

Directed by Kenji Mizoguchi
Produced by Masaichi Nagata
Original Music by Toshirō Mayuzumi
Cinematography by Kazuo Miyagawa
Film Editing by Kanji Sugawara
Written by Masashige Narusawa
Based on Yoshiko Shibaki's novel *Susaki no Onna*

Machiko Kyō...Mickey
Aiko Mimasu...Yumeko
Ayako Wakao...Yasumi
Michiyo Kogure...Hanae
Kumeko Urabe...Otane
Yasuko Kawakami...Shizuko
Hiroko Machida...Yorie
Eitarō Shindō...Kurazō Taya
Sadako Sawamura...Tatsuko Taya
Toranosuke Ogawa...Mickey's Father
Bontarō Miyake...Nightwatch
Daisuke Katō...President of Brothel Owners' Association

KENJI MIZOGUCHI (16 May 1898, Asakusa, Tokyo, Japan—24 August 1956, Kyoto, Japan, leukemia) directed 94 films, some of which were *Akasen chitai/Street of Shame* (1956), *Shin heike monogatari/Legend of the Taira Clan* (1955), *Yōkihi/The Empress Yan Kwei Fei* (1955), *Chikamatsu monogatari/The Crucified Lovers* (1954), *Uwasa no onna/The Crucified Woman* (1954), *Sanshō dayū/Sansho the Bailiff* (1954), *Ugetsu monogatari/Ugetsu* (1953), *Saikaku ichidai onna/The Life of Oharu* (1952), *Yoru no onnatachi/Women of the Night* (1948), *Josei no shōri/The Victory of Women* (1946), *Meito bijomaru/The Sword* (1945), *Miyamoto Musashi/The Swordsman* (1944), *Genroku Chūshingura/The 47 Ronin* (1941), *Naniwa onna/A Woman of Osaka* (1940), *Zangiku monogatari/The Story of the Last Chrysanthemums* (1939), *Gion no shimai/Sisters of the Gion* (1936), *Gubijinsō/Poppies* (1935), *Maria no Oyuki/Oyuki, the Virgin* (1935), *Taki no shiraito/Cascading White Threads* (1933), *Tojin Okichi/Mistress of a Foreigner* (1930/I), *Jihi shincho/The Cuckoo* (1927), *Kane/Money* (1926), *Kyōren no onna shishō/The Love-Mad Tutoress* (1926), *Ningen/The Human Being* (1925), *Akai yuhi ni terasarete* (1925), *Kyokubadan no joō/Queen of the Circus* (1924), *Kanraku no onna/A Woman of Pleasure* (1924), *Gendai no jo-o/The Queen of Modern Times* (1924), *Chi to rei/Blood and Soul* (1923), *Haikyo no naka/The Adventures of Arsène Lupin* (1923), *Joen no chimata/City of Desire*



(1923), *Kokyo/Native Country* (1923), *Ai ni yomigaeru hi/The Resurrection of Love* (1923).

MACHIKO KYŌ (25 March 1924, Osaka, Japan—) acted in 72 films, including *Kesho/Make-up* (1984), *Otoko wa tsurai yo: Torajiro junjoshishu/Tora's Pure Love* (1976), *Yoba/The Possessed* (1976), *Kinkanshoku* (1975), *Karei-naru ichizoku/The Family* (1974), *Senba zuru/Thousand Cranes* (1969), *Onna no issho/Life of a Woman* (1962), *Shaka/Buddha* (1961), *Ukigusa/Floating Weeds* (1959), *Osaka no onna/Woman of Osaka* (1958), *Chūshingura/The Loyal 47 Ronin* (1958), *Ana/The Pit* (1957), *The Teahouse of the August Moon* (1956), *Akasen chitai/Street of Shame* (1956), *Senhime/The Princess Sen* (1954), *Jigokumon/Gate of Hell* (1953), *Ugetsu monogatari /Ugetsu* (1953), *Genji monogatari/The Tale of Genji* (1951), *Mesu inu/Bitch* (1951), *Rashōmon* (1950), *Chijin no ai* (1949).

KAZUO MIYAGAWA (25 February 1908, Kyoto, Japan—7 August 1999, Tokyo, Japan, kidney failure) shot 79 films, the last of which was *Maihime/The Dancer* (1989). Some of the others were *Yari no gonza/Gonza the Spearman* (1986), *Setouchi shonen yakyu dan/MacArthur's Children* (1984), *Akuryo-To/Island of the Evil Spirits* (1981), *Sonezaki shinju/The Love Suicides at Sonezaki* (1980), *Yoba/The Possessed* (1976), *Nora inu/Stray Dog* (1973), *Goyōkiba: Kamisori Hanzō jigoku zeme* (1973), *Mushukunin Mikogami no Jōkichi: Kiba wa hikisaita/Trail of Blood* (1972),

Zatôichi abare-himatsuri/ Zatoichi Goes to the Fire Festival (1970), *Zatôichi hatashi-jô* (1968), *Zatôichi rôyaburi/ Zatoichi the Outlaw* (1967), *Zatoichi no uta ga kikoeru/ The Blind Swordsman's Vengeance* (1966), *Zatôichi senryô-kubi/ Blind Swordsman: Zatoichi and the Chest of Gold* (1964), *Hakai/The Outcast* (1962), *Yojimbo/The Bodyguard* (1961), *Ukigusa/Floating Weeds* (1959), *Enjo/The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* (1958), *Akasen chitai/Street of Shame* (1956), *Yoru no kawa/River of the Night* (1956), *Shin heike monogatari/Legend of the Taira Clan* (1955), *Chikamatsu monogatari/The Crucified Lovers* (1954), *Uwasa no onna/The Crucified Woman* (1954), *Sanshō dayū/Sansho the Bailiff* (1954), *Ugetsu monogatari/Ugetsu* (1953), *Rashômon* (1950), *Muhomatsu no issho/The Life of Matsuo the Untamed* (1943), *Oshidori utagassen/Singing Lovebirds* (1939), *Yami no kagebôshi/Shadows of Darkness* (1938), *Kurama Tengu/Kurama Tengu: Kakubei-jishi no maki* (1938), *Shusse taikoki/A Great World Power Rising* (1938).

Misoguchi, from *World Film Directors, V.I.* Ed. John Wakeman. The H.W. Wilson Co., NY, 1987. Entry by David Williams

Kenji Mizoguchi (May 16, 1898-August 24, 1956), Japanese director, was born in the middle-class district of Hongo, in Tokyo, near the Yushima shrine. His father, Zentaro, was a roofing carpenter, and his mother, Masa, the daughter of an unsuccessful trader in Chinese herbal remedies. When Mizoguchi was seven, they had to move to a poorer downtown district of Asakusa because of the failure of a business venture in which his father tried to sell raincoats to the army during the war with Russia. In that same year his younger brother, Yoshio, was born, while his sister, Suzu, then fourteen, was given up for adoption to help the family finances, and soon afterwards sold by her foster parents to a geisha house. She was eventually to find a wealthy patron who married her in 1925.

