



## **Master of Arts Thesis**

### **Euroculture**

**Home University:** Universidad de Deusto, Donostia-San Sebastián (Spain)

**Host University:** Univerzita Palackého, Olomouc (Czech Republic)

**December 2009**

## **GO EAST**

**REPRESENTATIONS OF EUROPEAN ENCOUNTER WITH CONTEMPORARY  
JAPAN IN EUROPEAN CINEMA OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

**Submitted by:**

Leonie Anna Müßig  
Ludwig-Thoma Str. 19  
73529 Schwäbisch Gmünd  
Germany

**Supervised by:**

María Pilar Rodríguez  
(Universidad de Deusto)  
Ondřej Kučera  
(Univerzita Palackého)

**Ōsaka (Japan), 12/12/2009**

.....



## **MA Programme Euroculture Declaration**

I, Leonie Anna Müßig hereby declare that this thesis, entitled “Go East. Representations of European Encounter with Contemporary Japan in European Cinema of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, submitted as partial requirement for the MA Programme Euroculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within it of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the List of References.

I hereby also acknowledge that I was informed about the regulations pertaining to the assessment of the MA thesis Euroculture and about the general completion rules for the Master of Arts Programme Euroculture.

**Signed**

.....

**Date**

.....

## Table of contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. Methodology .....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 Film as a means of analysis for the perception and representation of culture .....	7
2.2 Choice of films.....	8
2.3 Film sequence protocol .....	9
2.4 Analytical approach .....	10
2.4.1 Artist, work and observer .....	10
2.4.2 Concepts of dealing with encounters between cultures .....	10
2.4.3 Approaches to the analysis of films .....	12
2.5 Further concepts.....	13
<b>I. Individual analysis .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>3. Kirschblüten – Hanami .....</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1 Overview .....	15
3.1.1 Basic Facts .....	15
3.1.2 Short summary .....	15
3.1.3 General structure.....	15
3.2 Analysis .....	16
3.2.1 West meets East .....	16
3.2.2 Of Strangers and Others.....	17
3.2.3 A little bit of Bavaria in Tōkyō and vice versa.....	19
3.2.4 Representation of male and female characters .....	21
3.2.5 Lost in translation? – The question of language .....	22
3.2.6 Life and death .....	24
<b>4. Stratosphere Girl .....</b>	<b>26</b>
4.1 Overview .....	26
4.1.1 Basic Facts .....	26
4.1.2 Short Summary .....	26
4.1.3 General Structure .....	26
4.2 Analysis .....	27
4.2.1 Where Europe and Japan meet .....	27
4.2.2 “That’s what they all look like” .....	30
4.2.3 Talking English, talking Japanese .....	31
4.2.4 At the borderline of the sex industry .....	32
4.2.5 The angel metaphor .....	33
4.2.6 Dream or Reality – Stratosphere Girl, a comic strip turned into a film?.....	36
<b>5. Wasabi .....</b>	<b>39</b>
5.1 Overview.....	39
5.1.1 Basic facts .....	39
5.1.2 Short summary .....	39
5.1.3 General structure.....	39

5.2 Analysis .....	40
5.2.1 A French ‘cop’ in Japan.....	40
5.2.2 Tradition and modernity .....	42
5.2.3 Yumi as the prototype of a Japanese girl.....	43
5.2.4 Yakuza – the Japanese mafia.....	43
5.2.5 Everything French .....	44
5.2.6 Asian cuisine.....	44
<b>II. Comparative analysis .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>6. Content and representation .....</b>	<b>47</b>
6.1 Clash of civilisations.....	47
6.2 Mobility .....	51
6.3 Orientalism.....	53
6.4 Popular culture .....	55
6.5 <i>Manga</i> – the Japanese comic strip .....	56
6.6 The issue of language .....	57
<b>7. Narration and dramaturgy .....</b>	<b>59</b>
7.1 Composition.....	59
7.2 Intertextuality.....	59
<b>8. Characters and protagonists .....</b>	<b>61</b>
8.1 The Other and the Stranger.....	61
8.2 Stereotypes.....	63
8.3 Women and Gender .....	65
<b>9. Aesthetics and composition.....</b>	<b>69</b>
9.1 Atmosphere.....	69
9.2 Fiction versus reality/dream.....	70
<b>10. Context.....</b>	<b>71</b>
10.1 Globalisation.....	71
10.2 Contemporary Japan .....	73
<b>11. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>74</b>
11.1 Japan – A country and culture far away from Europe? .....	74
11.2 Transculturality – A concept towards a universalistic culture?.....	76
11.3 Concluding thoughts .....	77
<b>12. Sources.....</b>	<b>79</b>
12.1 Books – Monographs .....	79
12.2 Articles, papers and essays .....	79
12.3 Reference works .....	82
12.4 Internet resources .....	82
12.5 Films .....	82
12.5.1 Films analysed .....	82
12.5.2 Other films referenced .....	83
12.6 List of illustrations .....	83
<b>13. Annex (Film analysis protocol).....</b>	<b>85</b>

