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Extraordinary career of Jean Rouch—surrealist, engineer, anthropologist, cinéaste—synthesizing the gains of Vertov and Flaherty, to take his camera inside the taboo. In Abidjan and Paris, ethnographical films appropriated by their subjects as springboard for the New Wave.

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THE CAMERA POSSESSED

Jean Rouch, Ethnographic Cinéaste: 1917–2004

A civil engineer, and leading authority on Dogon rituals; an Africanist, who turned his ethnographer's camera on 1960s Paris; a second-generation Surrealist, and inspiration for Truffaut's audacious final scene in *Les Quatre cents coups*. Jean Rouch's long career as an anthropologist and film-maker reads like one of Apollinaire's *poèmes conversations*, sentences and verses fused from snatches overheard at café tables: separate people, events, moments in time, brought together in ways that seem to suggest a new sort of life. Rouch appears in many of his own films—there were over a hundred of them—as a mischief-making *bon viveur*, always ready to poke fun. André Breton and Luis Buñuel attended his early screenings—Buñuel declaring himself, after *Les Maîtres fous*, 'fascinated and afraid'. A pioneering figure in the history of visual ethnography, he was also a profound influence on the *Cahiers du cinéma* directors, a living link between metropolitan Surrealism, African liberation and the *Nouvelle vague*. His thesis *La Religion et la magie Songhay*, published in 1960, remains a vital resource. Rouch was attending a film festival in Niger in February this year when his car crashed, killing him and injuring his wife, Jocelyne Lamothe, the actor Damouré Zika, and film-maker Moustapha Alassane. He had been active and involved to the last, giving screenings of his films from Iran to Mozambique—making his loss, at the age of 86, terribly premature.

Rouch was born in 1917, in Paris. His Catalan father, a meteorologist, had sailed with Jean-Baptiste Charcot's 1908 expedition to the Antarctic, on the *Pourquoi Pas?* His mother was a *normande* artist, whose brother had also been part of Charcot's team. Both parents were connected to the avant-garde, and Rouch was alluding as much to Breton's mantra as to the explorer's ship when he said, 'I consider myself a child of the *Pourquoi Pas?*' His early years were peripatetic ones, travelling with the family—his father now a French naval attaché—to ports in Algeria, Turkey, Morocco, the Balkans, Greece and Germany, before moving to Paris in the early 1930s for his baccalaureate. Rouch plunged into the cultural life of the city, hearing Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong play their first set there, catching new theatre by Cocteau and Anouilh. He discovered, more or less simultaneously, the work of the Surrealists and the African landscapes and Dogon masks that Marcel Griaule had brought back from his 1931 Dakar-to-Djibouti expedition for the new Musée de l'Homme.

If Rouch's interest in these objects sprang in part from the cult of the artefact developed in Cubist and Surrealist circles, passionate about *l'art nègre*, it was also informed by lectures from Griaule and Germaine Dieterlan, early ethnographic footage screened at the Cinémathèque and articles in *Minotaure* that insisted on their scientific value. For Rouch, Surrealism and anthropology, art and science, were never separate worlds. Nor did he ever lose

his early sense of shock and fascination with the two. As he put it: 'For me, de Chirico's paintings are connected with the Dogon landscape'. [1] The first films he saw were *Nanook of the North* and *Robin Hood*, [2] but as a student he was a regular at Henri Langlois's early screenings, watching Buñuel's *Un Chien andalou*, Vertov's *Enthusiasm* and André Breton's favourite film, *Peter Ibbetson*, in a basement on the Champs-Élysées even before the Cinémathèque was founded—as well as Chaplin, Renoir, Stroheim, Clair. [3]

Rouch initially chose to train, though, not as an artist or anthropologist but as an engineer, enrolling at the Écoles des Ponts et Chaussées in 1937. He would later apply the rigorous disciplines of this formation—practical tasks informed by imaginative mathematical understanding—to his anthropology. Making his first inventory of the Songhay gods for his doctoral thesis in Niger, Rouch would recall the way his teacher Albert Coquot had slowly initiated the students into the apparently irrational principle of the resistance of materials to successive stresses: through precise analysis, the strangeness would slowly disappear. As an engineer, he would later explain, he had learnt that 'everything has already been invented'. [4]