These early experiences were to have a powerful influence on Mizoguchi's films, like much else in his turbulent personal life. At the time of the move to Asakusa he suffered his first attack of the rheumatoid arthritis that was to recur throughout his life, and which left him with an odd gait and a tendency to raise his right shoulder when angry. In June 1907 he entered Isihama elementary school and there met Matsutaro Kawaguchi, who became a successful novelist and Mizoguchi's collaborator on many of his best-known films.

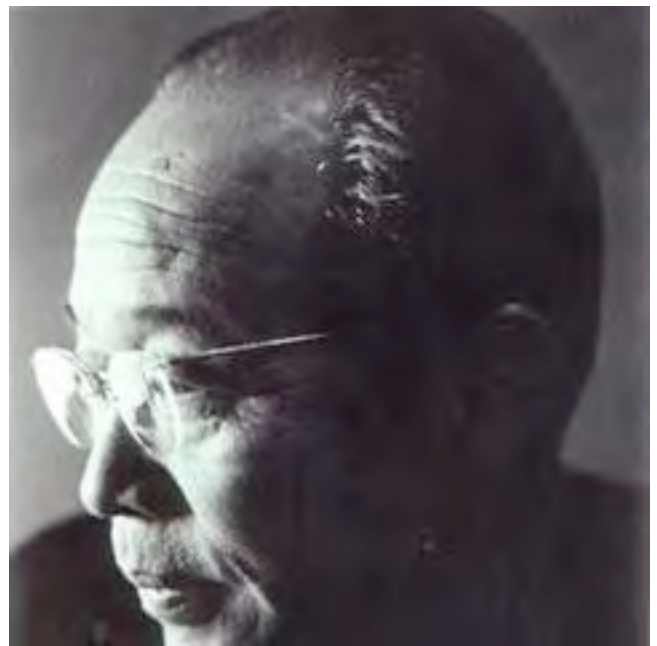
When Mizoguchi was eleven, after a total of six years schooling, his father was forced by a lack of money to send him to live with relatives in the northern city of Morioka, where he was apprenticed to an uncle who worked as a hospital pharmacist. He returned home in 1912, but his father, whom he hated, refused to send him to school again. The resulting sense of inferiority about his lack of formal education stayed with him all his life.

In 1913 Mizoguchi's sister found him a job with a designer of patterns for kimonos. Two years later, when their mother died, Suzu installed their father in an old people's home, and took her two brothers to live with her. Watching an artist who lived across the street, Mizoguchi began to be interested in painting, and studied Western-style oil and watercolor painting at the Aiobashi Institute. At the same time he was absorbing the city life of Tokyo and going to Japanese variety theatre and Western-style shows in Asakusa. He read Zola, Maupassant and Tolstoy, but preferred Japanese novelists: Kafu Negai for his naturalism, Soseki Natsume for a philosophical view, Koyo Ozaki, for his panoramic and allegorical narratives, and Kyoka Izumi for the aestheticism of his sentimental Meiji melodramas.

Mizoguchi went to Kobe in 1918 to take up a job as a designer of advertisements for a newspaper there. He enjoyed the city's progressive atmosphere and the company of new drinking companions, dabbled in theatrical ventures, and wrote poems which the newspaper printed; but homesickness drove him back to Tokyo. He moved in with a friend who worked at Nikkatsu's Mukojima film studios and through him came to know Osamu Wakayama, one of the progressive directors. At this time Nikkatsu was modernizing its methods of production in response to competition from other studios. Mizoguchi was fascinated. He offered himself in 1922 as an actor, but found himself doing various jobs such as transcribing scripts. "I remember my first day in the studio perfectly," he said years later. "I was a flunky, that's all, but at the end of that day, I thought—this is good work for me."

Misoguchi worked for Eiao Tanaka, organizing sets for his *Kyoya Collar Shop* (1922) so effectively that Tanaka recommended him as a director. This was the year of the famous walkout of directors and actors protesting at the studio's new policy of casting actresses in women's roles instead of female impersonators—the traditional *oyama*. Because of the strike, a directorial vacancy appeared almost at once. Mizoguchi's first film, *Ai ni yomigaeru hi* (*The Resurrection of Love*) was released on February 3, 1923, heavily cut by the censors because of its resolutely naturalistic treatment of a "proletarian ideology." Its realistic style was influenced by the innovative critic and director Norimasa Kaeriyama. Mizoguchi used a great many intertitles—his first attempt to dispense with the traditional *benshi*, the narrator who sat on a special platform and explained what was happening on the silent screen behind him.

Ten more films followed in the same year, the average



shooting time being about a week for each. *Foggy Harbor*, based on O'Neill's *Anna Christie*, had a formally framed story beginning one evening and ending the following dawn, and was as richly melancholy in atmosphere as the title suggests. It continued the innovative tendency toward making the *benshi* redundant, but this time by using the camera to tell the story so clearly that few titles were required. *Blood and Soul* showed the expressionist influence of *Caligari*, which had appeared in Japan in 1921. The variety of Mizoguchi's early output is further demonstrated on the one hand

by *813*, based on an Arsène Lupin detective story by Maurice Leblanc, and on the other by *The Song of the Mountain Pass* by Lady Gregory, a founder of the Irish Literary Theatre. The great Tokyo earthquake on September 1, 1923 caused the evacuation of Suzu and their father to the studio for safety; Mizoguchi himself was filming the disaster for American newsreels and for use in the feature film *In the Ruins*, which opened to great success the following month.

Mizoguchi was now moved to Nikkatsu's Kyoto studios, where he continued to make many films according to front office requirements. He found the atmosphere of the ancient city, with its traditions and its distinctive Kansai dialect, so much to his taste that he made it his permanent home. Beginning with *Turkeys in a Row* in 1924, most of Mizoguchi's films until the advent of sound were scripted by Shuichi Hatamoto, over whom he exercised a domineering control of the kind his more famous collaborator Yoshikata Toda suffered in later years. Hatamoto was not even allowed to return home after work, but was enlisted as Mizoguchi's unwilling drinking partner. Mizoguchi was living with Yuriko Ichijo, a call girl who moved into the flat he shared with his assistant director Koji Asaka. In the summer of 1925, she attacked Mizoguchi in a jealous rage, wounding him in the back with a razor. The scandal that followed led to Mizoguchi's suspension from the studio, interrupting the filming of *Shining in the Red Sunset*; it was completed by his friend Saegusa.

