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"Chronicle of a Summer": The Film

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"Chronicle of a Summer": The Film

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"Chronicle of a Summer": The Film

NOTE: We have the good fortune to be able to publish in this volume the text of the dialogue from several important scenes of "Chronicle of a Summer" which do not figure in the version of the film shown in theaters. These scenes have been incorporated in the present volume where they fit in quite naturally. To distinguish them from the dialogue of the film, they are printed in italics and set off by a line of asterisks. 19

Introduction

The film opens with views of Paris and its industrial suburbs, at the end of a summer night. Factory smokestacks. The sound of sirens. Day breaks. The crowd of workers and employees headed for work surges from every subway exit. Titles. Off-screen is heard the voice of

Jr: 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. 20

Marceline

A dining room. The end of a meal. Behind the partially cleared table Edgar Morin and Jean Rouch are seated on either side of Marceline.

Jr: You see, Morin, the idea of gathering people around a table is an excellent idea. Only I don't know if we'll manage to record a conversation that's as normal as it would be if the camera wasn't present. For example, I don't know if Marceline will be able to relax; will be able to talk absolutely normally.

Marceline turns to Morin.

Em: We've got to try.

Marceline: I think I'm going to have some difficulty.

Jr: Why?

Marceline: Because I'm a bit intimidated.

Jr: You're intimidated by what?

Marceline: I'm intimidated because at a given moment I have to be ready and, well, I'm not really, I guess.

Jr: At this moment you're not intimidated.

Marceline: No, right now I'm not.

Jr: Okay, so you're not intimidated now. What we're asking of you, with great trickery, Morin and I, is simply to talk, to answer our questions. And if you say anything you don't like, there's always time to cut...

Marceline: Yeah.

Jr: You don't need to feel intimidated.

Marceline: Yeah, but I'm less now than I was a couple of minutes ago because I wasn't attacked head-on, I guess...

She laughs. Jean Rouch laughs, pointing to Morin.

Jr: It's this ruffian. Okay then, go ahead Morin, attack!

Em: Okay, I'll attack anyway. You don't know what questions we're going to ask you. We ourselves don't even know too precisely. What Rouch and I want to do is film the following idea: How do you live? How do you live? We start with you and then we're going to ask other people. How do you live? That means what do you get by in life? We're starting with you because you are going to play an integral role in our enterprise, in our film, and because we have to start somewhere...

Em: Listen, Marceline, it's impossible to see you without noticing a number tattooed on your arm. It means that you have lived through what may be the worst trial a human being has endured. And I remember that not long ago you and I saw a film called L'Etoile. It was a story about deported people, and I know that you were terribly upset by the film.

Marceline: Yes, for sure... I was particularly upset by that film because it happens that I saw it at a given moment, but now I realize that I relive with incredible clarity old images of Auschwitz... and I have no idea why... I don't know what the period I'm living at this moment corresponds to. I don't know, for example, I can forget it for a while, or live with it, but without thinking much about it, because I think... well I couldn't go on living if I was always thinking about it. There was a whole period in my life when I was really obsessed...

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19. The filmscript has been modified additionally to conform to the English subtitles of the film in U.S. distribution. —Ed.

20. The English subtitles of the film translate “cinéma-vérité” as “filming the truth.” The essays by Morin and Rouch place this term in the historical and theoretical perspective necessary to understand why it is not what the experiment was seeking. —Ed.
in my daily life as well as in my sleep because it was almost unbearable. And at this moment... I don't know... I don't have the words to explain.

EM: Listen, Marceline. We don't want to question you about this deportation. It's about the fact that you were deported when you were quite young.

MARCELINE: Yes.

EM: You were fourteen and you never turned fifteen... you never lived as a fifteen year old like everyone else. Deep down, this fact has had an effect on you, when you first came back among us and maybe even still today. You say that today you're in a crisis period where these images are more vivid than at other moments.

MARCELINE: Yeah.

EM: But we'd like to know how, not only in this particular crisis, but how you've managed to live in this normal world after coming out of that world of madness.

MARCELINE: Well...

JR: Marceline, go ahead and tell us about your present life, what you do, etc.

MARCELINE: Well, I live... I don't know... I live sort of in disorder, I guess....

Close-up of Marceline, then of Rouch.

JR: What do you do all day? For example, when you get up in the morning, what do you do?

Close-up of Marceline.

MARCELINE: Usually I work.

JR (off-screen): What sort of work?

MARCELINE: I do psycho-sociological surveys for an applied social psychology firm. I do interviews, analyze the interviews, and eventually write up summaries of them. Which takes up quite a bit of time, I think.

JR: Is it interesting?

MAROFT INF: No, not a bit

JR: So why do you do it?

MARCELINE: I do it because... I've got to live, I've got to feed myself, house myself, it's so... those are the only reasons I do it. And then it happens that, the fact that... at least I think partly because of my past... the fact that when I came back from being deported I found myself quite alone in life... I didn't have the chance to do what I wanted to do... at least to have some direction.

JR: What would you have liked to do?

MARCELINE: I don't know, I have no idea. Deep down I think I could have had some desire of... no, I think not... I think I'd be lying... I mean, I think... I think that... I mean, I think maybe there is a certain instability in me and anyway the past has made any re-adaptation pretty difficult.

EM: Marceline, you do surveys, you have a little tape recorder over your shoulder and you go interview people, for this company or that company, and then, when you're not doing surveys you can often be found in a cafe called the Old Navy.

MARCELINE: That's right.

EM: When you have time to kill, when you're alone, you go to the Old Navy?

MARCELINE: Yes.

EM: That cafe on the Boulevard St. Germain?

MARCELINE: Yes.

EM: What do you find there?

MARCELINE: What I find there, well, it's pretty difficult to explain because basically, I think it's a place where people go partly for... I don't know how to tell you, it's a place where I go when I'm alone, or when I don't want to be alone... I know I'll find people, I know there; it's a kind of haven, a refuge, a discussion ground... I mean, when I go to the Old Navy like some evening when I have nothing to do, I'm pretty much assured that I will not eat alone, maybe I won't go home alone. I don't know, but maybe I'll go to the movies too, maybe I'll do something.

EM: It seems to me that you are very scared of being alone, and there's one thing that strikes me, that you know loads of people, a lot more people than, than people who know a lot of people know... and I think that's... this has some meaning, doesn't it?

MARCELINE: Yes, I think it must have some meaning. I think I must need to be surrounded like that, and more than that I like people a lot, I like to see them, I like to be with them. You say I know a lot of people... yes, I know a lot, because... I've been hanging around St. Germain for fifteen years more or less... well, let's not say fifteen because I came back from deportation in '45... I must have started in '46 or '47, so, of course, I mean, naturally I've known tons of people.

JR: You say you know tons of people. Do you have many real friends?

MARCELINE: No. I have really very few friends. I mean I must have one or two and that's it.

JR: But Marceline, aren't the people at the Old Navy all just like you?

MARCELINE: Yeah, I think so... well... more or less.

JR: Basically it's a society of loners?
MARCEL: That's right. It's a society of loners and of people who don't fit in. And in general I must say that some of the people there are much younger than I am, of course, because some are students, some are actors, etc. So I must say that I am one of the—at least at the Old Navy anyway—maybe not in other bistros in St. Germain des Prés. I'm one . . . I mean probably . . . I mean it sounds stupid to say this but, well . . . I'm one of the oldest . . . (she laughs).

EM: No, but I'm going to ask you a very indiscreet question . . . it's your attitude toward men . . .

MARCEL: My attitude toward men?

EM: Yes.

MARCEL: What is my attitude toward men in general?

EM: Yes.

MARCEL: I've known a lot of them, I've never found one (laughter) so I think I've given up searching (laughter).  

EM: You were searching?

MARCEL: When I was younger, yes.

EM: You aren't searching anymore?

MARCEL: Oh, there's always the desire deep within me to find someone maybe, but I think my many experiences have scarred me a bit, and even if I have trouble . . . I mean I think that in getting older I've become less absolute, less exclusive, less possessive, less demanding, less intransigent, so maybe I could be content some time to accept living with someone who doesn't bother me too much, who's not, who gives me breathing room . . . but at the same time the men I could . . . I don't know . . . I could live with are already all married so I'm old so it's difficult.

EM: That is to say, you're thirty-two.

MARCEL: Yes, I'm thirty-two. But at thirty-two, well, I don't know . . . men between thirty-five and forty are all married off so . . . so my attitude with men . . . well, I think it's the attitude of a woman . . . I mean I meet a man I like, well I certainly sleep with him, but I've become much more picky with age too, so I sleep with them less often. (laughter)

EM: What are you looking for?

MARCEL: Well, you certainly ask it brutally . . . what I am looking for . . . I have no idea what I'm looking for, I just want to live life, that's all.

EM: You live from day to day?

MARCEL: Ah, yes, that's it . . . I even live for the instant. (laugh)

EM: Would you like to live any other way?

MARCEL: But when I was younger I think that . . . I mean for a long time I thought that . . . yes, that's it I think . . . for a long time I thought that a man could help me live, could help me somehow to overcome my past, and then now I begin to not believe that so much. Inasmuch as, of course, given the places I frequent . . . given that the people I meet are all more or less neurotic . . . the only man I had in my life who wasn't my husband . . . I stayed with him for eight months . . . then I left. I absolutely could not live . . . he made me sweat.

EM: Why?

MARCEL: He annoyed me because . . . first of all our lives . . . really we had no affinity . . . we had no common desires . . . everything he wanted I found laughable . . . success, a career in Madagascar . . . things like that . . . I couldn't give a damn . . . I mean I wasn't interested. And then when I first met my husband I had just come out of a serious nervous depression . . . I mean, it was my first nervous depression . . . in fact the only one I had, it was several years after I returned from deportation. I was just back from the sanatorium . . . so I had had this nervous depression. Then I met this big young engineer who built dams and who looked at the soft blue line of the mountains like that, who thirsted for the vast horizon. He was nevertheless extremely kind, extremely nice, and then, since I was small, he confined me to a role as a little girl that I absolutely could not accept. Uh . . . the word "Jew" had no meaning for him . . . he had absolutely no understanding . . . the war he spent in high school or with some boy scout troop, so really we were not similar. So I left, I left him after eight months because I was bored, it's not so much that I was bored with him as . . . basically we didn't understand each other. With that I think he'll meet a girl who will suit him fine, but not me. And I was inevitably drawn back to the Old Navy. I rediscovered the Old Navy, I rediscovered St Germain . . . well of course I had an extremely hard time because he had cut off my supplies, so starting then I really began to work . . . I've . . . in fact that's sort of how I learned my current profession, I don't know, I ended up in a joint where they paid me 100 francs an hour to transcribe diagrams, studies, and so, fine, so I was paid 100 francs an hour and then there was no more work, so I started to mimeograph reports, and then I read some kind of investigation reports, things like that, and when I was there . . . the day when there were no more reports to duplicate, they kicked me out . . . there was no more work, so I was . . . out of sheer nerve I went to see the head of the psychology service, then I said that . . . that it didn't seem so difficult to me, that stuff, that I could surely do it, so he said: "Diplomas, no diplomas," then he said I seemed too timid. I must admit that physically I was very different . . .
now I'm a bit aggressive what with the red hair, whereas back then I had my hair pulled back, no makeup . . . , I was a poor little ragamuffin wanderin' around the streets . . . I begged him to take me on anyway . . . I told him I didn't care whether I was paid 100 francs an hour but that he had to try me, he had no right to refuse me. So he tried me and it worked out very well and there it is, that's how I learned this job after being a waitress in a milk bar, after typing manuscripts, after doing loads of things, anything to make a living.

