented on, and discussed by 20 or so specialists.

The CIFES general meeting was held in Florence on February 16. There was clearly a renewed interest: with representatives of new committees—already constituted, or in the process of so doing—applying for admission from Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and Lebanon. Jean Rouch announced that the planned catalog of ethnographic and sociological films on Africa had been enriched: it now included 465 titles. A new productions contract involving films on the Pacific had been finalized with UNESCO. Robert Gardner, representing the U.S. committee, announced that the American Anthropological Association had asked a certain number of researchers to take an interest in ethnographic film. Following this decision the Program in Ethnographic Film (PIEF) was formed, its two vice-presidents being himself and Asen Balicki (who was also president of the Canadian CIFES committee). This new association was financially backed by the Wenner-Gren Foundation. On its advisory board sat most notably Claude Lévi-Strauss and Jean Rouch. The general meeting took note of this development with great interest, but Germaine Dieterlen and Tullio Seppili most wisely asked if the activities of the PIEF didn't overlap, at least partially, those of CIFES. Robert Gardner produced the decisive argument: being headquartered in the U.S. the PIEF seems to him the best platform for obtaining important backing from U.S. foundations. In the name of the French committee, Jean Rouch informs the general meeting that the teaching of ethnographic film is hereafter institutionalized in France, thanks to the creation of the Laboratoire audio-visuel de la Ve section de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes (religious sciences), and intended for students pursuing involvement in the human sciences. Under the patronage of Claude Lévi-Strauss, this laboratory is codirected by Jean Rouch and the ethnomusicologist Gilbert Rouget. And it is in this same period (the later 1960s) that, upon the initiative of Colin Young, the University of California starts to set up a program in Los Angeles on the relationship between film and anthropology, founded on the pioneering work of the "direct cinema," also called observationalcinema.

Only three national committees sent a representative to the general meeting held in Florence the following year (February 22, 1967). However, six committees were represented. This meeting admitted the Argentinean committee as active members and elected as corresponding members Roger Sandall and Ian Dunlop, responsible for setting up the Australian committee, together with Pierre Naville, director of the audio-visual section of the Centre d'Etudes sociologiques. In July 1966, CIFES took part in the round table organized by UNESCO in Sydney on Ethnographic Films of the Pacific.

The national committees, now 18 in number, 13 of which were European, still suffered cruelly from a lack of regular funds.

The French committee, with a subvention from the CNRS, organized in collaboration with CIFES weekly screenings that were actively attended at the Musée de l'Homme. Also in France, as of 1967, Eric de Dampierre of the Université de Paris—Nanterre shouldered the initiative, rare at the time, of building up a stock of the most interesting ethnographic films for use in ethnographic education, while in Great Britain the Royal Anthropological Institute set up an ethnographic film library, and Granada Television initiated, in collaboration with the University of Manchester, a center of visual anthropology. The television channel also produced a series of documentaries, each requiring the collaboration of an ethnographer in the field and a professional filmmaker. Ethnographic film archives were also established in Leiden and Go'ttingen.

I don't know the outcome of the seminars organized by the Festival dei Popoli after 1967. In any event, the CIFES general meetings that were regularly organized in Florence at this occasion were not held from 1968 to 1971. The upheaval in the university world after May 1968 was partly responsible. Throughout these years, CIFES' activities were essentially limited to producing catalogs under contract with UNESCO. After the Black Africa ethnographic film catalog [1967], there was the Pacific ethnographic film catalog [1970]. The film catalog on dramatic arts in Asian and Arab culture countries was in preparation.

In August 1971, CIFES jointly organized with UNESCO a three-day seminar on "the current situation of ethnographic film in the world" within the framework of the 32e Mostra Internazionale del Cinema di Venezia. Thirteen films were screened. Among the participants in the discussion were most notably the ethnographers Germaine Dieterlen, Adrien Gerbrands, Guy Le Moal, Jean Rouch, and James Woodburn, and the filmmaker Michel Brault.

The following year, in 1972, CIFES was once again invited to the Venice festival, and a general meeting at last took place on April 21. Seven national committees were present at this meeting. Also present was a Japanese observer, Jun'ichi Ushiyama, director of Nippon Audio-Visual Productions, working in association with Nippon Television Network Corporation. Former links with the Festival dei Popoli were evoked, and it was decided that "common ground must be established." It never was, to my knowledge. Upon a motion of the Italian delegate, Romano Calisi, Georges-Henri Rivie`re was elected president. The board was composed as follows: secretary-general, Jean Rouch; assistant secretaries-general, Romano Calisi (Italy), Luc de Heusch

(Belgium), James Woodburn (U.K.); Jean treasurer, Jacqueline Veuve (Switzerland). Marielle Delorme became administrative secretary.

The board would meet one month later in Paris, on May 24–25, 1972, under the presidency of Georges-Henri Rivière. The members present decided on the creation of an international library of films on man, which Paris's Musée de l'Homme had declared itself ready to house. Then a surprising thing happened. The CIFES board moved to "broaden its study objectives and the mutual understanding of societies and cultures," and to adopt the denomination of Comité international des films de l'homme (CIFH), while pursuing "the organization of periodic international meetings, such as festivals, symposia, and seminars." I wasn't present at this meeting, and the change has remained utterly unfathomable as far as I am concerned. That was the end of CIFES. My own preoccupations were elsewhere. I never queried Rouch on this point, and our friendship continued untroubled. The solemn demand submitted to UNESCO "to broaden its material and moral support" was never followed up. This refusal is all the more understandable in that the demand was enormous. It stipulated, in addition to the creation of the library at the Musée de l'Homme, "the creation or development of one or several pilot international archives, specialized in conservation in state-of-the-art technical conditions," as well as "the creation of a pilot production center of film on man in developing countries, intended to promote research and education in the human sciences." What was being proposed was no less than a federation of archives on the model of the FIAF. The document attached to the brief entitled "Project origins and development" goes some way in explaining the surprising decisions taken by the CIFES board. It is from the Musée de l'Homme, the French Commission in UNESCO and CIFES. It says, "this not very ambitious program [sic] was aimed at resolving the immediate problems and difficulties facing anthropologists, ethnologists, and sociologists who use the cinema for research and teaching." These problems arise fundamentally from "the diversity of the 'human sciences' accepted by various schools, the hierarchization of the disciplines involved, and their content." The report continues:

The same can be said of the difficulties resulting from the resistance, justified or not, of the developing countries (essentially the African countries) to ethnographic terminology and content. This content appears to them particularly tainted with racism and paternalism, studying, as it does, their actual social organization as the anachronistic embodiment

of a lost phase in human development. In so doing, CIFES is condemned to being a committee composed of academics, eminent no doubt, but representative only of the bodies that appoint them and destined to resolve only current problems of immediate interest to various affiliated universities or research centers, which is to say, the overdeveloped countries of Europe, North America, and, to a lesser extent, Latin America.

I thought that, since Boas, serious ethnographers had rejected social Darwinism. In any case, here is a declaration that warrants lengthy debate. But the discussions that the imprudent 1973 declaration should have kindled never opened. Certainly ethnography is not practiced in the same manner as it was during colonial times. But has its objective changed after what we've been a bit too quick to call globalization? Must we not conclude, when all is said and done, that CIFES fell victim to contemporary anthropology's disarray?

I have never again heard talk of CIFES, now lost in oblivion, any more than of CIFH, a still-born. That same year (it was 1973), Emilie de Brigard organized in New York what is perhaps the U.S.'s first substantial visual anthropological event. (She had, however, been a participant at the UCLA Colloquium on Ethnographic Film, which Colin Young had organized in Los Angeles in 1968.) Now she presented at New York's Museum of Modern Art from May 17 to July 3 a series of striking "anthropological" films divided into 24 different themes. She didn't hesitate to write in the program, in her presentation of the third theme devoted to the work of Flaherty, that he was the generally accepted founder of the anthropological documentary, "despite the questionable ethnographical content of his films." Emilie de Brigard also recognized that "no organization has done more to collect and publish information about ethnographic films than the Comité international du film ethnographique, guided by Jean Rouch at the Musée de l'Homme, Paris." She added: "The present generation of filmmakers has, it seems to me, much to learn from these unfairly neglected films."

THE FIRST INVENTORY (1962)

The first discussions on the specifications of ethnographic or sociological film seemed to me to require an evaluation of past works, realized by professionals as opposed to ethnographers. UNESCO's department of social sciences, anxious half a century ago to have a working tool, commissioned from me a study on "the cinema and the social sciences."

