

Candidate B

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# International Baccalaureate Form 6/FISCS

## Film cover sheet: independent study

SUBMIT TO: EXAMINER ARRIVAL DATE: 30 APR (30 OCT) SESSION: 07...

SCHOOL CODE: SCHOOL NAME:

- Type or write legibly using black ink and retain a copy of this form.
- Complete one copy of this form for each candidate.

SUBJECT: Film LEVEL: Higher

CANDIDATE NAME: Candidate B CAND NO:

### Instructions to candidates

Please tick/check to show you have included:

Rationale

Script

List of sources

Number of script pages (HL 12–15, SL 8–10): 15

Title: Poems of Truth

Cultures examined	Films studied
England	<u>The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner</u>
France	<u>Breathless</u>
Italy	<u>Rome! Open City</u>
United States	<u>Shadows</u>

I confirm that this independent study is my own work.

Candidate's signature:

Date: 4/3/07

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the material submitted is the authentic work of the candidate.

Teacher's name:

Date: 5 April 07

## Documentary Rationale

In my documentary, I intended to study the effects of the Italian Neorealist movement exemplified by Robert Rossellini on the New Wave movement in France, the Kitchen Sink Cinema of England and the movement of Cinema Verite in the United States. The purpose was to study the evolution of realism in film since the end of World War II and to cite the techniques that were utilized to achieve this realism.

Cinema of Truth:  
A Study in Neorealism and New Wave Cinema  
(Cultures: England, France, Italy, and the United States)

IB Film  
Internal Assessment

Audio	Video
<p>The documentary opens with the opening soundtrack from <u>Rome, Open City</u>, fading into the Narrator's voice.</p> <p>Narrator (V.O.): In 1945, Roberto Rossellini released <u>Rome, Open City</u>. This film, a principal work of Italian Neorealism, made an indelible mark on realism in film. This new movement in realism manifested as Cinema Verite in the United States, the Nouvelle Vague in France, and Direct Cinema in the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Narrator: <u>Shadows</u>, directed by John Cassavetes; <u>Breathless</u>, directed by Jean-Luc Godard; and <u>The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner</u>, directed by Tony Richardson are principal works in the vein of realism emerging in the early 1960's around the world. These films, which achieve their realism through cinematography, dialogue, and narrative, all drew heavily upon the precedents set by <u>Rome, Open City</u>, described as "a springboard for defining Neorealism in film history."<sup>1</sup> These techniques were used to achieve a new kind of realism in cinema heretofore unheard of in the world of film - a cinema of truth.</p>	<p>Clip from <u>Rome, Open City</u>: title card</p> <p>Clip from <u>Shadows</u>: title card</p> <p>Clip from <u>Breathless</u>: title card</p> <p>Clip from <u>The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner</u>: title card</p> <p>Medium shot of Narrator, seated in chair. In background are movie posters from the four films, the most prominent of which is the poster for <u>Open City</u>. When he says "cinema of truth," the title of the documentary fades in. (30 seconds)</p>

Narrator: The primary reasons that Open City was so influential, in terms of cinematography, was because of its film stock, which "lends a 'newsreel' authenticity"<sup>ii</sup> and through the use of hand held cameras, which added a gritty shakiness. In Open City, this grainy stock is clearly seen throughout the film. It is important to note, however, that this was not merely a technique utilized to simulate realism, but was necessitated by the restraints of production. "the very hardships borne by Rossellini and his colleagues are precisely what gave the film its unique look."<sup>iii</sup> This type of film stock, with its rough look "has always been one of the benchmarks of traditional definitions of Neorealism"<sup>iv</sup> and was utilized to attain this same sense of realism by filmmakers of the early 1960's. Shadows made significant use of this particular aspect of cinematography, partly due to budget constraints. Breathless and The Long Distance Runner, while also making use of this technique, do so to a much lesser extent.