EM: Do you want to get out of that or do you want it to keep on?
MARCELINE: I think that no matter what I do in life, even if . . . I don't know, I manage to do something I can . . . I mean something I might like, which might interest me, then there will always be a part of me that will be . . . what it is . . . I mean that unlike most of the people I see around me, I have known a lot of people who at some point have become famous, whether they do something, I don't know, make films, write books, paint, etc . . . they have a name. At that point all these people stop coming to the Old Navy to . . . I think that to a certain degree they are tied up elsewhere, but at the same time, perhaps they need it less . . . I don't know. At the same time the Old Navy for them represents a time in their lives that they want above all to forget . . . little by little they become bourgeois, they buy cars, they even buy country homes, apartments, they have children . . . and I think that all these elements make them want to forget that moment in their lives, and they don't go to the Old Navy anymore . . . and for them, to go to the Old Navy is no longer any big deal. So I don't know what might happen to me . . . I suppose that . . . I'm nevertheless just as optimistic . . .

FM: But notice, your number, you keep it, because there are women now who were deported and who have their numbers removed from their arms.
MARCELINE: Yeah, yeah, I know . . . I know they can do some kind of a graft or else take it off with electrolysis . . . I saw a girl, in fact, who had had a number and who had an enormous scar that was really ugly. Me, I always considered, at least . . . did I really consider it? . . . there were moments when I wanted to get rid of it, and then I don't know, I mean, it . . . well, I don't know.

Medium shot Rouch, addressing Marceline.

JR: When you go out in the street in the morning . . .
MARCELINE: Yes . . .
JR: Do you have an idea of what you're going to do during the day?

Shots of Marceline walking in the street. She walks with her back to the camera, which follows her. The day is grey. We see that it has been raining. Marceline is wearing a raincoat and wears a satchel slung across her shoulders. Over these images, we hear, off-screen, Marceline's laugh as she responds to Jean Rouch, then her voice.

MARCELINE: Listen, there are times when I go out in the street in the morning . . . when I have things to do . . . but there is no guarantee I'm going to do them. I mean I never know what I'll be doing from one day to the next. It's like I live thinking that I don't know what tomorrow will bring . . . and then, for me, adventure is always just around the corner.

JR: And if we asked you to go into the street and ask people the question "Are you happy?", would you go?

Marceline continues to walk down the street, her back to the camera, following Rouch's off-screen question.

Are You Happy?

METRO PASSY

The picture answers Jean Rouch's question. Marceline, wearing the raincoat in which we saw her in the preceding sequence, calls out to passersby near the Passy metro station. The satchel she is carrying is a tape recorder case, and she holds a microphone in her hand. She is accompanied by Nadine, who is taking part in the film as interviewer. Marceline speaks to a passerby:

MARCELINE: Are you happy? Sir, excuse me?
MAN: What the fuck do you care . . .
MARCELINE (to Nadine): He said what the fuck do you care . . .

Nadine laughs. Marceline and Nadine approach a young boy.

MARCELINE: Are you happy?

The young boy draws back in fear.
MARCELLE AND NADINE: Hey, don't be afraid! We don't want to hurt you!

PLACE VICTOR HUGO

MARCELLE calls to a middle-aged woman, passing by.

MARCELLE: Ma'am... excuse me...
WOMAN: Eh, I don't have time, I'm already tired enough.

PLACE DE LA BASTILLE

MARCELLE: Are you happy, sir?
PASSENGER: Oh, don't give me all that stuff!

MARCELLE stops an unassuming looking man, about fifty years old.

MARCELLE: Are you happy?
MAN: Always, yes.
MARCELLE: Really?
MAN: Yes, of course!

PLACE DU PANthéON

MARCELLE speaks to an old woman, who is afraid of the microphone.

MARCELLE: Are you happy?
WOMAN: Oh yes. Well, things are okay... those contraptions!

MENILMONTANT

A young woman pushing a baby carriage.

YOUNG WOMAN: It depends what you mean by happy... Happy? I'm happy in my home life. Yeah, and so?

BASTILLE

A woman around sixty years old. She tries to avoid them.

NADINE: Please ma'am, do us this favor.
WOMAN: Of course... can't you tell? Can't you see it on my face?
MARCELLE: Yes, you have a very bright face.
WOMAN: So I'm happy, happy to be alive, even though I'm sixty years old.
NADINE: You're sixty?
WOMAN: Yes, and even though I travel twenty kilometers every day to come work in Paris.
NADINE: No kidding?
WOMAN: I'm glad to have my health... that's the main thing... and a kind husband.

METRO PASSY

A woman, on the metro plattorm.

WOMAN: It depends.
MARCELLE: It depends on what?
WOMAN: It depends on what... you know, question of money, no; you're never happy when you're a worker.

SAINT GERMAIN DES PRES

A man around fifty years old.

MAN: Sometimes I've got plenty of troubles.
NADINE: And still you're not unhappy?
MAN: I've lost my sister, forty-four years old, yes, my dear! And I am really upset... believe me. Now I don't even try to understand.

PLACE VICTOR HUGO

A young man wearing glasses—no doubt a student.

MARCELLE: Are you unhappy?
YOUNG MAN: What do you mean unhappy? What for?
NADINE: Are you happy or unhappy?
YOUNG MAN: It depends what philosophy you adopt.
MARCELLE: Oh, we're doing a study on the theme of happiness.
NADINE: Yeah.
YOUNG MAN: On the theme of happiness? And you aren't going to cite any names? Well... I don't know... if you take Descartes...
NADINE: Oh no, no, no... oh my, no!
YOUNG MAN: You see, I'm in the middle of reading this!

He shows a book which he pulls out of his pocket.

BASTILLE

A fun fair. In front of a merry-go-round

MARCELLE and Nadine interrogate a friendly young cop.

MARCELLE: Are you happy?
COP: No.
MARCELLE: No, you're not happy, why? We're doing a sociological investigation.
COP: A lodging investigation?
NADINE: No, sociological.
COP: Off-duty it would be okay to answer, but in uniform...
MARCELLE: You aren't allowed to answer?
COP: No, not in uniform... off-duty I would have answered.
SAINT GERMAIN DES PRES

A middle-aged lady, unpretentious, but elegant.

LADY: On the theme of happiness? I’ve had happiness, I’ve had unhappiness. I’ve had a bit of everything in my life. It can’t be any other way, eh? You’ve got to take the good with the bad, eh?

RUE BEAUREGARD

An old man, almost miserable looking.

MARCELINE: Why are you unhappy, sir?
OLD MAN: Because I’m too old.
MARCELINE: Really?
OLD MAN: Yup, seventy-nine years!
MARCELINE: No?
OLD MAN: I swear it, yes, I’m from ’82...

He seems completely terrified by the mike, which Marceline holds near him. The young women laugh.

NADINE: Don’t be afraid, no, don’t be afraid, it’s the microphone! It’s the microphone!
MARCELINE: And do you think that when you’re eighty... when you’re seventy-nine years old, you’re unhappy?
OLD MAN: Uh, well, I lost my wife, too...
NADINE: So you’re alone?
OLD MAN: Ah yes, I’m alone. And then there’s the rent, 6,318 francs every month. I’m in a hotel...

SAINT GERMAIN DES PRES

Two young women, elegant and cheerful.

MARCELINE: Are you happy?
ONE YOUNG WOMAN: Yes.
NADINE: And you, miss?
OTHER YOUNG WOMAN: Me too, of course. We’re young and it’s a beautiful day.

The Garage Mechanic

A car repair shop. Medium shot of the front of a car with its hood up. Back to the camera, the garage mechanic, in blue coveralls, is leaning over the engine. His wife is standing near him, screen left. They both must be about thirty-five. Marceline arrives and comes toward them, facing the camera.

MARCELINE: Good morning. I was sent here by Daniel; he said you had agreed to be interviewed.
MECHANIC: Yes.

Medium close-up of the mechanic.

MARCELINE: I’m going to ask you to answer just one question for me: Are you satisfied with your living conditions?

The mechanic casts one last glance at the motor.
MECHANIC: There's not much to be done about it.

Medium shot, over Marceline's shoulder to the mechanic and his wife.

WIFE: We aren't lacking anything. We've got everything we need ... what we want, well, it's to move up ... I mean it's ...

MECHANIC: No, in a certain sense we're not complaining ... to say we're complaining we're not complaining. Us, we don't complain. I mean to say that ...

WIFE: I think that to get somewhere in life, to do something yourself, you've got to work.

MARCELINE: Yes.

MECHANIC: No, but that's out of the realm of living conditions. About living conditions, we get by because we cheat a little, eh? Because we do a bunch of things that we really shouldn't do.

The wife is shocked.

WIFE: Oh, you're being funny, saying that ...

MECHANIC: It's the truth ... You ask me a question, I answer it for you.

WIFE: Obviously.

MECHANIC: Now living conditions ... well, it's practically impossible if you stick to the rules ... that's what I think.

MARCELINE: Yeah ...

MECHANIC: I mean that if I bill all my clients ... if I bill everything normally, then making a living is impossible ...

The young woman seems scandalized and most of all very worried. She taps her husband lightly and looks toward the camera with apprehension. A friend of the mechanic—a worker or somebody connected with the garage—is near him. Marceline questions him. (Opposite angle to medium shot of the men.)

MARCELINE: And you, sir, are you happy?

MAN: Oh, from time to time. It depends on the moment ... on circumstances ... I manage.

Close-up of Marceline, to three-shot, with the wife in profile.

WIFE: When you get right down to it, Paris is not all that much fun. The atmosphere, the lack of sun we still have a life that's, well, too ...

Close-up of Marceline, to medium shot of the two men behind the gaping hood of the car, wife in profile.

MECHANIC: People are crazy, they're nuts. They work all week, then they don't do anything on Sunday. They don't want to wreck the car. They park along the side of the road, they take out their little table, their little chair, they set themselves up so they won't wreck the car, because on a little back lane, they'd wreck it. So they sit there, they use five liters of gas and they take three hours to get home. You think that's normal?

Close-up of the two men, over:

MARCELINE: And you live differently, you two?

MECHANIC: I try ... we try.

MARCELINE: Yeah? ...

MECHANIC: We're interested in useless things that don't get you anything, just for the fun of it.

MARCELINE: What do you mean by useless things?

MECHANIC: Well, we've got some friends ...

FRIEND: Putter around ...

MECHANIC: We mess around doing things for no reason. We spend time doing nothing.

Maddie and Henri

A door opens to reveal a young woman, and behind her a room visibly close to the roof. In the back of the room a young bearded man is seated. Marceline and Nadine enter:

MARCELINE: Hello

YOUNG WOMAN: Hello

NADINE: Hello, we're here for the survey you were told about ... hello ... here we are.

YOUNG WOMAN: What are your names?

NADINE: I'm Nadine and this is Marceline.

MARCELINE: And I'm Marceline. And you?

YOUNG WOMAN: Maddie ... and he's Henri.

Marceline asks her question—are you happy? Close-up of Henri, who answers:

HENRI: Me, I don't know ... happiness isn't a goal ... I don't set up happiness as a goal for myself ... I try to live as normally as possible ... I mean as true to myself as possible ... at the moment there are two of us ... that hasn't changed a thing in my concept of happiness ... I try to find it for two, whereas before I was looking for it alone ... and that's it.

MARCELINE: And how was your life before?

Close up of Maddie, later cutting away to close-ups of Henri and Marceline.
MADDIE: Until I was seventeen, I lived with my parents and then some friends, and I decided to start a business that was going to make us get rich quick... of course! Because working a lot... that is not very interesting... because it's really a waste of time... for earning money in particular. So we had a big cabinet shop and with big old Louis Philippe bureaus that we cut up, that we dismantled completely... we managed to make Louis XVI bureaus, because the wood was 100 years old and people were fooled by it... 100 years or 150 or 200 years, it doesn't matter... So we transformed them, for example, by adding some columns on either side... we left only three drawers... You know on Louis Philippe's there are five drawers. Then in the end, using only the old wood, we managed to even reconstruct some Louis XIV pieces, by bending the old wood, adding curves and new veneer.