I called the essay, published in 1962, *Panorama du film ethnographique et sociologique*. Emilie de Brigard qualified it as the “first monograph” of its sort. I looked at the problem both theoretically and historically. I opposed the aesthetics of Dziga Vertov and Flaherty as two poles necessary to the documentary genre presenting the most diverse of social situations. I tried to complete the analyses of the most striking recent films with information drawn from cinema history. Thus I described and questioned the documentary aims of several documentary films remote perhaps from academic concerns, but not from the independent spirit characteristic of the social sciences. Flaherty invented the technique that I called the “participating camera,” while Vertov defined an utterly different field of action that would subsequently be called *cine´ma-ve´rite´* after the label under which he placed his enterprise (*kino pravda* in Russian), and which included a goodly dose of aesthetic ambition. Vertov insisted on the importance of editing in the creative process, while Flaherty based himself on the authenticity of familiar gestures, performed before the camera by nonprofessional actors. Nanook’s smile is unforgettable. We learned not long ago that his “two wives” were chosen by Flaherty, who thereby composed what Max Weber would no doubt have called an ideal type. The fact remains that he gave us the paradigmatic *chef d’oeuvre*, a certain manner of filming social reality—a reality that is all the more priceless because it has disappeared forever.

I insisted in this *Panorama* on the various contributions of the professional cinema, and notably on the role of the British tradition: it was inspired by that pioneer Grierson, who invented the word documentary. He is the author of *Drifters*, one of the first European “documentaries,” produced in 1929, in the dying days of the silent film. Its subject was herring fishing in the North Sea. But Grierson is known above all as a producer, linked to the General Post Office—one of the main official production centers of documentaries at the time. Under the influence of Flaherty, who shot *Man of Aran* in Ireland at the beginning of the 1930s, a school and a style developed around Grierson’s forceful personality. The objective of this school was not without ideological intentions; it was a question of exalting human labor (its “unconscious beauty”) and its civic virtues.

But it is interesting to note how preoccupied Grierson, a Ph.D. at Glasgow University, was with rigor in the elaboration of social documentaries. It is true that the sociological vision of the first generation was very academic. But the film made by Harry Watt and Basil Wright in 1936 clearly stands out: *Night Mail* portrays grippingly, and with the greatest simplicity, the nocturnal journey of the train that provides the postal link between London and Glasgow.

During World War II, Humphrey Jennings was the most endearing figure. The formula that he used in *Fires Were Started* (1943) to portray the work of the Auxiliary Fire Service throughout a day of air raids, is a happy mixture of reportage and drama played by anonymous heroes. The young school that succeeded this generation under the banner *Free Cinema* (1956–1960), was situated much more to the left. These filmmakers protested against the fossilized vision imposed by the documentary tradition born in 1930, and sought to renew the cinematographic approach to English society. They wanted to establish direct contact with life, abandon once and for all aesthetic tampering, leave the dialogue to the man under the camera’s gaze, and disappear before him. The filmmaker who accomplished this in exemplary fashion was Lindsay Anderson, later known for his feature films. In *Every Day Except Christmas* (1957), he portrays the lives of the men at London’s morning Covent Garden market. Anderson’s conviction rejoins that of his French contemporaries Rouch and Morin: “It is astonishing to see how ‘ordinary’ folk (even in Great Britain!) can behave in a natural manner before a camera when they feel they can trust you” [interview in *Les lettres franc,aises*, 7–13 May 1960].

In the U.S., Flaherty had no direct inheritors. Unlike Grierson in England, he did not found a school. However, between 1934 and 1940, a galaxy of young filmmakers in the U.S. tried to create a realistic cinema that bore witness to the problems of social life. Under the influence of Paul Strand, several documentary filmmakers took part in the adventure of the production house *Frontier Films*, a cooperative for social action through the cinema. After World War II, a new wave of sociological documentaries appeared in the U.S. In 1950, Sidney Meyers described Harlem in *The Quiet One*. Ten years later, in 1960, he produced *The Savage Eye*, which explores the streets, the bars, an evangelical church, and a homosexual dance hall. George C. Stoney is the author of a piece full of tenderness, *All My Babies* (1952), a moving account of relationships in the Black communities of the American South that contrast sharply with the dry doctor-and-patient relationships in the bureaucratic health-care system. Stoney devoted an article to the model sociological investigation he conducted to prepare for his film, which is principally on the subject of giving birth. He tells how his simplistic views on Black midwives evolved. Discovering them for the extraordinary individuals that they were, he gradually lost his condescending attitude toward them. He also explains how the color bar aroused the suspicion of the Whites. For them, there were only two reasons to go to the Black neighborhoods: you either wanted whisky or a woman. But, as time went on, they developed an interest in the true subject of the film.

Lionel Rogosin confronted the world of despair in *On the Bowery* (1956), a film investigation on the alcoholic dropouts that run aground in the famous New York neighborhood, where death soon takes them by surprise. He then went to South Africa, where he surreptitiously shot that major expose´ on racism, *Come Back Africa* (1959). Like Rouch, he left much to the extempore input of nonprofessional “actors,” limiting himself to providing the underpinning theme for each scene. And lastly, the activity of the Film Study Center at Harvard University’s Peabody Museum is directly linked to our subject, having been for a time closely associated with the activities of the *Comite´ international du film ethnographique*. Filming a Bushman giraffe hunt, John Marshall in *The Hunters* (1956) pursued the great epic tradition of Flaherty. As for the “direct cinema,” produced by Robert Drew and propagated by his team of young filmmakers (Richard Leacock, D. A. Pennebaker, etc.), it is characterized by absolute nonintervention in the camera shots. It uses reportage technique over an extended period and a virtually journalistic detachment in relation to the person filmed, whom the camera follows step by step throughout an event. Primary, by Richard Leacock, on John F. Kennedy’s presidential campaign, is a remarkable example and an unqualified success. Regrettably, the filmmaker abstains from telling us anything about the ins and outs of this campaign, although we see it from behind the scenes as well as from out front.

The National Film Board (*Office national du film canadien*), founded by Grierson, who was called upon by the government after World War II, displayed a liberty that was uncommon in such official contexts. Grierson, like his successors, made it one of the most important quality documentary film production centers. From the viewpoint of the social sciences, the free winds blowing out of Quebec enabled young filmmakers to develop from the 1950s onward a direct cinema very much like what was in France called, rightly or wrongly, *cine´mave´rite´*. This is what explains the close links Rouch maintained with Michel Brault. In 1960, he would direct *Raquetteurs* with Gilles Groux: a satirical portrait of the leisure activities of Quebec society. In a style more serious (and more severe), Margaret Mead narrated the English version of *Four Families* (1959), a film that compares the behavior of four middle-class families in India, Japan, France, and Canada. The French version of this film, produced by the Film Board, was narrated by Marcel Rioux, president of the *Comite´ canadien du film ethnographique*. The film illustrates the anthropological conceptions typical of the psychosociological North American school.

It would be unjust to pass over in silence the successes of the English-speaking Canadian cinema. In the sociological field that

interests us here, *The Back-Breaking Leaf*, made in 1960 by Leslie McCartney-Filgate, is a moving account of the hardship among seasonal laborers in Ontario’s tobacco industry; while Colin Low and Wolf Koenig’s beautiful film, *City of Gold* (1957), uses old photos to evoke the delirious gold rush that drew 30,000 men to Dawson City in the Klondike a hundred years ago.

As cursory as it was, this panorama of ethnographic and sociological films would have been incomplete had it not accorded a place to French production; the evolving documentary works of Jean Vigo, Georges Lacombe, Georges Rouquier, Yannick Bellon, Francois Reichenbach, Chris Marker, and Alain Resnais; as well as those of Henri Storck in Belgium, Joris Ivens in the Netherlands and Vittorio de Sica and Gian Vittorio Baldi in Italy.

AND TODAY . . .

Thanks to a subsidy from the Wenner-Gren Foundation and the happy initiative of Beate Engelbrecht, the ethnographic and sociological film pioneers of Europe, the U.S., and Australia were invited to Go¨ttingen, Germany, June 20–25, 2001, to participate in a conference on the origins of visual anthropology. Various experts, generally from North American universities, were called upon to analyze and comment on either a movement, a filmmaker, or the state of affairs past and present. At the outset, Paul Hockings described the first years of visual anthropology, insisting on the primordial roles of Jean Rouch and Richard Leacock. It was no doubt one of the last public occasions Jean Rouch would attend, and he was warmly applauded. Marc-Henri Piault spoke of the sovereignty of the subject in the fertile work of this observer and investigator of otherness. But the tumultuous history of CIFES was almost completely passed over. It was naturally Leacock who described Flaherty’s career. We learned many things that had remained unknown in Europe. Various expose´s dealt with the beginnings of filmed ethnography in Australia, still in full expansion thanks to the works of Ian Dunlop and David MacDougall. Peter Ian Crawford presented the work accomplished in Europe’s northern regions by the Nordic Anthropological Film Association, which organizes an international meeting in a Nordic country every year. This association takes an interest in the use of ethnographic films at every educational level. It has a film library and gladly lends films to universities. It has become, Colette Piault informed us, an important hub in European visual anthropology, and it was on this model that she founded in 1985 an interuniversity cooperative—*La Socie´te´ franc,aise pour l’Anthropologie visuelle*.

