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From France to Japan. Migration of the surrealist ideas and its influence on Japanese avant-garde film

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Introduction

The ground for adopting surrealist ideas by the Japanese artists was prepared long before the current appeared in the Far East. As Chinghsin Wu observes, a great work towards popularizing modern art trends and Western concepts was done by a painter Kuroda Seiki (1866–1924), who introduced on the Japanese ground, for example, futurism, post-impressionism, and expressionism¹. The new ideas were digested by the artists not only through individual expression. They were also used to communicate and emphasize the socio-cultural and political transformations in Japan². As Wu further observes: “this enthusiasm for Western modern art trends reflected Japanese artists’ strong desire to integrate themselves into global artistic modernism, a desire that dated back to the Meiji period (1868–1912) and corresponded to the broader Westernization policies pursued by the Meiji government.”³

According to the above, when in 1920s Surrealism appeared on the Japanese ground, the artists had already developed self-awareness and were prepared not to copy Western style, but to produce distinctive art, full of references to Eastern culture⁴. It is also significant that the idea of surrealism migrated to Japan soon after its emergence, not, as it happened with different art currents – some years after the introduction on the Western ground. The first surrealist writings were brought to Japan in 1926 by a poet

¹ Wu, Chinghsin. “Reality Within and Without: Surrealism in Japan and China in the Early 1930s.” *Review of Japanese Culture and Society*, Vol.26, December 2014, p. 189.

² Ibidem.

³ Ibidem.

⁴ Ibidem.

Junzaburō Nishiwaki, what had a place just after publishing the famous *Manifestoes of Surrealism* by André Breton⁵.

Western Surrealism, the heir of Dada⁶ – a phenomenon representing anti-art, focused on paradoxes and stepping against the reason⁷, developed the thought that “human nature is fundamentally irrational.”⁸ The creators of surrealism, among whom Max Ernst, Salvador Dalí, Joan Miró, and André Masson should be mentioned, brought attention to the power of unconsciousness. They also crossed the traditional artistic conventions and, what seems to be most visible in the film art, made the understanding of the role of dreams the central subject of their pursuits⁹.

The oneiric mood and aesthetics of Surrealism influenced Japanese cinema and became an indispensable source of inspiration for the avant-garde authors. Following the goal stated by the Western artists – that the art should affect the viewer and the reception of the work of art should not be restrained to aesthetic pleasure¹⁰, the avant-garde Japanese film directors depicted the life as ruled by absurd and grotesque situations. Moreover, the protagonist was introduced as the one wandering in the mysterious atmosphere of the dream-like structured world. The surrealist Japanese avant-garde films also defamiliarized the contexts known to the viewer and deconstructed logic by using unexpected juxtapositions of events and everyday objects. Even though the plethora of problems the Japanese artists faced, as the lack of proper translations of the Western papers, the lack of availability and the difficulties with understanding the complex statements rooted in Western socio-cultural order – they managed to fulfill the gaps with own invention and concepts taken from Japanese culture.

The picture considered to be the first Japanese attempt to transfer surrealist ideas on the cinematic ground was *Page of Madness* (*Kurutta ippēji*, 1926) by Teinosuke Kinugasa. Later on, the references to surrealism returned in the works of such avant-garde artists as Masao Adachi, Shūji Terayama, Hiroshi Teshigahara, Toshio Matsumoto, as well as American-born Donald Richie. The surrealist aesthetics also found its proponents among the directors of experimental films as Takahiko Iimura and Mako Idemitsu. The echoes of the ideas transferred on the Japanese ground can

5 See: Breton, André. *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1972, pp. 3–48.

6 Munro, Majella. “Dada and Surrealism in Japan.” *A Companion to Dada and Surrealism*. Ed. David Hopkins. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2016, p. 145. The synonym of Dada in Japan was a collective MAVO, led by Murayama Tomoyoshi. However, it should be noticed that Japanese Surrealism developed independently from Dada movement.

7 To read more about the history and objectives of Dada, see: Hopkins, David. *Dada and Surrealism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 1–29.

