THE ADVENTURE OF THE REAL

JEAN ROUCH AND THE CRAFT OF ETHNOGRAPHIC CINEMA

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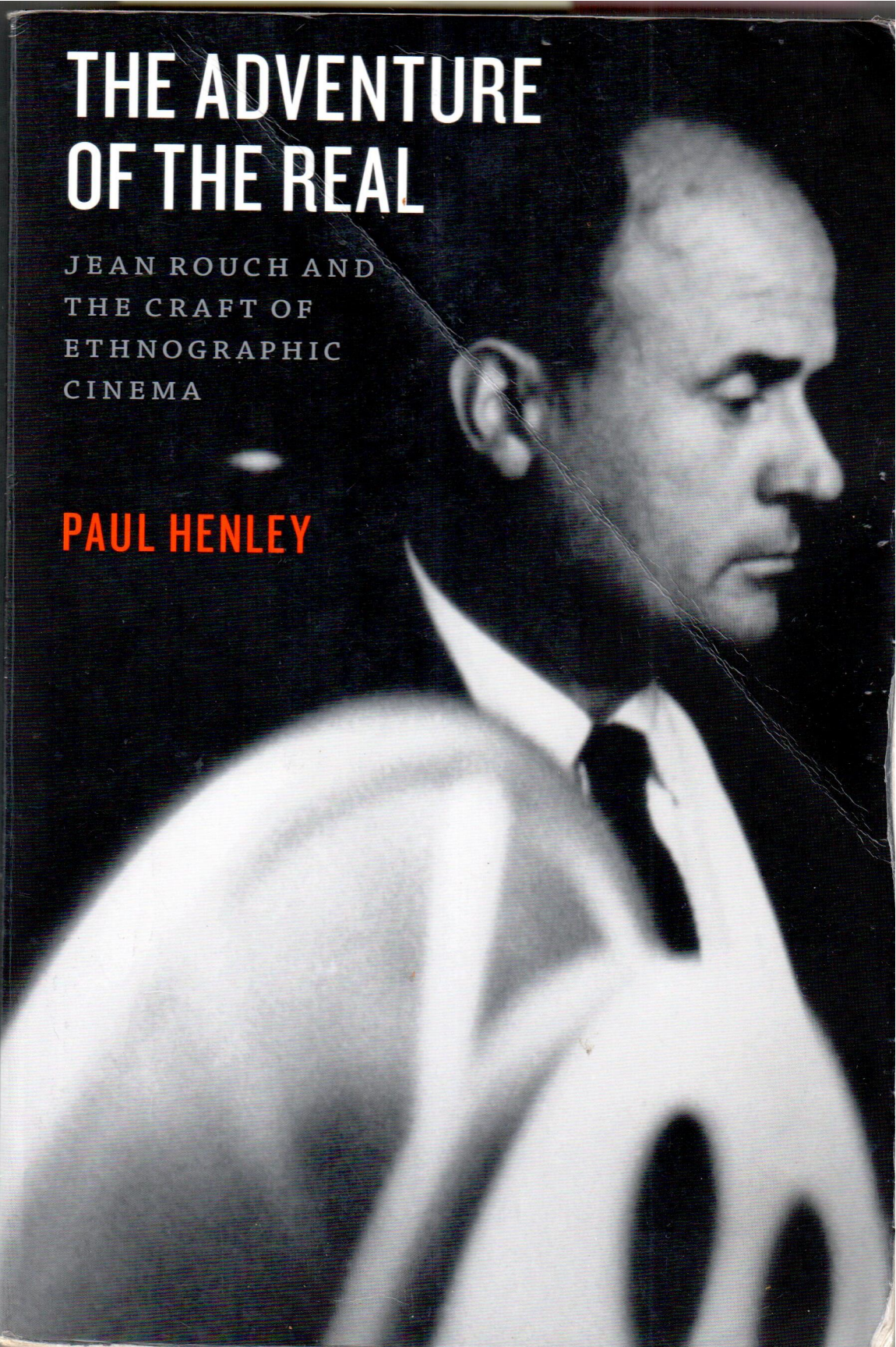

13 : The Harsh Dialogue

[T]he reader [is invited] to consider the history of cinema in the light of the idea of freedom underwritten . . . by the great names of editing: Griffith, Eisenstein, Welles, Rouch, Godard. DOMINIQUE VILLAIN, 1991[1]

To Edit or Not to Edit

In the view of Dominique Villain, author of *Le Montage au cinéma* and a distinguished film editor herself, Jean Rouch is one of the great figures in the history of editing, ranking in importance alongside D. W. Griffith, Sergei Eisenstein, Orson Welles, and Jean-Luc Godard. Yet, in comparison to his innumerable discussions and pronouncements about the practicalities of shooting, Rouch himself had relatively little to say about the process of editing. Moreover, from what little he did say, he seems to have had distinctly contradictory attitudes about this phase of the filmmaking process.