NADINE: And you made money in this venture?

MADDIE: Oh, the people who were with me made a lot, but in the end I got out... people are even suing since then... I mean to tell you that all this... to say that the business world is hideous... in fact I'm very happy not to have gotten anything out of it... except for the experience so that I never again get started in ventures like that it's not worth it.

Maddie gets up and we see her in the foreground, getting a bowl of fruit from a table. Henri is talking in the background.

HENRI: Me, I'm a painter. I'm not a theoretician. To understand something I need to make it, to participate in it... so... I like painting and so I do it to try to understand others a bit.

Maddie returns toward Henri, Nadine, and Marceline on the terrace and offers some fruit.

MARCELIN: I'll take one grape. I'm not hungry at all.

MARCELINE (off-screen): What do you do every day?

Maddie is seated, Nadine at her right, Henri at her left; Marceline faces her, holding the microphone.

MADDIE: So there you have it, it's been exactly a year and a half that we're together... so it's sort of been our honeymoon. We've usually stayed in bed until one in the afternoon... read old books, and every afternoon we've painted... but painting, that's only for the last six months.

HENRI: You're forgetting about our jaunts.

MADDIE: Because besides that we wanted to travel a bit, all over. Last year we left in May. It was our honeymoon trip from May up until... until the end of September... we went to the Camargue... we rented a studio... well, in an old house, with an old lady.

MARCELIN: Aie! You went to Saint Tropez?

Close-up of Henri.

HENRI: Completely broke! And there we had to get by, we had to live... and the great discovery was to realize that we could live down there just like we live here now... I mean we did odd jobs... I painted names on boats... things like that. I worked two hours a day... we led a life of luxury.

Close-up of Maddie.

MADDIE: And then we lived on that for the whole day... we sunbathed, we painted...

Close-up of Henri.

HENRI: We don't think about the problem of happiness... maybe that's why we consider ourselves happy, because we don't think about the problem of happiness, which is a pretty empty word. Because to consider the problem of unhappiness... the problem of happiness, to consider the problem of unhappiness... and the problem of unhappiness is ridiculous. It's a word that should be stricken from the vocabulary, unhappiness. There is sorrow... there's everything you want... but not unhappiness... or happiness either.

Henri gets up and walks to the foreground; the camera follows him, panning left toward an odd cabinet with a glass door, which he opens, and he flicks a switch. It's an antique music case in which an enormous toothed wheel begins to rotate. In the background Maddie is still talking.

MADDIE: You see, for example, we have no money, and yet I know very few people in our group of friends, who earn, by the way, some heftily sum every month, who have a library or a record collection like ours, because as soon as we sell a little painting, it's really to enrich our universe with belongings, with objects.

The camera stops on the music machine, filming it in successive extreme close-ups, while we hear the music continue its little mechanical round. Downward wipe to black.
The Workers

Part of a close shot of a photo of Marlon Brando stuck to a wall. The camera tilts down to a group of young workers at a table with Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin (close-up of Jean, with inserts of Morin, and then Jacques).

JEAN: When I think that you have to get up in the morning at the same time every day . . . let's say at six o'clock . . . then you have your coffee . . . you take the same route every day to get to the station . . . you walk up the stairs, you get on the train, then you arrive . . . you go in the same door every day. Then the time clock, you punch in every day. Then after that you sit down at your drafting table and you start to draw. And then at noon you start over every day, you talk and then that's it, you go eat and then you come back and then in the evening you take your train, you go home and then you eat . . . then you go to bed and it's always the same, I mean, I find it ridiculous. I find it . . . . When I get here in the morning, when I get to the door of the factory . . . . I don't know . . . . I feel like there's something . . . . I feel like rebelling and then I tell myself . . . . after all, I don't give a damn

Close-up of Jacques.

JACQUES: Me, I've never heard a guy tell me his work was interesting.

EM: But Angélo, do you feel the same way he does?

ANGELO: Yeah, just about . . . yeah . . . but I think that

Medium close-up of Jacques with cutaways to Angélo.

JACQUES: Well, there are lots of guys who want to become . . . to climb the ranks . . . to get from workers to technicians, from technicians they think they'll get to be . . . I don't know . . . engineers maybe. So they take courses . . . that's what they're hoping for . . . but to leave to go where? To shop around? There are many who leave to go shop around and then they come back . . . there are some who leave to go start a business . . . some succeed . . . some don't succeed and they come back. The problem is the same for people who work in the office. For all the people who work in whatever part of the factory, it's the same. It's that the work is so fragmented, it's gotten so small, if you like, that we end up doing a job that's monotonous . . . that's boring . . . and it's always the same.

Close-up of Angélo.
ANGÉLITO: Well, I think that... me, I do twenty-four hours a day. Because you do nine hours a day, that's true, but the rest of the hours you use to sleep, and you sleep so you can go work, so it's all the same... and all of it is work... I think he's right.

ANGÉLO

ANGÉLO’s bedroom, at home in Clamart, in the morning. An alarm clock rings. ANGÉLO emerges from the sheets, stretches. His mother comes in carrying his breakfast tray. They kiss each other.

ANGELITO: How are you?

MOTHER: Fine, how are you?

The mother leaves the room. ANGÉLO eats his breakfast, then lights a cigarette and takes a couple of drags before he gets up.

Rapid succession of shots: ANGÉLO finishes washing, gets dressed, and leaves the house.

We follow him, as does the camera, down the street. Day has not yet broken. The factory entrance, which groups of workers penetrate silently. We see ANGÉLO enter. A worker at the door distributes leaflets.

The factory. Flashes of the workers at work in front of their machines in full action. Lathes, milling machines, plating presses... melting iron. Trullleys. Wagons.

The break. Workers, sitting in different corners of the shop, eat sandwiches. One leafs through a newspaper as he eats.

End of the day. The workers leave the factory. We follow ANGÉLO in the street. He is waiting for the bus. Quick shots of the ride. When he gets off, ANGÉLO climbs a long stairway squeezed between gardens. Some children are playing on the steps. ANGÉLO says hello to some of them in passing.

When ANGÉLO reaches the top of the stairs, we discover, from that point, an immense panoramic view down onto the roofs of Paris.

At the end of a little street also lined with gardens, ANGÉLO reaches the house where he lives. We then see him in the courtyard, in a white judo suit. He is practicing judo movements: shoulder butts, wrist manchettes, falls. Some sort of heavy bearskin hanging from a tree and the tree itself serve as his partner. ANGÉLO seems to be fighting with the tree.

ANGÉLO’s room. He stretches out on the bed, picks up a book with an ancient binding, opens it. We can make out a title: Danton.

Dusk. Lights go out in ANGÉLO’s room.
Angélo and Landry

The staircase of an apartment building. On the first steps are seated Landry, a black African, and Angélo. Standing and facing them at the foot of the steps, Edgar Morin.

EM: Angélo, you saw Landry at the screening of the rushes; you wanted to meet him . . . well, here he is now, go ahead!

Close-up of Angélo, then Landry.

ANGÉLO: What are you doing in France now?
LANDRY: In France I’m at Villeneuve-sur-Lot college, in Lot-en-Garonne. It’s a place where I’m quite happy.
ANGÉLO: I work at Renault.
LANDRY: Ah, you work at Renault! Well, well, my friend! They sure talk about Renault in Africa. The Renault company, what do you know, what do you know!

ANGÉLO: It’s got a big reputation.

Series of close-ups alternating Angélo-Landry during the following response.

LANDRY: Oh, a very big reputation; for Africans it’s the only automobile manufacturer that exists. Besides Renault there’s nobody . . . Yes, but, I don’t know, . . . for myself, I would never consider working in a factory. Because I imagine that . . . in a factory you’re there, you’re closed in, you’re there all day long, the noise of machines and all there . . .

Close-up of Angélo.

ANGÉLO: You’re absolutely right. It’s disgusting. I wonder how we manage to stay in a factory, like you say, closed in. We’re closed in, we’re controlled. There’s a kind of discord that already divides workers. And on top of that, there’s the management harassing us, always in back of us, the foremen, that’s right. It’s really disgusting. And you’re right when you say that you wonder how we manage to stay in a factory, it’s really tough, only you’ve got no choice, sometimes there just isn’t anything else. Uh, . . . when you first came to France, and you were doing absolutely nothing, you didn’t know the place, you didn’t know anyone, oh? That’s just what I’d like you to tell me a little about.

Close-up Landry.

LANDRY: Ah! When I first came to France, I didn’t know anyone, I mean . . . I didn’t know anyone. I wasn’t really familiar with life in France, and I was obliged to get by . . . I mean to pull myself
through. In my condition it's pretty difficult. An African in France is not... there's... for him the big problem is a question of adaptation.

**Alternating close-ups of Angelo and Landry throughout the following exchange.**

**ANGELO:** I also have the impression that in life you have... there are people who have inferiority complexes.

**LANDRY:** When I talk about inferiority complexes, that's me exactly, I mean...

**ANGELO:** Yeah, I understand, but there's a thing I want to ask you. Could I maybe use "tu" with you? Do you mind?

**LANDRY:** Yes, of course, at this point!...

**ANGELO:** There's a thing I want to ask you and that's, do you still have this complex?

**LANDRY:** Uh... me, no, I no longer have a complex because when I arrived in France I realized that the French in Paris were not the same as the French in Africa and—

**ANGELO:** It doesn't bother you a bit... you're black and you don't give a damn.

**LANDRY:** Oh, I don't give a damn! Like I said, I've got a system. I knock on a door and when it opens, I walk in. When it insists on staying shut, I turn around. It's simple.

**ANGELO:** Oh, you're right. You're really okay. I like you a lot. I listen. I'm going to say, what do you think about workers?

**LANDRY:** Uh, workers, well, I, workers in France, I'm not exactly familiar with them...

**ANGELO:** You're not familiar with them...

**LANDRY:** Ah, but... I don't know how it works in France... because here in France I've seen workers, even the lower-income worker, he's got a car. And so every evening you see him, he's very happy... so I don't know how it really works and... I don't know if it's the same as in Africa...

**ANGELO:** You're right... you see, I work at Renault, and you've got to figure, you know, 80 percent of the guys who have their car... because I must tell you, it's that in France... the guy is an individual. He works for himself... y'know... he thinks only of himself... the guy's got his salary, you see, he works... he works... for himself, the guy... and he works hard, eh? So he saves up some dough, you see, he deprives himself of certain things, you see... he wants to play, like, that kind of guy, you know, who has dough... who's got some bread... you see. He's a pitiful guy... he's really a pitiful guy. The rest of us, we go to the cafeteria, you know, but me, I don't give a damn... I've got absolutely nothing... I've got absolutely nothing... I'm a poor guy, but I eat. At the cafeteria at Renault, you see, the guys at the table... you know they eat... just... an appetizer... you know, that's all... and a bit of bread. That's all, but they've got one thing... they've got their wheels... so you imagine... you say to yourself, you say... yeah, but shit, these guys in France... the proletariat in France... he's got some dough... he's got some dough... he makes a lot... he makes a lot of bread... he can buy himself a car... he can buy himself a car... he can pay for his apartment. Don't believe it! He is one unhappy guy... he's a pitiful type. Believe me! I live with these people... I live with them... they're a pitiful bunch. Look, you've got other things like... you go into a café or a restaurant... more like a restaurant. You see the guy really well dressed... with all that, you say... at least this guy must have some money. He's a pitiful guy... don't have any illusions... he's a pitiful guy... most of the time he's a pitiful guy, well, that's my opinion... he's an unhappy guy... he's a guy who's deprived himself so he could buy a suit, you see... well dressed. The gossips and you see the whole deal. It's a sham, all of that... it's a joke... the guy... because... why is it a joke? It's a joke because on Monday he's going to start over like a pitiful guy in a shifty factory... filthy I like when you see him inside a factory and you see the outside it's no longer the same guy... you see?