8 Hopkins, David., op.cit., n. p. [introduction].

9 Ibidem, [introduction], p. 18 [chapter III].

10 Ibidem, p. 2 [chapter II].

also be traced down to Japanese experimental films after the year 2000, as Takashi Makino, Rei Hayama, Shinkan Tamaki or Takashi Ito.

According to the above, the author of the presented article aims to depict on how Surrealism, perceived as the movement and the aesthetic, was transferred from one culture to another. The primary purpose is to trace the migration of the idea and its results on the field of early Japanese avant-garde film. Because Surrealism also influenced popular cinema (mainly horrors and animation), as well as found its reflection in the works of the experimental artists after the year 2000, the author focuses on the beginnings of the current on the Japanese ground¹¹.

Migrating ideas. The beginnings of surrealism on the Japanese ground

When it comes to Surrealism as an idea in shape it migrated to Japan, the Eastern authors focused mostly on what Breton proposed and manifested deep devotion towards his definitions. The concept of surrealism, defined as “psychic automatism in its pure state [...] dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern,”¹² together with the emphasis on the role of dreams and unconsciousness became the basis of the Japanese movement¹³. However, as Wu indicates, from the beginnings the artists had their point of view on the idea that was transferred from abroad. What is significant, some of the passages of Breton’s *Manifestoes* (the first, written in 1924 and later on, the second one, written in 1929) were lost in translation¹⁴. Taking into consideration the Japanese commentaries from the early period of the existence of the idea in Japan¹⁵, it can be observed that Surrealism was perceived as “an attitude and action transcending the real world,” “a tool to [...] reach more complete reality” or a way of escaping reality¹⁶.

Except mentioned Junzaburō Nishiwaki, who brought the first surrealists’ text to Japan, also Katsue Kitasono¹⁷ spread the new idea on the East. In 1927, together with

11 It is worth noticing that as the beginnings of the current on the Japanese cinematic ground should be perceived the rapid development of Surrealism in the 1960s. Even though Kinugasa’s film, described in the further parts of this article, appeared in the 1920s, it had no followers before the war.

12 Breton, André., op.cit., p. 26.

13 Wu, Chinghsin., op.cit., p. 190.

14 Ibidem, p. 191.

15 For example the critique written by Güichi Minegishi or Koga Harue.

16 Ibidem.

17 Kitasono Katsue – “(1902–1978) was the best known Japanese poet-artist in Europe and the US during the middle half of the 20th century [...] Active from the mid-1920s as a pioneering avant-garde spirit, Kitasono made a priority of finding common ground with poets, artists and writers in Europe and the Americas. First entranced by Dadaism and Surrealism, he also thoroughly absorbed the ideas of Futurism,

poets Seichi Fujiwara, Kazuhiko Yamada and brothers Ueda – Toshio and Tamotsu, Kitasono established the first magazine promoting Japanese surrealism¹⁸. In monthly-published *Shōbi, majutsu, gakusetsu* (*Rose, magic, theory*) the reader could find the translations of the Western poetry and theoretical papers, as well as the original works of the Japanese authors. In the same year, Kitasono and Ueda brothers wrote *A Note—December 1927*¹⁹. That three-page text may be perceived as the first Japanese surrealist manifesto, as the authors stated that their primary objective of the further writings published in *SMG* would be Surrealism, understood as the only (possible) way to show “the progress of the senses.”²⁰ From the manifesto, it can also be learned that in the late 1920s the movement was divided into the people gathered around *SMG* and the group Fukuiku taru kafu yo (trans. O fragrant fireman) – which also had access to the French papers brought by professor Junzaburō Nishiwaki from his voyages. However, while Fukuiku remained loyal to Breton’s thoughts, *SMG* openly manifested that they will work on introducing “Japanese Surrealism.”²¹ It is worth mentioning that later on Kitasono also published, in the magazine *Bungei tanbi* (*Literary Aesthetics*), the Japanese translations of the poetry of Louis Aragon, André Breton, and Paul Éluard²² – continually aiming at the differences between the European Surrealism and the Japanese movement.