In 1941, disillusioned by the ease with which his country had folded in the wake of Nazi invasion, and well aware of the difficulties of living in occupied France, Rouch enlisted as a civil engineer and was posted to the French West African territory of Niger. Legend has it that he left Paris with nothing in his bag but a copy of Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit* and Michel Leiris's *L'Afrique fantôme*. [5] Rouch's first encounter with Africa was thus as an 'empire-builder'—of roads and bridges—and structured by the rapidly deteriorating colonial relationship. He quickly understood the barbarity of the situation, finding the colonists 'more Vichyssois than the Parisians'. A labour force of some twenty-thousand Africans toiled without tools or machinery, 'mak[ing] bridges like Romans, just cutting stones'. Over them stood the 'mad masters' so savagely mimicked in one of his greatest films: the site bosses who routinely exploited their unconditional authority over the huge workforce. Rouch was soon deemed too close to his African colleagues—he was intrigued by the possession rituals he witnessed in the local villages—and expelled from Niger by the governor for being 'a Gaullist'. Rouch was eventually relocated to the Senegal River, now under Allied occupation, and spent two years there, training with explosives to prepare for the crossing of the Rhine. [6] One of his first film scripts was written amid the ruins of Berlin, and published by Cocteau in *Fontaine* in 1945.

Anti-colonial ethnography?

Back in Paris, Rouch approached Marcel Griaule—who would take the first chair in Ethnology at the Sorbonne in 1946—to supervise his doctoral thesis, the seminal ethnographic study of the Songhay. French anthropology had originally established itself as a colonial discipline *par excellence* under Maurice Delafosse, who taught the ethnographic method—concrete ways to 'know' Africa—to officers passing through the École Coloniale at the beginning of the twentieth century. By contrast Marcel Mauss, a nephew of Durkheim and teacher at the Collège de France from 1931, encouraged a documentary approach to fieldwork which involved amassing as complete a corpus as possible of another culture's literature, artefacts and tools, with the aim of developing 'total social facts'. In part a recognition of the universality of post-World War I chaos, Mauss provided his students not so much with a *méthode* as with 'an enormous checklist'. His dictum, 'You will film all techniques', was another aspect of this undifferentiated quest. As a result, the Malinowskian ethnographies or Boasian theory that characterize early British and US anthropology did not develop a distinctive French counterpart. Mauss's students (among them Charles LeCoeur and Leiris, as well as Griaule) would pursue radically different paths. [7]

Although never questioning the virtues of colonial rule in Africa, Griaule possessed an acute and often ironic awareness of his own position, at a time when it was conventional anthropological practice to erase or legitimate one's presence. [8] A culture 'could be revealed only by a kind of violence: the ethnographer must keep the pressure' on his informants. [9] He would confront lies, manipulation, secrets—and, using tactics of interrogation, must 'parade across his face as pretty a collection of masks as that possessed by any museum'. [10] This was a rare acknowledgment of the intrusive nature of fieldwork, a recognition that the element of theatricality required on the ethnographer's part to 'provoke the truth' necessarily reproduced itself in those he was supposedly

observing.

But the colonial structures of segregation and authority that had dictated the status and relationships of his anthropological predecessors were in the process of disintegrating as Rouch entered the field. His work would chart the complex transition from occupation to independence, from village life to a fraught and contradictory modernity, in the emergent nations of West Africa—Niger, Ghana, the Ivory Coast and Mali. At the same time, in Rouch's practice anthropology retained a Surrealist willingness to give primacy to dreams. The mysticism and possession rituals he had encountered in Niger seemed an extension of Surrealism's ambitions, as a movement dedicated to an art of spontaneous creation that would explore and seek to unify the human psyche. In recognizing the potency of the dreamworld, both strategies possessed the power to inject chaos into convention, to create a more direct, improvised vision.

In 1946 Rouch and two wartime friends, Pierre Ponty and Jean Sauvy, returned to Niger, equipped with an ex-army 16mm Bell & Howell camera and a few reels of black-and-white film stock. Funding was supplied by a photographic commission from Agence France-Presse, where the trio had done collective journalism under the name Jean Pierjean. [11] They journeyed down the Niger River—a pledge the three of them had made on their last visit, as engineers—and met with Griaule, doing fieldwork in Bandiagara. Rouch would later recount the making of his first film, the fifteen-minute *Au pays des mages noirs*, on the rituals of the Sorko hippopotamus hunters, as a chaotic concatenation of events in which he was forced to improvise with a hand-held camera—a largely untried technique—after losing the tripod overboard. But his approach was already profoundly informed by two key influences: the Irishman, Robert Flaherty, and the Russian, Dziga Vertov.