**Final close-up of Landry, agreeing, vaguely disturbed.**

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**Gabillon**

**A dining room. At the table facing Edgar Morin is Jacques Gabillon, his wife, Simone, and their little boy.**

**EM:** Go on and serve your kid! He's got nothing left to eat!

**MME. GABILLON:** What do you want my love?

**CHILD:** Some cucumber...

**GABILLON:** Cucumber!

**MME. GABILLON:** Okay then.

**GABILLON:** You're a cucumber lover.

**Profile close-up of Morin, with cutaways to Gabillon.**

**EM:** I remember... eh?... for years, the housing problem... how much it bothered you... how much it weighed down your life. And then now you're in Clichy. Low-cost housing is better anyway. It's bright, it's peaceful, etc.... but could you talk to us about that problem?

**Close-up of Mme. Gabillon during her husband's response.**
GABILLON: It was sheer anguish, the housing question. It was frightening. Not to have a home... to be in some ways at the mercy of others. It's something absolutely terrible. Well, first of all when you're in a... in a boarding house...

MME. GABILLON: Oh, listen, you don't remember!... there were some walls that were so thin you could hear everything the neighbors were saying next door...

GABILLON: Of course... of course... it's true.

MME. GABILLON: We didn't even have heat in the room.

GABILLON: It's true.

MME. GABILLON: And then we had bedbugs... I was so terrified that I wanted to sleep outside.

GABILLON: But I didn't want you to sleep outside... you wanted to go up to the park on the hill...

MME. GABILLON: Well, I would have preferred.

GABILLON: The park... though... in the eighteenth... down there...

Close-up of Mme. Gabillon.

MME. GABILLON: Oh, it was awful! I had never seen bedbugs in my life. The first time I saw... it was one day... I woke up at about five in the morning. I mean before I had a couple of little... a couple of little bumps on my arms... I didn't know what they were... I thought they were some weird pimples, and then one fine day I woke up at five in the morning and I turned my head and saw some kind of bug climbing behind my bed... I'd never seen any bedbugs... never... I let out an ear-piercing scream. You remember...

GABILLON: I didn't care. I'd seen bedbugs of course.

MME. GABILLON: But I hadn't.

GABILLON: I had seen them before, but Simone hadn't, eh?

MME. GABILLON: Oh no, it was awful!... to see such things!

Close-up of Gabillon.

GABILLON: Then it's terrible because she wanted to go out like that and sleep on the grass... on the lawn... in the park. Down there...

MME. GABILLON: No it wasn't... yeah, but the Buttes Chaumont,²² it wasn't...

GABILLON: And me, I didn't want to. I didn't want to because for me the Buttes Chaumont, you know, it's something... it left me... how can I explain, it was a risk, you know?... to be left somehow at the mercy of the night... and anyway, I didn't want to leave her in the park, on the lawn, eh?

Close-up of Mme. Gabillon.

MME. GABILLON: As for me, I preferred that to the bedbugs. Oh, I would have preferred that. And then, I talked about them at the office, and I had a friend who said "Oh my god, a bedbug makes... it's weird... it's like a drop of blood running down your body." And all night I thought about that. I got to sleep around four in the morning thinking I'd feel a drop of blood fall on me... it was awful!

ARE YOU HAPPY?

Close-up of Edgar Morin, then close-ups alternating between Gabillon and his wife during the following replies.

EM: I was wondering something. Are you happy?

MME. GABILLON: More or less...

EM: And you?

GABILLON: More or less.

EM: So what's missing?

MME. GABILLON: Oh, I'm ashamed to say it... money.

EM: And you?

GABILLON: To do what I'd like to do...

EM: Which is?

GABILLON: To devote time to what interests me...

MME. GABILLON: Yeah, but it's the same thing! Because if we had money he could dedicate himself to whatever he wants... I mean...

EM: Right now what are you happy with?

MME. GABILLON: Well, I suppose that in spite of everything I'm pretty spoiled by life... because... I love my husband... I love my son... I have a job... a small job, but I like it...

GABILLON: For me, work is time wasted.

Close-up of Gabillon during Morin's question, then alternation of close-ups again, according to which person is speaking.

EM: Okay, but if you remember... you struggled... we struggled in the same party. We hoped for another kind of life... we hoped for something different... and then?

GABILLON: Yes, of course.

EM: So we bury it?

GABILLON: Ideals are not always... they're not always... not even often attainable. So of course we accept... we accept or no. We don't accept the life that is made for us.

²² The Buttes Chaumont is a beautiful park on a hill in the north of Paris.—Ed.
EM: You have to adapt?
GABILLON: You have to adapt. I admire and envy people who precisely can adapt totally. Me, I’m reduced to a sort of . . . a split, you know, internally, an intimate split, and I abandon one part of me, you know? . . . that I adapt.
EM: And the other part—what does it do?
GABILLON: Well, I keep it . . . up till now . . . I protect it, more exactly . . . I protect it!
EM: And what is this part?
GABILLON: Well, it’s the authentic part of me . . .

Off-screen voice of Gabillon over close-up of Morin, then slight pan toward Mme. Gabillon, finishing on close-up of Gabillon with Mme. Gabillon.

I think that the tragedy of our age is that we choose our work less and less. You don’t enter into something . . . you fall into something because you’ve simply got to have . . . if not a title . . . but a position, an official job . . . because you need an ID card . . . you need a work card. A man today, what is a man? A packet . . . a packet of . . . he’s an ID card . . . a bunch of forms . . . that’s today’s man, isn’t it? Not everybody can be an artist, nor can everybody be a craftsman. It’s a maneuver so you have to beat boredom . . . the whole day long . . . a job that’s uninteresting, a job to . . . how shall I put it? . . . in which you find no interest, that has no meaning . . . And yet obviously you have to do it, this job . . . You have to put up with it, right, until six P.M.
EM: Yeah, but after six o’clock?
GABILLON: Well, after six o’clock you try to become yourself again . . . you become yourself again. You have a job until six o’clock and then afterward you’re a whole other man . . . a whole other person.

Close-up of Morin, smiling.

EM: And what does this man do?

Profile close-up of Gabillon with close-up inserts of Mme. Gabillon.

GABILLON: Well, this man, he vibrates, he exists. He’s maybe a prisoner somewhere. He’s a prisoner of the first man, right? It’s the first one who passed him the handcuffs. But I think that more and more you have to, you have to . . . how shall I put it? cut down your participation, you know, in work, in work, in official work, and give even more on the side . . . to what I call the marginal life . . .

Close-up Morin.

EM: Because for the rest you think . . . is there anything you believe in?

Close-up Gabillon.

GABILLON: I believe in life . . . I mean, I believe . . . in the possibility of being fulfilled in spite of everything, in . . . and because of it!
Marilou

[Below you will read almost in its entirety the exchange between Marilou and Morin, which has been shortened considerably in the film as shown. Marilou knew nothing of the questions she would be asked. Morin didn't know where he was heading. His first question was anecdotal and superficial, but Marilou, who could have avoided answering it, responds, in fact, with extraordinary candor, which takes this exchange beyond the bounds of the conversation or the interview.]

FM: Listen, Marilou.
MARILOU: Yes, my father . . .
EM: I'm going to ask you a question.
MARILOU: Go ahead.
EM: On Friday, last Friday at three in the morning, I saw you at St. Germain des Prés with two men.
MARILOU: That's a question I don't ask myself, I live like I live; it sometimes happens that I'm out late every night, that I still manage to get to work; it sometimes happens that I go to bed very early; it doesn't change me in the least, makes absolutely no difference in my life.
EM: It was in July 1957 that you arrived in Paris with your suitcases. You didn't know French, well, you had learned some in school.
MARILOU: Yes, it was the fourteenth of July in 1957; I arrived on the fourteenth of July, I didn't know a word of French. I had some addresses but I didn't know anyone; I arrived and I went to the first address and no one was there; I went to the second address, there was a girl who spoke English. She said "You must be tired, come in and rest" . . . I rested. I phoned the first address because it was some friends; some comrades, political friends; I went back there and I lived at the beginning with a Spanish refugee; I learned French in political surroundings . . . it was . . . it was really great, and I didn't notice that I was making an effort to adapt because there were new relationships to be made, new people, even the language, it was a really euphoric period up to the point when I began to express myself in French, and the mechanism of repetition started up. I realized that at Concord or at Montparnasse or Etoile or St. Germain des Prés . . . the problem was the same as in the smallest café, on the smallest street of the most remote little hamlet in Italy, and that it had done me no good to have come to France.
EM: I first met you in October '57; in sum those were your early days in Paris?
MARILOU: Yeah.
EM: It was at the town hall in Clichy.
MARILOU: Yeah.
EM: It was by chance; there was a debate about Poland.
MARILOU: On Stalinism.
EM: With our friend, Claudio.
MARILOU: Yeah.
EM: And you worked as a secretary.
MARILOU: Yeah, a crummy joint.
EM: I saw you there and it's been over three years since.
MARILOU: Yeah.
EM: You're a Parisian now, at least you're no longer . . . you're more Parisian than Cremonese. I mean . . . has something new happened for you?
MARILOU: Yes. Nothing scandalizes me anymore. In Italy I was into politics and was really scandalized (now, I don't like that word) by a certain social situation. I really thought I could do something, I pursued it in France. I belonged to leftist groups in France; for the past two months I've been out of politics altogether! . . . I find it laughable. . . . I find that . . . I discover that I don't know how to say . . . a logic in things and I tell myself all the time, fine, it's like this, if you like it, fine, if you don't like it, all you have to do is avoid it. Yeah, but otherwise you just keep on walking, that's all.

We see Marilou going out of her maid's room and leaving the building she lives in. We follow her on the street. We find her at her office of Cahiers du Cinéma, where she is a secretary. Over a medium close-up of Marilou sitting in front of her typewriter, we hear Edgar Morin, whose voice continues over close-ups of Marilou in inserts, then alternating with close-ups of himself.

EM: Marilou, you are twenty-seven years old, you came from Italy to France three years ago, and for the past three years you have been living a totally new experience. When you were in Cremona, you lived with your father, a petty bourgeois, to boot. Here in Paris you live in a maid's room, without running water, you have had the experience of being a foreigner and you have met some men: you have learned some things; you've gotten to know Paris, you've had some new friends, and so, what I want to say is, what is there that's new for you?
Close-up of Marilou, the face, attentive, leaning on one of her hands.

MARILOU: You've mentioned the difference between my bourgeois life in Italy and my maid's room in Paris. In fact, my maid's room has done something for me. I spent one winter... several winters, in fact, with no heat... it was cold. It was the first time I lived without comfort. It was a relief the first year... I was overwhelmed by bad conscience when I first came to Paris... and... I don't know... it was silly but it did me good to be, to be uncomfortable... and then, and then... I think... it was also the first time I worked. The first times when I woke up at seven o'clock, even if I was exhausted, I was almost happy to take the subway... to find myself in the hustle. I think that really I felt myself a part of something. But that didn't last too long. Now I'm sick of my maid's room, I'm sick of being cold in the winter... I'm sick of being in the subway at rush hour. I don't find anymore communication, I find... it all disagreeable, it's all for nothing... and...

Close-up of Morin.

EM: Yeah, but listen... I mean... Are you pursuing something? Do you have some goal?...

Close-up of Marilou.

MARILOU: Really, to be honest, I don't know... There are moments when I happily tell myself that I came to Paris... and its true, I have the impression that I've recovered lost time. I felt sort of out of phase with everything when I first came here and I was closed up at home... isolated... when I was in Italy. And I used up my inner resources, so I wanted to go crashing into reality... I did it... and I thought it was good. And now I wonder if I had to do it that way. I drink, for example... that too I find... I don't know... I wanted to free myself of alibi when I came to France, I wanted to live, not by compensation... I wanted to live because I wanted to live... you know, then... Now I've destroyed bit by bit the false mechanisms, the alibis, and I recover them by drinking or by sleeping around, by some irrational attitude, by doing fucked-up thing basically... using foul language doesn't help, so, that's it—

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EM: Yes, but still you see I don't agree with what you're saying. There's something in you, because here you've got friends. There are people who really like you, you're not alone, so in the end what are you seeking to overcome? You know you have... I don't understand now if you're wishing this state on yourself...