Narrator (V.O.): While the difference is so drastic that these two films look amazingly polished in comparison to the gritty

The title fades out as the narrator begins to speak again. (5 seconds)

Clip from Open City: A mob yells outside of a bakery as a lone policeman attempts to restore order. (20 seconds)

Clip from Shadows: A scene in Lelia's apartment. As she and Tony sit on the couch, Bennie and his friends play cards. (10 seconds)

Clip from Breathless: Michel drives a stolen car through the countryside (5 seconds)

Clip from Long Distance Runner: Colin speaks to the governor of the reform school for the first time (5 seconds)

Shadows, the technique nevertheless achieves its desired effect.

Narrator: Open City's use of handheld cameras to shoot a feature film was revolutionary, both aesthetically and in a more pragmatic sense. Certainly, it was easier to shoot with a handheld camera, but there was also a visual appeal to be found. Through the use of these cameras, the frame had a tendency to shake, recalling documentaries of the time and therefore suggesting truthfulness to what was being shown. In Shadows, this technique is primarily emphasized in scenes that take place on the streets. As Bennie walks by in this sequence, the frame moves jerkily to follow him, as if the camera does not know where exactly he is going. This is suggestive that he may just be a stranger on the street - a real person, rather than an actor. This voyeuristic style is recalled again in Long Distance Runner, in the scenes where Colin runs through the countryside. Because of the long range of this shot, taken far from the subject, it seems that the camera is merely observing an unrehearsed occurrence, rather than a scene in a fictional narrative. As in Shadows, breathless makes use of the same technique in filming on the street: the use of a

Medium shot of Narrator speaking (5 seconds)

Clip from Open City: Don Pietro meets a resistance member to drop off a parcel (5 seconds)

Clip from Shadows: Bennie walks down the street, coughing and adjusting his jacket. (10 seconds)

Clip from Long Distance Runner: a long shot of Colin, dressed in his shorts and t-shirt, running through the countryside (10 seconds)

Clip from Breathless: Patricia walks along the street in her overcoat, stopping to look at herself in a window. (25 seconds)

telephoto lens and long shots of the subject to suggest that what we, as the audience, see is a natural occurrence. The use of these shooting techniques, emphasized by these filmmakers of the 60's led them to be described as "iconoclasts... reclaiming film as the right of any artist with a camera."<sup>v</sup>

Narrator: The use of cinematography in all of these films portrays a sense of realism through foregrounding - we, as the audience, are made aware that we are watching a recorded sequence by the grit of the film stock and the instability of the framing. At the time that these films were made, and this remains true today to an extent, these aspects in a film were only widely accepted in the documentary or newsreel form. These types of films were considered wholly true and by evoking these nonfiction films, the director implicitly suggests a truth to what he is showing his audience.

Narrator: The dialogue of the Neorealist movement was revolutionary for its period. For the first time in the history of narrative film, dialogue was spoken with frequent pauses and realistic pacing. In Open City, Rossellini accomplished this by placing "many non-professionals in supporting parts"<sup>vi</sup> within the film.

Medium shot of Narrator (20 seconds)

Soldier: "Engineer Giorgio Manfredi?"  
Old Woman 2: "He's seldom home... You know... he's young... single..."  
Soldier: "Where's his room?... Search the house!"

The dialogue in this scene, consisting entirely of non-actors, is exemplary of the period. The pauses and awkwardness of this conversational aesthetic was taken a step further by filmmakers in the 1960's

Lelia: "What happens now?"

Tony: "What happens? Uh, what do you mean, 'What happens now?'"  
[pause]

Lelia: "I mean, do I stay with you?"

Tony: "Stay with me? Uh, stay with me? (Stutters) Do you mean live with me?"  
[pause]

Lelia: "Yes"

[pause]

Tony: "Do you want to?"

[pause]

Lelia: "No"

Narrator (V.O.): In this sequence, the delivery of the dialogue is more important than what is actually spoken: "The beats,

Clip from Open City: Nazi soldiers burst into a hallway, frightening two old women. They ask about Giorgio Manfredi and proceed to search his room.

