

A PINWOOD DIALOGUE WITH DONALD RICHIE

Donald Richie has been the preeminent American scholar and historian of Japanese film since the 1950s. His books—including *The Japanese Film*, *The Films of Akira Kurosawa*, and *Ozu: His Life and Films*—are widely credited with introducing American audiences to the riches of Japanese cinema. Richie, who has lived in Japan for the last fifty years, is also an accomplished filmmaker. In a rare New York appearance, he discussed his career, following a program of his own experimental short films: *Life*, *Atami Blues*, *Dead Youth*, and *Five Philosophical Fables*.

A Pinewood Dialogue following a screening of short films by Donald Richie, moderated by Assistant Curator Livia Bloom (October 21, 2006):

LIVIA BLOOM: Please join me in welcoming Donald Richie. [Applause]

DONALD RICHIE: Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

BLOOM: Can you talk about how these [experimental] films [that you made] came about? And also, what the Japanese reaction to the films was.

RICHIE: During the war, I was—that's the Second World War—I was in the Merchant Marine, I was in maritime service. And that had helped get me out of Ohio, which is where I was born. And after the war, the prospects of going anyplace else were very slight. And I certainly didn't want to go back to Ohio. So I heard that they were recruiting people for the occupied areas, Germany and Japan. I'd been to Europe and I liked it and I wanted to go back. And so I put down Germany. And they, in their wisdom, sent me to Japan. [Laughter] And I don't think I'd been there a week or two, that I realized it was *completely* different from anything I'd ever imagined, that I just wanted to stay and learn for the rest of my life.

The films came about because a lot of people in my generation—I don't know about this generation, but in my generation—the movies were sort of the thing we did when we were little. Particularly me, because

I was very often—when I was three or four—sent to the movies, to be kept quiet. And I would sit there mesmerized. I had no idea what was coming next or who they were or what they were doing. The fact that it was moving was enough. So I became sort of a charter member of the movie generation, and went to see everything that played in this little town that I was born in. The movies became my reality. The people I saw became more real than my family. Johnny Weissmuller was a lot more real than my father was. And when Norma Shearer wept, I cried along—as I *never* did when my mother cried. And so this became my preferred reality.

And so this continued on, and then one day, I finally discovered what movies were doing. I walked into the Sigma Theater in Lima, Ohio—and I again paid no attention to what was on the marquee at all. (I never looked at what was playing; it wasn't important.) And I went in and I thought, "Something's the matter; probably, the projectionist is drunk again," because it first started with the end of the picture: the old man in the bed died. And then all of a sudden came the newsreel. And then after that it picked up, and it kept jumping back and forth. And I was certain that the reels were utterly mixed up, until it all began to make a kind of sense. And by the end of the film, I knew what film was, and I *almost* knew what life was. The film was *Citizen Kane*. And this inspired me so much. I'd only been a passive observer of the film; now I wanted to be active. I badgered my father into getting me an 8mm camera, and I was—how old was I? Seventeen? Next day, I was out—you know, I invented the documentary. I'd never heard of a documentary. But I took the camera, and went

around and took pictures of people going in and out of churches and called it *Small Town Sunday*. And I was enthused, you know, living through film—but consciously this time. That was the beginning, and that has continued now for eighty-two years. And this is the way that I am.

Now, to answer the second part of the question, I came at a time, in Japan, when movies—that generation was also being inundated with movies. At this point, Japan had been bombed almost out of existence. The people were very, very poor. They'd almost had a famine the year before I got there. And the only kind of recreation that they could afford was the movies. So no matter what was playing or where it was playing, you had to fight your way into the theaters and stand in the back. Nobody ever got a seat. So the movies were doing for that generation what they had done for me in my childhood: they were becoming a new kind of reality.