However, it would be no exaggeration to say that the U.S. was the focus of attention at the Goettingen reunion. The invited speakers, more often than not teachers from U.S. universities, put the accent on the importance of such pioneers as Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson, and Edmund Carpenter. The classic works of John Marshall, Robert Gardner, Judith and David MacDougall and Timothy Asch were evaluated at length, but also those of filmmaker George Stoney, who wasn't afraid to draw inspiration from the classical models of film documentary. Also present at Goettingen (among so many others), after some intense international activity that often converged with that of CIFES, was Asen Balikci, who, in Flaherty's footsteps, filmed among the Eskimos in the beginning of the 1960s. Grierson was severely criticized, rightly or wrongly, by Brian Winston. Winston rebuked the father of British documentary for having insisted on the creative aspect of the documentary film, which seemed to him of little use in the ethnographic context. This declaration of war brought him effectively close to the camp of Rolf Husmann, who defended, against wind and high water, the archaic stance of the Goettingen Institute for Scientific Film. As I believe I wrote in the past, this rigorous body was based on the illusory belief that in human sciences, the lens was a sort of magic eye, similar to that of the microscope in the natural sciences. And finally, Jay Ruby, one of the pioneers of visual anthropology in the U.S., delivered an excellent expose on the professionalization of visual anthropology, a phenomenon whose influence was felt as of the 1960s, long before European universities became aware of its importance.

Visual anthropology has developed considerably throughout the world thanks to the electronic revolution that succeeded the technological revolution, when the generalized use of 16mm drove its rapid development at the beginning of the '60s. More and more advanced digital cameras are available to an ever-increasing number of clients, professional or not, and the price of the recorded image is now derisory.

The cinema, its history, and its role in research are now taken seriously by an increasing number of universities. The efforts of Eric de Dampierre in 1967 to integrate ethnographic film into education have spread everywhere, and today the Universite de Paris—Nanterre, to which he used to belong, gives future researchers practical and theoretical instruction in the anthropological cinema department. Significantly, Jean Rouch taught a course there entitled "Cinema and Creativity."

As of 1980, we have also seen increasing numbers of ethnographic and sociological films in international documentary festivals. We have even seen the emergence of specialized festivals. I list only the most

important. In France, the Bilan des films ethnographiques, a section of the Festival du Cinema du Reel, has been held in Paris every year since 1982, at the initiative of Jean Rouch, seconded by Françoise Foucault. That same year, the Comite du film ethnographique, the only survivor of CIFE, decided to hold a noncompetitive annual seminar on a given theme called Regards croises. This initiative, which aims to bring together films on social groups seen from various view points, hasn't failed to kindle heated debates. In the U.K., the prestigious Royal Anthropological Institute has organized since 1985 a biennial festival, always in a different city. Germany set up in Fribourg the Forum of Ethnographic Film in 1985; and at Goettingen, in 1993, the Goettingen International Film Festival (GIEF). In Italy, the Festival dei Popoli, with a remit that has broadened into other domains, has been held in Florence since 1959. As we have seen, for a long time it collaborated with CIFES. There are other international events devoted to ethnographic or sociological film in Italy, among which, in Sardinia, is the biennial International Festival of Ethnographic Films in Nuoro (1982). In the Netherlands, in Leiden, an international conference for the evaluation of anthropological films has met periodically since 1999. Poland organizes at Lods a festival of ethnographic films (1983), and Estonia does the same in Parn (1987). And finally, there is the very important Margaret Mead Film and Video Festival that has been held in New York since 1977. And more recently, since 1993, the Mostra Internacional do Filme Etnografico has been held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

So many dispersed efforts deserve to be coordinated within an international federation such as the one envisioned by Jean Rouch, and for which he became the tireless pilgrim in the days when, as secretary-general of the Comite international du film ethnographique et sociologique, he traveled throughout Europe and the U.S.

As the organizers of the Festival dei Popoli concluded in 1966, "the greatest obstacle to conducting a periodic and collective appreciation [of ethnographic and sociological film], is in bringing together in one place, on a single occasion, if not the total production, then at least the most numerous and most representative part." Catalogs are necessary. The existence of one or several archives, available to all universities, is indispensable.

These tasks can be achieved only with the collaboration of existing institutions. The time has come to network our actions and resources. It is also highly desirable to share with a broad public, at least every two years, the ethnographic and sociological films that have been crowned in the various specialized festivals.

Whatever the future of ethnography and sociology, the cinema

will contribute on its own merits to the development of that general anthropology we are all eager to see. We are many, African or otherwise, who wish it to be exempt of all social ideology, while we remain anxious over the future of the poor nations—as well as for the rich nations, with their growing numbers of dispossessed.

Note

1. The papers of this conference were recently edited and published. See Engelbrecht 2007.

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**The Work of Testimony in the Age of Decolonization:
Chronicle of a Summer, Cinema Verité,
and the Emergence of the Holocaust Survivor
MICHAEL ROTHBERG, 2004**

The year 1961 is generally considered a turning point in the history of Holocaust memory. In the spring and summer of that year the trial of Adolf Eichmann took place in Jerusalem. Anchored by the dramatic testimony of 111 survivors, the Eichmann trial brought the Nazi

genocide of European Jews into the public sphere for the first time as a discrete event on an international scale. The trial was explicitly designed, in the words of the Israeli prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, to present “[t]he Holocaust that the Nazis wreaked on the Jewish people [as] a unique episode that has no equal [and] as the only crime that has no parallel in human history” (qtd. in Segev 329–30). Ben-Gurion’s strategy was largely successful. According to the Israeli journalist and historian Tom Segev, “The Eichmann trial marked the beginning of a dramatic shift in the way Israelis related to the Holocaust” (361). The effect of the trial was by no means limited to Israel. In an account of the memory of the Shoah in France, Annette Wieviorka cites the trial as the moment at which previously private individual and family memories of the genocide came to “penetrate the social field” (79).¹ And in his history of Holocaust memory in the United States, Peter Novick has demonstrated that

[t]he Eichmann trial, along with the controversies over [Hannah] Arendt’s book [Eichmann in Jerusalem] and [Rolf] Hochuth’s play [The Deputy], effectively broke fifteen years of near silence on the Holocaust in American public discourse. As part of this process, there emerged in American culture a distinct thing called “the Holocaust”—an event in its own right, not simply a subdivision of general Nazi barbarism. (144)

By almost all accounts, the effects of bringing Eichmann to justice in Jerusalem have been long lasting and widespread.

The videotape broadcast of parts of the Eichmann trial in the United States and Europe has led Jeffrey Shandler, the leading scholar of the representation of the Holocaust on television, to see the trial as an anticipation of the “cinéma vérité of due process” marked by the advent thirty years later of cable television’s Court TV (127–32). Although Shandler makes no mention of it, 1961 was also the year in which a film first described itself as a work of cinema vérité, a film that, moreover, features the testimony of a Holocaust survivor at its center. In the same year that the Eichmann trial definitively changed Holocaust memory, Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin’s film *Chronicle of a Summer* (*Chronique d’un été*) appeared in France. While absent from scholarship on memory of the Nazi genocide for over forty years, *Chronicle of a Summer*’s almost-forgotten scene of Holocaust testimony suggests the need to look beyond the Eichmann trial for other instances of Holocaust remembrance in the public sphere in the first decades following the war.³ The pursuit of such instances,

even minor ones like that caught in *Chronicle of a Summer*, can alter substantially understanding of the evolution of the Holocaust's meanings— not by offering a counternarrative that would disprove the dominant story but by providing an archaeology of nondominant forces at work in the past. Even if evidence of these forces was not ultimately preserved in dominant, collective memory, their recovery can indicate paths not taken that retain relevance. The juxtaposition in *Chronicle of a Summer* of the memory of the Nazi genocide and the history of decolonization invites the viewer to rethink the “unique” place that the Holocaust has come to hold in discourses on extreme violence.