On the one hand, he would often assert the great importance of editing. In the catalog of African ethnographic films that he edited for UNESCO in 1967, for example, he observes that "it must not be forgotten that cutting a film remains the best way for the filmmaker to learn his craft."[2] In "The Camera and Man" in 1975, he again stresses the importance of editing, though on this occasion, he adds that the editing of a film should always be performed by someone who has had no involvement in the actual shooting. The advantage of bringing in such a "second ciné-eye" was that this person could look at the rushes and assess them on his or her own terms without being unduly influenced either by the original context of the shooting or by the filmmaker's intentions. Rouch acknowledged that the "dialogue" between this "objective editor" and the "subjective" filmmaker could be "harsh and difficult," but, he believed, the ultimate success of the film depended upon this exchange.[3]

On the other hand, despite these assertions about the great importance of working with an editor, Rouch seems to have worked hard to keep it to a minimum, be it by his practices on location or back in the edit suite. For, while on location, Rouch's ambition was to "to edit through the viewfinder." In this connection, he was fond of citing Vertov's observation that it is not only in the edit suite that editing takes place: it also takes place beforehand when a filmmaker chooses which subject among many possible subjects to shoot, and which way among many possible ways to shoot it.[4] In the earliest phases of his career, when he was still using a spring-wound camera that allowed shots of a maximum duration of twenty-five seconds, Rouch would use the interval required to rewind the mechanism to work out what his next shot would be. At the same time, he would change the angle or the framing in such a way as to enable one shot to follow directly on from the other in the edit suite if required.[5] This was surely good practice but, in effect, the more that it was successful, the more it made editing in the edit suite unnecessary.

The same was true of his predilection for the sequence-shot, which he used a great deal in the latter part of his career, once technological developments had made possible shots of several minutes' duration. As described in the previous chapter, Rouch's ideal sequence-shot would last the whole ten-minute duration of a standard16mm magazine and would be shot so well that it could be inserted directly into the final version of the film, or even constitute the whole film itself, as in the case of *Les Tambours d'avant*. Again, the more prolonged a sequence-shot, the more it renders editing in the edit suite redundant. In short, whereas the conventional instruction in film schools is "shoot to edit," it seems that principle underlying Rouch's praxis would be more accurately summarized as "shoot so as not to edit."

Concerti à deux regards

Over the course of his career, Rouch worked with many of the most distinguished film editors in France. This was made possible through the unusual relationship that Rouch maintained with the producers of his films. With some notable exceptions, such as *Chronicle of a Summer* and *Les Veuves de quinze ans*, Rouch would usually begin shooting on a subject of his choosing, generally in West Africa and always on 16mm. The costs of this production phase of his films would usually be met by the CNRS as part and parcel of his position as a CNRS researcher. However, if he thought that the material had potential interest for an audience outside the academic world, he would show it to a producer. For much of his early

career, this was Pierre Braunberger, the director of Argos Films. If Braunberger agreed about the potential popular interest of the material, then he would pay for a professional editor to work on it and, eventually, the edited film would be blown up to 35mm for cinema release.[6]

However, Rouch's first experience of working in this way was not with Braunberger, but with the newsreel agency Actualités françaises, which bought the rights to the material that he had shot during his descent of the Niger River with Pierre Ponty and Jean Sauvy in 1946–1947 and re-edited it for cinema distribution. But, as I described in chapter 3, when he saw the results, Rouch was deeply dismayed: not only had the editors at the agency given the film a dubious popular title, *Au pays des mages noirs*, but they had covered the images with excruciating canned music and a narration in the style of a sports commentary. Worst of all, in order to give the film an engaging climax, they had altered the chronology of the original material so that the sequence of a possession ceremony in which, prior to setting out, a group of hunters ask the spirit controlling the Niger River to release some hippopotami to them was presented instead as a ritual offering of thanks after the hunt. Yet although Rouch was unhappy with the way in which the chronology had been distorted, he also recognized that the newsreel editors, who were turning out two such films a week, really knew their business since by placing the ceremony at the end of the film, they had made it very much more dramatic. Putting his dismay to one side, he concluded that in future he too would always edit his films with reference to the ending.[7]

The working relationships that Rouch developed with the editors with whom he worked subsequently in his career were generally much more satisfactory, as Dominique Villain has described. Villain herself worked as an editor with Rouch on the short version of *Petit à Petit*, so although her descriptions of these relationships are tantalizingly brief, they are certainly based on firsthand experience. They provide a fascinating glimpse into these collaborations, or, as they were described by one of Rouch's later editors, Danièle Tessier, these *concerti à deux regards et quatre mains*, or "concertos for two ways of seeing and four hands."[8]

The editors with whom Rouch worked in the 1950s, though eventually destined to go on to great things, were still young and, like him, were at the beginning of their careers. As was generally the case in France at that time, according to Villain, most of these editors were women.[9] The status of editors was then so low in the hierarchy of the filmmaking industry that they were often not even named in the on-screen credits, particularly in the case of documentaries. This was certainly the fate of Renée Lichtig, who cut Rouch's early film, *Bataille sur le grand fleuve*, released in 1952. Lichtig was no more than twenty years of age at the time,

but shortly afterward, she would go on to work with the legendary Hollywood director Eric von Stroheim on the synchronization of his 1920s silent classic, *The Wedding March*, and between 1958 and 1962, she cut the last three films of that towering figure of French cinema, Jean Renoir.