MARILOU: I know there are people who love me; that's not what's important, it's feeling it. I have moments when I don't feel it, where I feel cut off from everything, where I feel that something isn't working, something fundamental is not working... and it comes before something happens, and so I don't give a damn whether people love me or not... it's not important, you see?

EM: Yeah, but then I say, what does there need to be for things to work right? What does there need to be for things to work right?...

MARILOU: I need to feel, in a given situation, like I am in the real world, whereas I constantly feel like I am in the imaginary.

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Close-up of Marilou from Morin's profile point of view.

EM: You say you are in the imaginary. But what does reality mean for you? Is it to have a job that really interests you? To do what you really want? Is it to... to... live with a man that you love rather than living day to day like this, sleeping with guys? I don't know, what is it?

MARILOU: But one flows from the other, clearly. It's to have a job that... that doesn't scare me. It's to live with someone who... no matter how long... whether it be for an hour two hours... a month... fifteen days... and knowing that I'm with him... that I have the possibility of communicating with him... that there are no phantoms to prevent my enjoying him. It's... it's above all... to come out of myself... to live or die, even... provided that it puts me in touch with something that... makes me get outside of myself, that's all... I reduce everything to myself for the moment. I don't even have the right to... not even the right to kill myself, you know, it would be false... absolutely false... and...

I long close-up of Marilou, who is silent, biting at her lips, on the verge of tears, under the gaze of Edgar Morin who is immobile, and also silent. Then...

EM: But why do you reduce everything to you?...
MARILOU: What?
EM: Reduce everything to you?
MARILOU: If only I knew!

Prolonged close-up of Marilou, silent again, edgy, anguisheed.
Intervention of Rouch who, after baiting this Morin-Marilou dialogue, remained silent and out of the conversation. Marilou is in tears, but her face is very calm.

JR: Ask a question now, anything, about the Pope. Ask the question now, and don't get close to her, ask the question.

EM: Okay, now listen, Marilou . . .

JR: No, you're moving closer, Morin, stay back, Morin, move back. Start the question over.

EM: Listen, for tonight we're going to ask you something a little lighter, okay?

(Laughter)

What do you think of the Pope, of anything you want?

Questioning face of Marilou.

EM: Because the Pope is Italian.

MARILOU: I don't care about being Italian, I'm Italian by chance and I don't give a damn about the Pope either.

EM: You're not Italian by chance.

MARILOU: No, it's by chance.

EM: But I see that when you prepare a dish of pasta-scutta, you prepare the sauce as though you were.

MARILOU: It's all a show for friends; Italians are supposed to know how to make spaghetti, so I make it, so everyone thinks my spaghetti sauces reveal the purest Italian tradition . . . well, the last time, I put vodka in it. So there, I'm quite pleased with myself (laughter).

EM: Do you feel as though you've said things . . . lots of things or not many things.

MARILOU: I can't say anything at the moment . . . I don't know where I am . . . I can't say anything.

EM: Do you think this film could help you say something?

MARILOU: I don't know. You are all very nice, that's all I can say.
Jean-Pierre at home

Jean-Pierre

The balcony of an apartment building in the seventeenth arrondissement. Back to the camera, Jean-Pierre is looking down at the street. He has a glass in his hand. He takes a drink, then goes back into his room and toward his work table, which is scattered with books and papers. He sits down and takes a cigarette, which he lights. Off-screen, we hear the voice of Edgar Morin, while Jean-Pierre stands up again.

EM: Jean-Pierre, you are a student, you are twenty years old, and I wonder how you get by in life.

Close-up of Jean-Pierre.

It is now another scene—a dining room, the end of dinner. After a moment we discover the presence of Marceline and Morin, by insert close-ups.

JEAN-PIERRE: Well, it is true that I live... Yes, in fact I do live... I live... I live no doubt much better than most students my age live. But I live, I mean I live so long as I accept some terrible compromises... I live only so long as I accept... I accept that things are not what I had wanted them to be... As long as I accept... well, being fucked over, you know!... there aren't, there aren't any problems... In fact I think that all the guys... all the guys who are my age now... even some older ones... manage to live serenely, if you will, only as long as they accept the necessity of being fucked over... But otherwise when I talk to you about impotence... I mean... they're real impotence, you understand...

Like the fact that I go and blow my exams... I don't know. I mean... Like I tried to live with a woman... I tried to make her happy... that she wanted to make me happy that we tried to be happy... then that it dissipates, it becomes absurd. They're impotent, you know... like on the political level too... and again, I don't give a damn now... I mean it's somehow much less important... that all my political needs, you know... are attenuated, are scattered... Sure I have needs, but to say that I am really unhappy that... that I am close to doing some very concrete things, some effective things, in the end, it's truer, you know... I have... well, I mean I have loads of very intellectual justifications for all that... I mean like I've seen those of your generation...

Close-up insert of Morin.

I've seen what their political involvement produced... I mean... their powerlessness in the face of barriers... I don't want it anymore... I mean... I've seen too many people like that, y'know, who... who were reduced to the point of crying by all that... to the point of being traumatized... of not knowing what to do any more... You are almost all like that, in fact, on that level... so me, I don't want it... and that is an intelligent intellectual justification... though I know very well that in a much more interior way... it's not that at all...

Close-up insert of Marceline.

... a sort of absence... a sort of absence of courage... Even on the emotional level... there is selfishness. Even though you've dreamed of moments of passion... of beautiful things... You realize... at least I'm obliged to realize... I mean... that everything is made in half-tones... I mean half-tones... and really neutral shades... There's no black and white... it's just shades of grey... I mean a little darker grey... a little lighter grey... It's sickening... do you understand?...

Close-up of Marceline, silent, who nods her head in agreement. Then to Marceline:

EM: D'you have something to say, Marceline?

Close-up of Marceline, who we feel is close to tears.

MARCELINE: I have to say that I feel very responsible for that... because it's partly through me that you...

Close-up of Jean-Pierre.
knew all those people who were ready to cry after their political experiences... Mo too, in fact...
And then when you talk about having wanted to make a woman happy... I know it's me...

Close-up of Jean-Pierre as Marceline speaks.

... so I feel a bit responsible... for all your helplessness inasmuch as... well... I made you leave the path that maybe you should have stayed on...

Close-up of Morin.

EM: No, but it's true... I think that Jean-Pierre says the word "impuissance" and that Marceline must think... of the word... failure...

Close-up of Marceline, who has a bitter smile.

MARCELINE: I do have a feeling of failure after so many years... though when I met Jean-Pierre I really didn't want it to be like that... I so much wanted him not to have the twenty years that I had had... I... I thought I could make him happy... that in spite of everything, it was possible.

Tilt down to close-up of Marceline's arm, on which we can distinguish a tattooed serial number, then back face close-ups of Jean-Pierre and Marceline.

I loved him deeply... I love him still, in fact... but then... it's still a failure. And it's not just a failure for me... it's a painful experience for him... because I still think he loves me a little, maybe...

Close-up of Jean-Pierre, eyes lowered.

The Algerian War Question

A long table surrounded by numerous guests, among whom the camera allows us to recognize Edgar Morin, Jean Rouch, Marceline, Jean-Pierre...

JR: We've reached the point where the film, which up to here has been enclosed in a relatively personal and individual universe, opens up onto the situation of this summer of 1960.

VOICES: Yeah, yeah.

JR: So, shall we go ahead?

EM: Yes, but I'd really like to know what they think.

JR: Let's go!

EM: Okay. Let's go... here we go, here we go... here we go... I don't know, but if I were a student... y'know... right now, the men in particu-

lar. I mean old enough to do military service, I'd be thinking about the events in Algeria... I mean about the war in Algeria... You don't give a damn about this issue, about the war in Algeria, do you?

Close-up of one of the young people, Jean-Marc.

JEAN-MARC: No, we do give a damn... if only for this reason, that one day, I mean, I don't know, next year, in two years, in ten years, well, there will be great subjects for films on the war of Algeria! (over close-up of Régis):

EM: So you're an aesthete? That means you're talking about the future films that you'd like to make about the war of Algeria, well that's fine...

Medium close-up of Céline and Morin, vehement.

CELINE: If only the majority of the French would show their opposition... would show it publicly.

ROPHÉ (sound recordist): But to what end?

CELINE: To put an end to this absurd war.

Close-up of Rophé, in profile.

ROPHÉ: I don't see why France should abandon tomorrow what I call her rights... because it is still her rights...

Close-up of Jean-Pierre, with Céline, attentive in the background.

JEAN-PIERRE: That this war has to end by means of negotiations is clear... every war ends by negotiations...

ROPHÉ: The G.P.R.A.23 is probably not capable of stopping it himself.

JEAN-PIERRE: But that's not the point!

ROPHÉ: It absolutely is!

CELINE: But this war has to stop!...

Close-up of Régis, with insert of Céline.

RÉGIS: This war has been going on for six years, that's the first thing to be said, and people are always forgetting it... Saying that we're installed in a sort of mutual habit... a sort of resignation to a

23. Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne—Ed.
state of fact. In fact there are crimes going on out there that are not by mistake... they're facts, and most people refuse to see them.

Medium close-up of Viguier, a cameraman, with Morin.

VIGUER: There is an Algerian problem, and there is a student problem... the two problems have become mixed up, and that is an enormous problem, because it is a problem which touches you particularly you young people, and what I reproach you for in this problem is for not playing your part... In my opinion you are not playing it because your hearts are not in it.

Close-up of Jean-Pierre, who is visibly wounded by Viguier's intervention.

JEAN-PIERRE: Yeah, but you're talking in the name of a myth of youth... you're talking more about a myth of youth!...

VIGUER: There is no myth of youth...

JEAN-PIERRE: Yes there is! From your own lips we feel... I mean we hear the myth of youth... rising youth... glorious youth... active youth... aggressive youth... But why?

VIGUER: Active youth... I'm all for it!

JEAN-PIERRE: But why? Just because we're twenty years old we can do anything? Because we're twenty we're available? But it's not true!...

VIGUER: We all have rights.

EM: As far as this question of the war in Algeria is concerned, everyone is dirtied right now, even those who think they have clear-cut opinions... firm opinions... solutions... France is pretty dirty... Close-up of Régis, turned toward Morin, with inserts of Céline, Rophé, and Morin.

RÉGIS: To get out of that mess you're so complacent in...

EM: I'm sorry, my friend...

RÉGIS: You have to carry your stone against the absurd, and that's a task each of us can do without worrying about the problems of the group. You don't start out from the group or from abstract words, you start out from what each person is. You've got to wager and you've got to make the French wager on the idea that men can finally put an end to this war.

Sound effects of machine-gun fire. Succession of rapid close-ups of newspaper headlines: "The tough FLN men counter-attack," "Tight negotiations with FLN," "Negotiations broken at Melun," "Desperate messages from Whites in Congo," "100 Dead in Congo."

Racism in Question

The same restaurant terrace. Another day. Another table. Rouc, Morin, Marceline, Nadine, Jean-Pierre, Régis. And also Landry, and several other young Africans.

MARCELINE: Personally I would never marry a black.
JR: Why?
NADINE: For the children?
MARCELINE: No, not at all, absolutely not... not at all...
JR: Why?

Medium close-up from Marceline's profile and point of view. In the middle ground, turned toward her, are Jean Rouc and Landry.

MARCELINE: Well... why... Because for me it has nothing to do with... I'm not racist. I understand perfectly that one can love a black.

VOICES OFF-SCREEN: But... but...

JEAN-PIERRE: But! But! You don't like negroes...