J.D. Andrew has suggested that the films Mizoguchi made after his return to the studio in October 1925 begin to take on a different character, but that from this time began both his obsessive perfectionism and his preoccupation with the suffering and hostility of women; it is difficult to judge since almost none of these early films survive. The first of his pictures still extant, *Furusato no uta* (*The Song of Home*), is a studio assignment remote from Mizoguchi's personal concerns, lauding traditional rural values over those of the wicked city, although it contains some montage experiments in the manner of Minoru Murata. The script by Ryunosuke Shimizu won a Ministry of Education award.

Then came the success of *A Paper Doll's Whisper of Spring* (1926), praised for its sensitive portrayal of the emotional conflict created by male egotism. The film was ranked seventh in the first *Kinema Jumbo* list of the best ten movies of the year. After that Mizoguchi was able to persuade his old school friend Matsutaro Kawaguchi for the first time to write him a script. The result was *The Passion of a Woman Teacher*, and pleased both Nikkatsu and the public so well that it became the first of Mizoguchi's films to be exported to Europe, where it had some success. French interest in that film led him to make one with foreign audiences specifically in mind—a portrait of the traditional Japan based on Kyoka Uzumi's novel *Nihonbashi*.

This was the era of the "tendency film" (*keiko eiga*), a manifestation of the new socialist consciousness. The extent of Mizoguchi's own commitment to this movement is much discussed. Kawaguchi saw his friend as an opportunist merely following the Marxist fashion of the time, but Ritchie and Anderson may be right in regarding the ambiguity of Mizoguchi's position as a characteristic shared by many Japanese. At any rate the leftist tendency led Mizoguchi into a clash with Minoru Murata, a right-winger who was not only Mizoguchi's chief rival as a director but had become Nikkatsu's secretary in charge of production. Nevertheless Mizoguchi's own position as head of the script department enabled him to make *Tokyo March* (1929), of which a fragment survives showing a use of newsreel techniques. It had

success enough for the company to sanction *Metropolitan Symphony* (1929), coscripted by the Marxist Fusao Hayashi who had a great influence on Mizoguchi at this time. The film ran into trouble with the censors and brought a police reprimand for the director and jail for Hayashi, but it still placed tenth in the *Kinema Jumbo* list.

No less influential than politics in Mizoguchi's life and perhaps his work in this period was his impulsive marriage to Chieko Saga, an Osaka dance-hall girl whom he met in 1926. Chieko's attempts to regulate her husband's life led to violent fights and brief separations, repeatedly resolved with his promises of reform.

Mizoguchi's first sound film, *Furusato* (*Home Town*), made in 1930, was also one of the first in Japan, and like other pioneer talkies was marked by primitive recording techniques. The silent film that followed, *Mistress of a Foreigner*, is regarded as the first in which the director systematically employed the long take or "one scene—one shot" method that became so much a part of his mature style. He found justification for the technique in the psychological experiments of his friend Dr. Konan Naito. As the director himself explained, "During the course of filming a scene, if I feel that a kind of psychological sympathy has begun to develop, then I cannot without regret cut into this. Rather, I then try to intensify, to prolong the scene as long as possible." Around this time Mizoguchi began to interest himself in the study of music, starting with Beethoven. He was also a member of a folk art group including the philosopher Kitaro Nishida, and wore clothes of a material woven and dyed by himself.

And Yet They Go (1931), a late "tendency" film, was followed in 1932 by *The Man of the Moment*, which was Nikkatsu's first success in sound despite production difficulties as a result of a strike of *benshi* that year. It also marks the end of an uninterrupted series of films for the studio. For some time he had been discontented with his salary and the company's policies, especially since a new management had instituted an even more dictatorial regime. Mizoguchi signed a contract with Shinko Studios, and began work for them by spending two months on location in China shooting *The Dawn of Manchuria* and *Mongolia* (1932), a propaganda piece that failed embarrassingly and led to Mizoguchi's refusal to undertake another project for six months.

Having been shown a version of Kyoka Izumi's novel *Giketsu, Kyoketsu*, Mizoguchi set out in 1933 to adapt it for the screen. But the novelist, who had greatly disliked the director's earlier adaptation of *Nihonbashi*, would not cooperate. The studio arranged a meeting at last, and the silent film *Taki no Shiraito* was made in the face of continuing disagreement. Izumi had objections to the cast Mizoguchi wanted, but the director got his way, while demanding freedom to shoot his own pace. Beginning without a completed script, so that changes had to be made from day to day, Mizoguchi spent forty days shooting. The result of his obsessive care was a success with both critics and public, ranking second in the *Kinema Jumbo* list for 1933.

The film tells the story of the tragic love of the heroine Taki no Shiraito for a weak and passive young student, Kinya. Taki, a stage performer specializing in a kind of juggling display with water jets, is a prototype of the rebellious women who appear in many of Mizoguchi's films, working for her financial independence, taking the initiative in the love affair. In the face of terrible difficulties, Taki contrives to support Kinya through his studies to become a lawyer, only to have him as her prosecutor when she is accused of murder. The story ends with the suicide of

both lovers. Close-ups and the normal procedures of narrative editing are freely used, the film shows Mizoguchi's increasing tendency to favor the long shot and the long take. It is remarkable also for its subtle but intense eroticism.

Gion Festival, made in the same year, had to be shot in haste to be in time for the festival of its title, a great annual celebration in Kyoto. An unexceptional studio assignment, it marked the beginning of Mizoguchi's association with art director Hiroshi Mizutani, who had been impressed with *Taki no Shiraito* and was to remain with the director for the rest of his career. As obsessed as Mizoguchi himself with detailed research in the interests of authenticity and historical accuracy, Mizutani's sets became an essential part of the one scene—one shot method, leading at least one Japanese critic to suggest that the setting is the central factor, even the "hero" in Mizoguchi's films, though others have found the scrupulously detailed settings too museum-like. Mizoguchi himself, speaking to film students, stressed the importance of atmosphere, saying that atmosphere to a film is like light to painting. According to the critic Yasuzo Masumura, it determines the very nature of Mizoguchi's realism, since his motive in devoting such attention to set detail was to provide an atmosphere that would draw the most authentic performances from his actors....

