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## Hiroshima mon amour (1959) dir Alain Resnais

"I will forget you," she says to him, "I am already forgetting you". This French classic, based on Marguerite Duras's script, brings us to a post-war Hiroshima and a chance meeting in the 'Hotel New Hiroshima' between a French actress (played by Emmanuel Riva) and a Japanese architect (Eiji Okada). No, this is not your conventional love-story. In fact one immediately gets the feeling that some ESSENTIAL part of the story has already been told. Arriving in town to 'make a film about peace', the actress is following her conscience against the horror of war ever repeating. He is from Hiroshima and, like her, happily married. But, while the bombs fell, he was away on duty. He might as well be in bed with the enemy - but the war is in the past. Or is it?

Starting off in bed, our main characters are caressing each other in highly visual black-and-white while flowing images of a past devastated Hiroshima intertwine with the reborn but scarred Hiroshima. The bodies make a parallel for the landscape in the edited images, a light spray of ashes and then rain falls upon the lovers. As we follow their anonymous story of pain (from their pasts) and desire for something of a brighter future through each other (or this we are used to wish for as an audience) we discover that they actually become themselves in this very context. But the town is not its own master any longer - it has been stolen for the world to pity. Everyone's own history leaves its (poetic?) traces on the subject.

One of the most (duly) recognised of the early French New Wave films, some of its value(s), the use of non-linear progression for example, are highly representative of a new set of problems of stability in a modern and post-holocaust world. *Hiroshima mon amour* maps, among other things, our capacity to recognise the essential difference between experience in memory through the body and through our minds.

Dmitry Tolonen

*Hiroshima My Love* is available at the NFT bookstore and video-rentals across the city.

( written on Tue  
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Hmm. Reads like a Bfi programme  
booklet. Hmm.