MARCELINE: No, no that's not true...
JR: You're racist at a sexual level...

MARCELINE: No, I'm not racist in matters of... It's not racism. I cannot have... I can't have sexual relations with someone I don't find... I can't do it with someone I don't find attractive.
JR: So you don't find blacks attractive...

Insert close-up of Landry.

MARCELINE: For a long time I thought it wasn't possible, and I still think so... only because I don't want to... that's all... it's a question of desire... only, I remember, two years ago, on the fourteenth of July...

Laughter.

JR: Ah, ah...

VOICE OFF-SCREEN: A weakness?

MARCELINE: No, I didn't have... No, not at all... But I remember that for the first time...

JEAN-PIERRE: Be brave...

MARCELINE: ... No... for the first time at a fourteenth of July ball. I danced with a black.

JEAN-PIERRE: And were you moved?

MARCELINE: And... the way he danced was so extraordinary...

JR: Come on, go ahead... go on... go on... (laughter)

The framing favors Landry.

LANDRY: Fine... well here's why I don't agree... you see the... for example, the blacks who are in France, in general when they go to a dance, people like the way they dance... But I wish they'd
like blacks ... for other reasons than the way they dance . . .
MARCELINE: But I agree completely.

Close-up of Morin in profile, looking toward the others from the far end of the table.

FM: Fine ... but we're basically getting to the question that we're here for ... I mean we're here to discuss the Congo . . . among our African friends . . . But before we discuss that . . . I wonder . . . in spite of the fact that for days now the press has been talking about these events in large headlines whether we in Paris . . . uh . . . whether we really feel concerned about this . . . I'd like to know whether Jean-Pierre, for example . . . whether Marceline . . . or Régis . . . feel concerned, and how they're concerned, about this . . .

Medium shot of Rouch and Régis from Jean-Pierre's point of view.

JEAN-PIERRE: I know that I felt concerned one time, quite physically because I was watching the TV news. And after the speaker showed a couple of pictures, announced a couple of events, he concluded by saying in a dry tone "we can see what these people are doing with their independence." . . .

Medium shot of Landry, with Jean Rouch and Nadine.

LANDRY: The Belgian arrived in the Congo . . . he said to himself . . . "Okay fine . . . money to be made." No, he didn't even say that. First of all, he said, "No elite, no worries." (laughter)

Close-up of Nadine, to two shots of Nadine and Landry.

JR: And you, Nadine. What do you think?
NADINE: I agree with Landry.
JR: You've been to Léopoldville . . .
NADINE: Yes, I've been to Léopoldville.
JR: For how long?
NADINE: For one year. I was a boarder with those nuns who were raped. (She smiles, then is serious.) No, it was horrible, I mean, because it's, the fact is that there the Africans were completely caged in. They were not allowed to come into certain areas. It was really horrible.

Profile close-up of Régis.

REGIS: Does a native of the Ivory Coast feel involved in this, as a black, because a black from the Belgian Congo is doing . . . I mean . . . Is there really a racial solidarity? Do you feel responsible, or not?

Close-up of Landry.

LANDRY: Oh yes . . . I feel responsible . . .
REGIS: Really?

Raymond, one of the young Africans, intervenes.

RAYMOND: It's true that you can reproach them for violence . . . but it's a question of anger . . .

Close-up of Landry.

LANDRY: It would be another story between Congolese and Ivorians . . . A Guinean, for example, would not feel engaged. But as soon as it's a white mistreating a black . . . you understand . . . I mean, all the countries, you see, the states of Africa were colonized . . . so as soon as they see a country mistreated by the whites . . . Well . . . immediately it's as if it was you, see, as if it was them who were suffering the pain of the others . . . so right away, it's like that!

Close-up of Marceiline in profile.

MARCELINE: 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 . . . whether it be a German Jew, a Polish Jew . . . a Russian Jew . . . an American Jew . . . it's all the same, for me.

Medium close-up of Jean Rouch, panning to a two shot with Landry.

JR: We're going to ask Landry a question . . . Landry, have you noticed that Marceiline has a number on her arm?
LANDRY: Yes.
JR: What is it, do you think?
LANDRY: No, I . . . I have no idea . . .
JR: No idea . . . Okay, and you, Raymond . . . what do you think?
RAYMOND: Well, I don't know exactly . . . I know that there are sailors who usually have numbers on their arms . . . and since she's not in the Navy . . .
JR: Why? So, what is it that . . . Why? Do you know more or less what it means?
REGIS: Affectation . . .
JR: Affectation?
RAYMOND: Maybe, yeah . . .
REGIS: But why a number, anyway? . . .
JR: Why a number?
MARCELINE: I could have put a heart?
JEAN-PIERRE: It could be her telephone number . . .
MARCELINE: I could have put a heart.
RAYMOND: That couldn't be a telephone number because it's too long . . . 78-750.

Close-up of Marceiline's arm, then medium close-up of Marceiline with Régis in the background.
MARCELINE: Well, first of all the . . . This isn’t a V . . .
it’s a triangle that is half of the Jewish star . . . I
don’t know if you know the Jewish symbol that’s a
six-pointed star . . . And then the number . . . well,
it’s not my telephone number . . . uh . . . I was de-
ported to a concentration camp during the war,
because I’m Jewish. And this is a serial number
that they gave me in that camp . . .
Quick pan to close-up of Landry, who
lowers his eyes.

JR: So? . . .

RAYMOND: It’s shocking . . .

MARCELINE: Raymond, do you know what a con-
centration camp is?

RAYMOND: Yes . . . yes . . . I saw a film . . . a film on
them . . . on the concentration camps.

Close-up of Marceline’s hand, stroking
a flower.

REGIS: Nuit et Brouillard, Night and Fog . . .

RAYMOND: I think, Night and Fog . . . yeah . . .

Freeze frame of Marceline’s hand.

Another scene. An intersection. Marceline
walks at a distance from us. We hear her
voice humming “Les grands prés
marécageux” . . . She sighs.

Papa . . . When I saw you, you said “And
Mama? And Michel?” you called me “your little
girl” . . . I was almost happy . . . to be deported
with you . . . I loved you so much . . .

We recognize the vaults of Les Halles. The
camera, preceding her again, moves away
from her quickly. Marceline is soon nothing
more than a small, solitary silhouette in the
empty market stalls, immense and dreary,
yet we still hear her voice.

Oh Papa, Papa . . . How I wish you were here
now . . . I lived through that thinking that you’d
come back . . . When I came back it was tough
. . . It was tough . . . (She sighs.) I saw . . . saw
everyone on the station platform—Mama, every-
body. They all kissed me. My heart felt like a
stone. It was Michel who moved me. I said, “Don’t
you recognize me?” He said, “Yes, I think . . . I
think you’re . . . Marceline . . . ” Oh Papa . . .

Black.

La Concorde

The Place de la Concorde, almost deserted.
It’s the fifteenth of August, in the morning.
From the center of the square, Marceline
comes toward us, slowly. She is walking
with eyes lowered, looking at the ground.
We hear her voice, tired and sad.

MARCELINE: This Place de la Concorde is as deserted
. . . as it was twenty years ago, fifteen years . . . I
don’t remember any more . . . Pitchipo! You’ll
see, we’ll go down there, we’ll work in the fact-
ories, we’ll see each other on Sundays, Papa said.
And you, you would answer me, you’re young,
you will come back . . . me, I surely won’t.

She is humming and walking faster. The
camera continues to follow her in a
backward traveling shot.

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.

Close-up of Marceline, still walking.

We throw ourselves in each other’s arms . . . and
then . . . that filthy SS man who flung himself on
me, who hit me in front of you . . . you said, “But
that’s my daughter—that’s my daughter.”
Achtung! He threatened you with the same treat-
ment . . . you had an onion in your hand, you put
it in mine and I fainted . . .
Marilou Is Happy

A French window opening onto the street. It is daylight. Over this image we continue to hear the sounds of the fourteenth of July festival. We are inside a room. Edgar Morin approaches the window and closes it, at the same time cutting off the festive sounds. He comes back inside and we discover Marilou sitting nearby. Morin sits down facing her.

EM: Well, Marilou. It's been a month since we had this discussion together. And now it's August and, well, something has struck me... Two evenings ago we were walking down the street, and I was talking to you about a question in this film that I told you I had asked my friends Jacques and his wife. The question was "Are you happy?" and I told you that they had replied, "More or less," and you said, "Me too. I could answer 'More or less.'" And yet when I saw you, it must be... fifteen days ago, you were in fact quite depressed, you didn't seem at all well...

Silence. Marilou smiles.

Could you answer "More or less?"

Medium close-up, from Morin's point of view, of Marilou, whose voice trembles a bit.

MARILOU: Yes... once again I don't know what's happening to me... Like I didn't know the evening of the fourteenth of July. I had all the faces of all the people I ever knew coming toward me... I didn't know where to put them... and I believed everything was fucked up... I think I overcame a hurdle that night. Then there were one or two empty days... and then all of a sudden everything fell into place. I started seeing people again... I came out of the fantasy world and now everything has become so simple and easy...

Close-up of Marilou as Morin asks the questions:

EM: All of this came abruptly? All by itself?... It happened all by itself...

Marilou hides her face in her hands. Her smile fades, then returns; tilt to her hands, playing with a charm, then back to her face.

MARILOU: Ever since I started to have people around me... to feel a part of things, I have become ready... ready for everything, for... I don't know, for friendship... for love too...
EM: Is that what changed things?

Marilou’s face becomes radiant. Her eyes sparkle. We can see that she is full of a joy that wants to explode, that she’d like to shout out, but that she is controlled.

MARILOU: Yes, that’s it... that’s it... But what’s stronger than anything else...

Marilou buries her face in her hands again. A cloud of anguish passes over it.

is the fear, in spite of everything, it’s the fear... like it’s happened to me a thousand times, of again finding myself completely alone, completely alone, completely isolated...

EM: I don’t think so.

Silent close-up of Marilou’s face, which has become radiant again.

MARILOU: What do you want me to say... You can’t talk about these things...

EM: No...

There follows a series of images of Marilou in the street, leafing through a newspaper as she walks, then throwing it away. The garret window of a little room, on a roof. Marilou pokes her head out and closes the window. In the room, Marilou and her friend are getting ready to go out. We follow them down the stairs, which they descend while playing with their hands on the banister. We end with shots of their hands clasped between them as they walk down the street.

Angélo Gets Pushed Around

Some shots of Angélo walking down the street. Off-screen voice of Jean Rouch, over inside close-up of Angélo.

JR: Angélo, Edgar tells me things aren’t going well... What exactly is going on?

Close-up of Angélo, then of the group of Angélo-Morin-Rouch.

ANGÉLO: Well, now, at the shop... I’m... I mean... I went back to work after you left. They came up and they said, “They want you in the office.” So I thought, first off... I thought it must be about some work problem. I said to myself, “Okay... I must have screwed up a series of pieces, so they’re going to chew me out.” But it wasn’t that at all. They start to say this, I mean the boss says, “So we’re making movies now.” So I say, “I don’t see what that’s got to do with my work.” He says, “Okay, let’s forget it. That’s not the problem. The problem is that we’re going to change your shop assignment, we’re going to put you someplace else because there’s no work.” And then they don’t let up hassling me... I mean, yesterday the foreman came looking for me, and he says, like this, “Okay, you’ve got ten pieces to make. If you make me those ten pieces this morning, then fine, I’ll leave you alone.” So I made him the ten pieces, on the milling wheel, which was all fucked up... and when I finished those ten pieces, about one in the afternoon, he brings me twenty more and says, “You’re here to work.” So that was too much for me to take... I was going to punch him out, because I could see that he was just there to give me shit, so I took time off and left... I left because Jacques, you know, and Gontran, he told me like, he told me... “You’ve got to get out of here, take some time off, go rest a bit, because if you don’t you’re really going to give them a hard time and at the moment you’d better not.” And that’s it...