Prior to working with Lichtig, Rouch had thought that the services of an editor were as dispensable as the services of a cameraman. Although it had provided a useful learning opportunity, the experience of seeing his first film distorted by the editors of Actualités françaises had led him to believe that it was better to do one's own editing. But through working with Lichtig, Rouch came round to the view that it was not just useful, but absolutely necessary, to work with an editor. As described in chapter 3, while trying to edit the material that he shot on his descent of the Niger, Rouch had found it impossible to cut directly from one riverbank to the other since this involved crossing the imaginary line constituted by the movement of the canoe downriver.[10] But while cutting *Bataille sur le grand fleuve*, Lichtig proved to him that if there were no clearly defined line created by the movement of the canoe in which the camera was traveling, then it was perfectly possible to intercut scenes of hippopotamus hunting that had taken place on opposite banks of the river.

At first, Rouch was horrified by this suggestion, considering it the equivalent, if making a film about Paris, to intercutting shots of Notre Dame Cathedral with shots of Montparnassse. But he had to acknowledge that for someone who had had no direct personal experience of the location, the effect was not visible. At the same time, it was a device that allowed him to cut out many tedious shots of the hunters crossing back and forth across the river in their cumbersome canoes. As a result of this experience, he came to accept that not only were such editorial sleights of hand permissible, but that it was essential that the editing of a film be carried out by someone who had not been present at the shoot and who could therefore react in an entirely unprejudiced way to the material.[11]

Another editor with whom Rouch worked at the beginning of his career and who would later go on to achieve great eminence was Suzanne Baron. She and Rouch cut two films together. The first was *Les Fils de l'eau*, a compilation of extracts from various earlier films that Rouch had shot in the period 1948 to 1951. Later, Baron cut *Les Maîtres fous*, released in 1955, and one of the best known of all Rouch's films. Although also very young when she collaborated with Rouch, Baron had already worked as an (uncredited) editor for the celebrated feature director, Jacques Tati, on *Les Vacances de M. Hulot* (1953). Later, she would go on to become the editor of choice of Louis Malle and to work with many other well-known directors, including such luminaries as Frédéric Rossif, Joris Ivens, Volker Schlöndorff, and Werner Herzog.[12]

Of all the many legends that surround the life of Jean Rouch, one of the most frequently told, including in chapter 7 of this book, concerns the highly negative reaction of his closest friends and colleagues to the screening of a preliminary version *Les Maîtres fous* in the cinema of the Musée de l'Homme. His supervisor and mentor, Marcel Griaule, even told him that he should destroy the material.[13] The less frequently told coda to this story is that while Rouch was still wondering what to do after this distressing experience, Pierre Braunberger took him to show the film to the Hollywood film noir director Jules Dassin who was then living in France. (This was the height of the McCarthy era and Dassin had been hounded out of the United States on account of his leftist sympathies). Dassin not only strongly encouraged Rouch to defy his critics and preserve the film, but even suggested that it should be blown up to 35mm and prepared for general cinema release. Much encouraged by this response, Braunberger brought in Suzanne Baron to work on the film.[14]

Les Maîtres fous is perhaps the most tightly edited of Rouch's films and features a number of editorial devices that are highly unusual in his work, and which it is tempting therefore to attribute to the influence of Baron. These include particular individual cuts that have given rise to much comment in the literature on this film and to which I shall return when considering the more technical aspects of Rouch's editing praxis in the following chapter. What is not in doubt is Baron's role in improving the sound track of *Les Maîtres fous*. On location, the sound track had been recorded by Rouch's regular associates, Damouré Zika and Lam Ibrahim Dia, employing a tape recorder that, like his Bell & Howell camera, operated with a clockwork mechanism. Whereas the camera would run for only twenty-five seconds, the tape recorder ran for up to thirty minutes. Yet it was far from synchronous and although it was considered "portable," it actually weighed over thirty kilograms, so for most of the time, it remained in a single place with the microphone placed in a conveniently located tree.[15] This recording of live performance in the field was considered very advanced for the time, but the sound quality of the film remains poor by modern standards. Particularly poor was the quality of the sound recorded at the moments when Rouch was actually shooting since he had no sound-proofing for the camera, and the mechanism whirring away sounded like a "coffee-grinder." In order to overcome this problem, Baron cut out these passages of synchronous sound and replaced them with passages of nonsynchronous wild track recorded either just before or just after any particular shot.[16]

The quality of the sound editing in Rouch's films would take another big step forward under the influence of Marie-Josèphe Yoyotte who cut *Moi, un Noir* and *La Pyramide humaine*. At around the same time, she was also cutting *Les Quatre Cents Coups* (1959) for François Truffaut and Jean Cocteau's last film, *Le Testament d'Orphée* (1960). Later, Yoyotte would go on to work with a number of leading New Wave directors as well as on Rouch's own ill-starred feature, *Dionysos* (1984), though even her great skill was not sufficient to save this film from critical opprobrium. Indeed, of all the editors with whom Rouch worked, Yoyotte has probably been the most prolific, and she continues to be active as an editor of major feature films, with various highly distinguished awards to her name.[17]