The ideas of surrealism spread in Japan, and it became recognizable also as a visual art movement, what happened after the Second Section Exhibition (Nikkaten) in 1929. There, a group of Japanese artists (such as Kongō Abe, Seiji Tōgō, and Harue Koga) exhibited a series of provocative works, considered by the critiques as “surreal.”²³ Japanese visual artists, except the written resources, were also influenced by Max Ernst²⁴. The second wave of migration of the surrealist ideas, tightly related to visual

Cubism, Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism [...] Kitasono edited and designed more than 500 magazines and poetry books, and created numerous covers for novels, trade journals and commercial magazines.” Retrieved from: N.a. “Kitasono Katue: Surrealist Poet.” *LACMA*. Pavilion for Japanese Art. 2013. Web. 30. Oct. 2017. <http://www.lacma.org/art/exhibition/kitasono-katue-surrealist-poet>.

18 Solt, John. *Shredding the Tapestry of Meaning: The Poetry and Poetics of Kitasono Katsue (1902–1978)*. Cambridge, London: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999, p. 51.

19 Ibidem, p. 55. The manifesto was concluded as follows: “We hailed surrealism’s development of artistic desire or the development of perceptive ability. Our baptized intellect, accepting no limits, received a technique that uses material which has passed through the intellect. We, by our fated poetic operation, are constructing a condition removed from the human. This condition reminds us of something similar to the indifference of technique [...] We will continue surrealism. We praise the virtue of saturation.” [trans. J. Solt].

20 Wu, Chinghsin, op.cit., p. 190.

21 Solt, John, op.cit., pp. 51–52.

22 Wu, Chinghsin, op.cit., p. 190.

23 Ibidem, p. 190.

24 Ibidem, p. 195.

arts, started in 1930. In that year Giichi Minegishi had established the group called Association des Artistes D'Avant-Garde Paris-Tokyo, which had its premises in Paris. Working together with European artists (among whom Joan Miró, André Masson and Jean Arp should be listed) and inviting to cooperation Breton himself, Minegishi created a strong bond between the movements from two far distant parts of the world²⁵. His actions resulted in preparing the exhibition Paris-Tokyo (Pari-Tōkyō Shinkō Bijutsu Ten) in 1932²⁶. The event was considered to be the most important one introducing European Surrealism to Japan²⁷. Another essential exhibition, curated by Tiroux Yamanaka, was displayed in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya and Kyoto in 1937²⁸. The Exhibition of Overseas Surrealist Works was one of the Yamanaka's ideas on how to pursue Japan-France reciprocal exchange²⁹. What is more, in 1936 he published a paper entitled *L'échange surréaliste*, describing the cooperation of two countries on the field of developing surrealist ideas³⁰. It is also worth indicating that Japanese Surrealism had still grown locally and as an individual practice, more than the national movement – what was, though, criticized by Yamanaka³¹. The local artists mixed Surrealism with regional cultural influences. For example, in Kyoto, the idea from France was influenced by Buddhism and the creators manifested an active interest in religious iconography, what they connected with psychoanalytic narratives³².

Migrating pictures. Surrealism and the beginnings of Japanese avant-garde film

Similarly to the manifestoes, poetry and visual arts, surrealist films were also brought to Japan by the passionate viewers and researchers, who encountered them during their travels. It should be pointed out that the number of available titles, among which appeared Man Ray's *The Starfish* (*L'Étoile de mer*, 1928) and *The Seashell and the Clergyman*

25 Ibidem, p. 196–197.

26 As Wu describes the exhibition: “[Minegishi] brought to Japan 116 works by 56 artists, including Miró, De Chirico, Ernst, Man Ray, Picasso, and Yves Tanguy. Many of these works were in a surrealist style and were seen by Japanese for the first time. The exhibition not only traveled to Tokyo, but also Osaka, Kyoto, Nagoya, Kanazawa, Kumamoto, and even Dalian in Japanese-occupied Manchuria.”