JR: If you stay at Renault, what kind of future will you have?

ANGÉLO: Absolutely nothing

Close-up of Angélo over the following:

JR: Someday you could be what, you could be a shop foreman?

ANGÉLO: Absolutely not, I haven’t got a chance.
France on Vacation

PARIS

First some shots of factory workrooms. On the walls are hung signs on which we read “vive les vacances,” “2 au jus” . . . Subway exits. Taxis. People loading cars. General atmosphere of a happy stampede. Followed by a silent shot of Edgar Morin, standing beside a sidewalk. He is reading a newspaper headline: “Desperate messages from Whites in Congo.” . . . Near him is Marceline.

THE SEASHORE

A woman on water skis speeds toward us and collapses at the feet of the camera, which follows her, to reveal Landry and Nadine paddling around. Off-screen voice of Jean Rouch over image of Landry coming out of the water.

JR: And that’s how Landry has become the black explorer of France on vacation.

THE BULLFIGHT


LANDRY: But look . . .
NADINE: Okay then . . . he stabs him in the neck . . . that’s to finish him off.
LANDRY: Why? . . . Oh . . . ah!
NADINE: Oh!
[LANDRY: But what are the passes for? Does that tire the animal out or is it . . .
NADINE: No, it’s the matador who . . .
LANDRY: Ah . . . yes . . .
NADINE: Go on! . . .
LANDRY: Now I like this, I like the passes. You see, if everything could consist of just the passes, I would have liked it, but killing the animal, I’m not for that.
NADINE: But you’ve got to kill it . . .
LANDRY: What do you mean you’ve got to? But those people down on the side, they’re bloodthirsty. They’re just waiting for him to kill the beast . . . the blood . . .
NADINE: No, no . . .
LANDRY: Oh yes they are . . .
NADINE: There are people who come just for that, but . . . doesn’t that look good?]24

24. The bracketed section here is dialogue that is included in the French book but does not appear in the English subtitled print of the film in U.S. distribution.—Ed.
Close-up of Landry and Nadine intercut with other spectators.

LANDRY: Oh shit!
NADINE: Look, look! Oh that was marvelous . . . Bravo!
LANDRY: Here it is, here it is . . . watch it, watch it, this is it . . . oh watch it, look out there! . . . Oh good, he didn't get it then . . . look, oh . . . I like these passes . . . I like these passes . . .
NADINE: It's beautiful, isn't it? Oh he's cute. I like him a lot . . . Oh this is great!
LANDRY: That's fantastic . . . That's a sight to see, you see, that's a sight to see . . . They came here to see the beasts die . . . and it's done! . . . Ah yes . . . These are the pleasures . . . the pleasures of life in the provinces.

The crowd in the grandstands.

SAINT TROPEZ

Landry and Catherine (the water-skier) walk slowly along the port.

LANDRY: You see, Saint Tropez is a city, it's kind of a village, too, it reminds me quite a bit of Black Africa, you see the old houses, the red tiles, and all that . . . Ah! Saint Tropez—they talk about it all the time in my deep forest, in my African bush, I've heard talk of Saint Tropez. I find it kind of curious that you see all the women in Saint Tropez wearing bikinis, I mean they do everything to attract attention.

CATHERINE: Yeah, and then they put on these outrageous outfits, with the excuse that they're in Saint Tropez.

LANDRY: Exactly. And when I think that back home, you know, in Africa when . . . because in certain regions of Africa there are women who wear leaves, you know, as panties.

CATHERINE: Yeah.

LANDRY: You see, and there are some colonials who make fun of us, who make fun of these women, but it's funny. You see, a woman in a bikini, she's not hiding anything, a woman in a bikini.

We see, as they do as they walk along, a crowd of vacationers in shorts and bikinis, crowding around a group of photographers for whom a pretty girl poses while standing in a boat tied up at the pier. Sophie, the cover-girl, Catherine, Landry. Sophie is explaining herself to Landry.

SOPHIE: It's not much fun being a model, but I'm getting used to it . . . I've got to make a living, and publicity photos, they bring in a bit of money . . . that's why I do it.

All three are walking away from the port, still talking, followed by the hoards armed with cameras, bombarding Sophie.25

A terrace. We find Morin, Rouch, Catherine, Landry, Sophie.

25. This scene is extended in the English subtitled print of the film in U.S. distribution. Sophie continues to tell Landry and followers how people like to have their picture taken with Saint Tropez models to show their friends. One of the followers argues back that this is a general view and that many people do not think this way. Sophie protests, "only a minority . . ." at which point the follower agrees, "The masses have not really advanced very far . . ."—Ed.
Sophie modeling at Saint Tropez: in the background, behind the camera, is Michel Brault

Irene and Véronique

Saint Tropez. Sitting at a table in a garden are Edgar Morin and his two daughters, Véronique (age twelve) and Irene (age thirteen). Alternating close-ups during the dialogue.

EM: You know that Rouch and I, we're making a film. It's called "How you live."
IRENE: Yeah, I've heard some vague mention of it.
EM: Okay, so here's the problem: We don't agree because Houch thinks that life is funny, and I think that life is not so funny.
IRENE: You're kidding... That's a bit much... I think that, on the contrary, I think that Houch is right.
EM: Life is funny?
IRENE: Yeah.
EM: Why is it funny?
IRENE: Well, maybe I said that because we're on vacation, now that I think about it.
EM: And besides vacation?
IRENE: Well, besides vacation...
VERONIQUE: Besides vacation... oh, we don't know much about it. We're not in your position...
IRENE: Well, I don't know... You go out in the evening with Mama, isn't that fun?
VERONIQUE: But why do you find life sad all of a sudden?
Landry arrives and comes to sit with them.

EM: Ah, here's a friend, Landry.
LANDRY: Hello, Morin.
EM: But I think you, that . . . you . . . you don't know much about the life of . . . French children? . . .
LANDRY: No, not a thing.
EM: These two girls here, twelve, thirteen years old . . . it must surprise you to see them? It must not be like this back home in Ivory Coast?

Medium three-shot of Landry facing Morin, with Véronique between them.

LANDRY: Oh no, back home it's not like this . . . You know . . . Where I live a girl starts living when she's already when she's six years old.

Close-up of Landry.

And even when I was seven years old I already knew how to cook.

Irène faces Landry; camera pans to Landry in close-up for his response.

IRÉNE: Well we only do work for school.
VERONIQUE: We don't work for our parents.
IRÉNE: Of course, we clear the table once in a while, we do things like that, but not very often.
LANDRY: And that's a mistake. You have to learn. You can't be content with an easy life . . . you know . . . Because you have to realize that later, you see, you'll have to do more in life than just clear tables.

On the Bottom of the Sea

The jetty at Saint Tropez.26 Marceline and Jean-Pierre are alone. Behind them, the sea.

JEAN-PIERRE: I'm going to change places . . . because this annoys me . . . I can't talk to you and see the sea at the same time, and if it doesn't bother you, I like to see the water, I mean the bottom of the sea, you're beautiful . . . there's a tragic side . . .
MARCELINE: You're kidding . . .
JEAN-PIERRE: It suits your face . . .
MARCELINE: You're saying that to make me happy . . .
JEAN-PIERRE: You always think I'm a bastard with you . . . that I'm always trying to . . . You were saying a while ago that I wanted to win you back . . . that I spend my time trying to seduce you . . . I mean it's absurd . . .
MARCELINE: You spend your time trying to seduce others . . .
JEAN-PIERRE: No, no . . .

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26. In the French text the following note appears: "This scene is not included in some copies of the film in distribution but is normally part of the film." The scene is cut from English subtitled prints in U.S. distribution.—Ed.
MARCELINE: Oh yes you do.
JEAN-PIERRE: No, it's just that I ... that I ... I mean, yes ... no ... no ... You don't seem to understand that we're not all on the same rhythm ... for a month and a half you've been working ... you've been sweating it out in Paris ... a shitty month of August ... miserable ... and me, for a month and a half I've been living a totally different lifestyle ... 
MARCELINE: And how have you been living?
JEAN-PIERRE: Differently A young man's vacation. you know ... 
MARCELINE: I understand that perfectly, but ... 
JEAN-PIERRE: No, you don't understand anything ... because you don't understand that I was fed up ... completely fed up ... uh ... I was fed up with you ... 
MARCELINE: Yeah, but I was fed up with ... 
JEAN-PIERRE: I was fed up with you ... with the shitty life we were both leading ... 
MARCELINE: I had hoped in coming here ... hoped to be able to really talk to you ... to talk to you about myself ... 
JEAN-PIERRE: But that's it, exactly ... 
MARCELINE: But you don't accept me as I am ... you don't accept how I am ... You allow me nothing ... you spend all your indulgence on yourself ... 
JEAN-PIERRE: But you expect me to be ... I mean, I don't know ... When I'm not there ... you dream of me ... but I think you're really dreaming about somebody else ... you know ... I'm sick of it ... sick of you ... sick of you ... Ever since I've been living with you it's been the same thing ... we just look at each other ... with the result being that I haven't done a thing for two years ... I'm bored to death ... I don't see the world any more ... I don't see things ... I've become incapable of seeing them ... completely perverted ... I want to look at them ... I want to be young, and when you're like you are now, you prevent me from being ... You're not always like that, but for a while now you've been more and more ... I don't know if it's because you feel closed in ... I don't know if it's because you feel me sliding away ... but I can't stand it ... Have you noticed?
MARCELINE: I don't know what you expect of me ... I don't understand ... I search ... I search ... I can't find any explanation that fits ... and then when you talk to me, things go from bad to worse ... I think I have been drinking because of you ... 
JEAN-PIERRE: Oh, I know, but ... 
MARCELINE: When you came back to that room you were horrible to me ... you ... I don't know ... you said things that I've never heard from a man before ... But there was also a time; Jean Pierre, where you spent your time challenging me ... running after girls ...
JEAN-PIERRE: But I don't challenge you any more ...
MARCELINE: Did you love me?
JEAN-PIERRE: Yeah, there was there was a ...
MARCELINE: Do you think you still love me?
JEAN-PIERRE: I don't know ... Anyway, it's no use.

Milly

A corner of Fountainebleau forest: a rockbound clearing. Angelo, his friend Jacques Mochet, and Jacques's wife, Maxie, and several children are finishing a picnic. Joyful atmosphere.

A LITTLE GIRL: No, we don't want to go look for mushrooms!
OTHER GIRLS: No I don't want to go look for much rooms! We don't like mushrooms! Besides, I said something! Ouch!
ANGelo (singing): I know the way to annoy people.
A LITTLE GIRL: You know the way to annoy people?

Angelo and Jacques go over to the rocks. Following Jacques, Angelo attempts to scale them. His efforts are clumsy, his feet unsure. Jacques encourages him with words and gestures.

JACQUES: There! I like that maybe you're a hit small ... Go on! Go on! Put your foot there! ... put your foot on the thing, Angelo! Angelo! put your foot there as soon as you

Maxie, Jacques's wife, intervenes off-screen.

MAXIE: Tell him to take it Dulfer style ...
JACQUES: Huh?
MAXIE (off-screen): He should take it Dulfer style ...
JACQUES: That's it! Okay, Angelo ... you put your foot there and there immediately, you see ... right away you're going to put it on the other ... push it, your foot ... push it ... ah! ah! ah! Angelo! There ... go ahead, put your foot there, the other foot ... no, no! He's putting it higher! ...

MAXIE: Not so high!
JACQUES: He's putting it higher ... idiot! idiot! ... lower! lower, here, your foot! on the divide there ... look here ... Angelo! Look how stupid he is ... that's it ... now put your foot there ... the step! the step. Angelo! ...
MAXIE (off-screen): Angelo! That's it!
Angélo, not without difficulty, finally makes it to the top of the rock. He is only half-satisfied.

ANGÉLO: No... I could never do it because you were always bitching down there.