After situating my argument in debates on the uniqueness of the Holocaust, I will discuss *Chronicle's* important place in film history and then analyze a key sequence from the middle of the ninety-minute film. The various kinds of personal and political encounters staged in the film reveal the stakes of *Chronicle's* aesthetic of juxtaposition: an exploration of the encounter between the traumas of genocide and colonialism. By historicizing Rouch and Morin's representation of this encounter, I unveil the intertwined aesthetic, technological, and political contexts of cinema vérité. Ultimately, *Chronicle's* placing of the Shoah alongside decolonization suggests that narratives of Holocaust memory that focus primarily on the memorial agency of the Eichmann trial may be incomplete. Europe's contemporaneous experience of the limits of its colonial project—here represented especially by the Algerian War of Independence and the autonomy of African nations—also served to catalyze Holocaust memory, while that memory in turn expressed a displaced recognition of the violence of the late colonial state. Taken together, these insights imply that at a certain historical moment a vision of the Holocaust as specific and yet still related to other histories of violence became possible. Despite the transitional possibilities represented in *Chronicle of a Summer*, however, this vision would soon be obscured by the increasing institutionalization of a more monolithic understanding of the Nazi genocide as radically unlike any other historical event.

MULTIDIRECTIONAL MEMORY

In the decades following the Eichmann trial, the Holocaust came to be understood in the popular imagination, especially in Europe, Israel, and North America, as the unique, *sui generis* event that Ben-Gurion described. In its extremity, it is sometimes even defined as only marginally connected to the course of human history. Thus, Elie Wiesel has written that “the Holocaust transcends history” (158), and Claude Lanzmann has claimed that “there is an unbreachable discrepancy”

between any of the Holocaust's possible historical causes and the ultimate unfolding of the events (206). Even arguments for uniqueness grounded in history sometimes tend toward ahistorical hyperbole. In an essay that seeks to differentiate the Nazi genocide from “the case of the Native Americans,” “the famine in the Ukraine” under Stalin, and “the Armenian tragedy,” Steven Katz argues that the “historically and phenomenologically unique” character of the Holocaust ensures that the Nazi genocide will differ from “every case said to be comparable to” it (49–50). At the same time that this understanding of the Nazi genocide has emerged, and in direct response to it, intellectuals interested in indigenous, minority, and colonial histories, as well as some involved in Holocaust studies, have challenged the uniqueness of the Holocaust and fostered research into other histories of extreme violence, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. Many of these intellectuals have argued that, while it is essential to understand the specificity of the Nazi genocide (as of all histories), separating it from other histories of collective violence—and even from history as such—is intellectually and politically dangerous. The dangers of the uniqueness discourse are that it potentially creates a hierarchy of suffering (a morally offensive result) and removes suffering from the field of historical agency (a morally and intellectually suspect result).

Proponents of uniqueness and their critics both tend to understand memory of the Holocaust as competing with that of other histories. Thus, on the one hand, the proponents assiduously search out and refute all attempts to compare or analogize the Holocaust, aiming to preserve memory of it from dilution or relativization. Deborah Lipstadt, a leading scholar studying the phenomenon of Holocaust denial, suggests links between those who relativize the Shoah through comparison and analogy and those who deny its existence; both groups, she argues, blur the “boundaries between fact and fiction and between persecuted and persecutor” (215). Blurring is also a concern of the literary critic Richard Golsan. In a discussion of the trial of Maurice Papon, a French police secretary general during the Vichy period, Golsan worries that comparison between French complicity in the deportation of Jews and French persecution of Algerians during decolonization, with which Papon was also involved, “could only deflect the focus from the Vichy past and, more significant, blur the specificity of the Final Solution” (20–21). On the other hand, critics of uniqueness often argue that the ever-increasing interest in the Nazi genocide distracts from the consideration of other historical tragedies. In one of the more extreme versions of this argument, David Stannard asserts that the uniqueness argument “willingly provides a screen behind which opportunistic governments today attempt to conceal their own

past and ongoing genocidal actions” (250).

There is some truth in both these views. Relativization and banalization of the Holocaust do take place, although perhaps more frequently at the hands of a culture industry that seeks to exploit its currency than among marginal or oppositional intellectuals and activists. Conversely, undue stress on the singularity of the Holocaust at the expense of its similarities with other events can block recognition of past as well as present genocides, if not generally with the full intentionality implied by Stannard—this is one of the lessons of Samantha Power’s convincing study “A Problem from Hell.” In summing up her account of American response to the threat and actuality of genocide in the twentieth century, Power writes, “Perversely, America’s public awareness of the Holocaust often seemed to set the bar for concern so high that we were able to tell ourselves that contemporary genocides were not measuring up” (503).

An overly rigid focus on memory competition, however, distracts from other ways of thinking about the relation between histories and their memorial legacies. Memory is not a zero-sum game. In place of memory competition, I propose a concept of multidirectional memory, which recognizes the dynamic transfers that take place between diverse places and times during remembrance. Instead of proceeding from the assumption that the presence of one history in collective memory entails the erasure or dilution of all others, this essay pays close attention to the circulation of historical memories in encounters whose meanings are complex and overdetermined. The purpose is both to think the Holocaust beyond the uniqueness paradigm and to draw attention to the particular, multidirectional forms of overlap in memory and discourse among the Holocaust and other histories during the age of decolonization. If, as I argue, the Eichmann trial was not the only significant force that propelled the Holocaust into the public sphere but did set the stage for the discourse of uniqueness, returning to a moment before the trial’s effect was felt may prove instructive in breaking apart the ossified positions in the memory wars.

TRAUMATIC ENCOUNTERS

Chronicle of a Summer provides an opportunity to reopen the historicization of Holocaust memory at the moment of the Eichmann trial. Though ignored by Holocaust scholars, Rouch and Morin’s film was quickly recognized as a landmark in nonfiction filmmaking. In this experiment, Rouch, known especially for his dozens of ethnographic films about Africa, turns his gaze to the metropolis. Accompanied by the sociologist Morin and a team of young coworkers, Rouch sends

interviewers into the streets of Paris in the summer of 1960 to ask passersby if they are content with their lives. These street scenes are mixed with interviews of individuals and couples in domestic spaces as well as with staged encounters between groups and documentation of the conditions of French workers. Noted for its early use of self-reflexivity, the film also includes a scene in which the participants and interviewees are asked to comment on an almost complete version of the film. Additionally, Rouch and Morin are frequently present on-screen—from the opening scene in which the filmmakers discuss their vision of the film to the final, retrospective dialogue set in the African section of the Musée de l’Homme, in Paris.

Although it is difficult to grasp *Chronicle of a Summer*’s novelty in the era of the webcam, reality television, and Court TV, Rouch and Morin’s film was, in the early 1960s, a radical aesthetic and sociological experiment that profoundly affected the French new wave and whose most important elements still resonate today. The film is significant for at least four reasons: its place in film history, its relation to the political history of France, its contribution to French intellectual history, and its status as a source for charting a history of memory. Its film-historical significance lies in its reinvention of a genre: *Chronicle* draws on previous documentary experiments by Robert Flaherty and Dziga Vertov (from whose concept of *kinopravda* the term *cinéma vérité* derives) but moves beyond them in the way it incorporates technological innovations in camera and sound technology. In terms of political history, the film refers to the contemporaneous decolonization of the Congo as well as the ongoing Algerian war—Morin even claims that it was the only film of its time to question the war (261). Intellectually, it both derives from and contributes to the thinking of everyday life, a category that was being theorized at the time by Henri Lefebvre and Morin. Finally, as I have noted, Rouch and Morin’s film includes a curious and overlooked contribution to considerations of Holocaust memory.

In *Chronicle*, these four modes of history—film, politics, ideas, and memory—intersect and come into dialogue with one another through the reinvention of the genre of *cinéma vérité*. Rouch and Morin themselves do not present a unified vision of what *cinéma vérité* is or does. While in Morin’s words its purpose is to document “the authenticity of life as it is lived” (229) at a particular moment and in a particular place (e.g., Paris, summer 1960), Rouch possesses what we might call a performative understanding of the genre. *Cinéma vérité*, he remarked, “does not mean the cinema of truth, but the truth of cinema” (*Ciné-Ethnography* 167). That is, Rouch recognizes the camera as a “stimulant” that “stages . . . reality” by intervening in and

shaping the environment it records (100, 185). While the deliberate and provocative staging of scenes would seem to prevent them from authentically capturing “life as it is lived,” the form of cinema vérité responds, although not univocally, to the historical imperatives of its moment.