Flaherty's groundbreaking *Nanook of the North* (1921) had introduced what Luc de Heusch called the 'participatory camera'. Filming the Inuit Eskimo hunters on his own with a 35mm camera, Flaherty was faced with a classic ethnographic problem: asking people who knew nothing of film-making to 'stage' events, in order to show the reality of their lives—including in this instance creating a 'set', an igloo big enough to fit the camera-clad Flaherty and the whole Inuit family. Flaherty's solution was to build an igloo-laboratory, develop his film on the spot and project the rushes for Nanook to see—simultaneously illuminating the alien film-making project and allowing for a process of collaboration between the two men. His pioneering work transformed the dilemmas of anthropological fieldwork over authenticity and ethics. When Flaherty took the step of showing Nanook what he was shooting, the camera, as Rouch would put it, was 'no longer an obstacle [but] the third member of this strange business of film-making . . . [it] was participating in the film'. [12]

From Vertov, on the other hand, Rouch drew the notion of 'bringing the camera to the man': the 'movie eye', or *kinok*, would fuse with the human eye—and later, as Vertov predicted, the 'radio ear'. [13] The 'Man with the Movie Camera' walked the streets of post-revolutionary Moscow and 'seized improvised life', spontaneity and chance playing their own, unpredictable parts in the attempt at a closer rendition of the real: 'I am the mechanical eye . . . I will be liberated from immobility . . . in perpetual movement. I draw to things . . . move myself away from them . . . enter into them'. [14] Vertov's strategies, like Flaherty's, helped Rouch to discover the emancipatory potential of technology.

Delirious dissent

Griaule, Leiris and Lévi-Strauss attended the first screening of *Au pays des mages noirs* at the Musée de l'Homme in 1947; soon after, the film was shown again alongside Rossellini's *Stromboli*. [15] From the start, Rouch was part of two worlds: academic anthropology—graduate from the Sorbonne, co-founder of ethnographic film institutions, long based at the Centre National de la Recherche, a unesco position, visiting professor at Harvard—and the French avant-garde. The 1954 screening of *Les Maîtres fous* at the Musée de l'Homme caused controversy and excitement in both. Its subject is the secret Hauka sect, which had originally emerged in 1920s Niger in resistance to French colonial rule. The film follows the sect's revival among recent migrants to the British-run Gold Coast (Kumasi and Accra). Joining the high priest Mounyéba in the forest, its members undergo a violent

possession by the spirits of their colonial masters, taking on the identities (as Rouch's narration explains) of Secretary General, the Corporal of the Guard and Ordinance Lieutenant. In over-elaborate gestures the men imitate their British counterparts, marching in tiny circles, their legs kicking towards the sky, the etiquette of the army feverishly preserved. As night falls over the forest, the scenes become increasingly disturbing as, foaming at the mouth, their hands trembling and eyes white and wide-open, the men proceed with the various ritual stages: the initiation of a new member, the sacrifice of an animal, drinking its blood. These were the scenes that so frightened the director of *Un Chien andalou*.

At the end of the film the men return to the city, to their day jobs in the pits, on the roads, at the market. In his closing commentary Rouch suggests an explanation for the shocking scenes: 'when comparing these smiling faces to the contortions of yesterday . . . one really wonders whether these men of Africa have found a panacea against mental disorders . . . whether they have found a way to absorb our inimical society'. For Rouch it was essential to convey that these men were neither primitives nor insane, to understand their strange practices in the broader context of the violent transition from village to city life, to an industrial civilization imposed from outside. The suggested 'panacea' may seem an endorsement of the ritual as quelling actual political dissent. But Rouch the Surrealist was also speaking—the ritual reflected the importance of giving freedom to the imagination. 'Therapy for the Africans is not a one-on-one private consultation', Rouch argued, his view characteristic of the broader Surrealist tendency to disregard what Tristan Tzara had described as Freud's objective in the analysis of dreams, to 'live in a state of bourgeois normality'. 'The therapy we filmed was a public ritual done in the sun. That aspect is one of the most important things we Westerners need to learn'.