Often considered "the forerunner of realism in the Japanese cinema," *Osaka Elegy* (1936) also shows a concern for the formal beauty of its images that is equally characteristic of its director. An immediate critical success, this was Mizoguchi's first association with the long-suffering Yoshikata Yoda, which lasted until the director's death. He was the ideal collaborator for so demanding a master, submissively revising the script, in this case more than ten times, before it was grudgingly accepted. Yoda was never told precisely what was wrong (Mizoguchi habitually placed all his associates in the same state of uncertainty), but was repeatedly instructed to create characters so real that the audience would smell their human odor. "Describe for me the implacable, the egoistic, the sensual, the cruel. . .there are none but disgusting people in this world." Yoda himself described the pent-up emotions that charged Mizoguchi's formally meticulous film: "He does not have the courage to face persons, things, and ideas that assail him. The anger and resentment which he cannot deal with makes him cry hysterically. This is the source of that intensity revealed in *Osaka Elegy* and *Sisters of the Gion*." Admired as it was by the critics, *Osaka Elegy* was a financial failure. The director was summoned before the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the film was only just passed by the censors, so that its distributors, Shochiku and Nikkatsu, were nervous of publicizing it....

In 1937 the Daiichi Eiga Company went out of business, and Mizoguchi returned to Shinko Kinema in Tokyo, where he first made *Aien kyo* (*The Straits of Love and Hate*), adapted from Tolstoy's *Resurrection* in collaboration with Yoda and Kawaguchi... Mizoguchi said that he was influenced by Von Sternberg in this film, especially in the use of sound, and critics have noticed in particular his debt to *The Docks of New York* (1928). In 1936 Mizoguchi had spent an afternoon with Von

Sternberg in Kyoto, insisting that the protesting visitor watch a bad print of one of Von Sternberg's own movies. It was during the making of this film that his associates begin to talk of Mizoguchi's obsessive concern to perfect his actors' performances. It is said that over three days he rehearsed one scene with Fumiko Yamajij almost seven hundred times. Yoda records that with actors, as with the writer himself, the director gave only a general idea of what was required, leaving the performers "to live and create themselves." Designer Mizutani recalled that if a long scene was failing to work, Mizoguchi would have the actors rehearse it on their own and tell him when they felt ready....

Despite the exhausting nature of Mizoguchi's method, Kinuyo Tanaka found it justified by its effect. It worked because of the tension it created in everyone. In spite of what many thought, she believed he had a great respect for actors and what they could do in the space he gave them. His instructions were few and general. She heard him say a hundred times: "Be a mirror to the character, reflect it, be natural"; never much else....

During the filming of the second part of *Chushingura*—but without interrupting it, as McDonald notes, for even a day—Mizoguchi's wife Chieko went finally insane and was committed to an institution for the rest of her life. Mizoguchi went to live with her war-widowed sister Fuji and her two children. He was made president of the Directors' Society, and engaged in researching projects for state policy films. His other accommodations to wartime requirements included two more ventures into the unfamiliar and uncongenial territory of the samurai film, *Miyamoto Mushi* (1944) and *Meito Bijomaru* (1945), undistinguished work done without enthusiasm. *Danjuro sandai* (1944), a theatrical subject, he later dismissed: "A very bad historical film—let's not talk about it." *Hisshoka* (*Victory Song*) was another patriotic piece made in 1945 at the instigation of the Information Bureau.

After the Japanese surrender, Mizoguchi found himself elected president of the labor union organized at Shochiku in response to the policy of the occupation forces. After three months, unwilling even to consider the notion of halting film production by strikes, he resigned. His first hesitant attempt at conformity with the American forces' demand for "democratic" subjects was *The Victory of Women* (1946), described by Keiko McDonald as "an outspoken celebration of women's rights."...

Mizoguchi was in a creative and emotional depression in these postwar years, shocked and confused by the Japanese surrender. Critics were inclined to regard him as a "grand old man" clinging to outdated styles. His politics were as confused as ever: again heading a left-wing union in 1948, in 1949 he was made president of the right-wing Directors' Association, a post he held for the rest of his life. Audie Bock believes that "the accusation that he did not really grasp the new postwar humanism proves itself in the similarity of the prostitutes' dismal fate in the 1948 *Women of the Night* and the 1931 *And Yet They Go*." During the filming of *Women of the Night* Mizoguchi broke down in front of prostitutes in a Yoshiwara hospital, cursing the villainy of all men, including himself.



Women of the Night was a commercial success and ranked third in the *Kinema Jumbo* list, while Tanaka's performance as Fusako again contributed to a Mainichi Concours award. It is a stark and pessimistic "view of prostitution seen as the epitome of the social and economic evils suffered by postwar Japan" (Keiko McDonald)....

According to Yoda, Mizoguchi was provoked into making his next film, *The Life of Oharu* (1952), by the irritation he felt at the success of Kurosawa's *Rashomon* at Venice the previous year. Whatever the truth of this, it was a consciously ambitious film, a high point in the director's career, initiating a new phase.

Collaborating from the start with Kinuyo Tanaka, recently returned from America, Mizoguchi began without normal studio finance, subcontracting the production through Shin Toho. Shooting was done in a "bombed-out park" near Kyoto where the noise of trains passing every fifteen minutes determined the schedule, but nothing could disturb the director's legendary concentration. Since *Mis Oyu* he had taken to using a portable urinal to avoid having to leave the set. Nothing could begin till the crane arrived from Kyoto, and authentic props had been collected from museums. As usual, scenes were shot and reshot again and again. Strict controls on the budget were ignored, and production cost forty-six million yen. The obsessive perfectionism paid off. Although in Japan it was a commercial failure and only a modest critical success, *The Life of Oharu* was chosen for the 1952 Venice Film Festival and shared a Silver Lion for best direction with John Ford's *The Quiet Man*. It was the beginning of Mizoguchi's belated international recognition, only four years before his death. ...The new philosophical breadth often remarked in Mizoguchi's later works is strong here. "For Mizoguchi the rights of women are merely a logical extension of the rights of man," wrote Andrew Sarris and, of the ending, "Just one more misfortune after another. Yet Oharu endures. She sees her son one last time, and then wanders into eternity as a street singer, a pagoda-shaped hat forming her last silhouette. In the last frames of the film Oharu pauses, turns to look at a distant pagoda, her spatial and spiritual correlative, and passes off the screen while the pagoda remains." Rosenbaum calls it "a coda that tells us nothing and, by doing so expresses everything." But where he finds a "relentless polemical thrust," Sarris sees Mizoguchi's "sublime directional purpose" as "a manner of looking at the world rather than a means of changing it."...Birch suggests that the spectacular use of the long take in *The Life of Oharu* may also have been stimulated by Mizoguchi's desire to outdo the William Wyler of such films as *The Little Foxes* or *The Best Years of Our Lives*....