So with that sort of voracious audience to see films with, it wasn't long before I got ideas of making films. Actually, I didn't have the means to do this until—I was making 8mm [films], and then I got a Bolex in the early sixties, and these are all 16mm [films]. And so I was able to do this. And there was a student audience. There was a lot of ferment at that point, philosophical as well as political. People wondering what life was all about anyway; criticizing their government, and criticizing our government... It was sort of like the sixties in Europe, or here [in the United States]. And so they were very interested in the kind of dissident satirical talk that I had to say. And so my films, they say, had some sort of influence.

BLOOM: In the past, when you've described your position in Japan, you've described it as "a social unit of one". You said that you "were looking down from a mountain top," and that you "had the best seat in the house" looking at Japanese culture. Can you discuss that, and also talk about whether there's a filmmaker who embodies that perspective?

RICHIE: Yeah. I think one of the joys of being an expatriate is the complete freedom that it gives you—particularly in Japan, where foreigners are held in a separate box, as it were, a separate category, where what applies to the Japanese does

not necessarily apply to the foreigners. And so this specialness gives you a kind of a freedom. It doesn't give you license. It doesn't mean you can just do anything you like then. But it makes you aware, in a very strange kind of way. And it prevents your having any of the comforts of belonging to any category. What she was quoting was something at the end of one my books, which says that I'm, like, on the mountaintop, where I can look back to the plains of the snowbound province of Ohio, where I came from. And it doesn't have any hold on me. It doesn't form me. It *has* formed me, but it doesn't have anything to do with my life right now. Then I can look down in the sunny valley of the land I've chosen, and know that I can never go down there. I look at it; and I take strolls; but I'm never going to belong to it, or it to me. And so this gives me, all of a sudden, a kind of freedom I didn't have before. I become a citizen of limbo. And limbo is the most democratic state that there is.

BLOOM: ...there are directors that embody that position of looking down from a mountain...?

RICHIE: I can't think of any Japanese that do this, because Japanese society is very, very strong, and will not allow the kind of freedom that a foreigner can achieve. (Unless, of course, the foreigner goes and lives abroad.) But usually when this happens—like when Soseki Natsume, the great writer, went to London—they become miserable. Or when Leonard Fujita, the great painter, went to Paris. He was okay for a while, but then he became miserable. A lot of people travel abroad and all of a sudden, they can't live without having *miso shiru*, (which is a kind of miso soup that everybody eats). And I'm sure there are many Americans who go to Europe and say, "Oh, gee, I wish I had a ham sandwich," or "Where's Mom's apple pie?" or something like that. So it takes a rare Japanese one, who has left the country and... Kakuzo Okakura, the man who lived in Boston for so long, would be an example of a man who found freedom this way. They're rather—well, they're rather rare, actually. It depends upon circumstances. I cannot think of a film director.

BLOOM: At one point, you also were a film curator at The Museum of Modern Art. Can you tell us about series that you worked on there?

RICHIE: Well, back then, when you were a curator of film at MoMA, it was, like Charles Foster Kane says, “The biggest toy train a boy ever had.” It was wonderful. You could—you know, it was the late 1960s, early 1970s. There was a big, voracious crowd waiting to be sort of educated and shown things. I was very happy to have given probably the greatest director of all, Robert Bresson, his first retrospective in America. And I was also honored to give the first retrospective of Stan Brakhage. I was able to bring together the films—and the director—of Satyajit Ray, or of Lester James Peries, which people don’t know anymore, but he’s a very great director from Sri Lanka. So we were able to do that sort of thing, and I was very pleased and proud that I had the opportunity to do this.

BLOOM: With wearing so many different hats—being a scholar, being a critic, being a filmmaker, being a curator—did you feel that when you moved into a different genre, that you were taking a risk to the position that you had already established?