Yoyotte encouraged Rouch to take an active interest in sound editing, and their first project together, *Moi, un Noir*, was certainly Rouch's most ambitious film up until that point in terms of the sound track. This film was shot by Rouch himself on his spring-wound Bell & Howell, so recording synchronous sound on location was impossible. Instead, as he had previously done with Damouré and Lam in the making of *Jaguar*, Rouch arranged for the actors playing the principal characters, Oumarou Ganda and Petit Touré, to improvise a commentary over the silent projection of a preliminary assembly of the film. The sound track was then built up through a complex mix of these improvised actors' commentaries, Rouch's own commentary voice, wild tracks of various kinds, plus a number of special sound effects and a broad variety of musical tracks.[18]

Rouch very much admired Yoyotte's inventiveness and as an example of this, he would tell the story of how they composed the sound track for the famous fight scene toward the end of *Moi, un Noir.* This takes place early one morning in the mud and the rain and involves the principal character, Robinson, and an Italian sailor whom Robinson discovers has spent the night with his girlfriend, Dorothy Lamour. Rouch had himself experienced how, when American B movies were screened in African cinemas, the spectators liked to accompany the fight sequences with cries and shouts that followed the rhythm of the punches being thrown by the actors. So when Yoyotte and he came to cut this scene, they covered the first part of the fight with music intended to encourage these responses.[19]

After he returned to work in Paris in the 1960s, Rouch continued to have the benefit of working with editors who were also working with the most celebrated feature film directors of the day. One of these was Jean Ravel, also one of the few male editors with whom Rouch worked in the course of his career. In addition to editing two of Rouch's less well-known ethnographic works, *Moro Naba* (1958–1960) and *Monsieur Albert, prophète* (1963), Ravel was primarily responsible for resolving the many editorial challenges posed by the innovative *cinéma-vérité* methods used in making *Chronicle of a Summer*. Rouch said of Ravel that he was an editor who could resolve transition problems that anyone else would

find impossible. It was from him that Rouch learned that one can even perform a jump cut in the midst of someone talking, provided that it is timed to complement the cadence of what is being said. However, not all Ravel's solutions were entirely to Rouch's taste: although Rouch was party to it himself, he continued to have reservations about the strategy that Ravel developed in order to cut *Chronicle* to length, which consisted of reconstructing conversations by linking together questions and answers that originally had nothing directly to do with one another. Immediately after *Chronicle*, Ravel would go on to cut *La Jetée* (1962) for Chris Marker and *A Valparaíso* (1963) for Joris Ivens. Many years later, in 1987, he would return to work with Rouch on *Bateau-givre*, a film that was very different from *Chronicle* in that it had no commentary and the dialogues were of no significance.[20]

A number of the other editors with whom Rouch worked in the 1960s also worked with leading New Wave directors. Among these was the senior editor on *Gare du Nord*, Jacqueline Raynal, who cut several films for Éric Rohmer, while Claudine Bouché, who cut the largely disastrous *Les Veuves de quinze ans* for Rouch, also cut a number of François Truffaut's most successful films, including *Jules et Jim* (1961), *La Peau douce* (1964), and *La mariée était en noir* (1968). Both Raynal and Bouché then went on to distinguished careers after the New Wave era, though they did not return to work with Rouch himself.

Yet another editor with whom Rouch worked on a number of different occasions in the early 1960s was Annie Tresgot. She cut *La Punition* (1964) and *La Goumbé des jeunes noceurs* (1965), though she had evidently started working with Rouch some years beforehand since Claude Jutra describes her as working with him in the famously small cutting room of the Musée de l'Homme in 1961.[21] During this period, Rouch was extremely busy and often abroad, so after no more than a preliminary discussion, he would often leave the actual editing entirely up to her, giving her the impression that he had great trust in her judgment.[22] Later, Tresgot went on to become a distinguished documentary director-producer in her own right, whose works covered such diverse subjects as Algerian migrants in France, social change in the French countryside (notably *Les Enfants de Néant*, released in 1968, which she produced and which was directed by Michel Brault) and a series of portraits of Hollywood filmmakers including Billy Wilder and Elia Kazan.

Around this same time, Rouch also began working with Josée Matarasso, who cut *The Lion Hunters*, released in 1965. This was the first of three of Rouch's best-known films that would be cut by Matarasso, the others being *Jaguar* and the long version of *Petit à Petit*, both of which were cut in the period 1969–1971. Whereas Suzanne Baron, in cutting *Les*