That *Chronicle of a Summer* will contribute to a rethinking of Holocaust memory and of its relation to decolonization is not immediately obvious in the opening scenes. The film begins with exterior shots of Paris and its suburbs, while Rouch’s voice is heard introducing the project of cinema vérité: “This film was not played by actors, but lived by men and women who have given a few moments of their lives to a new experiment in *cinéma vérité*” (274). A scene follows in which Morin, Rouch, and a young woman named Marceline sit around after dinner, and Morin explains to Marceline the nature of their project: “What Rouch and I want to do is a film on the following idea: How do you live? How do you live? We start with you, and then we’re going to ask other people” (275). In this scene and over the course of the next forty minutes, in which the film explores the contours of Parisian everyday life, the trauma of the Nazi genocide seems far away. In the streets Marceline and her friend Nadine approach strangers and ask them if they are happy; in a series of cramped apartments, various couples detail their daily joys and trials; a worker, Angelo, and a young African student, Landry, converse about racism, class conflict, and consumer society on the staircase of an apartment building; and Marceline’s boyfriend, Jean-Pierre, an angst-ridden philosophy student, recounts his feelings of bitterness and impotence.

In these scenes, however, the traumas of World War II lie just below the surface. The husband in one of the couples interviewed about their living conditions, for example, turns out to have been a deportee, although this is divulged only in the published version of the script. More dramatically, when Jean-Pierre complains of feeling personally and politically “fucked over” and “impotent,” Marceline takes responsibility for his political defeatism, admitting that “it’s partly through me that you . . . knew all those people who were ready to cry after their political experiences . . . Me too, in fact.” As Marceline somberly continues that “in spite of everything” she thought it was possible to make Jean-Pierre happy, the camera pans down from her face to her arm and reveals the tattoo that marks her as a survivor of Auschwitz (303–05; ellipses in orig.). Although Morin claims in the following scene that the film “up to here has been enclosed in a relatively personal and individual universe” (305), the still-unspoken memory of the Nazi period and the concentrationary universe emerges in the scene with Jean-Pierre as a force that cuts across public and

private realms, across political crises and everyday intimacies.¹¹

When the Nazi genocide finally becomes an explicit theme after the conversation with Jean-Pierre, it does so in the context of discussions about contemporary racism and the struggles for decolonization in Algeria and the Congo. These discussions and the film techniques that render them both reveal a movement from private to public and create a sense that these realms are inextricably implicated in each other because of the traumatic effects of political violence. On the one hand, the *mise-en-scène* of the sequence echoes Morin’s claim that the film moves from the personal to the public, as the scene with a couple in a cramped apartment gives way to a group scene in a dining room, then to a group scene in a roof-terrace restaurant (first shot so the street below is visible in the background), and finally to a pair of traveling shots in the streets of the city. On the other hand, the personal dimension persists throughout the film, and the public dimension seems always to haunt it.

Throughout the sequence, the filmmakers alternate close-ups of the participants speaking and listening to one another with occasional medium shots that display the participants as a group or that look over the shoulder of one of them, creating a subjective point of view. These tight and often subjective shots establish an intimacy between viewers and participants that grounds the illusion of a relatively unmediated capturing of everyday life. Yet, through its staging, the film reveals everyday life as shot through with politics and violence. First, Rouch and Morin film their friends in an after-dinner discussion of the Algerian war, a scene that testifies to the ambivalence among the French about the war and to their somewhat distanced response to it (even in a left-wing intellectual milieu such as this one). If, in the previous scene with Jean-Pierre and Marceline, an everyday affair is ruptured by memory of extreme violence, in the discussion of the Algerian war, state violence is revealed as having become quotidian, “a sort of mutual habit,” complains a young Régis Debray. Following Debray’s exhortation “You’ve got to wager . . . that men can finally put an end to this war,” sound effects of machine-gun fire are heard, and a series of newspaper headlines is displayed, concerning first the war and then events in the newly independent Congo (306–07). The montage of newspaper headlines and gunfire, rare *nondiegetic* elements resonant of fictional-film techniques for the creation of dramatic tension, reinforces the sense that in 1960 everyday life and the punctuality of political events are intersecting, despite public indifference.

In the following scene, Marceline’s identity as an Auschwitz survivor enters the film explicitly through the provocation of the filmmakers during a discussion of contemporary racism and

anticolonial solidarity among Africans. The setting of this scene—the Totem restaurant at the Musée de l'Homme—takes on added significance when we realize that the museum functioned as one of the initial organizational sites for the French Resistance during the German occupation and that it houses the ethnographic artifacts collected during Marcel Griaule's famous Mission Dakar-Djibouti (Clifford 139). Oddly, though, the scene begins with a mild expression of racism by Marceline: "Personally," she claims, "I would never marry a black" (307). A brief discussion of racial stereotypes follows before Morin interrupts with a question about responses to the events in the Congo, where the Lumumba government was struggling against Belgian military forces. Landry, a student from the Ivory Coast, explains the solidarity of Africans from different nations with all anticolonial struggles, and Marceline, perhaps trying to save face after her embarrassing revelations, expresses understanding for Landry's position based on her own experiences: "I understand that very well, because while the example is not completely, completely a good one . . . but if there is a manifestation of anti-Semitism in any country in the world . . . well, then I'm involved . . . I can't allow it . . . [I]t's all the same, for me" (310; ellipses in orig.). Marceline's willingness to proceed so quickly to an analogy between anti-Semitism and colonialism reveals the presence of a historical sensibility at odds with the discourse of uniqueness that would eventually become dominant but that was only just emergent at this moment.

Prompted perhaps by Marceline's analogy between Jewish solidarity in the face of anti-Semitism and Africans' solidarity in the face of colonialism, Rouch asks the African students, Landry and Raymond, if they know what Marceline's tattoo is. They do not. A few moments of embarrassment mixed with joking about the possible sources of the tattoo ensue—an affectation? a telephone number?—and then, after the camera has zoomed in on her arm and receded, Marceline explains: "well, it's not my telephone number . . . uh . . . I was deported to a concentration camp during the war, because I'm Jewish, and this is a serial number that they gave me in that camp" (311; ellipses in orig.). A quick pan reveals that the usually voluble Landry has been silenced. Raymond knows something about the camps, having seen a film about them, probably Alain Resnais's 1955 *Night and Fog* (*Nuit et brouillard*). This scene, an exemplary instance of Rouch's notion of *cinéma vérité* as provocation, produces discomfort in the viewers as in the participants (even Rouch was later embarrassed about his demeanor here). In the course of a brief scene, there has been an odd displacement from actuality (signaled by the newspaper headlines and the discussion of ongoing events) to memory (registered

by the inscription of a tattoo and the invocation of a historical film). Furthermore, the scene has established a disturbing hierarchy of knowledge in which the white French figures are set up as those who know, while Landry and Raymond are relegated to the status of those who do not, and Marceline comes to embody history. Given how little was generally known about the specificities of the Nazi genocide in 1960, such a hierarchy is particularly dubious.

As that scene ends, we cut to a sequence that follows Marceline through the Place de la Concorde and into the empty markets of Les Halles as she recounts her story: how she was deported with her father, was beaten in front of him by an SS man the one time they were reunited in the camps, and then returned home without him to the remnants of her family. Once again, *mise-en-scène* is significant and contributes to a layering of past and present, everyday and extreme: the innocent-looking Place de la Concorde triggers a memory of Marceline's arrest, while the architecture of Les Halles echoes that of the train station to which she would have returned and thus seems to prompt the content of her testimony. Past and present, here and there, are further confused through Marceline's mode of address: "And then here I am now, Place de la Concorde . . . I came back, you stayed. (She sighs.) We'd been there six months before I saw you" (312; ellipses in orig.). Speaking directly to her dead father, Marceline creates a ghostly space in which places (the camps, Paris) and times (the war, the postwar) intersect with little transition. If the remainder of the film shifts toward more mundane themes (such as love affairs and vacations) and Marceline plays a less central role, her dramatic testimony continues to mark viewers' memories (as comments by critics and participants in the film demonstrate).

Marceline's narrative is brief and cryptic and yet, viewed from the present, resolutely familiar. Its story of deportation and return to a shattered family echoes numerous other camp memoirs, most closely the third volume of Charlotte Delbo's trilogy, *Auschwitz and After* (*Auschwitz et après*), in which Delbo creates a collection of short survivors' narratives focuses on the difficulty of reintegration into postwar social and family conditions (233–354; Rothberg, *Traumatic Realism* 141–77). But if the elements of Marceline's story sound familiar now, that is because of the many texts that have been published, like Delbo's, or rediscovered, like Primo Levi's, since the early 1960s. At the time, the stories of Jewish victims of Nazism were only beginning to be recognized. Elie Wiesel's *La nuit* and André Schwarz-Bart's *Le dernier des justes*, two key texts of what would become Holocaust literature, were published in the two years preceding the filming of *Chronicle*, yet these texts can only retrospectively be seen as forming part of an

autonomous discourse. Indeed, Schwarz-Bart's accounts of his writing emphasize how significantly decolonization contributed to his oeuvre (Schwarz-Bart; Salomon).