RICHIE: Maybe. I do know that the way that I’ve arranged my work is so that I can have the illusion of having taken a risk. I mean, I come from a very Protestant background. You know, despite all the, you know, glamour of Japan. And so I’m a workaholic, obviously. And how to do this? You know, when work, in itself, as the Bible tells us, is not very pleasant. The way that I do it is arrange it in—well, like a menu. I have to work. If I don’t do my proper work—by which I mean my writing and things like this—then I can’t enjoy the rest of the day very much. And certainly, if I prowl around at night, I don’t enjoy that, because I didn’t earn it. So what I do is I will arrange the night before, “Which do you want to work on, A, B, C or D?” And I have three or four manuscripts going at once. I’ve the column—I’ve got a column every week in *Japan Times*; I could do that. I’ve got a new book on aesthetics; I can do that. I’m redoing a book that has been published in Japanese, called *Viewing Film*, but never been published in English; and so I’m going to work on that. And then I’ve got my journals, which I still keep up. All of this is work. My correspondence is not work. Correspondence is a deadly enemy of all work, as all of you who subscribe to email already know. So that’s not included. But the other things, A, B, C, D, I can choose. And this keeps the impulse fresh. If you’re working, if you feel you have to work, if you’re as

neurotic about it as I am, then this is one way to cope with it.

BLOOM: Can you talk a little about the process of your writing?

RICHIE: I think everybody has pretty much the same process. Well, it depends on what you’re doing, you know? If you’re doing critical work, the only thing you can do is look at the object again and again and again, until you’ve memorized it to the extent that you’ve internalized it. And when you’ve done that, then you can start to do work on that object. I think that’s the only way that a critic can work. He has to know that much, if he’s going to be any good. The reason I made these films, despite the fact that they’re fun, you know, is that I felt that any critic—and I was a film critic—should know how to make what he’s criticizing. I think that a music critic ought to know how to play some instruments. This is what Paul Hindemith thought, and he was absolutely right. An art critic ought to know how to paint. And literary critics should always have written a book or two. And since I was in films, I wanted to know what it was like to actually go through the process. And this probably is one of the impulses behind my doing this.

How else do you approach your work? There’s other ways. If you’re writing a novel, of course, it’s completely different. Then, you’re looking into a void and trying to find a piece of string to pull and hoping something... It’s like fishing, to see what’s on the other hand, what the association is, what comes up. You throw the bucket in the well, and are surprised, pleased, horrified, at what the bucket brings up. There are different methods.

BLOOM: I recently watched the DVD of *Rashômon*, which is a wonderful Criterion DVD on which you did the commentary track. And, there were two things that stood out for me, maybe you could comment on. One, about how the actors—in particular, Toshirô Mifune—he’s sort of impersonating an animal at one point. And I thought that was a really interesting description; I wonder if you could talk about that.

RICHIE: Actually, when Mifune—when we hear about his impersonating the animal, this is all Kurosawa’s doing. He had various ways of controlling his actors. And when he has a group as tight as he

did—this is, you know, 1950; making movies was sort of like a cottage industry; everybody knew everybody else. Very tight little units. And they were all living in the same inn, down near the forest, where they took *Rashômon*, near Nara. And so he was able to sort of mold them. They took their meals together, they slept together (in different rooms, I presume). You know, it was a very together, sort of Bohemian, laid back experience. And one of the things that he tried was he got some old Martin and Johnson animal pictures. And when the black leopard came snarling, he turned to Machiko Kyô and said, "This is how the woman acts in that particular section of the film." And then when the lion, or whatever it was, was roaring and pounding his chest, he turned to Mifune and said, "This is you." So the director arranged for this bestiary that we see in the finished film.

BLOOM: Also in that DVD, you were talking about the music at one point, and you mentioned that Kurosawa had a "tin ear". I wonder if you could talk about that.