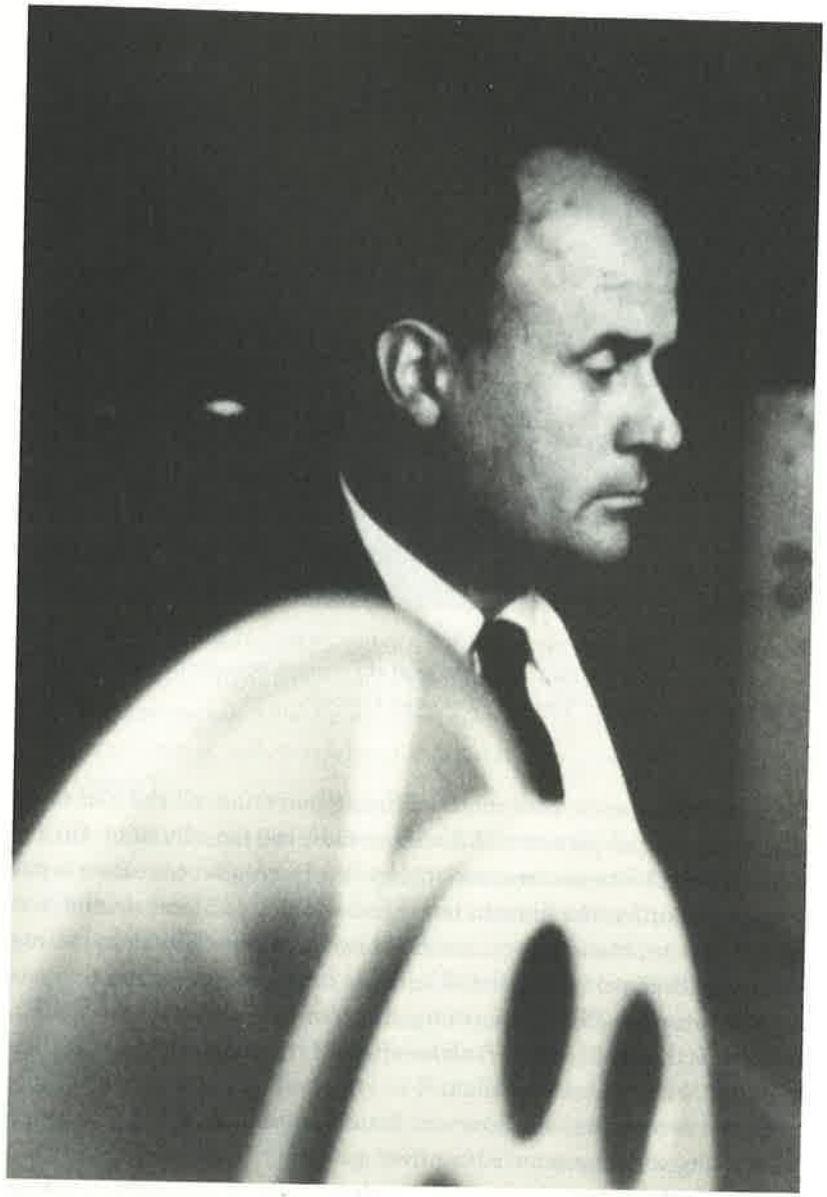

FIGURE 13.1. Jean Rouch in an edit suite around 1962. © Annie Tresgot.

Maîtres fous, had emphasized the importance of the "punch" delivered by the first frame of a shot, Matarasso persuaded Rouch that it was last frame that was the most important because it endured, mingling with the images that followed. Rouch and Matarasso also appear to have developed a great mutual confidence, so that Rouch was happy to let her get on with the work alone. Villain reports that if Matarasso wanted to

FIGURE 13.2. Françoise Beloux with Rouch in 1991, in the very small edit suite, no longer extant, created out of the space at the head of a stairwell opposite the entrance to the cinema of the Musée de l'Homme. © Françoise Foucault.

be alone to cut some particularly difficult transition, all she had to do was make a small gesture and Rouch would leave the edit suite. On *The Lion Hunters*, Matarasso was assisted by Dov Hoenig, who went on to cut various major feature films in Israel and the United States. In the case of *Petit à Petit*, Matarasso was assisted by Dominique Villain in cutting the long, three-part first version but, due to Matarasso's many competing commitments, the cutting of the shorter ninety-two-minute version, which was the version that was later offered for general release, was actually mostly carried out by Villain.[23]

In the second half of his career, Rouch continued with this strategy of working with the same editor over a number of films in succession. Both of the DALAROUTA ethnofictions that he shot in the 1970s, *Cocorico! Monsieur Poulet* and *Babatou, les trois conseils*, were cut by Christine Lefort, while over the same period, Danièle Tessier cut a considerable number of his documentaries, including the major Dogon films, *Funérailles à Bongo* and *Le Dama d'Ambara*. But from the 1980s until the end of his life, Rouch worked almost exclusively on his major films with Françoise Beloux, an editor who had previously established her reputation in the 1970s through her work for Claude Lanzmann (fig. 13.2).