27 Ibidem, p. 196–197.

28 Munro, Majella., op. cit., p. 149.

29 Ibidem.

30 Ibidem. See: Yamanaka Tiroux. 1936. “The internationalisation of Surrealist thought: postscript to exchange.” *L'échange surréaliste*. Tokyo: Bon Shoten, pp. 77–86.

31 Ibidem, p. 150. Yamanaka wanted Surrealism to develop as international movement, bringing together the ideas of the practitioners from all over the world.

32 Ibidem, p. 150–151.

(*La Coquille et le Clergyman*, 1927) by Germaine Dulac³³, was relatively small. The films mentioned above were screened in public for the first time thanks to the painter Asahara Kiyotaka, who supported the event in the Faculty of the Imperial School of Fine Arts in Tokyo³⁴. As Felicity Gee observes, it resulted in the small audience having the opportunity to embrace the new current³⁵. As the author further indicates, even though the critiques commented these films, “the very idea of the foreign avant-garde film came to be dissected, misappropriated, and misunderstood by individuals who had perhaps never seen the films themselves.”³⁶ According to the mentioned problem of reduced availability of screenings, also the Japanese filmmakers were able to reach surrealist films mostly by the connections with their acquaintances, already working within surrealist groups³⁷. Following the analysis of Mark Schilling, who deliberates on the impact of Western surrealist films on Japanese audiovisual works, it can be concluded that opposed to the theoretical papers; the European pictures did not influence the Japanese movement as much as the written ideas did³⁸. For example, before the II World War few of the Buñuel films were recognizable on the Japanese ground. The political climate and the censorship of the early 1930s made impossible to screen in public the pictures as *An Andalusian Dog* (*Un chien andalou*, 1929). However, the post-war period was the time of new freedom and the Japanese audience received access to films as *Beauty and the Beast* (*La Belle et la Bête*, 1946) by Jean Cocteau³⁹ or *The Forgotten Ones* (*Los olvidados*, 1950) by Buñuel. Later on, the last one mentioned had a significant influence on the works of such artists as Nagisa Ōshima⁴⁰.

Searching for the first traces of Surrealism in Japanese film it is impossible to ignore Teinosuke Kinugasa's picture *Page of Madness* (*Kurutta IPPĒJI*, 1926). Even though, as James Peterson reminds – it is mostly considered by scholars as an isolated experiment, preceding the times of the rapid development of the interest in Surrealism after the II World War⁴¹, it brought new quality to Japanese cinematography.

33 Gee, Felicity. “Surrealist Legacies.” *A Companion to Luis Bunuel*. Ed. Rob Stone and Julian Daniel Gutierrez-Albilla. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2013, p. 572.

34 Munro, Majella., op.cit., p. 151.

35 Gee, Felicity., op.cit., p. 572.

36 Ibidem.

37 Ibidem, p. 573. For example, Hiroshi Teshigahara was introduced to the idea by his friend, a novelist Abe Kobo, with whom he later collaborated, working on, for example, *Otoshiana* (1962).

38 Schilling, Mark. “Japanising the Dark Side: Surrealism in Japanese Film,” *The Unsilvered Screen: Surrealism on Film*. Ed. Harper Graeme and Stone Rob. London, New York: Wallflower Press, 2007, p. 134.

39 Ibidem, p. 135.

40 Rosenbaum, Jonathan. *Goodbye Cinema, Hello Cinephilia: Film Culture in Transition*. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2010, p. 163.

41 Peterson, James. “A War of Utter Rebellion: Kinugasa's *Page of Madness* and the Japanese Avant-Garde of the 1920s.” *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Autumn, 1989), pp. 36–53.