RICHIE: Kurosawa's famous tin ear. Like a lot of cultured people during that generation, he loved music. But the music he knew was what you would find in an album which is titled, you know, "World Classics: The Ten Best Pieces of Music". That's what he knew, and that's what he loved, and that's what he wanted to use. If you pay attention to Kurosawa's music as it comes along, you'll find all sorts of classical references as to what he liked and what he insisted upon. If you look at *Ran*, for example, you'll hear Mahler, because he had just discovered Mahler's First. And he insisted that his composer, Takemitsu, do something like that. They very seldom rebelled. Takemitsu rebelled only once, and that was in *Dô desu ka den* when, during the rushes, he played the Bizet *L'Arlesienne Suite: Dum-dum-da, da-dum, da-dum, da-da*. "Now, you do something like that." And Takemitsu said, "You know, it's been *done*. And the composer is *dead*, so you can't get him, but I'm leaving." And Kurosawa was not used to being treated like that. So he said, "No, no, no, no, wait...." And so Tôru did, you know, exactly what he wanted.

Other composers—Ikebe, when they were scoring *Kagemusha*, Kurosawa said, "Now, this is what I want for this scene," and he played a well beloved passage from the *Peer Gynt* music of Grieg: *Bum-*

bum-bum-bum-bum-bum-bum, bum-bum-bum, bum-bum-bum—and said to the composer, "Something like that." So the composer did something like that. And when you look at the thing, and you hear the music, the music goes: *dun-dun-dun-dun-dun-dun-dong, dit-dit dong*. He turned it upside-down. And so you sort of get away from the dictatorial demands of Kurosawa.

In the case of *Rashômon*, however, an extremely sensitive composer, Fumio Hayasaka, who had scored many of the Kurosawa pictures, and came to *Rashômon*. On *Rashômon*, he said, "I want something like: *dee-de-de-de-de-de-dee-de-de-dee, de-de-de-de-de-dee*." [Laughter] And Hayasaka didn't know what to do. And he'd try to get further and further away, and he'd always be dragged back. So when you hear the score in the film—it almost ruins the film for us—you hear the bolero whining away in the background. When you listen to, or when you see *Red Beard*, for example, that is supposed to be an imitation of Beethoven's Ninth, the final movement. And before he started filming, he assembled cast and all the staff together and played the entire *Ode to Joy* for them, so they'd get the proper idea. So this is the "tin ear," really dumb way that he thought about music.

BLOOM: Can you talk a little about how you scored your films? On *Atami Blues*, the score is wonderful.

RICHIE: *Atami Blues* was scored after the fact. I had shown it without any music at all, and Takemitsu Toru said, "You know, it needs music." And I said, "I know it does, but what?" He said, "Oh, you use these." And he gave me two tapes. And so I alternate the tapes. And I use it just like Ozu. That film is much inspired by Ozu, *Atami Blues*. So it's wallpaper. But I use it like wallpaper. It's visible wallpaper. It depends on the film, about how you're going to do it. [The music for] *Life*, you might have recognized, is [sung by] the voice that you're listening to right now. I improvised that in the studio. I wanted something really perfumed and heavily romantic for *Dead Youth*, so I used Indian sitar music, which was then mingled with natural things—wind and things, waves and things like this—to give this sort of Wagnerian—it's a very Wagnerian film; it's about *Liebestod*. And I didn't want to use the *Liebestod*, but I wanted to give something that was just—what?—slippery, and this emotion, which is the reason that I chose the sitar.

In the case of *Five Philosophical Fables*, I wanted something which was anodyne, in the same way that all early music for silent films is anodyne. Nothing matches. It doesn't fit. And it's not supposed to; it's supposed to be just an aural sort of background to what you're seeing. And I wanted something which was very delicate, very nineteenth century, very refined. And who could that be, but Mendelssohn? The additions are all made by me on another piano.

BLOOM: Alright, I want to take some questions from the audience. Yeah, right there. I'll repeat the question so everyone can hear it. (Repeats audience question) The incongruities that you experience in Japan, how do you think your films reflect them?