The sequence of scenes that runs from the confrontation of Marceline and Jean-Pierre to Marceline's testimony constitutes a series of encounters of different types. Each of the first three scenes stages an encounter between individuals around difficult personal and political issues, while the fourth depicts an encounter between past and present in the form of the reemergence of traumatic memories. Furthermore, both between and within scenes, the filmmakers force encounters between different histories, between public and private spaces, and between everyday practices and traumatic violence. This technique of productive encounter recalls Rouch's surrealist heritage, which he imbibed during his youth in 1930s Paris, and especially James Clifford's notion of "ethnographic surrealism," which is meant to capture the creative energy and methodological innovation of that era. For Clifford, "ethnographic surrealist practice . . . attacks the familiar, provoking the irruption of otherness—the unexpected" (145). Referring to anthropology's tendency to produce encounters "in which distinct cultural realities are cut from their contexts and forced into jarring proximity," Clifford suggests that "[t]he surrealist moment in ethnography is that moment in which the possibility of comparison exists in unmediated tension with sheer incongruity" (146). Surrealists intend their practice of juxtaposition to provoke access to levels of reality beyond the everyday and the conscious.

In *Chronicle of a Summer*, the ethnographic surrealist method of encounter reveals the presence in 1960s Paris of two further forms of encounter: the traumatic encounter with memory of genocide and the unsettling encounter with colonial legacies. The "jarring proximity" of these two forms of encounter—which in these scenes seems to exceed the filmmakers' intentional manipulation—produces ambivalence and discomfort but also displays the political unconscious of the moment: the inscription of an as-yet-unacknowledged memory in urban space and the residual hierarchies of race and nation that continue to haunt even progressive milieus in the metropolis. While for many today this proximity produces an effect of "sheer incongruity," the juxtaposition of legacies of the Nazi genocide and colonialism has its historical logic. To understand the significance of the inclusion of these scenes in *Chronicle*, we must reestablish the context of their emergence. In this context, the disturbing displacement enacted in the film from anticolonial actuality to the memory of genocide takes on additional dimensions.

CINEMA VERITÉ AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE SURVIVOR

The scenes following Marceline into the streets of Paris link the reinvention of cinema vérité to the emergence of a new public form of Holocaust memory. If the film's sequencing of this act of testimony implies that it is included as a kind of remediation for the "ignorance" of Landry and Raymond, I argue that its conditions of possibility are more complex. These new forms of film and public memory take shape at the intersection of technology, aesthetics, and the conjunctural politics of decolonization. In these scenes, and unlike in *kinopravda* or even *Night and Fog*, the documentary mentioned in *Chronicle*, film and firsthand testimony work together dramatically.

The technology that enables cinema vérité also seems to elicit the form of testimony, a genre in its own right that has grown in importance since the early 1960s. The light and mobile Éclair 16 mm camera, developed during shooting with Rouch's feedback, and the portable Nagra tape recorder that Rouch and Morin use enable the filmmakers to capture synchronous image and sound without relying on a large crew (Feld 14–15). Technology allows the filmmakers simultaneously to be intrusive and to remain aloof; intimacy and distance combine to set the stage for an unprecedented articulation of personal experience in a public medium. We see this combination especially in the shots of Marceline as she crosses the public space of the Place de la Concorde and enters the markets of Les Halles, all the while withdrawn into a traumatized, trancelike reminiscence, which is captured by the portable sound equipment. Although her words are ultimately intended for the public, they are articulated as if privately, since even the crew is unable to hear her as she speaks. Anticipating the invention of Holocaust video testimony, which would only begin to be archived in the 1970s, cinema vérité deploys the latest technology and documents the emergence of the Holocaust survivor. Like the video archive, Rouch's cinema vérité displays an embodied, speaking subject.¹⁶ As Michel Marie has suggested, cinema vérité and the related "direct cinema" movement possess "an aesthetic based on a return to the primordial function of spoken language" (35). Much of the power of video testimony and cinema vérité derives from their apparently phonocentric use of a self-present body.

The direct synchronized sound used in cinema vérité and the extreme close-ups made possible by the new camera technology encourage understanding of the embodied subject, in this case Marceline, as a carrier of authenticity. Yet, while the scenes with Marceline are moving—and unprecedented—they cannot simply be considered "authentic"; or, rather, they unsettle notions of authenticity

that have since come to adhere to the powerful genre of audiovisual testimony. An unquestioned association of testimony with authenticity emerges even in a sophisticated scholar of Holocaust representation like Lawrence Langer, who asserts that such testimonies bypass “the mediation of a text” and reach us “in their raw frankness” through “the immediacy and intimacy of . . . interviews” (xii–xiii). Such claims, already dubious when made for video testimony, would be even more mystifying applied to *Chronicle*, despite their echo of Morin’s conception of cinema vérité. Far from being an unmediated example of sound and image, Marceline’s testimony emerges through the mediation of film. Cinema is present in this scene not only in the form of sophisticated editing decisions, the visible and invisible sound and camera equipment, and the crew who, offscreen, ride alongside and then ahead of Marceline in a car (Rouch, *Ciné- Ethnography* 153). Cinema also circulates here as what Marceline herself later called “cinematographic fantasies.” “[C]ertain lines from *Hiroshima, mon amour* came to me” during the filming, she writes in her contribution to the published version of the script, and indeed Marceline’s scenes in the Place de la Concorde and Les Halles visually echo the nighttime meanderings of Emmanuelle Riva in Alain Resnais and Marguerite Duras’s 1959 film (Rouch, *Ciné- Ethnography* 341). The choice of the Concorde as a location was determined, Morin reports, by the expected presence there of a crew shooting a film on the German occupation, which—had the crew still been there—would have offered signs in German and extras wearing Wehrmacht uniforms (Morin 240). Marceline’s trancelike testimony is actually a kind of “ciné-transe” in Rouch’s sense—an event of mutual possession mediated by the presence of the camera (Rouch, *Ciné-Ethnography* 99–100). As Marceline writes, “I put myself in the situation, I dramatized myself, I chose a character that I then interpreted within the limits of the film, a character who is both an aspect of the reality of Marceline and also a dramatized character created by Marceline” (341). The mixture of fantasy, staging, and technologically mediated access to reality in these scenes constitutes an unusual context for thinking about the emergence of testimony but one that is not without suggestive ties to more canonical works of Holocaust representation. For instance, *Chronicle*’s mixture of staging and testimony makes the film look like an unacknowledged predecessor of Claude Lanzmann’s opus *Shoah*, a film based entirely on testimony but understood by Lanzmann less as a documentary than as a kind of performative reenactment.

While Marceline’s testimony would not have been possible without the technology and aesthetic ideology of cinema vérité, both the act of testimony by a Holocaust survivor and the genre of cinema

vérité need to be historicized. 20 First of all, reference to Marceline as a Holocaust survivor is somewhat anachronistic— not only because the word Holocaust was not used in French until much later but also because the concept of the survivor was only then emerging. As already noted, the years of *Chronicle*’s filming and release, 1960–61, are crucial moments in the history of Holocaust memory; at this time a notion of the specific nature of the extermination of European Jews emerges. Eichmann’s abduction by Israeli agents in 1960 already raised many legal and moral questions that were hotly debated in the lead-up to the trial, but the prosecutor Gideon Hausner’s decision to call 111 witnesses to testify in the 1961 trial had the longest-term effect on the shape of Holocaust memory (Segev; Novick; Wieviorka; Shandler). In the words of the French historian Annette Wieviorka, “The Eichmann trial marks a turning point. . . . The memory of the genocide becomes constitutive of a certain Jewish identity at the same time that it claims a presence in the public sphere” (81). In addition, Wieviorka goes on to argue, “the survivor” becomes a social identity through the agency of the trial: “Before the Eichmann trial, the survivor maintains her identity by and in intimate associations, an associative life closed in on itself. . . . The Eichmann trial changes the situation. At the heart of survivor identity, a new function [emerges], that of the carrier of history” (117–18).