In 1954, the hostile responses centred primarily around the mockery of white authority, which Rouch made even more overt by cutting to documentary footage of a British colonial army trooping the colours. Following the screening, London banned the film in its West African territories. African intellectuals were offended by the close-up shots of wild-eyed black men drinking animal blood. Griaule, '*rouge comme un bifteck seignant*', [16] called for the film to be destroyed; he was deeply disturbed by the scenes of Africans burlesquing whites. Griaule's response reflected the sharp generation gap between teacher and pupil. The moment of decolonization in West Africa—of the countries in which Rouch had spent most time, Ghana won independence in 1957, Niger, the Ivory Coast and Mali in 1960—was shattering the world that Griaule had worked so hard to understand. Rouch was not only uniquely open to that transition but, through his camera, an active participant in the process—perhaps distinguishing himself here from the *négritude* of most Surrealists. Beyond mere documentation of the changing world, his work aspired to find new forms for its self-expression. [17] His films would give voice to the subjective experience of modernity for the young men of West Africa, in particular—the freedoms and the exploitation of city life; euphoria, desperation and disappointment; the unexorcized horrors of colonial subjugation, the absurdities of the racial pyramid.

Hollywood in Abidjan

The *malentendu complet* surrounding the reception of *Les Maîtres fous* extended to those keen to praise it. Despite the film's clear opening statement that all involved were willing participants, and that it was Rouch and his camera who had entered into the rules of the Haukas' game so as to record it, Rouch was asked by one of the *Cahiers* critics, Claude Chabrol, how he was able to direct his actors to do such extraordinary things. His 1957 film, *Moi, un noir*, was fiction—cited by Godard as evidence for his claim that 'all great fiction films tend towards documentary, just as all great documentaries tend towards fiction'—although its protagonists were working-class Ivory Coast migrants, whose post-synched commentary on the footage formed much of the soundtrack. [18] This strategy in turn drew criticism from the anthropologists. Lévi-Strauss rejected the notion that *cinéma vérité* might be of any ethnographic value. 'It becomes necessary to transform truth into a spectacle', he complained, 'because truth taken by itself would be too boring and no one would want to watch . . . It would probably be better made with professionals, a scenario and a *mise en scène*'. [19] Academic anthropology continued to regard ethnographic film as a visual form of note-taking. In Rouch's work, the camera was put to use as part of the process of

creating a world, not simply discovering it.

Rouch describes how the idea for *Moi, un noir* came to him one Sunday night, ‘in a bar in Treichville’, a sprawling slum of Abidjan:

The contrast between this shortlived Sunday exuberance and the everyday misery is so strong that I know it will haunt me right up to the moment that I can give it some expression. How? . . . The only solution was to make a film about it, where it would not be me crying out my joy or my revolt, but one of these people for whom Treichville was both heaven and hell . . . *Moi, un noir* appeared to me as a necessity. [20]

The film’s central character would be Oumarou Ganda, a young man Rouch got to know in Treichville. Originally from Niger, Ganda had attended classes in Niamey and served with the French forces in Indo-China, but was now working for 225 colonial francs a day as an unskilled labourer at the Customs depot in Abidjan, carrying sacks of coffee, cocoa, flour. ‘We’re made only for this—for the sacks’, he cries on the post-synch commentary. ‘This is what life is: the sacks. Our comrades, the sacks!’ His experience as a migrant, Rouch’s opening commentary suggests, was emblematic of the modern world: someone who knows how to do everything at home, and in the city, knows nothing. ‘One of the things wrong with Africa’s new towns: young men without jobs.’

Rouch sets out his method at the beginning of the film:

For six months I followed a group of young immigrants from Niger who were living in Treichville. I proposed to make a film where they would play themselves, and would be free to do and say everything. This is how we improvised the film.