RICHIE: Well, I don't think any Japanese could've made them. You know, it would be like asking a fish to make a film about water. So you have to be outside whatever you're making a film of to make a coherent film. I mean, we all, you know, know what coterie films are. And a lot of Japanese films are coterie films. So I don't think anybody could have made the films except somebody outside society in one way or another. On the other hand, the films would not have achieved the celebrity that they have achieved in Japan, if they had been made in any other manner. The very fact that they're being made from the outside, that this was an outside view of the Japanese—which is what they took them to be. I took them to be an outside view of the world. But for the Japanese audience, they read all sorts of things into this, and they snickered at criticism of the Japanese family, when they ate the youngest son [in *Five Philosophical Fables*—it was all taken very, very personally. And I think that the reason that it was accepted—I can't imagine what would've happened to a Japanese director who tried to do this—was the fact that I was an outsider, that I was looking in, that my criticism was, therefore, more amusing than telling, perhaps.

BLOOM: (Repeats audience question) Have you ever been charged with exploiting Japanese culture, or fetishizing it, as a white person?

RICHIE: Oh, no, I don't think so. I might have been in other countries. But in the case of Japan, which has, you know, two hundred years of white people exploiting them, [chuckles] I don't think that charge

is ever made. It's always put on the other foot. I mean, people have been very grateful for what you're doing. Whether you're taking seriously or not... I think it's telling that all of my books on film history—I have four of them now—have never been translated into Japanese. But that could well be because of academic competitions, and the local teachers there don't want to have the kind of competition that, if I'm lucky, I represent. My books that are sort of off that tangent, like the book on Kurosawa or the book on Ozu, these have been translated. But again, no Japanese sensei at that point had attempted this himself. So this would be one of the reasons. I've never been "accused"—I guess that's the word—of this kind of exploitation by anyone in the West. If I'd chosen another culture like French or something, I may have been. But in the case of Japan, I started so early on that, I became identified with it. So I'm never criticized for that.

BLOOM: (Repeats audience question) Could you talk about how the *Five Fables* were dedicated to Buster Keaton?

RICHIE: They were dedicated to the spirit of Buster Keaton, because Buster Keaton, of course, as you well know, is absolutely unflappable. And no matter what happens to him, we still have the same face. And in a way, this is sort of like Japan is. Japan is unflappable. Japan is effect-less. It's easy to make Japan hysterical on one level or another; but it's very difficult to make it, you know, carry on, the way that some countries do. At any rate, I wanted to suggest not so much that this was a Japanese attribute that they shared with Buster, as that this was an aspiration that I wanted to share with Buster. I wanted to be as unflappable as Buster was. That's why I dedicated it to him.

BLOOM: (Repeats audience question) Is Ozu your favorite of the Japanese directors?

RICHIE: Oh, absolutely, yes. There's never been a film director like Ozu. There's never been a director who wedded simplicity with profundity in the way—and one leaning on the other—that Ozu does. And he's the master carpenter, the way that he connects his scenes. He's a master editor of those scenes, the way he leads time and space just to, you know, to make the effects that he wants. I think he's probably one of the finest filmmakers that's ever

made [films]—simply because he understands the nature of film so well, in my opinion.

BLOOM: Can you talk a little bit about what [Ozu] was like in person?

RICHIE: I knew Kurosawa quite well. And I'd go to the, you know, studio to watch him work sometimes. Ozu, he was a different kind of person. One did not presume. I mean, Kurosawa was a tyrant; he'd get mad and threaten people, but he was approachable. And Ozu never did anything like that; but in a way, he was unapproachable. He knew exactly what he was going to do when he came to the set. He'd already made up his mind about everything. He'd take the actors aside and say, "Move your finger two inches to the left, and then turn your head very slightly, and that's the performance I want, and don't do anything else."

I only watched him work once. I watched him to the—there's part of an inn scene, in a Japanese inn, in *Akibiyori*, which I think is *Early Autumn*. And it was absolutely like watching an architect who already made the blueprint. "Yes, now we've done this, and now we're going to this; now, next scene, we're going to do this." And any volition, any emotion on the part of the actors was severely dampened. I wasn't there when this happened, but in *Tokyo Story*, there's a famous scene where Haruko Sugimura—who is a very famous stage actress, and certainly has her own persona in everything she does—she had a scene on the telephone, where they're deciding what to do about Mama and Papa. And she had a fan, she has this round fan. And she's looking at the fan as she's saying this very small dialogue. Seventy-two times, he took this. And I don't know what he was searching for, but I do know the reason. He wanted to destroy her idea of it. He wanted to destroy her persona. He wanted her to *become* the person. And finally, being dead tired and in sheer desperation, she became that, famous actress though she was. She stopped being an actress.

