*Night and Fog* (*Nuit et brouillard*)

Widely considered one of the greatest documentaries ever made, *Night and Fog* is a 1955 French short film about the Holocaust, combining footage from Nazi concentration camps with contemporary material shot at Auschwitz and Majdanek ten years after their liberation. It was directed by Alain Resnais, written by Jean Cayrol (himself a Holocaust survivor), and features narration by Michel Bouquet and scoring by Hanns Eisler. The film alternates between the tranquil, present-day camp grounds and a detailed, often graphic account of the starvation, torture, medical experimentation, and mass executions that took place in the camps. Similar to Resnais’s *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* (1959), *Night and Fog*’s modernist approach rejects the pretence of realism typical of documentary filmmaking, instead emphasizing subjectivity as a means for evaluating historical consciousness. This is evinced by a subtle and self-reflexive critique of the documentary format, heard in Bouquet’s narration, which expresses scepticism, even frustration, at the camera’s limited capacity to capture and comprehend the full horrors of the Holocaust. Throughout, Resnais favours a fragmented, essayistic structure that scrutinizes the nature of atrocity and the politics of collective memory. Interpretations note how the film chronicles the camps’ routines and administrative processes, pointing to the everyday banalities from which unspeakable cruelty become normalized.

Further reading:

Pollock, G. and Silverman, M. (eds.) (2011), *Concentrationary Cinema: Aesthetics as Political Resistance in Alain Resnais’s Night and Fog*, New York: Berghahn Books.

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**Please hyperlink the following terms and titles:**

**[Paragraph 1]**

*Night and Fog*: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0048434/

Alain Resnais: http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0720297/

Jean Cayrol: http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0147321/

Michel Bouquet: http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0099677/

Hanns Eisler: http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0006058/

“The film alternates”: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmO4L4H1-as

**[Paragraph 2]**

*Hiroshima, Mon Amour*: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0052893/

“scrutinizes the nature of atrocity”: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T\_JQBL1fbi0