

connections to popular genres of music (videos can be viewed on the Internet). The analysis of lyrics and the living conditions of artists yields a worthwhile introduction to the status of youth in contemporary societies. Particularly for undergraduate students or those just learning about Africa, the quick pace of the chapters provides an invigorating sense of the relevance of youth, music and social conditions in three countries. Ntarangwi's writing style is also devoid of heavy jargon or verbose passages, and will appeal to general interest readers.

For scholars interested in the history or in-depth analysis of music in East Africa, the monograph often moves too quickly to explore topics fully. The lives and careers of artists, as well as the reasons people are drawn to hip hop, are hardly addressed. There is almost no detail about the *sound* of East African hip hop and how the music pushes the themes of the lyrics. For scholars of East Africa, the inclusion of lyrics in English versions only makes it impossible to read more into them, or to check translations. Finally, even though the ethnography focuses on all of East Africa, it is strongest in examining Tanzania and Kenya and somewhat limited when it turns to Uganda.

Overall, this is an important regional study. As new economic and political partnerships emerge within regions such as East Africa, such studies are increasingly necessary to interpret the meaning and significance of cultural forms – of which popular music is certainly an important example.

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PAUL HENLEY, *The Adventure of the Real: Jean Rouch and the craft of ethnographic cinema*. Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press (pb \$37.50 – 978 0 22632 715 0). 2010, 512 pp.

Songhay elders in Niger and Mali sometimes say: 'The blind mongoose never strays far from its home.' Although he never tired of travelling to varied and distant places, Jean Rouch, like the blind mongoose, never strayed far from his homes: France and Niger. Even when he was in his eighties, Rouch tried to travel to Niger once a year. During one of those annual trips he died in a tragic car accident. His remains lie in a simple grave in the Catholic cemetery of Niamey, Niger's capital city.

When I travelled to Niamey in 2009 I went to the Catholic cemetery to find Jean Rouch's gravesite. The cemetery is a dry and sandy expanse just off the road to Kollo near Niamey's Terminus neighbourhood. Most of the gravesites are bare mounds marked with crosses. Jean Rouch's has a tombstone and is covered with white marble squares. It is unobtrusively situated at the southern end of the cemetery and says only: 'Jean Rouch May 31, 1917–February 18, 2004' – a modest space that marks the passing of a great scholar and film maker.

My visit to the gravesite was on the fifth anniversary of his death. In the years since his passing Jean Rouch's persona has reached mythic proportions in Niger. The French cultural centre in Niamey bears his name and its library is establishing a collection of books by and about him. A media centre is being developed. In addition *La Caravane Jean Rouch*, sponsored by the cultural centre, has taken Jean Rouch's films to the remote villages where they were shot, in some cases more than 60 years ago. Some of the villagers are the

grandchildren of people who appeared in those films. For some of them it was the first time they had seen their grandparents, which moved them deeply.

Everyone I met in Niger talked about Jean Rouch in reverential tones, as if he, as a respected ancestor, was listening to all the talk about his life and work, as if he were making judgements about us down here on earth.

‘Did you know him?’ people would ask me in a whisper.

‘I did,’ I’d say. ‘If you have some time, I could tell you some good stories.’

Since his death in 2004, a wide variety of scholars, some who knew Jean Rouch personally, others who knew him through his films or books, have paid tribute to his contribution to the cinema and the human sciences. In tales recounted at conferences or in books we have tried to tell Jean Rouch’s story. Narrators of the cinematic persuasion have focused on Rouch’s film making. Raconteurs of the anthropological persuasion have praised the ethnographic foundation of Rouch’s work on the Songhay and Dogon. Although most of these appreciative works on Rouch have made significant contributions to visual anthropology and the media studies, no one work, including my own musings, has been a truly comprehensive analysis of Rouch’s work and legacy. Enter Paul Henley’s magisterial *The Adventure of the Real: Jean Rouch and the craft of ethnographic cinema*, a book that is destined to become the most important text on one of the great figures of twentieth-century anthropology and cinema.

Many of the biographic events covered in *The Adventure of Real* have been discussed before, but never in such exacting detail. Many of the films that Paul Henley considers have been analysed before, but never with such perspicacity. What’s more, Henley demonstrates with great lucidity how the aesthetic forces of surrealism, Russian cinema, Songhay belief and Dogon philosophy shaped Rouch’s anthropological and filmic practices.

Everything about *The Adventure of the Real* is carefully and beautifully constructed. Two themes central to Jean Rouch’s view of the world, initiation and surrealism, frame the book, the remainder of which is divided into three parts. In these and subsequent chapters Paul Henley skilfully peppers the text with metaphoric twists that underscore Rouch’s take on West Africa—‘encounters with spirits’, ‘dreams of Black and White’, ‘images of power’, ‘totemic ancestors’, and ‘between Paris and the Land of Nowhere’. In all of the chapters he carefully and critically assesses Rouch’s work, separating fact from fiction, and hyperbole from actual practice, all of which sets straight the record of Rouch’s achievements.

In Part III, ‘The Craft of Ethnographic Cinema’, Henley uses his expertise and experience as an anthropologist and a film maker to consider Rouch’s film-making practices. Here we learn about Rouch’s approach to *cinema vérité*, his notion of cine-trance, his inclination toward taking aesthetic risks as well as his approach to film editing, which Rouch called ‘the fixing of the truth’. In these chapters, Paul Henley casts a welcome critical gaze upon Jean Rouch’s technical practices, illuminating both cinematic strengths and weaknesses. In the end the reader comes away from these chapters with a nuanced appreciation for Rouch as a film maker—a major achievement.

After reading the refreshingly comprehensive analyses we find in *Adventures of the Real*, how do we assess the legacy of Jean Rouch? As Paul Henley correctly asserts, Rouch wasn’t much of a theorist of the social; rather, he was a great storyteller. Indeed, Jean Rouch crafted narratives, stories, as Paul Henley puts it, that told and re-told the fabulous adventure of the real, stories that today inspire a younger generation of scholars and film makers to play with artistic form, take aesthetic risks, and recount the stories of their own adventures of

the real. Such a legacy ensures that the work, as Jean Rouch liked to say, will go on. Such a legacy, expertly reinforced in *Adventures of the Real*, also ensures that the ancestors will be pleased.

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