BLOOM: (Repeats audience question) The question is: With Bresson, compared to Ozu, the actors were very thoroughly rehearsed. Do you think that's unfair?

RICHIE: I think you'd be more partial to Kurosawa's way, for example. His way is they sit around having readings first. Then they have full rehearsals. They had something like three months of rehearsals for *The Lower Depths*, with the camera gliding around, everybody in full costume and makeup. And during the rehearsals is where he sort of formulates them. He lets the actor do what the actor wants to do. And then he says, "You know, it's very good. But don't you think you could move it a little bit to the left or a little bit to the right? Let's try it again." And he does this very, very gently. I mean, he—who loses his temper and hits people—nonetheless, when it comes to this, he's very, very gentle. And he molds his people. I remember once Kyôko Kagawa told me that when—[there's a] climactic scene of *The Bad Sleep Well*, where she's supposed to cry. And they had rehearsals and she, you know, got with the crying mode on, and did not cry. And then he said, "Okay, I'm going to take it now, and *you're going to cry*." And she did. So this seems to work.

Different directors use different methods. A lot of directors spoil their films by not directing the actors. It's considered—as indeed, perhaps you yourself would consider it—rude to interrupt another person's interpretation, or their work, or to take away what creative value they themselves have. But when those people don't have very much, then they probably need something. And nonetheless, we do have a number of directors in Japan who will simply let the actor do what he wants and say, "Oh, that's a take." Such a director is Shinoda, whose films have many, many virtues, but the acting certainly isn't among them. You notice that the acting is really not very good.

There are other directors—Teshigahara is very much like that. He will do everything about the film, but when it comes to the acting, he won't. I remember... And I know this from experience. I don't know if you've seen a film called *Rikyu*. Has anybody seen *Rikyu*? It's a Teshigahara film. And it's about the sixteenth century, and it is about the warlord Hideyoshi browbeating his tea master, Rikyu; eventually, the poor man has to commit suicide, and that's the story. And playing the two leads, he had very, very famous people. And playing Hideyoshi, he had Tsutomu Yamazaki, who can put in a tremendous performance when he is controlled (as in *High and Low*, where he plays the criminal), but when he's not controlled, he's

something else. And I know about this, because I was playing—this is not my acting debut, actually, but whatever the opposite of debut is: I never made another film after this—I was the head of the Portuguese mission, and speaking Portuguese—the language of Portuguese—which is among the many languages I don't know. And the rehearsal went okay, but came the first take, and I was advanced upon so heavily by Yamazaki, playing the warlord, that I dropped my suplice, I lost my rosary, my hat came off. And afterwards, the man who played Rikyu said, "You know, I didn't realize you could play that role with such a comic flair. You're really quite good." [Laughter] *Comic? Comic?* I had thought that I was being a wiley Jesuit, you know? But the point is that Hiroshi allowed this. And he allowed the haminess of that particular actor to come through. It wasn't that he was attacking me; he wasn't, he was just doing his part. But there was no control. And when there's no control on a spontaneous event like acting, then you've got to watch out. I don't know whether you have to be as rigid, let's say, as Ozu was; but you certainly can't be as light as Teshigahara is, or was, and get the results. So you're quite right as to the question, but the answer seems to lie in the middle there someplace.

BLOOM: Yes, right here.