## 1. Introduction

Art is influenced by and influences how we see and perceive the world. Since the invention of cinema more than 100 years ago and the development towards the multimedia-based society we live in nowadays, it was mainly pictures and film that shaped our image of other cultures. However, we are not only influenced by the images, but the images also mirror how we see the world. Therefore, film serves as a good medium to analyse how we perceive other cultures. More specifically it is the fictional cinema films that allow a thorough analysis of the representation of other cultures. Since they are ‘fictional’, they are the perceptions and images of a person or a group from another culture turned into actual moving pictures. Unlike documentaries for example, which usually general try to offer a more objective view.

As in recent years the interest in Asia and particularly East Asia and its culture has increased, so has the number of films that deal with those cultures. One of the most popular and widely known films in recent years that deals specifically with Westerners – in this case North Americans – coming to Japan has been Sofia Coppola’s Lost in Translation from 2003<sup>1</sup>, which won an Academy Award (Oscar®) and was nominated for another three. The present Master thesis, however, focuses on Europe. Its aim is to analyse the representation of Japan in European films, meaning hereby films that were produced in Europe and directed by a European film maker. Through a thorough analysis of three films of different genres and their comparison it will be analysed if there is a common view on Japan in the current European cinema. The aim of this thesis is not to analyse if the image of Japan created in the films is ‘correct’, but to analyse as objectively as possible **how** Japan is depicted. This task is not easy, since one can never get entirely rid of the cultural glasses through which we all see the world.

The films to be analysed are Kirschblüten – Hanami, Stratosphere Girl and Wasabi. The main approach taken for the analysis of the films is that of the concept of transculturality as proposed by Faulstich (see Faulstich 2008: 208). His approach is based on the concept of transculturality by Wolfgang Welsch. This concept claims that today’s cultures are very much interwoven and highly influenced by each other. A closer look at the different types of encounters between cultures and the concept of transculturality in particular will be given in the first chapter on methodology. The

---

<sup>1</sup> A reference of all films that are mentioned in the thesis can be found in the bibliography.

thesis is then split into two parts: in the first part each of the three films will be analysed individually, furthermore, some basic facts<sup>2</sup> will be provided, a short summary and the general structure of the film. This individual analysis is important to understand the aim and message of each film. In the second part of the thesis special attention will be paid to recurring topics, themes and motifs in all three films. Besides the concepts of focus decided on already in the beginning (like the Other, the Stranger, Orientalism, stereotypes, gender issues, linguistics, mobility, globalisation and the question of fiction versus reality), new motifs that came up during the analysis are added. A detailed film sequence protocol for each film that serves as a basis for the analysis can be found in the annex.