JACQUES: But I'm bitching because you're stupid... otherwise I wouldn't bitch... You've got... you've got much more strength in your arms than I do...

Saying this, Jacques slaps Angélo's arm lightly, and Angélo staggers as they go down toward the clearing and approach the foot of the rocks.

JACQUES: You know, you've got one thing: you don't know where you're putting your feet, you don't know how to use your feet. You know how to use your arms, you don't know how to use your feet...

The children in turn try to climb the rocks. One boy comes down by rappelling.

JACQUES: Okay, who's next?

CARIÈNE: Angélo's daughter, steps up.

CARIÈNE: My turn.

We find Cariné clinging to the face of the rock, rope in hand. Her father, up above, guides her descent.

JACQUES: Cariné! Take your foot out of there and you grab the rope behind you... Take your hand out of there... and take your rope and push yourself! And let yourself go! You take that rope... push yourself away from the rock, yes, yes! Away from the rock!... from the rock... Don't be afraid... go on!

MAXIE (off-screen): Your father is there, honey... There's nothing to be afraid of.

JACQUES: Push yourself away from the rock!...

ANGÉLO (off-screen): Go on... knock, Mothet!

JACQUES: Push away from the rock! Ah now there... She must have it.

MAXIE (off-screen): She's got it...

ANGÉLO: She's got it, Mothet.

JACQUES: Okay, go on... take your hand out of there... that's it! Go on... push yourself away! Push away! Jump a little... move away from the rock... let go with your hands...

VOICE (off-screen): She's got it... she's got it in back there, the rope!

JACQUES: What a good! Put your hand in back of you... put your hand back... grab the rope... not... the rope behind you!... grab the rope behind you!... right there... closer!... on that side... Ah!

Jacques kicks Cariné's hand lightly on the side where the rope is hanging.

MAXIE: Now don't go brutalizing the kid... there...

JACQUES: Go on, go ahead, go ahead... go on, let go, let yourself slip a bit, let yourself slip a little, that's it! With your other hand... Cariné, your other hand, behind you... take that rope there... not that one!

VOICE (off-screen): No! That one... Cariné!...

A hand holds up the rope, but Cariné remains riveted to her rock, slightly dazed...

JACQUES: Oh! What do you do with kids like that!

Jacques, disappointed, gives up the struggle. Cariné ends up grabbing hold of the famous rope and tries to use it to help her descend. But she maneuvers badly and slips toward the ground all of a sudden, amidst great laughter.

CARIÈNE: I'm going to take a nap...

Everyone has regrouped in the clearing. The children have formed a choir and are singing. The voices of the adults mingle with those of the children.

So pretty and sweet, gorse flowers they're called, tell me where you see them—
—where do you see them?—
In the town of the millers' wives
That is called the Land of Love
—the Land of Love—
On the edge of the clear-watered spring
Gorse flowers ever singing
—ever singing—
And the little white collars
Of the whole Breton countryside
—Breton countryside—

As they sing, they offer each other fruit. Angélo, squatting near the children, seizes a bunch of grapes with his mouth. On this image, in close up, we leave the Milly clearing.

Truth in Question

We hear for a moment more the song of the Milly picnickers, as the beam of a projector lamp appears on the screen, shining across the room plunged in obscurity. Then the song ends, the beam goes out, light returns to the room revealing the characters of “Chronique
d’un été,” who have just seen the projection of certain sequences of their film, alongside Edgar Morin and Jean Rouch. Close-ups of different people as they respond.

JR: You’ve just seen yourselves on the screen. ... Edgar and I would like to know your opinions. First the children: Véro, do you like what you saw?

VÉRONIQUE: Oh well, it’s not as good as Chaplin, but you know.

EM: So what’s your impression, in the end?

VÉRONIQUE: I don’t know. ... explain it to me!

EM: There’s nothing to explain. Some people say it’s not true, others say it’s true.

VÉRONIQUE: Say what’s not true? I mean, you can’t lie in front of a camera...

JACQUES: In fact, every time anybody wanted to express themselves, they often spoke in generalities, and in life you don’t just speak in generalities.

EM: An example... an example, an example...

JACQUES: The discussion between Angélo and Landry is a discussion with lots of generalities.

NADINE: On the contrary, it’s fantastic when he says to Landry I like you a lot, it’s because there was a contact... You know... they have the same problem, Angélo and...

MARCELINE: You cannot say they have the same problems, it’s not true.

NADINE: There’s a human contact between the two of them. You might say they discovered each other...

MARCELINE: They got along very well.

GABILLON: It’s a meeting of two sensibilities.

EM: For me, it’s the scene with the most... excuse me... it’s the truest scene we did, because there’s a friendship which forms right there, before our eyes.

JACQUES: You say there’s empathy between Angélo and Landry, that’s obvious, that’s not what I’m saying: it’s that all that isn’t natural, it’s not natural and it’s artificial, you know...

ANGÉLO: I don’t agree, because when there was the scene with Landry, I didn’t know Landry, I didn’t know a thing about him. And then it turned out that when I talked with him, I didn’t see the cameras anymore, I didn’t see them anymore, the cameras. It was only the problem that concerned me.

JEAN-PIERRE: If you examine everything we saw there, I mean, I find this film infinitely irksome because a part of what we saw is totally boring, and what isn’t boring, is undeniably so at the price of a great deal of immodesty.

MARILOU: It seems to me that in the end, to have a tiny spark of truth the character usually has to be... I mean, it’s not a rule... alone and on the verge of a nervous breakdown. I mean when he’s talking about something that has touched him profoundly.

MAXIE: By that system you could only get scenes that were artificial or scenes that would be... but, and not only would they be, but they are, straight out, that are shameless. I agree with him; they are immodest. And at the beginning, when you asked whether we now wanted to get to know these people, well, for me, there’s a certain number of people here, please excuse me, whom I have absolutely no desire to meet after this film, and among others, I confess that Marilou... it would really embarrass me... it would embarrass me because she told us too many things, she revealed too much of herself.

MME. GABILLON: I think Marilou was really extraordinary, and all I want now is to get to know her.

EM: Maxie’s suggestions sounded monstrous to me, and really, for me, hers are reactions which are against the emergence of truth in the world, in social life, in people’s lives or in life among people.

REGIS: Marilou, confronted by the camera, no longer acts. She plays a role not of inhibition, but rather of self-searching. For Marceline it’s exactly the same thing, she speaks to herself, and it’s in this sense that it embarrasses us, because we feel that it concerns her alone, and yet it is because of this that we are extremely, even completely taken in.

JEAN-PIERRE: If the coquonce of Marcoline is much more perfect than the others... you say that it is truer than truth... it’s because she is acting.

MARCELINE: They were extremely intimate memoirs, the most pervasive memories I have, but, if you will, when I said those words, I was recalling things... at the moment I said them, I said them with feelings, but I was absolutely not involved with those feelings between shootings, or else I should have been... like Marilou said a minute ago, and that’s why I don’t agree with her at all... on the verge of a nervous breakdown, and that wasn’t the case.

REGIS: What is really beautiful in this film is that we go from a naturalness which, in the end, is quite false, for example, a conversation in the street which means absolutely nothing, to a close-up of Marilou which never quite makes it, and which is extremely beautiful and which is no doubt much more true, and it’s this transition from one to the other which gives all the interest to this film.
They have stopped walking and face each other. The camera frames Morin alone, then they start walking again.

EM: So that’s the fundamental problem, because we, what we wanted if people think that these are actors or exhibitionists, then our film is a failure. And at the same time I can say that I know, that I feel that they are neither actors nor exhibitionists.

JR: Only one can’t be sure of that.

EM: For whom?

JR: They themselves can’t know. You understand when, for example, Marceline says she was acting on the Place de la Concorde... we were witnesses?

EM: Yes...

JR: She wasn’t acting!

EM: If she was acting, you could say it was the most authentic part of her own when she was talking about her father... It’s not an act, you know, you can’t call that an act...

JR: Of course...

EM: That is to say, this film, as opposed to ordinary cinema, reintroduces us to life. People approach the film as they do everyday life, that is, they aren’t guided, because we have not guided the spectator... we have not told him, “So and so is kind, so and so is nasty, so and so is a nice guy, so and so is intelligent.” And so, confronted with these people that they could meet in real life, they are disarmed, they feel that they themselves are implicated, they feel concerned and they try to resist that.

JR: Yeah, right.

EM: There are others who are moved by this. What struck me is that there are people who, for example, were very affected by Marilou, others who are very moved by Marceline, others by Jean-Pierre, others by Angelo... I mean that to some degree, I think that at least some of what we wanted to do is going to get across.

JR: And you, are you moved?

EM: Me, well, I mean... the number of times we’ve seen the film ends up attenuating the emotions, but me... in the end I am very moved. I’m affected right now in another way. At the beginning, if you will, I thought that everyone would be moved by this film, and to see now that people that I like very much, like Marilou and Marceline, are criticized, well that upsets me, that bothers me. I believed the viewer would like the characters that I liked.

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Self-Criticism

In the hall of the Musée de l’Homme, Edgar Morin and Jean Rouch are alone. They walk up and down among the glass cases.

JR: So, Edgar, what do you think of this screening?

EM: Well, I think it’s interesting because, all things considered, everything that has been said can be summed up in two things: either the characters are reproached for not being real enough, for example, Jacques reproaches Angelo for being sort of a actor when he’s with Landry, or else they are reproached for being too real, like when Maxie, Jacques’s wife, reproaches Marilou for laying herself bare before the camera. What does this mean? This means that we arrive at a certain degree where we investigate a truth which is not the truth of everyday relations... We’ve gone beyond that. As soon as people are a little more sincere then they are in real life, others say either “You’re a ham, an actor,” or else they say, “You’re an exhibitionist.”

JR (off-screen): Yeah...
Both of them walk away toward the end of the hall, turning their backs to the camera, which stays immobile. Only their voices stay close. Soon they appear to be very far away.

JR: In other words, we wanted to make a film of love, and we end up at a sort of film of indifference, or in any case in which... no, not indifference...

EM: No, people do react...

JR: ...by reaction, and by reaction which is not necessarily a sympathetic reaction.

EM: That's the difficulty of communicating something. We are in the know... 27

The Champs-Elysées. Edgar Morin on the edge of the sidewalk, waves his hand and walks up toward l’Etoile. Over images of passersby who walk past him and hide him, we hear the attentive voices of Marceline and Nadine, as though echoing...

Are you happy?
Are you happy, Sir?
Are you happy, Ma'am?
Are you happy? ... happy?

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27. "Nous sommes dans le bain." The idiom means to have one's hand in things, to be implicated; the English subtitles translate this last comment as "We're in for trouble," thus closing the film with a rather different tone than what is implied by Morin.—En

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End Titles

Participants in the film:
Marceline; Marilou; Angélo; Jean-Pierre
Workers:
Jacques, Jean
Students:
Régis, Céline, Jean-Marc, Nadine, Landry, Raymond
Employees:
Jacques, Simone
Artists:
Henri, Maddie, Catherine
A cover-girl:
Sophie
and various unknown people encountered in Paris

Photography:
Roger Morillère, Raoul Coutard, Jean-Jacques Tarbès, Michel Brault
Assistants:
Claude Beausoleil and Louis Boucher
Lighting:
Moineau and Créaux
Sound:
Guy Rophe, Michel Fano, Darbelémy
Production Director:
André Heinrich
Production Secretary:
Annette Blamont
Editors:
Jean Ravel, Nina Daratier, Francoise Colin

This film was made with the assistance of the Comité du Film Ethnographique, Musée de l’Homme, and with the help of the Kinotechnique team of André Coutant.

Laboratory:
Eclair
Mix:
Simo-Jean Neny
Production:
Argos Films (Anatole Dauman and Philippe Lifchitz)
A film by Jean Rouh and Edgar Morin
Film Control Visa # 23.792