Medium shot of Narrator (10 seconds)

Clip from Shadows: Lelia and Tony lie in bed and talk (30 seconds)



hesitations, and inflections are more important than the words themselves."<sup>vii</sup>

Colin: "I couldn't stay lost for long. After about four hours [pause] they came and found me sitting on the steps of this big building singing away to everybody that went by. [pause] I didn't cry when they took me back to the beach"

Narrator (V.O.): The use of pauses and hesitation is emphasized in Colin's speech, suggesting that his lines are not pre-rehearsed, but spontaneous.

"Tell me what's wrong."

"Leave me alone. I'm thinking."

[pause]

"What about"

[pause]

"The problem is that I don't even know"

[pause]

"I know."

"No, nobody knows."

Godard himself stated that in Breathless, "Usually the lines were written at the last minute, which means the actors had no time to prepare."<sup>viii</sup> This technique sought to add to the naturalism of the dialogue and

Clip from Long Distance Runner: Colin and Audrey walk along the beach, talking. (20 seconds)

Clip from Breathless: Michel and Patricia talk while sitting on the bed in Patricia's room. (30 seconds)

because of this, the lines not only seem impromptu, but indeed are unrehearsed by the actors.

Narrator: The second aspect of dialogue in these films that adds to their realistic tendencies was the presence of accurate dialect. In Open City, "Rossellini was able to heighten the authenticity of the sound track by having his Germans speak German and his Italians speak Italian."<sup>ix</sup>

Soldier (in German): "We found this in the priest's house. Their identity cards... all forged naturally."

Bergmann (in German): "You searched the priest's house?"

Soldier (in German): "Yes, the Sacristy, too."

Bergmann (in German): "That was unwise..."

Soldier (in German): "There was only a boy in church..."

Bergmann (in German): "Thank you"

Narrator (V.O.): This technique stood in sharp contrast to conventional Hollywood dialogue techniques, where a "foreign" accent was placed on English words to signify that a character was from another culture. This bilingualism was also utilized

Medium Shot of Narrator (10 seconds)

Clip from Open City: A soldier reports in to Major Bergmann as to his findings regarding Don Pietro. (30 seconds)

by Godard.

Employer (in English): "This is the book I promised you"

Patricia (in French): "Thank you"

Employer (in English): "I hope that nothing happens to you like the woman in the book"

Patricia (in English): "Why?"

Employer (in English): "Read it, you'll see. Well, she doesn't want a child, but the operation is unsuccessful and she dies."

Employer (in French): "I'd hate it if that happened to you."

Patricia (in French): "We'll see"

Employer (in French): "What's the matter?"

Patricia (in French): "If I could dig a hole and hide from everyone, I'd do it."

Employer (in French): "Do as elephants do - when they're unhappy they just disappear."

Employer (in English): "They vanish."

Narrator: As Patricia and her employer meet, they speak in both French and English interchangeably, as they are both Americans living in France. The films of Richardson and Cassavetes play upon this bilingualism in a lesser way: through the use of slang and dialect, rather than completely differing languages.

Clip from Breathless: Patricia meets with her employer, and the two speak about her next assignment. (45 seconds)

Medium shot of Narrator (25 seconds)

Clip from Long Distance Runner: Colin and Mike drive around in a stolen car. The clip ends as they see two girls walking on the sidewalk. (50 seconds)

Medium shot of narrator (20 seconds)

Clip from Shadows: Ben, Dennis, and Tom walk to the Museum of Modern Art while Tom complains. (25 seconds)

Mike: "Where did you learn to drive like this?"

Colin: "Me cousin had a milk round"

Mike: "Get a look at this gear in the back"

Mike: "Hey, do you want a fag?"

Mike: "Hey, birds, slow down then"

Narrator: The use of slang by the two boys in this scene adds considerably to its realism and, especially to a non-British audience, makes it almost seem as if they are, in fact, speaking a foreign language. Of Richardson, it was said that "the filmmaker was committed to making use of real language and everyday situations."<sup>x</sup> Indeed, for these boys it seems to be an everyday situation and as such, they speak very casually, in informal dialect. This same sort of dialect was also utilized in Shadows.