---

<sup>2</sup> All data for this information is taken from the Internet Movie Data Base on <http://www.imdb.com>.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Film as a means of analysis for the perception and representation of culture

Can film serve as a means to analyse how culture is represented and perceived by people? It can, at least in the field of art, which itself is a part of culture. There is still no general definition of neither art nor culture and the meaning of both terms has changed many times in the past. Culture nowadays has to be seen on two levels of meaning: On the one hand, culture refers to all inventions and creations by man (that includes art); on the other hand, culture refers to a group of people, who share certain values and patterns of thought (see Saal 2007: 22). Especially the second level of meaning will be important for this analysis and therefore is more thoroughly discussed in chapter 2.4. The first level of meaning has to be studied, since the object of investigation of the present thesis is the relatively new medium of film.<sup>3</sup>

There is no doubt that film is a medium of art, although Margit Dorn sees it as a medium with a dual character as both art and merchandise (see Dorn 2004: 219), a statement that is true for all kinds of cultural ‘products’. The monetary aspect plays an important role in most film productions, mainly expensive large-scale productions where the objective is to make as much profit as possible with the film. It thereby takes an influence on the artist, the director in this case, namely on what and how he presents the story he wants to tell. However, this aspect of the medium can be disregarded for the purpose of this analysis, since all three films (as most European productions) are rather small-scale productions compared to Hollywood films for example<sup>4</sup> and so it can be assumed that the economic aspect does not interfere too much with the artistic freedom of the director. James Monaco classifies film as part of the recording arts that provide a more direct link between the work of art and the observer than do the performance and representational arts (see Monaco 2006: 21). This means that film is more appropriate to give a realistic account of the world, since it shows the audience recorded moving pictures of real life people in real life surroundings, although those things have been staged especially for the film. Nevertheless, the spectators will keep in mind and will be influenced by what they have seen, and for the fact that film is also a mass medium, this

---

<sup>3</sup> The first public screening by the brothers Lumière in Paris in December 1895 is commonly identified as the film’s hour of birth.

<sup>4</sup> This does not mean that they have not been successful. On the contrary Wasabi and Kirschblüten-Hanami have been blockbusters in France and Germany respectively.

means that a considerable number of spectators will do so. “More than simply reflecting the environment, cinema actively participates in its configuration.” (Peckham 2007: 421) Therefore, film serves as a good means to show how other cultures are perceived and represented in a specific culture and at the same time have an influence on this culture. On the one hand, film shows the way in which cultures are represented by a director; on the other hand, film has an influence on the spectators’ perception of other cultures. A similar approach towards the analysis of cinema and television is used by German media scientist Lothar Mikos, who refers to film and cinema productions as communication media, which interact with their spectators (see Mikos 2008: 15 et seq.). Following his argument, the fictional cinema films analysed in the present thesis therefore are seen as a form of intercultural and transcultural communication that represent an interaction between different cultures.

## 2.2 Choice of films

As the title suggests, this thesis will analyse the European encounter with contemporary Japan by means of European cine films. Although his categorisation of the world and its cultures may be criticised, Samuel P. Huntington’s division of the world in so called ‘areas of culture’ serves as a starting point for the analysis. In his book *Clash of Civilizations* Huntington distinguishes seven current main areas of culture – thereby only referring to the second level of meaning of the term – to which he adds another two minor ones.<sup>5</sup> For this thesis two areas of culture are important: the Western and the Japanese. Here the first problem arises. On the one hand, we have Japan as the only country that makes up the Japanese area of culture, while on the other hand the Western area comprises of North America and Europe.<sup>6</sup> The focus in this thesis is on Europe. And now we already face the second problem: how to define Europe in this respect? A lot has been written about where the borders of Europe are, but still there is no final answer to this question. Since it is not a crucial issue for the analysis of the films, I decided to take as a reference point the United Nations’ definition of Europe, which excludes Turkey and includes Russia.<sup>7</sup> The latter will play an important role in the analysis of Stratosphere Girl.

---

<sup>5</sup> The Sinist, Japanese, Hinduist, Islamic, Western, Latin-American and African area of culture, furthermore, the Orthodox and Buddhist area of culture (see Huntington 2006: 56 et seq.).

<sup>6</sup> Huntington also mentions Latin-America as part of the Western area of culture, but at the same time admits that this part of the world now forms its own area of culture (see Huntington 2006: 61).

<sup>7</sup> For a complete list of countries see: <http://esa.un.org/unpp/definition.html#Europe>.