Beginning with the success of *The Life of Oharu*, Mizoguchi began to be adopted as a hero by the critics and young filmmakers of the French New Wave. Jacques Rivette, writing in *Cahiers de Cinéma* in 1958, pointed out how Mizoguchi's films communicated across barriers of culture in a familiar tongue, "the only language to which a filmmaker should lay claim: the language

of *mise-en-scène*." In particular the young French enthusiasts admired Mizoguchi's long take and what Audie Bock calls "the centrifugal force applied to the edges of the frame." In their critical polemics Kurosawa and Mizoguchi (then the two best-known Japanese directors) were seen as opposites, with the latter much preferred.

Following the foreign success of *Oharu*, Masiachi Nagata, an old friend, offered the director a rare carte-blanche contract for *Ugetsu monogatari* (1953)—and even so Mizoguchi found himself influenced by the company to provide *Ugetsu* a less bitter conclusion than he had wanted. The script was adapted by Yoda and Kawaguchi from two stories in an eighteenth century collection



of the same title by Akinari Ueda, with borrowings also from Maupassant's short story "Décoré!" During the civil wars of the sixteenth century the potter Genjuro leaves home eager to sell his wares and becomes lost in a dream world of dangerous beauty, seduced by the ghost of a long-dead princess. When the dream breaks he returns to his village, to a vision of his wife whom we have seen murdered by starving soldiers, and to humble toil to raise their young son. In a parallel narrative, Genjuro's brother

Tobei, eager to be a great soldier, cheats his way to brief eminence as a general. When he is confronted by his wife in a brothel, where she works after being raped by soldiers, he returns contritely with her to the village to join his brother.

In one of many letters to Yoda, Mizoguchi explained what he wanted to emphasize as the main theme of the film: "Whether war originates in a ruler's personal motives or in some public concern, how violence, disguised as war, oppresses and torments the populace, both physically and spiritually!" And this theme is expressed not through documentary realism, but through a grippingly realized vision of the past in which natural and supernatural, grim reality and distracting dream, deceptively coexist. Such critics as Dudley Andrew and Max Tessier have noted the relevance of the subject, and in particular, Genjuro's story, to a director's own case as creator of artistic illusions in a violent world.

Mizoguchi told his cameraman Miyagawa that he wanted the film "to unroll seamlessly like a scroll-painting," and the transitions of mood and atmosphere, for example from the bustling market to the mansion of the ghost princess, are achieved largely by rhythmically fluid camera movement. In one of the most famous scenes, at the climax of the haunted love affair, Genjuro and the ghost Wakasa make love by a spring while the camera shifts uneasily away, following the stream, until a swift dissolve brings us smoothly to a long shot of the lovers in fluttering kimonos, playing on the shore of Lake Biwa in the glittering sunshine. Miyagawa remembered the creation of these shots as the only occasion Mizoguchi ever praised him for his work. Lake Biwa is also the setting for another celebrated scene when, in the enveloping mist, the boat carrying the two families encounters another containing not a ghost but a boatman dying of wounds. Donald Ritchie draws attention to the formal beauty and conservative moral message of

Ugetsu as exemplified and framed by the opening and closing shots. “*Ugetsu* opens with a long panorama around a lake, a shot which begins on the far shore and then tilts down to reveal the village at the conclusion. It closes with the child and the father offering a bowl of rice at the mother’s grave. . . with the camera moving off into an upward tilting panorama which describes the movement of the opening.” These “separate but similar” shots are “like brackets to the film” suggesting “a sameness, a spiral-like quality of experience,” echoing “the stories of the two women, separate yet inverted: the wife moves from life to death, the ghost from death to life.”

“One of the most perfect movies in the history of Japanese cinema.”

But the immediate reception of the film in the West was more significant. Mizoguchi made his first trip abroad, accompanying the film to the Venice Festival, along with Yoda and Tanaka. Tanaka found him keeping to his hotel room praying before an image of the Buddhist saint Nichiren, whose sect he had joined under the influence of Nagata. Mizoguchi also had an uncommunicative meeting with the once-admired Wyler, whose *Roman Holiday* was a rival to *Ugetsu* for the Silver Lion. Mizoguchi’s prayers were answered, and his film also won the Italian Critics’ Award.

In 1954 Mizoguchi and Kinuyo Tanaka quarreled over Tanaka’s project to direct a film with the support of Ozu and Naruse. But it was still a prolific year for Mizoguchi, with three films, two of them considered among his finest. *Sansho Dayu* (*Sansho the Bailiff*) is described by John Gillett as “not only a great classic of world cinema, but one of Mizoguchi’s most probing and rigorously worked period pieces.” Tessier calls it one of the director’s most moving works, “fully meriting the adjective ‘sublime’ often abused in reference to Mizoguchi.”

In eleventh-century Japan, a provincial governor teaches his children that “a man without pity is no longer human,” but his concern for human rights causes him to be exiled. Traveling to join him, his wife Tamaki (Kinuyo Tanaka) is sold into prostitution on Sado Island, while his son Zushio and daughter Anju are enslaved on an estate under the brutal bailiff Sansho. After ten years, Zushio has compromised his humane principles to the extent of becoming an overseer, shocking his sister by branding an aged runaway. When they hear news that their mother is still alive, Anju persuades Zushio to escape, giving her own life to cover his tracks. Seeking justice from the prime minister, Zushio is appointed governor of the province, the post once held by his now dead father. He frees all the slaves and banishes Sansho, then goes in search of his mother, whom he finds living blind and maimed on the shore of Sado Island. He convinces her of his identity and they embrace.

Although the script is based on a version by the novelist Ogai Mori, the story is very well-known in Japan. By presenting this familiar tale “in an unfamiliar, challenging framework,” explains Tony Rayns, Mizoguchi produces “an almost visionary account of the wheels of history turning.” Images of ancient stone relics, which open the film and recur to mark each ten-year interval, are used to “evoke the period in which the story is set from a present-day perspective,” both “actualising” the narrative and asserting “the film’s meditative stance,” inviting the audience’s reflection. On the other hand, the political and moral choices facing all the characters, by being centered on the inner conflict of Zushio himself, “become highly engaging issues cutting across the schematization of the melodrama.” This “coexistence of direct

engagement and reflective distance” means that the images are used both literally and figuratively. Rayns cites for instance the opening scenes of the journeying family, “developed through chiaroscuro images whose fragility intimates the precariousness of the family unit.” The mode of narration is calculatedly equivocal, with flashbacks and “languorous dissolves” to express shifts of time and the divisions between individual members of the family. Mizoguchi refuses to make of all this one single statement; “his subject is as much the lines of male/female force within a family as it is the historical struggle between totalitarianism and liberal humanism.” The various themes and images are united in a final shot where the camera cranes up from the pitiful reunion of mother and son. Panning away to the seaweed gatherer at work on the wave-washed beach, taking the film out of the world of the individual and historical into the contemplative detachment of Mizoguchi’s Buddhism.