Tom: "I don't know what you want to come here for, Dennis. This joint is nothing but a place for a bunch of sexless women who don't have any love in their life. A lot of big deal professors. A lot of creeps trying

to show off how much they know."

Narrator (V.O.): Tom's use of informal language here belies the fact that he is uneducated and thus suggests to the audience why he is so resentful of museums. It is thus very characteristic of his persona, adding to the realism of this scene for him to speak almost exclusively in slang.

Narrator: While the cinematography of these films gives the audience a realistic eye, their dialogue gives the audience a realistic ear. Each of these films, which draw largely upon dialogue, utilize techniques that ran counter to conventional Hollywood cinema. For the first time, these films presented conversation as it truly was: unpracticed. They also sought to be uncompromising in presenting the manner in which their characters spoke. The films remain more realistic because Germans speak German, Americans speak English, and the uneducated youth use colloquial slang.

Narrator: While the ear and eye of these films are presented through dialogue and cinematography, the mind of these works is found in their respective narratives. There is a significant deconstruction of typical movie clichés in each of these films and

Medium shot of Narrator (75 seconds)

through this deconstruction, a well-rounded and realistic vision of the narrative can be presented.

Narrator (V.O.): The character of Michel is, ostensibly, a dangerous gangster, or at least that is the appearance that he attempts to maintain. It has been said that "Michel is making all this up"<sup>xi</sup> and this seems very much to be true in scenes where we see Michel speaking with Patricia. The realism of these scenes comes from the dismissal of the pretense that Michel is an archetypal "gangster," and focuses on him as only a person - someone concerned primarily with love.

Narrator (V.O.): Similarly, the archetypical "angry young man" is deconstructed with the use of a romantic interest in Richardson's film. The common conception of this character type is that he is a person who has grown up in hardship, with no happiness in his life. Through the use of these flashbacks throughout the film, Richardson rounds out the character of Colin, giving him a more believable, realistic character. We are able to see not only his rough side that is exemplified at the reform school, but we are also able to see his capacity for love.

Clip from Breathless: Michel looks at a Humphrey Bogart poster. Cut to Michel and Patricia talk in her room, as Michel tries to convince her to sleep with him. (60 seconds)

Clip from Long Distance Runner: Colin and Audrey play along the beach, eventually ending up in an embrace (60 seconds)

Narrator (V.O.): Cassavetes plays upon the stereotypes of the "beat generation" primarily through the character of Bennie. Through Bennie's continual posing, he "affects a James Dean façade,"<sup>xii</sup> and it is clear throughout the film that this is merely an act. Cassavetes uses his own character as fodder for the deconstruction of modern images. Through this deconstruction, the audience can accept Bennie's character as realistic - he is not actually the perfect image of a hipster, he merely attempts to portray himself as such.

Narrator (V.O.): Rome, Open City, rather than merely settling with the deconstruction of a single character type, does away with the entire conception of melodrama in conventional film. In this scene, Pina is murdered by an unseen killer, eliminating any chance for Francesco to bring him to justice. After she is killed, there is no grieving over her body and the plot marches firmly onward, just as life does.

Narrator: There is also a significant lack of resolution to be found with the ending of each of these films. Questions raised either through the plotline or during the final action of the films are left unresolved,

Clip from Shadows: Bennie sits in the corner of his brother's party, ignoring the advances of an interested woman (60 seconds)

Clip from Rome, Open City: As Francesco is arrested and taken away, Pina chases after the truck that Francesco is being transported in. While she is yelling out his name, she is shot by an unseen assailant and falls to the ground, dead. Her son and Don Pietro run over to the body and the scene promptly ends. (45 seconds)

Medium shot of Narrator (15 seconds)

implying a sense of uncertainty that is largely absent from conventional film.

Narrator (V.O.): With the death of Don Pietro, none of the possible heroes of this film are left alive. Questions remain: what will happen to the resistance? What will become of Francesco? Will the deaths of Pina, Manfredi, and Don Pietro be avenged? The audience is left with not even an inkling as to what these answers could be.

