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A Hen in the Wind (*Kaze no Naka no Mendori*). Shochiku/Ofuna. Script by Ozu and Ryosuke Saito. Photographed by Yuharu Atsuta. With Kinuyo Tanaka, Shuji Sano, Kuniko Miyake, Chishu

A Hen in the Wind. 1948. Hideo Nakagawa, Kinuyo Tanaka, Shuji Sano

Ryu, Chieko Murata, Eijiro Tono, Koji Mitsuo, et al. 90 min. Released September 20, 1948. Original negative and script in existence; prints at Shochiku.

A destitute woman is awaiting the demobilization of her husband when her child falls ill. She prostitutes herself to pay the hospital. When her husband returns, she tells all. He knocks her downstairs but later apologizes, suddenly realizing all she has been through.

Writing ten years later Ozu said: "Well, everyone has his failures. There are all kinds of failures, however, and some of my failures I like. This film is a bad failure."⁶³ Nonetheless the picture ranked seventh in the *Kinema Jumbo* polls. Even the critics who liked the film, however, complained about some of the more unlikely scenes. Fresh, clean covers on a prostitute's bed in postwar Japan? The heroine falling all the way downstairs in a crowded Japanese apartment and no one coming to see what had happened? Given the film in question, they were right to complain. In the general context of Ozu's style, however, sacrifices of realism to beauty were already visible, and it was through such sacrifices that a new and perhaps higher reality was shortly to emerge.

Though most critics now agree that nothing new was learned during the days of film-viewing in Singapore, and that the unchanging Ozu was, as he himself said, "a tough old buzzard," one possible result of seeing such films as *Citizen Kane* may have been the new aesthetic, beauty for its own sake, in Ozu's later films. In a picture as melodramatic as *A Hen in the Wind*, of course, Ozu's heightened interest in beauty (clean, pretty bedspreads in a whorehouse) is obtrusive. In a film like *Late Spring*, however, the same distortions for beauty's sake in an almost eventless story only enrich the experience as a whole.