The three films to be analysed are:

- Kirschblüten – Hanami (Germany, France: 2008; Director: Doris Dörrie)
- Stratosphere Girl (Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, UK: 2004; Director: Matthias X. Oberg)
- Wasabi (France, Japan: 2001; Director: Gérard Krawczyk)

The objective of this choice was to have three films for the analysis that are as different in genre, plot and theme as possible, in order to be able to identify recurrent motifs in the representation of Japan in European cinema. As mentioned in the introduction, the selected films are produced in Europe and directed by a European film maker. Nevertheless it has to be pointed out that the films to be analysed are productions of Western European countries, so it may be questioned if they actually represent a European view on Japan and not just a Western European one. Furthermore, films produced in or after 2000 were chosen in order to narrow the range of films and to have a common ground in respect of the temporal context. The same applies to the storyline of the films that are all set in contemporary Japan. Moreover, none of the films are based on a literary artwork that is a (graphic) novel, short story or play; they are ‘original films’. This is important, since filmed literary artworks have to be analysed differently. So, on the one hand, the three films have some basic features in form in common, on the other hand, their genre and content are quite different, making them perfect objects of comparison and research for possible recurrent topics, themes and motifs.

### **2.3 Film sequence protocol**

Beforehand a detailed film sequence protocol of all three films has been drawn up, which served as the basis for the analysis. The main sources used for the structure of the analysis itself were the books on film analysis by Werner Faulstich, James Monaco, Helmut Korte and Lothar Mikos. The basic structure of the film analysis protocol contains the sequence number, starting time, name of sequence (divided in various subsequences), a brief description of the content, music/sound/dialogue and length of the sequence. However, some sequences might require a more detailed analysis. It has to be beared in mind that there are no determined factors to divide a film into sequences. Therefore, the sequences pointed out in the protocols are a rather subjective division of the author.

## 2.4 Analytical approach

### 2.4.1 Artist, work and observer

Before deciding on the kind of analysis with which to approach the films, it is important to state which side of the work we are looking at. James Monaco clarifies the relationship between artist, work and observer in a triangle. The artist is the one that produces the work that is consumed by the observer, whereas the potential relationship between artist and consumer still rarely comes about (see Monaco 2006: 27). The film analysis in this thesis approaches the work from the viewpoint of the observer. What effect do the films have on the observer and his perception of Japan? The difficult task is to look at the films as objectively as possible. The present analysis therefore does not claim a universal validity, nor does it represent a valid evidence of what the director really wanted to express and procure with his work. The latter is negligible for the analysis from the spectator's viewpoint, since on the one hand he sees what the director has selected and how he has decided to assemble it by means of mise-en-scène and montage, on the other hand, the director has no influence on how the spectator perceives it and if he comes to the conclusion that the director wanted.

Being from the same area of culture and thus having a similar cultural background as the majority of the people, who watched the films (supposedly a mainly European audience), it can be assumed that they are perceived similarly by the author of this thesis and other European observers – with the constraint that there might be minor differences in perception between spectators from different European nations, while the present thesis expresses the view of a German spectator. The same is true for other things that are likely to be overlooked by the author for various reasons. Siegfried Kracauer already points to the problem that we tend to ignore and overlook things, because we have already formed a ready-made view on them, or because they are common to us and therefore do not catch our attention (see Kracauer 1985: 86). Some of those 'hidden objects' might be brought forward through the camera in the films (as shown in Kirschblüten – Hanami), while others might be left unnoticed, even in a thorough analysis like the one present.

### 2.4.2 Concepts of dealing with encounters between cultures

Encounters between people of different cultures have led to the development of scientific ways to analyse and describe those encounters and to enable a peaceful

interaction and living together of the members of those cultures. Three of those concepts will be used for the analysis in the present thesis, namely the concepts of interculturalism, multiculturalism and transculturality. Alongside, the representation of other cultures and the representation of encounters between people from different cultures in the media have led to the emergence of theories of communication, like the international, intercultural or transcultural<sup>8</sup> communication. For this analysis, however, only the latter two are relevant.