The "Napoleon" of the Edit Suite

As reported by Dominique Villain, the fundamental principle of Jean Rouch's approach to editing was free improvisation. In *Le Montage au cinema*, she cites a striking account by Josée Matarasso of the experience of working with Rouch:

> To cut with Jean Rouch . . . is to improvise on the editing table, to collaborate 100 % completely freely, quite outside the normal limits, following the often Surrealist lines of his thinking, "to enter into a film through emotion." You have to learn to feel for the shape of the sound, for the remark of one character that will set off the following shot.[24]

But this ethos of freedom did not mean that all was sweetness and light in the Rouchian *concerto à deux regards*. By contrast, Danièle Tessier's account confirms Rouch's own observation that it could sometimes be "harsh and difficult," precisely because editor and filmmaker were bound to have different points of view:

> The "birth" is sometimes turbulent, with the film being delivered in the midst of violent arguments; sometimes such a tension reigns that nobody dares enter the edit suite. Confrontation? That's inevitable, but there are also moments of collusion when ideas burst forth and everything links up clearly.[25]

True to his Surrealist tendencies, this ethos of improvisation in Rouch's edit suite was combined with a commitment to experimentation. It seems that he positively enjoyed struggling with editorial puzzles and he would go over them time and time again. Unconstrained by any conventional ideas of editorial practice, Rouch almost invariably found a solution to these problems. With tongue in cheek, Villain describes him as a "Napoleon" of the edit suite, because "he won all his battles."[26] As with his shooting, when he achieved these victories, he would attribute them to *la grace*, a term that, as we saw in the previous chapter, had a somewhat idiosyncratic meaning for Rouch, denoting a Dionysian state in which intuitive artistic creativity combines with random good fortune to produce a successful result.[27]

As described above, it was from observing the work of the editors of the Actualités françaises on his first film that Rouch learned that one should always cut a film with reference to the ending. Sometimes he would claim a more elevated model, suggesting that he was following Baudelaire, who composed his poems starting from the last line. However, by saying that he liked to cut his films in this way, Rouch did not ac-

tually mean that he cut them backward. The process was somewhat more complicated, as he explained to Villain:

> In cutting a film, you begin from the beginning, then you try to find out where you are going. Usually, I cut the first two-thirds, then the last third from the end. I have a theory that is perhaps a bit literary. I remember my French Composition lessons: you had to have an introduction followed by two parts and then a conclusion or third part, the so-called "synthesis." So you began with an introduction, got into the subject, the first part was usually a bit rough, you got on a bit better in the second part, arrived at a conclusion and wrote that up, then rewrote the second part, which in turn meant you had to change the first part, and then finally, you rewrote the introduction. Editing is like a narrative, like telling a story. Perhaps it's also like this in music, when the last note is prolonged and, as a result, becomes very important. . . . You begin from the tail. It's like Hitchcock's suspense, you give a sense in advance of the ending but without actually revealing it. The whole film heads toward it. Instinctively, that's what I do when editing.[28]

Villain emphasizes the rapidity with which Rouch worked in the edit suite. But, more generally, Rouch's relaxed attitude with regard to time was legendary. He would claim that he had learned in Africa not to wear a watch, considering it both a limitation and a *memento mori* that he could do without.[29] As a result, he was proverbially late for appointments. Unless under intense pressure from a producer, he showed a similar disregard for cutting his films according to any fixed schedule. Indeed, in order to give himself the luxury of being able to experiment with his films as long as he felt was necessary, he set up both his own edit suite and and his own sound-mixing facility at the Musée de l'Homme.

Not long after returning from a shoot, Rouch would generally look at the rushes, usually by himself. As there had been no shooting script, there could be no cutting script either. Instead, according to Philo Bregstein, while viewing the rushes, Rouch would write an extensive log, and these would become a sort of cutting script after the fact.[30] But once he had viewed the rushes, the images would be fixed in his mind and the precise date for editing took on less importance for him. In the case of some of his shorter films on very specific subjects, editing could be carried out shortly after the viewing. This happened, for example, with *Les Tambours d'avant* and the portraits of Mauss's former students. But sometimes years would elapse before he got round to editing more complex works. For example, *Mammy Water*, which was shot in 1954, was not definitively edited until 1966. *Le Dama d'Ambara*, shot in 1974, was not completed until 1980.[31]

Not only did Rouch shoot all his films, including the fictional works, as if they were documentaries, with no script, no second takes, and in chronological order, but he also edited them as if they were documentaries, working with the same sort of cutting ratios.[32] When shooting his ethnofictions, he usually ended up with what were, for a fiction film, many hours of rushes. In shooting *Petit à Petit* in 1967–1968, for example, he produced twenty-four hours of rushes.[33] This was similar to the twenty-five hours shot for *Chronicle of a Summer*, but that was a documentary. Given that *Petit à Petit* was a fiction film and that the rushes were entirely composed of what were, supposedly, first-and-only takes, twenty-four hours represented a vast amount of material. In cutting this material, Rouch was not choosing between various takes of the same shot, as one would normally do in the editing of a fiction film, but rather treating the material as if it were a set of documentary rushes, either cutting particular shots down in length or eliminating them completely. The cutting ratio of the 35mm version of *Petit à Petit* that eventually resulted from this process was 16:1, which is very high for a fiction film, though not at all unusual for a documentary shot on 16mm at that time.[34]