Like its immediate predecessor, *Sansho the Bailiff* had a better reception abroad than in Japan, in 1954 sharing the Silver Lion at Venice with Kurosawa’s *Seven Samurai*.... Mizoguchi’s last film was a return to black-and white [he had done two in color], and to a familiar theme. *Akasen chitai* (*Street of Shame*, 1956) depicts the red-light district of modern Tokyo through the stories of five prostitutes of various backgrounds and character who work at the “Dreamland” brothel. The director’s original plan was for a semidocumentary shot on location, but the brothel owners refused to cooperate. The action takes place, as Anderson and Ritchie explain, against the background of one of the “heated and widely publicized” debates on prostitution in the Diet, and was released while the actual debates were continuing.

The film proved to be one of Mizoguchi’s biggest successes at the box office; despite the cool objectivity of its approach, condemned at the time by some Japanese critics, it may have helped to bring about the reforms of 1957. It was also “the very first outstanding film on Japanese contemporary life to command a large American audience.” Philippe Demonsablon compared Mizoguchi to a composer working with rhythm and tonality, and wrote that “like Ophuls and Preminger, Mizoguchi’s entire art, with all its artifice, is aimed at allowing actors to reveal the fugitive truths of their being.”...

Tadao Sato, considering the extent to which the recognition of Mizoguchi’s genius had been left to Western (and in the first instance to French) critics, wrote that in Japan, “while Mizoguchi was greatly applauded as a realist, as an inquirer into human nature, and as an aesthetic artist, a great deal of criticism asserted that his strong attachment to old manners was a form of escape, and that the length of his shots and the slackness of his tempo reflected conservatism in cinematic methodology.” However, Sato pointed out, Japanese critics could no longer call Mizoguchi old-fashioned when the French *nouvelle vague* took him as a model.

The treatment of women, Mizoguchi’s favorite theme, is a key to his work. Dudley Andrew believes he saw women “as representative of culture, of the artistic impulse. Of the downtrodden, of history, and of revolt,” and that increasingly for him social problems were seen “as emanations of a cosmic fiction” to which the only possible response was a stoic awareness. Women critics have been sharper in their comments, Amy Taubin for instance noting an element of sadism. Audie Bock finds “an ambivalent attitude towards women” connected with Mizoguchi’s “enigmatic political stance toward oppression, poverty, and even the Japanese family.” She stresses the extent to which this ambivalence derives from his turbulent personal life, quoting

Matsuo Kishi's view that the director was "unusual in the extent to which he suffered at the hands of women. He hated women; he was contemptuous of women. On the other hand, when he fell in love, it was with the sincerity of a little boy." Sato considered Mizoguchi's work "the purification of a national resentment" about the tragic role of women, while Anderson and Ritchie identify a recurrent motif in the film as Mizoguchi's favorite myth: "A man's soul is saved by a woman's love."...

As influences, Mizoguchi himself acknowledged L'Herbier, Von Sternberg, Wyler, and Ford, while others have proposed Murnau, Ophüls, and Cukor. When Mizoguchi died, Kurosawa, a director often seen as his exact opposite, said, "Now that Mizoguchi has gone, there are very few directors left who can see the past clearly and realistically." Acknowledged as one of the greatest of all movie directors, Mizoguchi himself said, at the height of his international success, "Today and as always I am interested in showing how a particular people live. Since I do not want my spectator to be driven to despair by the spectacle, however, I also want to make a sense of the new for him, so that he will not despair. And yet I cannot altogether disregard the old. I love the past and I have but little hope for the future."

from Mizoguchi and Japan.
Mark LeFanu. British Film
Institute, London, 2005.

It's never been contested that Kenji Mizoguchi (1898-1956) is among the greatest masters that the medium has ever known; but if this is so, he belongs nonetheless—along with directors like Bresson, Murnau, Dreyer and Ophüls—to the obscurer shadows of the inner sanctum. People know more about him than they know his actual work. Indeed, he is almost certainly less well known than his fellow countrymen Kurosawa and Ozu, about whom well-researched studies and biographies have long existed in print. By contrast, there has not been an English-language study of Mizoguchi's cinema taken as a whole since the monograph written by Keiko McDonald twenty years ago....

Despite this relative obscurity, there is a feeling in the air that Mizoguchi is alive and relevant. ...But there is also the matter of Mizoguchi's style; a specific way of setting up his scenes that speaks forcibly and directly over the gap of years to the modern viewer: the serious modern viewer that is, who takes world cinema, and not just Hollywood, as the object of his interest and curiosity. So I think it is worth making the claim right at the beginning of this book that Mizoguchi is perhaps the greatest master ever of the method of shooting known as *extended sequence* or long-take composition—the very method, coincidentally, that is the signature of many of the most interesting contemporary film directors; in different ways of course (everyone's signature is at least slightly different), as well as for different reasons, and towards different ends: but united in opposition to that other mode of contemporary film-making which relies for its effects on multiple alternation of

camera angles, rapid-fire editing and unremitting pace of delivery. ...

It goes without saying that the cinema which emerges in its different ways from this preference for long takes makes heavy demands on the viewer: minimalism, in any form, can be uncomfortable. There are times when such a mode of directing seem to simply slip into arid formalism. When it does not work it can be boring and aggravating. One can feel sympathetic to the oft-voiced verdict: 'Watching *X* is like watching paint dry.' Yet, conversely, when such methods really do work, there is simply nothing to compare to them.

Sometimes, it's almost as if patience with the long take—a sense of its sombre existence (even if the director isn't actually *using* it the whole time)—is the precondition for cinema saying anything powerful at all. ...Reliance on the long take has to be balanced against the dangers of formalism. Yet whether the long take is deployed consistently throughout a film, or whether it is used sparingly but intelligently, it seems able to bring something to the possibility of cinema of which other forms of *mise en scène* are incapable.



