

Nuit et Brouillard (Night and Fog) (Alain Resnais, 1955; 32 min.)

Producer: Anatole Dauman

Cinematography: Sacha Vierny &
Ghislain Clouquet

Screenwriter: Jean Cayrol

Narrator: Michel Bouquet

Assistant Director: Chris Marker

Editor: Alain Resnais (uncredited)

Music: Hanns Eisler

Abstract (adapted from IMDB.com):

One of the first and most vivid documentaries of the horrors of Nazi Concentration Camps, *Night and Fog* was filmed just ten years after the end of WWII and was subjected to censorship by the French government. It alternates present-day (1955) color footage of Auschwitz with black-and-white archival footage (newsreels, stills, films, etc.), and is narrated by a poignant voiceover text written by Cayrol, a Holocaust survivor. Resnais not only depicts the horrors of the Holocaust's brutal inhumanity, but further questions ethical responsibility and complicity for all—past and present.

Questions for Discussion:

1. As you watch *Night & Fog*, try to segment the major blocks of action. How do you understand the different sections?
2. What parallelisms and contrasts do you find suggested among the different situations and/or sections? How does the film encourage us to make judgments about values and conduct?
3. What do you interpret as the film's explicit, implicit, and symptomatic meanings?
4. Think about *N&F* in terms of its mise-en-scène, camerawork, editing, and sound. Find significant examples of all 4 techniques in each film, and explain how your examples function to create meaning in the film.
5. *N&F* combines aspects of abstract, associational, categorical, and rhetorical non-narrative form. Find significant examples of all 4 forms in the film, and explain how your examples function to create meaning in the film.

Documentary Terms:

Documentary Realism

"Objectivity"

Lumière Brothers

John Grierson

Intertitles

Narrative Documentary

Interviews

Narration

Cinema Vérité/Direct Cinema

4 Ways of Organizing "Nonfiction" Form:

Rhetorical

Categorical

Abstract

Associational

Leni Riefenstahl

Self-Reflexive

Documentary Reconstruction

Fictional Documentary Realism