Editing by Successive Approximations

Rouch would often describe his editorial strategy as being based on the principle of "successive approximations," the design principle taught to him by Albert Caquot during his days as a student of engineering at the École des Ponts et Chausées. Transferred to the edit suite, what this meant was that Rouch progressed his edits by a process of trial and error, trying out various combinations, before finally selecting the one that he thought worked best. When this process of successive approximation entailed no more than the linking together of a few sequence-shots that had already been largely edited in the camera, then the editing that actually took place in the edit suite could be very brief. But if the subject of the film were more complex, then the editing could be very prolonged. Tessier compares the case of the fourteen-minute portrait film of the Japanese sculptor, *Taro Okamoto*, which took two hours to cut, with the editing of the eighty-minute *Funérailles à Bongo* that was not started until five years after the shoot and then took a further two years to complete.[35]

There were also a number of further reasons for the drawn-out nature of Rouch's editing schedules. One was simply that he was involved in many different things: if he was not engaged in some sort of project in Paris itself, he was off on an airplane to West Africa. Due to these many distractions, Rouch would often have to abandon a film in the middle of

the edit and would only come back to it months or years later. Another reason for Rouch's prolonged editing schedules was that an integral part of the strategy of successive approximations involved screening cuts of the film to an audience and then recutting it in the light of the feedback. Rouch not only employed this feedback strategy with the subjects of his film as part of his practice of "shared anthropology," as described in earlier chapters, but also with what he called the "freemasonry" of editors around Paris, as well as with producers, colleagues or friends within his immediate circle.[36]

In this connection, one of Rouch's favorite stories concerned the time when he was working on a film with Suzanne Baron, early on in his career. Toward the end of the normal working day, the eminent director Jacques Tati would come into the edit suite and sit quietly in the corner, waiting his turn to work with Baron after-hours. Eventually, Rouch plucked up the courage to ask the great man what film he was working on, only to discover, to his astonishment, that it was *Les Vacances de M. Hulot*. This film, on which Baron had been one of three editors, had had its general release some four months earlier. But Tati explained that as a former mime artist, he knew that it took at least three months of public performance before a particular routine could be considered fully perfected and that the same applied, in his view, to films. Therefore, for several months after the release of his films, he would go in person to the cinemas where they were showing and then, on the basis of the audience's reactions, recut his films, often by minute amounts, taking out two frames here and three frames there.[37]

This attitude greatly impressed the young Rouch, and he would later apply it to his own practice of recutting his films in the light of the feedback that he received following screenings at film festivals or similar venues. In the 16mm era, this would have been an expensive strategy, since in order for a film to be shown at a festival, it would have been necessary to prepare, if not a fully married print, at least a double-band version with a mixed sound track and perhaps a fresh print of the image track as well.[38] Although this was a common enough strategy among feature filmmakers at the time, for most ethnographic filmmakers the cost of recutting and remixing after the presentation of a film at a festival would have been prohibitive. But although Rouch might have incurred certain laboratory costs for the reprinting of the image track, in other respects the costs involved in such a reworking would have been much reduced for him since he had both his own sound-mixing studio and his own editing suite at the Musée de l'Homme, and he usually carried out the sound mixing of the festival versions of his films himself.[39]

A number of Rouch's best-known films were recut after they had already been screened in public. As described in chapter 8, a festival version of *Chronicle of a Summer* was prepared for Cannes in 1961, but was then recut by Rouch when this screening suggested that a stronger ending was needed. But by far the most extreme example of recutting in the Rouchian canon is surely *Jaguar*. The first cut of this film was almost five hours long and was screened in private to Pierre Braunberger and Jules Dassin in 1955. At this screening, it was agreed that the material would work well with a voice-over improvised by the protagonists, though this was not recorded by Damouré and Lam until 1957.[40] This formed the basis of the sound track for the 2.5-hour version screened at the Cinémathèque in Paris shortly thereafter. But some years later, the film was recut again with additional voice-over material recorded by Damouré and Lam in 1960 and was then screened at the Venice Film Festival in 1967 with a running time of about a hundred minutes. A couple of years after that, around the same time that *Petit à Petit*, the sequel to *Jaguar*, was also being cut, *Jaguar* was recut yet again and released in the definitive eighty-eight-minute version.[41]

Rouch's editorial strategy of successive approximations and the many re-versions that he produced in the light of the feedback that he received certainly give the lie to what Philo Bregstein calls the "myth" that editing was of no importance to him.[42] However, the long drawn-out editing schedules that these practices entailed were only made possible by virtue of Rouch's very particular institutional circumstances. For most of the time, he was able to proceed at his own chosen pace, without either producers or academic authorities breathing down his neck, demanding some kind of output. But there was one circumstance that even Rouch, for all his ingenuity, could not avoid. For, in the end, the Napoleon of the edit suite also met his Waterloo: he simply ran out of time, as is the fate of Everyman. When he died, the editing of perhaps as many as a third of his works remained incomplete.

Nietzsche, and the early twentieth-century painter Giorgio de Chirico, who was much influenced by Nietzsche and whose work had a powerful impact on Rouch when he was a very young man (see chapter 2, pp. 19–24).

39. Convenient republications of the original article are to be found in the second edition of Rouch's major work on Songhay religion (1989, 337–349) and in the more recent collection of ethnographic essays by Rouch (1997e). An abbreviated version is appended to his original interview in French with Enrico Fulchignoni (1981, 28–29). An English translation of this is offered in Steven Feld's edited volume, *Ciné-ethnography* (Rouch 2003c).