Moreover, Kinugasa was mostly influenced by foreign films, not by the papers of the first Japanese surrealists. The filmmaker mentioned that the style of his picture was inspired by Robert Weine's *The Cabinet of Doctor's Caligari* (*Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*, 1920), as well as *La Roue* (1923) by Abel Gance⁴². The film, based on the scenario written by Yasunari Kawabata⁴³, depicts the story of a retired sailor, who decides to spend his time in a mental asylum to be closer to his ill wife. The viewer, following the retrospections, discovers the couple's past, as well as learns about the fantasies the husband caretaker has about the future happiness of his daughter⁴⁴. Kinugasa's picture refers to the literature of the avant-garde Shinkankaku group⁴⁵, regarding the style, narrative and stylistics⁴⁶. Describing the film, Peterson observes that:

[...] *Page of Madness* constantly shifts between narrative levels. Further, since so much of the relevant story information concerns events that occurred before the film's first scenes in the asylum, even very basic exposition is filtered through characters' memories that may be tainted by insanity. Accordingly, viewers are not only challenged to separate the "real" world of the primary story level from the level of character subjectivity, they must also distinguish between two types of subjective images: images of past events (memories) and images of imaginary events (fantasies, hallucinations, and dreams)⁴⁷.

The deconstruction of narrative codes is one of the innovations in the field of the film techniques that allows connecting Kinugasa's work to Surrealism. According to that, it is possible to decipher the film as opposed to commercial pictures from the silent era⁴⁸ (also Western ones, as Noël Burch emphasizes⁴⁹). It is significant that later on Kinugasa returned to the traditional narration, leaving behind his early experiments.

The next wave of the development of Surrealism in Japanese film had started no sooner than during the post-war period⁵⁰. Even though with more freedom appeared more opportunities for the filmmakers, it was still relatively difficult to work under the label of "an independent artist." As Schilling indicates, in 1952 on the Japanese ground there were only five independent production studios and that number

42 Schilling, Mark., op.cit., p. 134.

43 Peterson, James., op.cit., p. 37. In 1968 Kawabata won the Nobel Prize for his literary works.

44 Ibidem, p. 39.

45 Ibidem, p. 38. Shinkankaku group, founded by Riichi Yokomitsu and Yasunari Kawabata, released its own journal, entitled *Literary Age* (*Bungei Jidai*), in which experimented with various modernist styles. Especially, the members focused on surrealism and expressionism.

46 Ibidem, p. 39.

47 Ibidem, p. 41.

48 Ibidem, p. 49.

49 Burch, Noël. *To the Distant Observer: Form and Meaning in the Japanese Cinema*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979, pp. 124–139.

50 Schilling, Mark., op.cit., p. 135.

decreased to two in 1960⁵¹. However, the practice was also developing outside the studio system and the release of wartime control in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in the emergence of the experimental film movement.

It is significant that as one of the influential filmmakers, who referenced to surrealist ideas, was American-born artist and critic Donald Richie⁵². Under the inspiration of Maya Deren, Cocteau and Buñuel (he considered himself to be his disciple), Richie created his short experimental works while staying in Japan as an expat⁵³. Among his films can be found the titles such as *Wargames* (*Sensō gokko*, 1962), *Atami Blues* (*Atami burūsu*, 1962), *Boy with Cat* (*Neko to shōnen*, 1967), *Five Philosophical Fables* (*Itsutsu no tetsugakutei dōwa*, 1967) and *Cybele* (*Shibēru*, 1968)⁵⁴. In the mentioned pictures the filmmaker dealt with the controversial topics, among which the viewer can encounter cannibalism, masturbation, group sexual intercourse or animal sacrifice by children⁵⁵. In his works, Richie mostly gives up on the dialogues and uses fragmented narration, as well as rapid camera movements to underline the psychological states of the protagonists and to introduce the oneiric mood. In the interview conducted by Jasper Sharp, the filmmaker admitted that his pictures were purely aesthetic exercise inspired by Surrealism and he did not operate within any particular movement⁵⁶.