In order to use a consistent definition of the concepts of interculturalism, multiculturalism and transculturality as a basis, the analysis of the films will abide by the definition of the terms given by Wolfgang Welsch. According to him **interculturalism** still thinks of cultures as separated from each other, – thereby following Johann Gottfried Herder’s traditional concept of culture as bowls that are defined by nation – yet interaction takes place (in the form of intercultural communication). **Multiculturalism** is defined by Welsch as the coexistence of various cultures inside a certain territory. Nevertheless this concept is also based on the traditional concept of culture (see Welsch 2000: 332 et seq.). Welsch proposes a new concept that stays abreast the changes in the globalised world with even more frequent and faster interaction and communication between members of different cultures: the concept of **transculturality**<sup>9</sup>. This concept claims that cultures today are mixed and interwoven to a high degree (see Welsch 1997: 18). Welsch emphasises the advantages of his approach to encounters between cultures by claiming that for the first time it is an exclusively ‘cultural’ approach, meaning that it is no longer limited by national or geographic boundaries (see Welsch 2000: 347). There are many more concepts that describe more or less the same phenomenon as Welsch’s transculturality. The concept that comes closest is Miquel Rodrigo’s concept of pluriculturalism (see Rodrigo 2003: 3 et seq.). However, Rodrigo sees pluriculturalism as a description of a situation, whereas Welsch’s concept of transculturality implies interaction. That means that it is not a mere description of a situation, but the process of interaction between cultures and thereby transformation of the same. Therefore, transculturality serves best for the film analysis,

---

<sup>8</sup> For this rather new theory on communication between cultures see e.g. Hepp 2006.

<sup>9</sup> In the following the term transculturality will be used, as in an English article by Welsch on the topic (see Welsch 1999), to distinguish it from the similar concept of transculturalism that has been originally defined by the South American scholar Fernando Ortiz in 1940 (see Cuccioletta 2001/02: 8).

since interaction between and transformation of people is exactly what makes a good story work.

Although the present film analysis focuses on the encounter of Europe and Japan and therefore first and foremost should be studied upon the aspect of interculturalism and transculturality, the concept of multiculturalism has to be included as well. As Europe will be treated in the thesis as one single territory, thereby ignoring the existing national borders between the different states of Europe, the concept of multiculturalism fits quite well, as it describes the living together of different cultures, normally in one state, in this case in a bigger territory, namely Europe. This will be especially important for the analysis of Stratosphere Girl, where girls from different European nations work together in Tōkyō.

Going back to the interrelation of globalisation and new concepts of culture, one can observe that people nowadays have access to up-to-date information from all around the world, not only through the ‘traditional’ mass media like newspaper, radio or television, but ever more important through internet. Does this mean that people today have a more differentiated view on the world and other cultures than before and does this possibly lead to the dissolution of the model of Us and Them that for so long has persisted in the formation of especially Europe’s identity? It will be interesting to analyse to what extent those developments are mirrored in cine films.

#### 2.4.3 Approaches to the analysis of films

Werner Faulstich distinguishes five different approaches for the analysis of films, according to their topics: in the context of the history of literature or film, in the biographic context of the director, in the sociological context, in the context of the film’s genre and in the transcultural context (see Faulstich 2008: 161). As mentioned previously this thesis deals with three totally different films, that consist of different genres and topics, are not based on a literary artwork and are the artistic products of three different directors. Therefore, the first four approaches cannot be applied to the intended analysis. Although the example given by Faulstich for the transcultural approach, viz. Babel, is a film that deals with several cultures and is set in various areas of culture (see Faulstich 2008: 211 et seq.)<sup>10</sup>, this approach can also be applied to the analysis of the three films mentioned. They all deal with the encounter of two areas of

---

<sup>10</sup> Besides Babel (2006) by Alejandro González Iñárritu, the film Crash (2004) by Paul Haggis is another prototype example for the transcultural film analysis.

culture, namely the European and the Japanese, and hold this encounter as a central part to their narrative. Hence, the main approach taken for the analysis of the films is that of the concept of transculturality as stated by Wolfgang Welsch. For a thorough analysis, however, the other concepts and theories mentioned before have to be taken into account. Furthermore, the analysis will be mainly a content based analysis and less a technical analysis, i.e. what is filmed will be more important than how it is filmed.