Narrator (V.O.): Shadows also ends on an ambiguous note. None of the conflicts in the film are left resolved. Bennie states that he will change his ways near the end of the film, but in this final scene he continues his false hipster "pose." It is never revealed as to whether or not Tony and Lelia can reconcile and it is never known if Hugh ever gets out of his slump. The film merely ends without the end of these stories.

Narrator (V.O.): Throughout the narrative of The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner, Colin's redemption seems to be presented as his ability to run. When the race begins, he is able to take the lead and comes close to winning, but decides to forfeit in an act of defiance against his "superiors." We, as the audience, can see his motivation behind

Clip from Rome, Open City: Don Pietro is brought before a firing squad, tied to a chair, and executed. Then, the frame cuts to a large group of children, sadly walking away. (60 seconds)

Clip from Shadows: A high angle shot of Bennie and Dennis. Dennis leaves, and only Bennie remains, alone. The angle changes to eye level and Bennie wanders off into the city. (60 seconds)

Clip from Long Distance Runner: Colin hobbles toward the finish line of the final long distance race of the film. His classmates and superiors cheer him on, but he slows to a halt and catches his breath. He stands still and allows the opposing team's leader to pass by him, winning the race. (60 seconds)



this: winning the race would merely be cooperating with a system that Colin is ethically opposed to. However, issues in the film are still left unresolved as we are left unaware of what will happen to Colin for this defiance.

Narrator (V.O.): The finale of Breathless, more than any other of the films discussed here, ends ambiguously. The exact motivations of Patricia are left unclear and even though Michel is dead, little closure is presented about his character. The realism of this scene comes out of the fact that we are unaware of these motivations. We are merely observers and thus cannot see into the mind of Patricia and thus this ending achieves a sense of realism by leaving us uninformed - we are merely outside spectators.

Narrator: Through innovations in cinematography, dialogue, and narrative, a new kind of realism was created by these filmmakers. They sought to create a vision of the world where the audience could be aware of its role as an observer through its foregrounding in cinematography, through the natural awkwardness in conversation, and through ambiguity and the destruction of iconic film clichés.

Clip from Breathless: Michel runs down the street, stumbling along the way for an extended period. After he finally falls, the detective and Patricia look over him and Patricia drags her thumb across her lips. (60 seconds)

Medium shot of Narrator (60 seconds)

The screen fades to black and the credits

roll

The same music that opened the documentary  
fades back in

- i Bondanella, Peter. The Films of Roberto Rossellini. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1993. P46
- ii Walsh, Martin. "Reevaluating Rossellini." Jump Cut. 17. Nov. 2006  
<<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC15folder/Louis14.html>>
- iii Brunette, Peter. Roberto Rossellini. New York: Oxford University Press. 1987. P41
- iv Bondanella, Peter. The Films of Roberto Rossellini. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1993. P48
- v Giddins, Gary. "Eternal Times Square." The Criterion Collection. 17 Nov. 2006  
<<http://www.criterionco.com/asp/release.asp?id=251&id=375&section=essay&age=2>>
- vi Issari, M. Ali. Cinema Verite. Michigan: Michigan State University Press. 1971. p52
- vii Carney, Ray. The Films of John Cassavetes: Pragmatism, Modernism, and the Movies. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1994. P44
- viii Sterritt, David. Jean-Luc Godard: Interviews. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi. 1998. P7
- ix Bondanella, Peter. The Films of Roberto Rossellini. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1993. P49
- x Welsh, James M. and Tibbetts, John C. The Cinema of Tony Richardson: Essays and Interviews. New York: State University of New York Press. 1999. P91
- xi Kreidl, John F. "Out of Breath: Two Negatives Make A Positive." Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities. 17 Nov. 2006. <<http://mth2.umd.edu/clients/mlifton/rosebud/old/breathess.html>>
- xii Giddins, Gary. "Eternal Times Square." The Criterion Collection. 17 Nov. 2006  
<<http://www.criterionco.com/asp/release.asp?id=251&id=375&section=essay&age=2>>

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