The French colonial administration tried to ban the film throughout their territories, particularly worried by a fight scene between Ganda and an Italian seaman who steals his girl on Saturday night. In the Ivory Coast itself only a censored version could be shown—because its subject was ‘a man on the street, rather than a lawyer or a doctor’, Rouch explained. [21] In *Moi, un Noir* Ganda is both at the centre of the raucous, mobile city and fully aware of his isolation from what it promises. The film is framed as an adventure, Ganda and his friends take on the identities of Edward G. Robinson, Dorothy Lamour, Tarzan, Eddy Constantine and the Lemmy Caution that Constantine played. Aspirations and frustrations are expressed through the use of cinema as a realm of fantasy; but the post-synchronized soundtrack of Rouch’s film also gives its protagonists an element of power over the images, the chance to talk back. The film thus becomes a mirror in which Ganda discovers himself.

The participatory camera

For Godard, who saw it in 1958, *Moi, un noir* was ‘the greatest French film since the Liberation’. It reminded him of *Rome, Open City*—‘Neo-Realism, but mixed in with the Surrealist concept of “objective chance”!’ [22] For the *Nouvelle vague*, Rouch was a crucial pioneer of the new technology—portable cameras, colour film, microphones—as well as a fertile source of *cinéma vérité* strategies: weaving fiction into documentary, playing on the multiple fantasies of cinema by allusions to B-movie characters (the return of Constantine/Caution in Godard’s *Alphaville*), combining imaginative freedom with the apparent constraints of (in his case) ethnography, and the experiments of shooting in real light and real time. Taking to the street and bringing the camera to the man dispensed with the need for sets, stars and large budgets—liberation from the traditional film industry. [23]

Godard invoked Rouch as the master of improvisation, in contrast to his classicist heroes Eisenstein and Hitchcock: ‘The others, people like Rouch, don’t know exactly what they’re doing, and search for it. The film is the search.’ [24] *Chronique d’un été* (1960) is a striking example of this. The initial idea came from the sociologist Edgar Morin: to see if film could ‘break the membrane which isolates each of us from others, in the *métro*, on the street, in the stairway’—to become a *cinéma de fraternité*. [25] In the summer of 1960 Rouch and Morin took the

camera walking through the streets of Paris and along the beaches of Saint-Tropez. The participants—students, workers, young professionals—talked to the camera, to each other and to themselves, and then later gathered to watch the rushes and determine the outcome of the film; Rouch effectively synthesizing Flaherty's participatory camera and Vertov's *kinok*.

The film was technically as well as formally innovative and improvisational. The first cameraman Rouch employed had refused to 'go walking' with the camera, a technique that the Canadian Michel Brault had described to Rouch as being deployed by experimental young Québécois film-makers in the late fifties. Rouch took Brault on instead, but also asked André Coutant to build a large-scale model of a new military prototype being used in a space satellite—and which then became the portable 35mm camera. 'We began to make our film with a camera that didn't totally exist', Rouch recalled. [26]

'Marceline and Marilou talk to themselves, they are in search of themselves—this is what bothers us. It feels like an intrusion, but at the same time it is because of this that we are drawn in', reflects one of the students—the young Régis Debray—as the group watch the footage in the final scenes of *Chronique d'un été*. (As Rouch later admitted, the 'cross-section of Parisian society' was in fact largely drawn from the group Socialisme ou Barbarie, of which his co-director was a member: 'a sub-tribe with substance'.) Debray's comment eloquently evokes the tension between exhibitionism and authenticity latent in the project, as in any attempt at *cinéma vérité*. But what is captured here in embryo are the ideas and experiences that would characterize *les événements* eight years later. In the alienation of Angelo, the Renault factory worker, we clearly sense the imminent revolt bubbling below the surface. Marilou, the young Italian, is the emancipated modern woman who has her freedom but doesn't know what to do with it—not so much oppressed by society as trapped by her own isolation from it.

Integral characters in their own production, Morin and Rouch try to provoke the participants into debate. The discussions are intercut with newspaper headlines: the crisis in 'White Congo', the war in Algeria. Whilst Morin, serious and militant, pushes the political, Rouch concentrates more on the unspoken assumptions of the group, looking for what would leave them uncomfortable and expose their prejudices. ('He finds life fun', Morin would explain morosely.) Parodying his own discipline, Rouch introduces Landry, a student from the Ivory Coast, as the 'black explorer of France on vacation', taking the team to Saint-Tropez. As the group sit around at lunchtime and light-heartedly broach the topic of racism and racial solidarity among Africans, Rouch stages a moment: he asks the two African students what the numbers on Marceline's arm signify. Perhaps 'affectation', or a 'phone number' they suggest, to a table of quietly horrified Europeans. Marceline, taking on a strange righteousness in her victimhood, explains. It is a characteristic intervention, although Rouch admitted to being a little embarrassed by it afterwards, his 'cruel smile' caught on camera as the idea flashed through his mind. [27]