If the public discourse of the Holocaust’s uniqueness dates to the early 1960s and is closely tied to the survivor as bearer of history, as Wieviorka and others argue, then *Chronicle of a Summer* has provocative implications for that discourse. The technology that makes Marceline’s testimony possible is a technology of reproducibility, a set of synchronized recording devices that facilitate the passage of intimacy into publicity. Furthermore, the staginess of these scenes, the difficulty of assessing their degree of spontaneity or scriptedness, mirrors that of the Eichmann trial itself. Like Marceline’s testimony (by her own account) and Rouch and Morin’s film as a whole, the trial was deliberately staged; it took place not in a courtroom but in Jerusalem’s Beit Ha’am, “a large public theater and community center” that had been “remodeled to provide hundreds of print and broadcast journalists with work space and telecommunications services” (Shandler 90). Since the Israeli government had set as its goal the creation of a new narrative of the Holocaust and not simply the rendering of justice, the trial became, in Shandler’s words, “a kind of hyperhistory,” a “self-conscious performance of the past as ‘historical’” (104). The trial thus shares with the film both a self-conscious aesthetic strategy and the use of the latest technology as vehicles for the dissemination of its truths. While in the trial this mix ultimately contributes to the

worldwide propagation of a discourse of uniqueness, the evidence of the film suggests other possible routes that might have been taken.

TRUTH AND DECOLONIZATION

How can we situate *Chronicle* and Marceline's testimony in relation to the epochal change ushered in by the 1961 trial? It is not only their relation but also their lack of relation that proves instructive for thinking about transformations in Holocaust memory. While the lead-up to the trial could have influenced Rouch and Morin's decision to place a survivor at the center of their film, the dramatic testimonies that constituted a large part of the trial and changed the contours of Holocaust memory could not have been influential, since the scenes with Marceline were filmed in August 1960 and most of the editing of the film had been completed by the time the trial commenced. (In addition, I have not found reference to the Eichmann trial in any of Rouch and Morin's writings about the film.) While the evidence of this one film cannot be said to change the dominant narrative of Holocaust memory and the role played within it by the critical Eichmann trial, the unprecedented scene of Marceline's testimony suggests that we need to think more about the social context in which public memory of the genocide and the figure of the survivor emerged together.

The context the film establishes suggests that an important role can be ascribed, at least in France, to the contemporaneous history of decolonization, which was bringing questions of everyday and extreme forms of state violence and racism into the public sphere. It is in the context of discussions of race and colonialism that Rouch and Morin choose to highlight Marceline's mark as a survivor and then to capture her on film in an act of testimony. I would go further and claim that the concept of *vérité* or truth, however contested, that buttresses the genre of cinema *vérité* takes some of its force from the struggles against colonialism that were at their height when Rouch and Morin first conceptualized the genre in 1959–62. The key elements of the war and the anticolonial movement relevant here are torture, censorship, and testimony.

Starting in 1957, during the battle of Algiers, and continuing, despite controversy, throughout the war, torture became an ordinary measure for the French in their war against the Algerians. Almost immediately, the practice of torture evoked memories of the German occupation of France, among members of the leftist resistance and even among some state officials. For example, when resigning in 1957, the secretary general of the police in Algiers, Paul Teitgen, a former deportee, wrote that he recognized in Algeria "profound traces . . . of the

torture that fourteen years ago I personally suffered in the basements of the Gestapo in Nancy" (qtd. in Delbo, *Les belles lettres* 81). When, in the mid-1960s, the Austrian Holocaust survivor Jean Améry wrote his well-known essay "Torture," about his experiences at the hands of the Nazis, he referred to contemporary practices in Vietnam as well as to the "numerous" books on torture in Algeria that appeared in France "around 1960" (23). The frequency of such analogies and links between past and current histories received further impetus from the presence of at least one million Algerians in concentration camps (*en camp de concentration*) in Algeria in 1959 and thousands in administrative detention in the metropole (Stora 34). Such extreme procedures were immediately experienced by camp survivors, including Delbo, as unwelcome echoes of the past (cf. *Les belles lettres* 65–66).

But the use of Nazi-like tactics by a nation recently victimized by fascism does not alone constitute the context of *Chronicle of a Summer*. The discourse of truth and the practice of testimony used in the film might also be understood to derive their inspiration from the extensive, if inconsistent, censorship undertaken by the state. After 1958 and the suppression of Henri Alleg's famous exposé of torture, La question, fourteen percent of all books on the war were censored, as well as hundreds of periodicals. Censorship reached its height in 1960 and 1961, the years Rouch and Morin's film was produced (Stora 25–28). The undeclared status of the war and the consequent inability to name the enemy (was the enemy Algerian, French, Muslim?), along with the open secret of torture, heightened the effect of censorship and produced a felt need among some French citizens for what the historian Benjamin Stora has called "a truth cure" (53)—a need to expose, to the extent possible, that which has been suppressed. Although much was known at the time—or available to be known by those who were interested—the aura of suppression would continue for decades after the war's end; indeed, only in September 1999 did the French Assembly vote that the "events" in Algeria be officially known as a war (Ross, *May '68* 49; Maschino).

This context of secrets and suppression entailed that, at least in the metropolis, a discourse of "truth" was circulating in proximity to anticolonial struggles at the moment when Rouch and Morin were creating the new cinema *vérité*. Most obviously, several journals of the French anticolonial movement deployed the concept of truth as definitional in their titles. There was *Vérité-liberté*, which began publication in May 1960 and was edited by the historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet, among others; and there were, in addition, *Vérités anticolonialistes* and *La vérité des travailleurs*, a communist newspaper whose main February 1961 headline reads "All Our Forces

for the Algerian Revolution” (Hamon and Rotman 398–99). In 1958 Jean- Paul Sartre’s radical comrade Francis Jeanson had founded the journal *Vérités* pour to unify various clandestine resistance groups; the arrest and trial of members of Jeanson’s network of support for the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale bracketed the primary filming of *Chronicle of a Summer* in 1960 and led to the drafting of the famous “Manifesto of the 121,” written by Maurice Blanchot and others in September of that year in favor of the right not to serve in the army (Sorum 173).

The link among cinema vérité, the Algerian war, and memory of the Nazi genocide is further supported by the fact that not only truth but also its articulation, specifically through testimony, was central to resistance to the Algerian war. Anticolonial activists attempted to circumvent state censorship through the publication of banned articles, and books in journals such as *Témoignages et documents* (“Testimonies and Documents”), also edited by Vidal Naquet before a split in 1960 led him to found *Vérité-liberté* (Vidal-Naquet, Face 83). Indeed, for people like Vidal-Naquet and André Mandouze, an associate of Frantz Fanon’s in North Africa, the acts of testimony and resistance bridged the eras of the two wars. During World War II, Mandouze was one of the founders of *Témoignage Chrétien* (“Christian Witness”), a group that helped save Jewish children and whose magazine was active in resistance to the Algerian war. Years later Mandouze titled the first volume of his memoirs *D’une résistance à l’autre* (“From One Resistance to Another”; Macey 260–62) and thus testified to the persistence of the link between fascist and colonial violence in at least a segment of French collective memory. Vidal Naquet, a French Jew whose parents had been deported and murdered by the Nazis, retrospectively observed that “I personally entered the fight against the Algerian war and specifically against torture . . . with a constant point of reference: the obsessive memory of our national injustices—particularly the Dreyfus Affair—and of the Nazi crimes of torture and extermination” (Assassins 127). Indeed, in the first editorial of *Vérité-liberté*, in May 1960, Vidal-Naquet wrote that “nobody can claim today that the Nazi years are completely behind us” (Face 83).

I argue that Marceline’s testimony was made possible by a discursive context in which the association of torture, truth, testimony, and resistance underwrote a link between the Algerian war and Nazi atrocities. The emergence of the survivor from silence and the private sphere of intimate associations—indeed the emergence of that private sphere—into a public space of articulation parallels the process of the Eichmann trial but derives its impetus at least in part from the intense, ongoing struggles of decolonization, which were forcing a new

recognition of racialized state violence, at least among a small cadre of French leftist intellectuals and activists. Those struggles to bring the truth of colonial violence into the public sphere met two difficulties, however. In the summer of 1960, as in the years immediately preceding and following, the ideological and repressive apparatuses of the state, unsurprisingly, actively resisted the recognition of state violence. But in addition, and perhaps more significant, the great majority of the French public was indifferent to the truths that could be known despite the censorship, a censorship that was in fact applied inconsistently. In the words of Stora, “Society knows, but contents itself to share the secret of an undeclared war” (73). The preservation of this secret demands an active work of forgetting and exclusion that “disappears” the violence of the state and the nationalist insurgency. Just at the moment that memory of the Nazi genocide is, according to Wiewiorka, emerging out of the intimate sphere, contemporary consciousness of the Algerian war is, according to Stora, already relegating collective history to oblivion. Since no special funeral orations, tombstones, or monuments mark the return of dead French soldiers from the war, “the relationship to death, exclusively private, is excluded from public life” (73).