40. See Rouch (1989), especially 38–39; also Stoller (1995), passim.

41. See Rouch (1997e), 224–225, Rouch (2003c), 101. But see also his somewhat more sceptical comments in Colleyn (1992), 41–42.

42. Rouch (1997e), 226.

43. Comparing his own experience with that of Rouch, David MacDougall has written, "There is no doubt that film-making can induce a trance-like state in which the camera operator feels a profound communion with surrounding people and events and indeed feels possessed by a spirit emanating from them. In these curious ballets, one moves as though directed by other forces, and the use of the camera feels more than anything like playing a musical instrument" (1998b, 113). Even Robert Gardner, who on occasion has been somewhat sceptical about Rouch's notion of the ciné-trance has admitted to remarkably similar sentiments (compare Barbash 2001, 391 with Gardner and Östör 2001, 37).

44. See the discussion of Vertov's ideas on pp. 245–251.

Chapter Thirteen

1. This statement appears on the cover of Villain's book, *Le Montage au cinéma* (1991).
2. Rouch (2003b), 79.
3. Rouch (1995a), 91.
4. Rouch (1995a), 90–91.
5. Colleyn (1992), 42.
6. Anon. (1965a), 58.
7. Colleyn (1992), 44; Rouch (1995b), 221–222.
8. Tessier (1996).
9. Villain (1991), 58–64.
10. See chapter 3, pp. 39–41.
11. Villain (1991), 34.
12. Even earlier in her career, around 1948, Baron had worked as an assistant editor on a film directed by the Belgian documentarist Henri Storck about the Flemish painter Peter Paul Rubens. It was while working on this film that she first met the anthropologist and filmmaker Luc de Heusch, who was then Storck's assistant. Later she would cut three films for de Heusch, two about other distinguished painters (René Magritte and James Ensor) and a fiction film released in 1967, *Jeudi on chantera comme dimanche* (Luc de Heusch, pers. comm., 2004).
13. See chapter 7, pp. 103–104.
14. Mouëllic (2002).
15. Eaton (1979a), 6, reports that the tape recorder that Rouch was using was a "Scubitophone." I suspect that this would be the same Sgubbi machine that Rouch had used to shoot the films of his 1950–1951 expedition with Roger Rosfelder.

16. Devanne (1998).

17. At the time of writing, Yoyotte's latest film was *Deuxième souffle* (2007), directed by Alain Corneau, which represents a reworking of the 1966 film of the same name directed by Jean-Pierre Melville. Among many other recent films, she also cut *Himalaya* (1999), the quasi-ethnographic feature directed by Eric Valli. See http://movies.nytimes.com/person/117714/Marie-Josephe-Yoyotte/filmography.

18. See chapter 6, p. 99.

19. Villain (1991), 86–87.

20. Villain (1991), 88 ; Colleyn (1992), 44 ; Colette Piault (1996b), 156.

21. Jutra (1961b), 40. See p. 138 above.

22. Annie Tresgot, personal communication, November 2008.

23. Villain (1991), 87–88; Philippe Costantini, personal communication, October 2008.

24. Villain (1991), 88.

25. Tessier (1996), 168.

26. Villain (1991), 86.

27. Villain (1991), 33–34. See chapter 12, pp. 257–258.

28. Villain (1991), 16.

29. See *Bregstein* (1978); Taylor (2003), 146.

30. Bregstein (2007), 173.

31. Tessier (1996), 168; Prédal (1996i), 222.

32. A cutting ratio is the ratio of the total duration of the rushes to the duration of the definitive version of the edited film.

33. Villain (1991), 87n.

34. Alan Marcus, director of the Film Studies Programme at the University of Aberdeen, informs me that "shooting ratios in feature films . . . can vary widely, but the norm for a Hollywood studio picture might be from 8 to 1 to 12 to 1. An independent picture would be lower—perhaps 6 to 1" (pers. comm., 2008).

35. Tessier (1996), 168; Prédal (1996i), 221.

36. Tessier (1996), 168–169, Villain (1991), 35.

37. See Villain (1991), 94. Villain reports, no doubt on Rouch's authority, that this encounter took place while Rouch and Baron were cutting *Les Maîtres fous*. But as *Les Vacances de M. Hulot* was released in France in February 1953, and *Les Maîtres fous* was not edited until 1955, I suspect that it might have been the earlier film on which Rouch and Baron collaborated, *Les Fils de l'eau*.

38. See appendix 1, pp. 366–367, for an explanation of the terms "double band" and "married print."

39. Villain (1991), 42–44.

40. Exactly who was responsible for the suggestion that Jaguar should be voiced over by Damouré and Lam remains unclear. According to some sources, this idea originated with Roberto Rossellini after he saw a preliminary version of the film, possibly the same one shown to Braunberger and Dassin (see Mundell 2004).

41. See Fieschi and Téchiné (1968), 17; Colette Piault (1996), 153 and (2007), 46.

42. See Bregstein (2007), 173.

Chapter Fourteen

1. Colleyn (1992), 44. Rouch's exact words in French are "C'est quoi le montage? C'est un trucage de la vérité."