## 2.5 Further concepts

In the second part of the thesis a comparative analysis of the three films will be given, divided in five different subgroups of fields of analysis. Despite recurrent motifs and themes detected in the films in the course of the individual analysis, a special focus will be laid on the following concepts and ideas:

- the Other → The colonial past of Europe with all its features of Othering people from other countries and continents shaped for a very long time how Europe saw itself in the world (see: Delanty 2002; Said 2003). Therefore, the analysis aims to see if those categories are still applied when dealing with other cultures.
- the Stranger → The concept of the Stranger is important for the analysis of the European characters in the film, as they come to a foreign country and culture as complete strangers. It will be looked at how they deal with their situation and how they approach the new culture. If they open up to it or enclose themselves and by this draw back to the traditional concept of Us and Them.
- Orientalism → This concept emerged in colonial times. The main reference for this is Edward Said's book *Orientalism* that gives a critical reflection on the concept. Especially the representation of the oriental woman and her features according to Orientalism will be interesting for the analysis of the films.
- Stereotypes → This concept is in line with the other concepts mentioned above. People need to categorise in order to structure their environment. However, stereotypes often cross the line of a mere description and simplification and turn over to fixed and biased images. The thesis' aim is to filter out recurrent stereotypes in the three films, and furthermore, to compare if certain genres tend to use more stereotypes than others.
- Gender issues → As mentioned under Orientalism, the female characters are an important aspect when dealing with representations of the East. Therefore, the

representation of women in the films will be analysed more in detail, not only the Japanese women, but also the European ones.

- Language → When dealing with the encounter of different cultures the question of language becomes quite important. Moreover, the question of how the issue of language is represented in the film. Is there a common language for the characters to communicate? Do they speak the language of the other? Is the foreign language made understandable for the viewer through subtitles?
- Mobility → As for the fact that in all three films people change places and move from one area of culture to another (in this case it is always a European going to Japan), the concept of mobility is important for the analysis. That is not the only reason; the concept also has to be taken into account, since it brings about the concept of the Stranger.
- Globalisation → This aspect, which affects nearly every society and culture in the contemporary world, is closely linked to the concept of mobility, since it brings the same about. Furthermore, globalisation is an important aspect of the context all three films are set in.
- Fiction versus reality → Another aspect for analysis is the question as for how reliable the story told is. It is especially important in connection with the assumption that cine films have an influence on the shaping of the image of other cultures. It is also an interesting question for the more general view on film as a representation of reality.

## I. Individual analysis

### 3. Kirschblüten – Hanami

#### 3.1 Overview

##### 3.1.1 Basic Facts

**Director:** Doris Dörrie

**Writer:** Doris Dörrie (screenplay)

**Cast:** Elmar Wepper (Rudi Angermeier); Hannelore Elsner (Trudi Angermeier); Aya Irizuki (Yu); Maximilian Brückner (Karl Angermeier); Nadja Uhl (Franzi); Birgit Minichmayr (Karolin Angermeier); Felix Eitner (Klaus Angermeier); Floriane Daniel (Emma Angermeier)

**Country:** Germany; France

**Language:** German; English; Japanese

**Year:** 2008

**Length:** 127 min

**Genre:** Drama; Romance

##### 3.1.2 Short summary

Rudi, a local civil servant who has to work one more year until his retirement, lives with his wife Trudi in a quiet village in the Bavarian countryside. When Trudi learns that her husband has cancer she decides not to tell him and instead make a trip with him to visit two of their three children (Klaus and Karo) in Berlin. As the children are short of time for them, they make a trip to the Baltic Sea, where Trudi unexpectedly dies. Rudi, now alone, decides to visit the youngest son Karl who has been living in Tōkyō for five years. At first overstrained by the new surroundings, Rudi learns to cope with his new situation with the help of the young Japanese *butō* dancer Yu, whom he meets in a park. He realises the journey which his wife always wanted to make and subsequently learns more about his wife's 'secret life', culminating in his *butō* dance performance and death at Mount Fuji.<sup>11</sup>

##### 3.1.3 General structure

As many other films Kirschblüten – Hanami on the whole follows the five act structure of the Aristotelian drama (see Faulstich 2008: 84). In the sequences 1 to 14 the story is exposed with Trudi learning about her husband's illness and telling the spectator