At the opening of *Chronique* Rouch mischievously prods the earnest Morin, 'Go ahead, ruffian, attack!' This *ciné-provocation*, as he would call it, takes much from Griaule's *ethnographie vérité*: the objects of study, as much as the anthropologist in the field, are never passive but become subjects during the investigation. Rouch saw the potential of film for a more direct communication with the cultures and practices he sought to understand. The camera was a means of abolishing the barriers that Leiris, for example, had encountered—of overcoming the impasse in understanding imposed by colonial structures. This led Rouch to criticize as 'stolen images' the scenes he had initially filmed for *Chronique* with a hidden camera, Vertov's 'candid eye'. He preferred to use the camera, and his own presence, as a catalyst, 'not an obstacle to expression, rather, an indispensable witness which [makes] that expression possible'; an accelerator, getting people to reveal themselves. [28]

The remarkable eight minutes that make up *Tourou et Bitti* (1971) would appear as a testament to this catalytic power. Rouch's 'entry into the game' at a ceremony held by the Simiri in the Zermaganda seems to have had a profound effect. For four days the priest, Zima Sido, moving and dancing to the beats of the ancient drums, *tourou* and *bitti*, had been calling the black spirits of the bush to protect the crops against locusts, to no avail. But as Rouch and his sound director approached, the spirits finally descended on him and took possession. Here, in what he described as an 'ethnographic film in the first person', Rouch seems both excited and disturbed. As the

ceremony intensifies, he retreats. The film's brevity is self-imposed: Rouch uncharacteristically zooms out, turning the camera's gaze to the neutral vision of the setting sun.

Rouch would describe his own experience during the filming of *Tourou et Bitti* as one of *ciné-transe*, in which the fused man-camera is now so fully immersed in the events that he becomes a critical agent of the possession process: 'Upon seeing the film again, it seemed that the filming itself unleashed and accelerated the possession. And I would not be surprised to learn from the priests of the Simiri . . . that it was my *ciné-transe* that played the role of essential catalyst that evening'. [29] This could hardly be further from the 'techno-objectivity' which anthropologists traditionally expected of the camera, considered as a strictly scientific instrument (rather than a 'musical' one, in Peter Wollen's phrase). This approach characterized earlier works—for example, 'Character Formation' (1936–8) by Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson on Bali—but continues today, with the use of films such as Robert Gardner's 1985 *Forest of Bliss* as 'magic-lantern' visual aids to accompany a lecture.

Shared anthropology

The film-maker Ousmane Sembène said of Rouch's films in 1965 that he tended to show traditional aspects of African life and 'dwelt on a reality without showing its evolution . . . you observe us like insects', he accused. [30] The accusation is an arrow to the heart of anthropological practice: historical accomplice to colonialism, the study of others which takes from, but is not, history or politics; nor, in its social and cultural forms, science. By any logic of representational politics no European can film Africans; indeed, no other can film another. The strongest counter to these remarks is what Rouch called 'shared anthropology'. [31] Like many of his peers, he was concerned to present others as equal and to show their cultures and practices as rational—a demystification of the heart of darkness. More unique was his application of this in film. Rejecting the hidden camera, and usually spurning zoom techniques that brought only 'ocular intimacy', akin to the isolated insights of a voyeur, Rouch's films deployed what he called 'audiovisual feedback' as a necessary element of their construction—the dialogue which developed between himself and his participants after he had projected the rushes to them, Flaherty style. The technique often made for a laborious process. *La Chasse au lion d'arc*, for example, was started in 1957 and took seven years to complete as the hunters, year after year, found the footage of their kills unsatisfactory, not true to reality, and summoned Rouch back with a telegram when the annual hunt was about to recommence. The direct communication engendered by this method ensured, despite the years in between, a particular rigour and validity to the final work and goes some way to answering the criticisms made by Sembène.