When the memory of one series of events emerges just as another series begins the longterm process of being forgotten, it is tempting to assign a relation of causality between remembrance and oblivion. In that reading, which is not uncommon, the growing obsession with the Holocaust serves as a screen memory that blocks access to the more recent and more troubling complicity with colonial violence.²⁵ In the long run, this may capture a partial truth of the situation in France—as in other locations, such as the United States, where unpleasant memories of slavery and the genocide of indigenous peoples remain muted in comparison with a large-scale fascination with the events of the Shoah and World War II. But the evidence provided by a contextual reading of *Chronicle of a Summer* suggests a more complex memory dynamic. For example, even as the new social identity of the survivor arises in France, the general climate remains hostile to a full reckoning with the past. According to Henry Rousso, the early 1960s represent the heart of that stage of the “Vichy syndrome”—France’s initial repression of and later obsession with its World War II past—during which French complicity and collaboration with Germany and its “final solution” were largely ignored in favor of the myth of a unified resistance to Nazism. Yet even in those years the Algerian war sparked politicized memory work, especially among former members of the resistance who identified themselves with a Dreyfusard inheritance (Rousso, ch. 2). In other words, even if the

majority of the French public remained uninterested in remembering or knowing crimes committed in the name of France, those who did speak out about Algeria were all the more likely to foster memory and testimony that drew on and helped create memory of the genocide.

Collective memories of genocide and colonialism had not settled into stable forms but remained in dynamic tension in the transitional and conflicted France of the late 1950s and early 1960s.²⁶ *Chronicle of a Summer* bears this out. On the one hand, the film undertakes a displacement from the immediate and pressing question of colonialism and decolonization to that of the temporally removed Holocaust. On the other hand, this displacement happens in a political context in which discourse on contemporary events was significantly restrained. This displacement may represent not merely a struggle between memories but also an instance of multidirectional memory: a process in which transfers occur between events that have come to seem separate from each other. Thus, not only does the actuality of decolonization struggles promote conditions in which memory of the Shoah can be articulated; the articulation of that memory may also serve as an allegory for what cannot be publicly spoken or for what the public does not want to hear. In the film, traumatic memory of the genocide is staged as moving from the implicit to the explicit and from the private to the public sphere. Given the enormous state censorship and repression that targeted opposition to the Algerian war—hence the need for journals such as those mentioned above—Marceline’s testimony may carry an added symbolic burden: she speaks as a victim whose experiences can finally be narrated and who thus stands in allegorically for those victims whose experiences cannot yet be spoken and recognized.

The fact that Marceline’s memory does not emerge “naturally”—that it derives from overlapping forces of technology, imagination, and politics and is situated in a context seemingly far removed from the Nazi genocide—ought to provoke further reflection on the history of Holocaust memory. The interarticulation of Holocaust memory and anticolonial history suggests that attempts to separate the legacies of the Holocaust from those of other histories of violence not only are morally suspect but also miss the productive dynamic that occurs in the acts of juxtaposition, comparison, and analogy. *Chronicle of a Summer* carries a trace of memory that does not fit into the dominant understanding of the Nazi genocide as “a unique episode that has no equal,” as a crime with “no parallel,” to reprise Ben-Gurion’s language. Rather, at the moment that such an understanding is emerging into international public consciousness, *Chronicle* bears witness to an alternative vision—a vision in which the specificity of the Nazi genocide is marked not in opposition to colonial violence but through

an encounter with it. However rooted the film was in the particular national and transnational circumstances of France in the early 1960s, *Chronicle*’s vision is not unique. Further traces of this vision remain to be excavated.²⁷

Notes

I am grateful to Susan Suleiman and Yasemin Yildiz for insightful comments on earlier versions of this essay and to Ramona Curry for help obtaining Rouch-related materials.

1 My translation from the French. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from French are my own.

2 Shandler takes the phrase from an article in the *New Yorker*. Radio was probably an even more important medium than television at the time; most Israelis experienced the trial through radio.

3 The first brief but insightful discussion of the film in the context of the Holocaust appeared after this essay was written (Hirsch).

4 My rethinking of Holocaust memory parallels that of Baron, who does not, however, discuss the question of decolonization.

5 In an informative and illuminating essay, Ungar considers a similar sequence of scenes but does not relate it to the history of Holocaust memory or to the specificities of anticolonial discourse (although he mentions both in passing).

6 While the notion of the Holocaust’s uniqueness retains its hold over the public imagination and much academic work in Holocaust studies, there have always been multiple perspectives, and the scholarly situation is beginning to change. See, e.g., the excellent comparative studies in Gellately and Kiernan.

7 The debate about uniqueness has generated an enormous amount of scholarly and polemical literature. For some representative contributions, see Rosenbaum.

8 For a related argument with respect to historiography, see Moses.

9 It is true that no French film directly addressed the Algerian war until after its conclusion. Those that attempted to address it indirectly, such as Alain Resnais’s *Muriel*, were sometimes censored. See Stora 38–45.

10 Quotations from the film are taken from Rouch’s *Ciné-Ethnography*, which includes a translation of the entire script that is more reliable than the English subtitles. See Rouch and Morin for the original French version of the script, which also contains important supplementary materials.

11 Paratextual materials suggest that the filmmakers deliberately

mutated the Holocaust's presence up until this point. An early scene in which Marceline describes her wartime experiences was edited out of the final version, although it is included in the script. This muting creates the sense, seemingly shared by the filmmakers, that the beginning of the film is "merely personal" and that politics emerges only in the middle of the film. I would argue that these realms are more intertwined. Rothman includes a fine close analysis of the scene with Jean-Pierre, but I disagree strongly with his conclusion that "[w]hen Rouch films Marceline . . . [s]ymbolically, he builds a death camp for her, and for himself" (85).

12 For Rouch's account of the museum during the war, see his essay "The Mad Fox and the Pale Master."

13 Clifford's phrasing is close to the way that Rouch once described the scenes with Marceline: "All of a sudden an encounter [took] place between two unusual things that normally are not related, and a structure was created because of this meeting" (qtd. in Freyer 441).

14 Eaton describes Rouch's surrealism as "a surrealism as conveyed by the theme of the encounter" (50). On Rouch and surrealism, see also DeBouzek (311–12) and Rouch, "Mad Fox."

15 Resnais intended *Night and Fog* as an oblique commentary on the Algerian war, and its text was written by a World War II deportee, Jean Cayrol. Unlike Marceline's account, however, Cayrol's narration is neither personal testimony nor testimony to the genocide of Jews but rather a poetic and political invocation of generalized camp horrors.

16 On voice and the Holocaust video archive, see Hartman 144.

17 Dornfeld discusses the editing of *Chronicle*.

18 I am adapting Rouch's concept, which primarily refers to the kind of trance the cinematographer experiences while filming possession ceremonies. This scene has, however, already been associated with "ciné-transe"; see De-Bouzek 305.

19 Hirsch also reads *Chronicle* as a precursor of Shoah and argues that the Rouch and Morin film offers the first "representation of the witness as a bearer of traumatic memory" (68). However, because he does not consider discourses of decolonization, he does not offer a new explanation of why *Chronicle* marks this emergence.

20 On Rouch's aesthetic ideology, see Eaton.

21 Wieviorka does not suggest that only the Eichmann trial matters. She also points to the publications of Wiesel and Schwarz-Bart and to ongoing German trials (86–87).

22 In 1961 the camp memoirist Delbo published her first book, *Les belles lettres*, which concerns the Algerian war.

23 Neither Rouch nor Morin signed the manifesto, but they signed the more moderate "Call to Opinion for a Negotiated Peace in Algeria,"

along with Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Paul Ricoeur, Roland Barthes, and others (Sorum 175).

24 Gilroy has been vigilant in pursuing the links between responses to fascist and colonial violence. See esp. his discussion of the novelist William Gardner Smith, whose 1963 novel set in Paris, *The Stone Face*, linked the Nazi genocide, the Algerian war, and American racism (316–24).

25 La Capra gives a convincing version of this argument that addresses the relation among Albert Camus's writings, the Holocaust, and the Algerian war (73–94).

26 On this period, see Ross, *Fast Cars*. Ross, however, downplays the legacies of the Nazi occupation and genocide.

27 For another example, see Rothberg, "W. E. B. Du Bois."

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