

## Document Citation

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Western Europe

FRANCE

The films of Alain Resnais

**MON ONCLE D'AMERIQUE**

*Mon Oncle d'Amerique* was one of the most original and important French films of the 1980s. It was also a major, revitalizing departure for director Alain Resnais, featuring not only his customary fluidity and mastery of montage, but also a new directness, more objective and straightforward than ever before. An adventurous mix of fact and fiction, science and art, biography and melodrama, the film takes as its starting point the real-life biologist Henri Laborit, whose theories describe how the most basic human drives and "natural" instincts are determined by cultural forces. The narrative then splits into parallel tracks that follow three occasionally intersecting lives, starting from birth and taking each one to a crisis point in mid-life: René (Gerard Depardieu), a workaholic who breaks from his farmboy upbringing to pursue an ulcer-ridden career in industry; Jean (Roger Pierre), an ambitious intellectual and media executive who turns politician; and Janine (Nicole Garcia), a talented but seldom employed actress who becomes Jean's lover for a while. The film's symphonic structure interweaves these strands into a dense network of comparisons, recurring motifs, free associations, and evocative details, adding up to nothing less than a search for the very roots of human behavior. The personal stories, deeply involving and authentic, are never reduced to textbook illustrations of the film's thesis. The scientific interludes, absorbing in themselves, are gracefully integrated with the dramatic passages, and Prof. Laborit himself is a highly photogenic and non-pompous presence.

France, 1980. 123 mins. Color.

Rental: Apply.



**HIROSHIMA MON AMOUR**

Resnais' classic first feature, written by Marguerite Duras, explores the jarring connections between sense and memory, and past and present, that are the philosophical core of all of his films. The plot concerns a French actress and a Japanese architect whose love affair in post-war Hiroshima brings a traumatised past into confrontation with a traumatic present.

France, 1959. 88 mins. B&W. Rental: 150  
From the Vauban Collection.



**LA GUERRE EST FINIE**

The most moving of Resnais' films, *La Guerre est Finie* integrates a mature political commentary with an involving personal story. Yves Montand plays a veteran Spanish leftist who continues to fight an aging revolution from his exile in Paris. A love affair with a young radical (Genevieve Bujold) brings about an inevitable clash of new politics and old.

France, 1966. 121 mins. B&W. Rental: 200



**LIFE IS A BED OF ROSES**

This multi-layered adult fable interweaves three narrative lines around a fabulous rococo Pleasure Dome in the French countryside. With its intricate game-like structure, *Life Is a Bed of Roses* is an audacious experiment from one of the cinema's continuing pioneers in the quest for fresh narrative forms. With Fanny Ardant and Geraldine Chaplin.

France, 1983. 111 mins. Color. Rental: 250

(All films in French with English subtitles)