Moreover, also another figure that created the beginnings of Japanese avant-garde, considered his early films as “exercise in surrealism.”⁵⁷ Masao Adachi, before he contributed to the development of the pink film’s genre while working for Wakamatsu Productions and even before leaving Japan to pursue his ideological goals⁵⁸, marked his presence on Japanese underground scene⁵⁹. While his ten-minute *Rice Bowl* (*Wan*, 1962) was the poetic exploration of the rice ceremony, *The Holeless Vagina* (*Sain*, 1963) was labeled obscene and banned from screens in Japan⁶⁰. The picture revolves around the depictions of the sexual intercourses, mutilation and ritualization of the sexual

51 Ibidem, p. 135–136.

52 More about Donald Richie, see: Sharp, Jasper. *Historical Dictionary of Japanese Cinema*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2011, p. 206.

53 Schilling, Mark., op.cit., p. 136.

54 See: Sharp, Jasper. “A Donald Richie Film Anthology.” *Midnight Eye. Visions of Japanese Cinema* (2005): n. pag. Web. 15 Nov. 2017. The mentioned titles were released in 2004 under the title *A Donald Richie Film Anthology*. The does not include Richie’s films as: *Small Town Sunday* (1941), *A Sentimental Education* (1953), *Aoyama Kaidan* (1957), *Shu-e* (1958), and shorter films, for example *Life* (1965).

55 Idem. *Historical...*, op.cit., p. 206.

56 Idem. “Donald Richie.” *Midnight Eye. Visions of Japanese Cinema* (2003): n. pag. Web. 14 Nov. 2017.

57 Dixon, Wheeler. *The Exploding Eye: A Re-Visionary History of 1960s American Experimental Cinema*. New York: SUNY Press, 1997, p. 7. [quoting Donald Richie’s comment].

58 In 1974 Adachi took part in the Palestinian Revolution and served in the Japan Red Army.

59 Sharp, Jasper. “Masao Adachi.” *Midnight Eye. Visions of Japanese Cinema* (2007): n. pag. Web. 13 Nov. 2017.

60 Dixon, Wheeler., op.cit., p. 7.

act – all presented in the oneiric mood, deprived of the sense of time passing and without the underlining the connections between the events and protagonists.

The traces of the surrealist ideas and aesthetics, mostly dream symbolism, depicting everyday objects in mysterious, uncanny ways, non-linear narration and the use of shocking images can also be found in films (and theatrical plays) of Shūji Terayama. The master of Japanese avant-garde, whose art has been, so far, thoroughly described by Carol Fisher Sorgenfrei⁶¹ and Steven Ridgely⁶², started making references to Surrealism while performing with his theatre group Tenjō Sajiki. Then, he combined “elements of surrealism and dream-work, folk, culture, machines and Brecht-like theatrics of defamiliarisation, with a critique of family and national structures.”⁶³ Moreover, in his *Manifesto* published in 1975, Terayama postulated engaging the viewer in the play or screening to the extent that will make him the co-creator of the event. In other words, he wanted to interact with the viewer by depriving him of the feeling of safety, what should, according to the artist, lead to the profound reflection on the existence⁶⁴. It is worth underlining that transforming the viewer into the active creator was one of the Western surrealists’ postulate, as it was mentioned in the first part of this article. Terayama’s films, among which are *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* (*Tomato kecchappu kōtei*, 1970), *Throw Away Your Books, Rally in the Streets* (*Sho o suteyo machi e deyō*, 1971) and *Pastoral: To Die in the Country* (*Den-en ni shisu*, 1974), bring together the surrealist collages of scenes. What is more, they emphasize abstraction of real-life scenes, depicting them as a balance between the symbolism and realism. The mentioned titles also deconstruct the social and cultural order known to the viewer.

The echoes of Surrealism, mostly perceived as aesthetic, also appeared in the films of Hiroshi Teshigahara and Toshio Matsumoto. However, when the first one mentioned linked himself with post-war surrealist group Century Club (Seiki no kai)⁶⁵ and underlined his inspirations with the style of Dalí⁶⁶, Matsumoto perceived surrealism more as a way of creating the distorted, dream-like narration – not believing

61 See: Sorgenfrei, Carol F., *Unspeakable Acts: The Avant-garde Theatre of Terayama Shuji and Postwar Japan*. University of Hawaii Press: Honolulu, 2005.