...As women are the centre of Mizoguchi's art, so they were at the centre of his existence. The 'bare facts', or some of them can be stated quite easily. In his twenties—as a young filmmaker based in the Kansai region—he frequented the tea houses, dance halls and brothels of the great cities of Osaka and Kyoto. In a famous incident early in 1925 Mizoguchi was wounded in a knife attack by a jealous girlfriend. Hospitalised, and removed from work for three months, he returned to his old haunts on his recovery, and the following year married an Osakan bar hostess name Chieko Saga. There are different verdicts about the success of this marriage. Kaneto Shindo...takes a cynical view of it. He implies that she was stingy with money and that the pair quarrelled frequently. But other directors who were closer to the director than Shindo ever was testify on the contrary that the union was a happy one—at least during the early days and during the 1930s. Tragedy struck at the outbreak of the Pacific war. In 1941, at the time of the release of the first part of *The Loyal 47 Ronin*, Chieko went mad, compelling Mizoguchi to place her in care (his great fear was that he had given her syphilis, though tests proved that neither she nor he was infected by the disease). To complete the matrimonial side of the story: a little after her death in 1951, Mizoguchi married her

widowed sister, Fuji, adopting the two young girls from the latter's previous marriage, whom he brought up by all accounts with affection. (Yoda gives a somewhat darker account of family life: 'I never once saw him smile at a child.')

...Mizoguchi was probably the most *cultivated* (in the sense of educated and knowledgeable) of all the classical Japanese film directors. An autodidact whose knowledge came equally from life as from study, his intellectual curiosity was phenomenal. Film, painting, literature and music were always, in his eyes part of single continuum.... With Mizoguchi, this emphasis on 'preparedness', on the sacred seriousness of art, was taken to a much higher level than it was with all but the most austere of his contemporaries. He demanded complete dedication from all the people he was involved with: cinema, as an art form, deserved nothing less if it was to take its place where Mizoguchi believed it belonged, in the exalted company of music, painting and poetry....

In several films made between the mid-1930s and his death in 1956, Mizoguchi turned his gaze relentlessly, and with the power of a great social critic, onto the society he saw around him in Japan. These seven films (which include some of his most admired works) are set for the most part in the contiguous milieus of prostitution and geishadom.

The Tradition—and Its Representation

No doubt prostitution existed, and continues to exist, in most societies, if not all. In Japan, however, it has had an especially complicated history dating back a thousand years to Heian times and beyond. Into that history is woven (paradoxically) some of the greatest achievements in Japanese culture. The various strands of this story though fascinating in themselves, are not my concern here. One strand, however, that is worth highlighting—because it is central to Mizoguchi's nuanced relationship with the whole phenomenon—is the way that the original culture of courtesanship and high-class prostitution was superceded, during the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, by the subtly different culture of geishadom. Courtesanship, as an institution whose primary purpose (beyond all the frills) was the regular exchange of sexual favors for money, continued alongside this new culture. Yet at a certain moment during this period, the licensed quarters lost their hegemony to a newer and freer institution that was based— theoretically at least—not as much on sex as on entertainment.

Now it is true that sex, bought and sold, is part of a geisha's world too, hypocritically concealed in some places, in other places more or less acknowledged. Nonetheless, whether sexually inflected or not, the fact remains that the geisha's main social function was an artistic one: it was to sing and dance and play samisen at the banquets thrown by wealthy clients at tea houses. Acquiring these skills meant a long and arduous learning process, comparable in many ways, strange though this may sound, to the education of a modern ballet dancer. So it is not entirely misleading to talk about a geisha's life in terms of a 'vocation'. The critic may rightly ask whether that vocation was freely chosen. Maybe not in many or even most cases: children were frequently sold into the profession by their parents. Moreover, the terms of indenture whereby the geisha was expected to pay back to the geisha house, out of her earnings, the large sums of money spent on her artistic education and on her wardrobe, were often harsh, especially if (as was often the case) the mistress of the house was cruel or rapacious. Still, as Lesley Downer and Liza Dalby among others have argued, the institution was not wholly negative—even for the women involved. In a society such as Japan's where, until recently, women were otherwise kept in the background, the geisha house—peopled

and managed exclusively by women (often strong, intelligent, sophisticated women)—paradoxically offered a kind of utopian space, a segregated atmosphere of calm and of busyness, where the feminine world could blossom on its own terms.

This is certainly the feeling elicited by a number of films which explore this phenomenon, linking it (where it needs to be linked) with more traditional forms of prostitution. While geishadom was the 'subject of subjects' for Mizoguchi, it was also (and is) no less compelling a topic for his contemporaries, and continues to haunt modern directors....

Do such films romanticise the milieus they evoke? Art, by definition, aestheticises, subjecting even the grimmest subject matter to the transforming rigour of shape and colour and line. Films and paintings (and books too for that matter) answer to their own truth before they answer to history or sociological fact. Yet of course the work of art is a representation of *something*: there is always a human and psychological subject matter which can either be handled with depth and delicacy, or else carelessly, dishonestly, sentimentally. In this particular subject matter the cliché that looms is a romanticised version of 'the whore with the heart of gold', a complaisant way of looking at a given milieu that—we may feel—should have required from the artist a harsher and more honest moral judgment.... Yet the converse danger in these matters is a sort of sanctimonious political correctness which stridently demands, in front of a work of art, that it *must* nail its ideological colours to the mast. Can the painter Toulouse-Lautrec or the New Orleans photographer Bellocq be asked to 'come out' with a judgment (one way or the other) concerning the whorehouses they haunted and chronicled? Their art would be a lesser thing if they did so.

Even so, there is no getting away from the fact that fierce moral indignation was part—perhaps even the defining part—of Mizoguchi's attitude towards this fascinating, complex and deeply embedded element of Japanese culture. The director broached the topic in seven surviving films, three of which date from before the war. The pre-war films are *Osaka Elegy* and *Sisters of the Gion* (both released in 1936) along with *The Straits of Love and Hate* (1937). (This last film is very rarely screened but copies of it exist, and who knows, one day it may become more widely known.) From the post-war period are *Women of the Night* (1948), *Gion Festival Music* (1953), *The Women of Rumour* (1954) and finally Mizoguchi's swan song *Street of Shame* (1956)....

Post-war

The war came and went, with its attendant horrors. Out of its ruin came despair but also a new humanism. Early in 1948, in the company of Yoda, Mizoguchi visited the prostitutes' ward of the Osaka Municipal Hospital as research for a film he was planning about street conditions in the wake of the collapse. Two versions of this very famous visit. In Yoda's memoirs, the teasing voices of the prostitutes are foregrounded. "When we entered the sick-room (according to Yoda) the girls clustered round and started shouting 'Hey, look at this little fellow—they say he's a film director! D'you think it's possible?' 'He's blushing, what a timid guy!' 'Come over here, sweetie! What brings you here? You want to sleep with us?'" "We were all highly embarrassed," Yoda concludes primly. Kaneto Shindo's documentary about Mizoguchi—already much cited—came out ten years after Yoda's memoirs, and Shindo, unlike Yoda, focuses on Mizoguchi's response. According to the Shochiku producer, Hisao Itoya, who was present that fateful day, Mizoguchi was overcome with emotion and could scarcely bring his words out. 'If you are here', he told the assembled prostitutes, 'it's the fault of men.' Then lowering his eyes, and close to tears: 'It is *my* fault too!'