Contemporary anthropologists continue to debate these issues, and any assertion of an authorial voice remains open to the charge of neo-colonialism. Rouch's work, in marked contrast to this impasse, took his subjects as much as himself to be protagonists in the project, active creators of a new world. His later films would be characterized by a strong suspicion of development and ngo programmes, which he often spoke of as providing only 'poison gifts'. [32] It would be a mistake to assimilate his version of 'shared anthropology' and mutual dialogue with the more vacuous buzzwords these have become today. The repatriation of museum artefacts, for example—a project that Rouch apparently resisted at the Musée de l'Homme—is often hailed as creating 'new sites of contestation' and 'opportunity for dialogue' between different cultures. There is a certain accommodation to the incommensurable differences between cultures: so it's good to talk, but essentially, the nebulous 'multiplicity of perspectives' reigns. For Rouch, on the contrary, these were practices of a shared discovery, and in film one that aimed to give expression to new forms of collective experience brought forth by a changing world.

'What is important . . . is to make films that are giving birth to new films', Rouch declared, paraphrasing Vertov, in 1978. [33] Films begetting films are a trademark of Rouch's work: the triumphant trip to Accra in *Jaguar* (1967) would have its sequel in 1969 with *Petit à petit*, whose heroes, Damouré, Lam and Tallou, appear in countless subsequent films. *La Pyramide humaine*, made in 1959, explored the after-effects of being in a film on the participants' lives, and Oumarou Ganda would become a film-maker himself in Niger. Driving around Paris in his Bugatti, there was equally something of the artisan in Rouch's working method, underscored by the

screenings that he would give, with live commentary, right up to the end. Not only every film but every showing was unique. He was fully aware of the difficulties and misunderstandings that hedged his work, which was in a sense always presented in an alien cultural context. ‘How will you see?’ he asked in *Madame l’Eau* (1992), offering us a guide along the treacherous road, as his narration guided Tallou on his fabled donkey-journey back to Niger from Holland:

I know the evening and have often seen what man believes to have seen. Take care Tallou: Damouré and Lam are two soul-devouring sorcerers. Quick! Quick! Those who have eyes have looked for them in vain. How will you see them?

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- [1] ‘A Life on the Edge of Anthropology and Film’, conversations between Lucien Taylor and Jean Rouch, December 1990. Reprinted in Jean Rouch, *Ciné-Ethnography*, Minneapolis, mn 2003, pp. 132–46.
- [2] After watching *Nanook* in Brest, the young Rouch often dreamt he was in the middle of a snowstorm, but the film written by Douglas Fairbanks made him cry as the people got killed. His mother, he recalled, assured him they were only actors. But, he asked, was this also true for Nanook and his family? Her reply – no, Nanook was real – would be his first lesson in what films could be.
- [3] Peter Wollen, ‘Jean Rouch’, in *Paris Hollywood: Writings on Film*, London 2002, p. 94.
- [4] Rouch, ‘A Life on the Edge’, p. 131.
- [5] Another member of Griaule’s 1931 expedition, Leiris was one of the first ethnographers to confront the political and epistemological constraints of colonialism on fieldwork. His unclassifiable *L’Afrique fantôme* (1934) – at once travel diary, ethnography and self-analysis – confessed in its *prière d’insérer* to the malaise that drove him on his trips to faraway lands: ‘Sick of Paris, viewing travel as a poetic adventure . . . what does he find? Few adventures . . . an emotional void of growing proportions . . . His attempted escape has been a complete failure . . . caught up in new phantoms – but this time without illusions’: *Brisées*, Paris 1966, pp. 54–5. See also Leiris, ‘L’ethnographie devant le colonialisme’, *Les Temps modernes*, no. 58, 1950, and James Clifford, ‘Tell Me About Your Trip: Michel Leiris’, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*, Cambridge, ma 1988, pp. 165–74.
- [6] Rouch, ‘A Life on the Edge’, 1990.
- [7] Clifford, *Predicament of Culture*, pp. 55–91.
- [8] See Talal Asad’s classic essay, ‘Two European Images of Non-European Rule’, in Asad, ed., *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, New York 1973, pp. 103–18.
- [9] Marcel Griaule, *Méthode de l’ethnographie*, Paris 1957, p. 14.
- [10] Griaule, ‘Introduction méthodologique’, *Minotaure*, no. 2, vol. 10.
- [11] Transportation was provided by Théodore Monad, director of the Institut Français d’Afrique Noire, whom Rouch had met in Dakar following his expulsion from Niger.
- [12] Jean Rouch, National Film Theatre lecture, 1978.
- [13] For a more detailed account of Vertov’s importance to Jean Rouch, see his preface, ‘Cinq regards sur Dziga Vertov’, to Georges Sadoul’s *Dziga Vertov*, Paris 1972.
- [14] Dziga Vertov, quoted in Jean Rouch, ‘The Camera and Man’, 1973. Reprinted in Paul Hocking, ed., *Principles of Visual Anthropology*, Berlin 1995.
- [15] Rossellini and Rouch would work together in 1957 at a Collective Creative Workshop attended by most of the future directors of the *Nouvelle vague*.
- [16] As Rouch described him in Manthia Diawara’s 1995 documentary, *Rouch in Reverse*.
- [17] See Anna Grimshaw, ‘The anthropological cinema of Jean Rouch’, in *The Ethnographic Eye: Ways of Seeing in Anthropology*, Manchester 2003, esp. pp. 110–2.
- [18] Godard quoted in Wollen, *Paris Hollywood*, p. 99.
- [19] Interview with Lévi-Strauss conducted by Jacques Rivette and Michel Delahaye in *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 156, 1965.