62 See: Ridgely, Steven C., *Japanese Counterculture. The Antiestablishment Art of Terayama Shuji*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 2010.

63 McKnight, Anne. “Terayama Shūji.” *The Encyclopedia of Contemporary Japanese Culture*. Ed. Buckley Sandra. London, New York: Taylor & Francis, 2009, p. 518.

64 Terayama, Shūji. “Manifesto.” *The Drama Review*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (1975), pp. 84–85.

65 Spicer, Paul. “Japanese Cinema and Landscape.” *Cinema and Landscape*. Ed. Harper Graeme, Rayner Jonathan R. Bristol: Intellect Books, p. 238.

66 Here should be mentioned Teshigahara’s films that he created together with Abe Kōbō, an experimental writer. The references to the surrealist aesthetics can be found in the pictures such as *Woman in the Dunes* (*Suna no Onna*, 1964) and *The Face of Another* (*Tanin no Kao*, 1966).

in the revolutionary potential of the idea⁶⁷. Matsumoto's *Funeral Parade of Roses* (*Bara no soretsu*, 1969) – the first gay film on the Japanese ground, was a semi-documentary surrealistic examination of the everyday life of Tokyo sexual minorities in the 1960s.

Conclusion

Surrealism, the idea brought from France by curious writers, researchers and artists not only profoundly influenced Japanese cinema but also evolved, changed by the socio-cultural reality of the Eastern country. Even though it had been nearly forty years from its emergence on the Western ground, before the strong presence of the new movement and aesthetics developed in Japan, Surrealism became a great source of inspiration for the filmmakers. The authors connected to the beginnings of the Japanese avant-garde by referring to Surrealism received a new tool, opening the plethora of possibilities for their artistic pursuits.

In the next decades, Surrealism further developed and influenced not only the experimental filmmakers from 1970s and 1980s, such as Takahiko Iimura or Mako Idemitsu, but also appeared in popular cinema, mainly horrors and animation. The surrealist mood can be found, for instance, in Masaki Kobayashi's traditional ghost story *Kwaidan* (1964), *Black Cat* (*Kuroneko*, 1968) by Kaneto Shindo, Nobuhiko Obayashi's *House* (*Hausu*, 1977), as well as in newer horror films, such as Kiyoshi Kurosawa's *Cure* (*Kyua*, 1997). It is also Takashi Miike and Shinya Tsukamoto, who should be considered as the heirs of surrealist aesthetics. The pictures such as *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* (1989, dir. Shinya Tsukamoto) or *Visitor Q* (*Bijitā Q*, 2001, dir. Takashi Miike) can become the subjects of further research concerning the connection between Surrealism and body horror on the Japanese ground. The attention of the researchers could also be turned into the animated pictures of Satoshi Kon, the director of *Paprika* (*Papurika*, 2006) and Masaaki Yuasa, the author of *Mind Game* (2004).

67 Schilling, Mark., op.cit., p. 137.

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Summary

When in 1920s Surrealism appeared on the Japanese ground it was just after publishing the famous *Surrealists Manifesto* by André Breton. The creators of Surrealism, who brought attention to the power of unconsciousness and made the understanding of the role of dreams the central subject of their pursuits, firstly inspired the poets, painters and theorists. However, from the 1960s the aesthetics of Surrealism also became an essential source of inspiration for the avant-garde and experimental filmmakers. Following the goal stated by the Western artists, the avant-garde Japanese film directors present the life as ruled by absurd and grotesque situations, full of the mysterious atmosphere of the dream-like structured world. The references to Surrealism appeared in the works of such avant-garde artists as Teinosuke Kinugasa (early exception of the idea on the Japanese cinematic ground), Masao Adachi, Shūji Terayama, Hiroshi Teshigahara, Toshio Matsumoto and Donald Richie. The presented article depicts how Surrealism, perceived as movement and aesthetic, was transferred from one culture to another. The author focuses on the field of Japanese avant-garde and experimental film.