

Title	Rashomon
Director	Akira Kurosawa
Date	1951
Area	Epistemology
Theme	Relativism
Plot Summary	<p>Tells the story of the rape of a nobleman's bride by a bandit (Toshiro Mifune), and the nobleman's murder, from four perspectives: that of the bandit, the bride, the nobleman and a woodcutter who happens to be passing. Each telling is significantly different.</p> <p>The bandit's version: he is heroic, the woman consents, and afterwards she insists he and her husband fight to the death so she will be spared disgrace.</p> <p>The bride's version: she is a victim, the bandit runs off afterwards, and she inadvertently kills her unsympathetic husband.</p> <p>The husband's version: he is the victim, his bride wants to run off with the bandit, and when the bandit refuses her request to kill him he kills himself out of shame.</p> <p>The woodcutter's version: the husband no longer respects the wife, who angrily goads the two men into fighting, and the husband is killed.</p> <p>It might be thought that here events are being interpreted in different ways, suggesting that experience is always conditioned by the perspective we are coming from. A closer reading suggests that Kurosawa does not want to illustrate the relative character of knowledge but is taking a cynical view of the ability of human beings to twist the truth, to deceive themselves, in order to preserve their self-image.</p>
Key Scenes	
Relevant Text	I. C. Jarvie, Philosophy of the Film: Epistemology, Ontology, Aesthetics, 1987, 306-7