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ness," the question of what it means, what it is, to be Japanese. Allan Casebier intriguingly puts forth the notion that irrationality is a key to the Japanese essence for Imamura. Irrationality is defined as the mystery, and incomprehensibility in all things (derived from the metaphysical and aesthetic concept of *yugen*). Irrationality is rooted in the instinctual, emotional, and intuitive processes of human behavior.¹¹ The appeal to the irrational might imply a connection between Imamura and Ozu, whose Zen-like codas call forth not only *mono no aware* but also *yugen*, an essential component of Zen. But the sense of mystery, of irrationality, in Imamura often stems from the structures. Casebier has isolated a series of oppositions which characterize Imamura's work: irrational vs. rational; primitive vs. civilized; spontaneous vs. conventional; the lower classes vs. the upper classes; authentic vs. contrived. To these we might add documentary vs. fiction (related to the last opposition of Casebier's, although he refers to the actions of the characters, not the techniques of the films). Casebier maintains that in the oppositions he has isolated, "Imamura believes the first of these conflicting elements to be the locus of value."¹² Only in the opposition documentary vs. fiction, which I have isolated, is there no clear-cut demarcation, no clearly defined value. The lines between the two are vague, and this explains Imamura's attraction, like Oshima Nagisa's, to real-life incidents and characters.

Nowhere is the merging of documentary and fiction more complex than in *Ningen johatsu* (*A Man Vanishes*, 1967), a film remarkably similar in theme and treatment to *The Ruined Map*. *A Man Vanishes* involves the search for the disappearance of a "vanished man," except that here the "detective" is a professional actor. In a sense, like the detective in Teshigahara's film, the actor, too, loses his identity when, to the actor's consternation and confusion, the woman whose fiancé is missing falls in love with him. A confusion of roles ensues in Imamura's mix of fact and fiction: "an actor can become a real-life subject, and a real-life subject can become an actress."¹³ The confusion of roles and the partial abandonment of the search, which is an abandonment of the film's narrative, its ostensible subject, highlight the essentially irrational nature of human behavior, discourse, and interaction. And while the film implies that the older sister of the woman may have been involved with the man's disappearance, the disappearance is ultimately left unsolved, as it might be, and typically is, in similar real-life cases—cases themselves which are tinged with the irrational.

The merging of documentary and fiction forms an interesting undercurrent to Imamura's earlier *Jinruigaku nyumon* (*The Pornographers*, 1966). This motif is visualized through the use of a film-within-a-film structure, first, as Imamura himself presides over a screening of *The Pornographers*, in the opening and closing sequences, and, second, through the use of films within the main narrative—a narrative concerned with the making