The Brothel or ‘Maison Close’—in Life and Art

Fusako and Kumiko and the other women portrayed in *Women of the Night* engage in prostitution in the most primitive conditions possible. To say that they ply their trade ‘on the street’ is almost a euphemism: in post-war Osaka, a major industrial city, the very streets have been blown away, and the women congregate in open lots and bombed-out ruins close to the main roads leading to the city’s slowly reopening factories. It’s from the industrial proletariat servicing these factories that they draw the bulk of their clientele, accosting them on their way to and from work. Charges, perforce, are minimal, given what the factory hands themselves are earning; and thus for the women to earn a living at all, large numbers of clients must be serviced on each working day.

The ‘house’ or bordello, operating in some long-established licensed quarter, must by contrast have seemed to Fusako and women like her a haven of civilisation. There, at last, one has a roof over one’s head and guaranteed rice in the bowl. The dangers of a freelance existence on the street (including unprovoked attacks by strangers) are avoided

or at least minimalised. In addition there is free health inspection and medical care. Nonetheless, in the immediate post-war era, it was exactly this domiciled, quasi-official protected status of the licensed quarter that constituted prostitution’s affront to society. The brothel, it was thought, could perhaps, as a known quantity, be tackled and eradicated. Legislation began to be introduced in European countries—France most famously—to outlaw the *maison close* and the red-light district. Japan, where the institution was as deeply engrained as anywhere in the world, in due course followed suit.

This is the social context surrounding the events portrayed in the last film Mizoguchi ever made, *Street of Shame*, released in 1956, the year in which he succumbed to leukemia at the age of fifty-eight. At the end of the movie, the brothel owner Taya congratulates himself that the threatened legislation to close the house in the Yoshiwara (Tokyo’s red-light district) seems to have been defeated; but, in fact, it was in that very year, 1956, that the measures in question were finally passed. The *succès d’estime* that surrounded Mizoguchi’s film following its release in early summer had a sociological byproduct: the movie was at least partially instrumental in, so it is said, in pushing these anti-brothel measures through parliament. Whether and to what extent, this makes the film a mere ‘propaganda movie’ will be discussed later. First, though, and for the sake of clarity, it is interesting to lay out the lines of the critique Mizoguchi is offering.

‘Dreamland’, the invented locale of the action, is an average modern brothel in the Yoshiwara. Times are hard (perhaps they are always hard?). ‘Courtesans used to be rich’, opines one of the girls, but—whether she is right or not—that is very far from the case now. All the girls are in debt to the brothel’s shrewd, business-

minded madam, Mrs Taya (the excellent Sadaki Sawamura), and one sees immediately that it’s in the madam’s interest (and of all madams like her) that they should be in debt. It gives her a hold over her employees that is, in essence, identical to the slave owner’s hold over his or her chattels. As long as the girls are in debt they must work for her; and in all cases save one, the debt is so deep, and so well devised, that there is little chance of them buying their freedom. Yasui (Ayako Wakao, the single employee to escape this regime, does so by engaging in methods that are essentially similar to the madam’s—i.e. by loaning out her savings to her colleagues, while charging them extortionate interest rates (rates she is ruthless in enforcing). She ‘collects’, too, on an even grander scale, from her male clients (one in particular who is eager to marry her), by promising favours she has no intention of granting.

In a sense, Yasumi is the only ‘professional’ among the employees/ For this is the second most striking thing about Dreamland and places like it: any residual glamour that once attached to the profession of courtesanship (if only the glamour of a set-apart caste) has long since vanished or been amortised. The place and inhabitants are dingy. The girls are not so much professionals as amateurs, involved in the game



because there is no other way to keep body and soul together. Homely looking Yumeko (Aikop Mimasu), from the depths of the country, has an adult factory worker son who is desperately ashamed of her. Frumpish, bespectacled Hanae (Michiyo Kogure), cursed with a permanent cold, has an invalid husband and child to support: prostitution, for her, was the last resort after she and her man balked at a planned double suicide. Only the reckless, insolent and forcibly sexy ex-teenager Mickey (Machiko Kyo) shows any aptitude for the game, and she, in a way, is the most amateur of all: a middle-class girl on the run from her authoritarian father, choosing a way of life which can be certain of mocking his values and exposing his paternalistic hypocrisy.

As a realistic or semi-realistic critique of the sadness and tawdriness of brothels, the film has few equals and is among the most famous of Mizoguchi’s works. Donald Richie calls it ‘the best of all films examining the problems of women in post-war Japan’. Jean Douchet (French Mizoguchi expert, onetime contributor to *Cahiers du Cinéma*) goes much further. ‘For me, along with Chaplin’s *M. Verdoux* and Renoir’s *The Rules of the Game*, [it is] the greatest film in the history of cinema.’ ...*Street of Shame* is fuelled by a fierce and pitiless indignation, and like all Mizoguchi films, is impressive for its dedicated moral seriousness. But it lacks the redemptive tenderness of Mizoguchi’s finest works, and strikes me as being uncharacteristically cold.

... Let us recapitulate for a moment: for the customer, as for the ‘service-provider’, the brothel is a house of illusions. The institution, it goes without saying, is rooted in profound ambiguity. Sometimes, as in *Street of Shame*’s Dreamland, the illusions are palpably kitsch. The large plastic scallop in the hallway on which Mickey, on her arrival, strikes up a pose as the Venus de Milo,

gestures toward a world of beauty, art and refinement that can only be mocked by the establishment's prosaic reality. The gap between aspiration and gross actuality is poignant as well as obvious, and it

is tempting to conclude that this is the moral economy of all brothels. So it is, in a way, and yet one can still be tender towards illusions: they are part of human life and human need.

COMING UP IN BUFFALO FILM SEMINARS XIX:

- Oct 6 Richard Brooks *Elmer Gantry* 1960
- Oct 13 Roman Polanski *Nóż w wodzie/Knife in the Water* 1962
- Oct 20 Stanley Kubrick *Lolita* 1962
- Oct 27 Carl Theodor Dreyer *Gertrud* 1964
- Nov 3 Eric Rohmer *Ma nuit chez Maud/My Night at Maude's* 1969
- Nov 10 Andrei Tarkovsky *Solaris* 1972
- Nov 17 Arthur Penn *Night Moves* 1975
- Nov 24 Abbas Kiarostami *Nema-ye Nazdik/Close Up* 1990
- Dec 1 Bela Tarr *Werckmeister harmóniák/Werckmeister Harmonies* 2000
- Dec 8 Mike Leigh *Topsy-Turvy* 1999



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