- [20] Rouch, 'The Cinema of the Future?' [1960], reprinted in *Ciné-Ethnography*, pp. 266–73. Translation amended.
- [21] Quoted in Mick Eaton, ed., *Anthropology–Reality–Cinema: The Films of Jean Rouch*, London 1979, p. 8.
- [22] Wollen, *Paris Hollywood*, p. 99.
- [23] 'Gare du Nord' is one example: the sixteen-minute short was Rouch's contribution to *Paris vu par* (1965), a collaboration with the New Wave directors (Chabrol, Rohmer, Godard). Rouch shot the piece in two takes, changing magazines during the darkness of the lift sequence halfway through, a scene integral to the technical possibility of the film as well as the narrative.
- [24] 'B. B. of the Rhine', in Jean Narboni and Tom Milne, eds, *Godard on Godard: Critical Writings by Jean-Luc Godard*, New York 1986, p. 101.
- [25] Edgar Morin, 'Chronicle of a Film', *Studies in Visual Communication*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1985, pp. 4–29.
- [26] 'The Politics of Visual Anthropology', interview with Jean Rouch by Dan Georgakas, Udayan Gupta and Judy Janda, 1977. Reprinted in *Ciné-Ethnography*, pp. 210–25.
- [27] Rouch, 'The Politics of Visual Anthropology', pp. 211–2.
- [28] See *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 112, 1960.
- [29] Rouch, *Ciné-Ethnography*, p. 370.
- [30] Ousmane Sembène, 'Jean Rouch – Ousmane Sembène: Comme des insectes', *CinémAction*, no. 17, 1982, pp. 77–8.
- [31] Rouch also stressed that his monographs on occasion made an essential ethnographic accompaniment to his films, providing a context and charting an evolution that he was sometimes unable to represent cinematically.
- [32] This is particularly the theme in the 1992 film, *Madame l'Eau*.
- [33] National Film Theatre Lecture.

Jean Rouch, Ethnographic Cinéma: 1917-2004. A civil engineer, and leading authority on Dogon rituals; an Africanist, who turned his ethnographer's camera on 1960s Paris; a second-generation Surrealist, and inspiration for Truffaut's audacious final scene in *Les quatre cents coups*. Jean Rouch's long career as an anthropologist and film-maker reads like one of Apollinaire's poems: conversations, sentences and verses fused from snatches overheard at café tables: separate people, events, moments in time. The Internet is always buzzing with camera rumors, and we bring them all together here. Camera rumors in 2021: what cameras are coming, officially and otherwise! By DCW team 24 November 2020. We round up the most credible camera rumors and throw in our thoughts on what the camera makers might do next. Shares. (Image credit: Canon). camera still possessed I've already checked all the settings and reset to everything to factory. It almost seems - Nikon Coolpix 2100 Digital Camera question. I've already checked all the settings and reset to everything to factory. It almost seems like the shutter button is stuck? If the camera is in setting mode or view mode, it doesn't take pictures. As soon as I put it into any other mode, it takes a picture automatically - but won't when I try depressing the shutter button. Weird, huh?