RICHIE: The question is about Mikio Naruse and his acting—or the way he was with actors. So much that actors didn't like, really very much, to act with him. Tatsuya Nakadai told me once that—he plays the bartender in *When a Woman Ascends the Stairs*—and he said that it was the worst experience of his life, because he was brand new, and he was trying to do what the director wanted, and the director wouldn't tell him. He'd say, you know, "How's that?" And the director would say, "Well, no good." "Well, why is it no good?" No answer. Hideko Takamine also talked about him never giving any kind of—simply make them do it over and over and over again, until, by accident, almost, they would satisfy him. I think it had the effect that Ozu wanted in erasing personality. This is certainly what Bresson wants. Bresson doesn't even call them actors. He calls them models—like people he tries clothes on, you know?—because he does not want the tinge of a personality to poison this conception that he has. I think they all share this.

Naruse may really not have known what he wanted, too. That's always possible: that the director has no idea, and he simply waits till something turns up that he likes. But since Naruse thought about everything pretty carefully, I would imagine this is part of his technique. He never talked to anybody. He always ate alone in the studio commissary. When he got married the first time, back in the thirties, everybody was, you know, astonished. "How did he even get to *know* anybody? Did he talk to her first?" sort of thing. [Laughter]

BLOOM: On that same idea, you said at one point, about your writing, that if you involve your feelings, you are lost. And you also called feelings "ideas whose time has not yet come". So this idea of feelings as not really having a place in this professional work. Can you talk about that a little bit more?

RICHIE: Well, that explains why I like Ozu so much, doesn't it? [Laughs] I believe in control. And I think that when you let your emotions rampage, you lose something. You pay for it. But this is a personal idea. The reason I feel this way is I don't believe in the concept of the emotions, as such. The emotion, presumably... First, I don't believe in the dichotic idea of the intellect on one hand and emotions on the other. I don't believe in Apollo on one side and Dionysius on the other. I don't believe any longer in things that come in pairs of twos. One of the things that Japan taught me is that between black and white, there is this area called gray. And we use it as though, you know, we never want to go there, never want to see that. But actually, that's the most fruitful. And that is the, you know, the clearest to the reality that we live in every day. It's the closest to the truth, to the extent that there is any. And so feeling this way, it's typical of me to make statements like that.

BLOOM: (Repeats audience question) How did you find the actors for your film?

RICHIE: When you make films like mine, you don't have any—but they don't cost very much money, but you try to keep them as cheap as you can. And in this case, I don't think any of these films cost more than what would now be four hundred dollars or five hundred dollars or something. So they were very cheap to make. Well, one of the reasons you make them cheap is the way you precede to film.

And so far as actors go, I only used my friends, and I never paid them. The actors in the last film [*Five Philosophical Fables*] were professionals. They were part of a mime group. And they worked wonderfully together. I saw them in Yokohama and fell in love with them. I thought, I've got to do something with these wonderful people! And indeed, they are wonderful. I didn't direct them. I mean, this is—all of their reactions are things they thought up, and I just sat back and was grateful.

It depends, you know, case by case. For example, *Atami Blues*: The Girl was professional. She was—she later became rather famous as a chanteuse. She was the first one to do the Kurt Weill *Seven Deadly Sins*, for example. And she was quite young; she was not famous then yet, but she was sort of pliable. She hadn't turn into "An Actress" at that point, so she could be modulated. The guy who played The Guy was an amateur, brand new.

And I picked him because he was my friend. And it wasn't a question of getting him down; it was a question of getting him up. But since he's such a son-of-a-bitch anyway, in the film, it was easy to get a kind of coldness, a kind of callow coldness out of him, because it was there. And so I was able, in that sense, to create the thing. But the people in *Dead Youth* are not people at all. This is psychodrama. They're not supposed to be people. They don't have any personalities or anything. So I used all my friends. And didn't even, you know—I used still pictures, I used out takes, I used a lot of things. I never told them, you know, what you're supposed to be feeling or anything. I simply said, like Ozu, I said, "Now, you move your hand two inches, and then you pick that up." So it sort of depends. But the main thing about them is that they're all free. [Laughter]

BLOOM: Thank you so much for coming. [Applause]

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