---

<sup>11</sup> As this thesis focuses on the representation of Japan, the second half of the film, when Rudi travels to Japan, is of special interest, although the entire film has to be included for a thorough analysis.

about Rudi's everyday life. The sequences 15 to 30 raise the action by Rudi's and Trudi's trip to Berlin to visit their children. Conflicts inside the family are made clear and as a consequence of those conflicts Rudi and Trudi set off on a trip to the Baltic Sea. Sequence no. 31, where Trudi unexpectedly dies, marks the turning point in Rudi's life and the film. He learns to deal with his mourning not until he meets the young *butō* dancer Yu in sequence no. 63 and the action starts to fall. Sequences 63 to 89 show Rudi's change and how he learns more about his wife and himself. The final step is a trip together with Yu to Mount Fuji, a place where his wife always wanted to go and where he finally finds his peace and dies. His death in sequence no. 90 marks the catastrophe.

## 3.2 Analysis

### 3.2.1 West meets East

The film Kirschblüten – Hanami can be divided into two parts. In the first part it shows the quiet, well organised life of Trudi and Rudi in the Bavarian countryside. A first step beyond those borders is depicted by their journey to Berlin to visit two of their children. After his wife's death Rudi makes the second and biggest step alone: his journey to Japan. His journey makes up more than half of the film<sup>12</sup>. In a way paralysed at first by the overwhelming experience in the foreign country he gradually crosses the narrow borders of his old life and gets into the new surroundings. When he finally makes personal contact by talking to the young *butō*<sup>13</sup> dancer Yu (seq. 63), he has cleared the way for his own personal development. By opening up, he allows change to happen and actually begins to understand himself and his surroundings better, since “[o]ur experience of culture is not that of an isolated, self-sufficient being; it is achieved vitally through our complex interactions with a range of other people, in various relationships, scenes and settings” (Pickering 2001: 80). Therefore, the analysis of films like Kirschblüten – Hanami that deal with the issues of interculturalism and transculturality not only reflects how we see the world, but also how we see ourselves, especially in the interaction with other cultures. As will be shown in the following, both concepts of interculturalism and transculturality can be detected in Kirschblüten – Hanami. In fact the two protagonists Rudi and Yu are not that different from each other as it might seem in the first place.

---

<sup>12</sup> Starting at minute 47'57. For a detailed protocol of the film, see annex.

<sup>13</sup> An “avant-garde dance which originated in Japan” (Grendaité-Vosylienè 2008:96).

### 3.2.2 Of Strangers and Others

Both Yu and Rudi are outsiders in Japan. It is more obvious in the case of Rudi who comes as a foreigner to Japan. Back home in his village in the Bavarian countryside, with his ever identical daily routine, he was safe. He was very much rooted in his culture, environment and way of life. With the death of his wife (seq. 31) his world falls apart. He pushes himself even more by travelling to Japan, a country to which he comes as a total stranger and that represents a heavy contrast to his former life. The film shows in the first part why Rudi decides to leave his home and go on a journey to a country far away from his own. Sequence 6, where Rudi gets home from work and is welcomed by Trudi at home, and sequence 9, which shows both on the sofa in the living room and in bed, contrasts with sequence 33 that shows Rudi doing all those things alone. It is emphasised that Rudi not only has lost his wife, but also his safe home, where he was rooted. Therefore, he goes on the journey to Japan in order to find a new halt. The experience of having lost a beloved family member he shares with Yu. She copes with the loss of her mother by dancing *butō* in the park and ‘talking to her mother’ via a pink telephone. His wife also loved talking on the telephone, Rudi tells Yu during their first meeting in the park (seq. 63). Besides that, Trudi wanted to become a *butō* dancer herself in the past, as we learn in sequence 35.

The loss of his rootedness and his new situation as a stranger in a foreign country also puts into question Rudi’s identity. As mentioned earlier, his journey to Japan is a quest for a new halt, a new rootedness and in a way a new identity that he finds in the character of Yu. Bruter says that “[i]dentity is [...] understood as a network of feelings of belonging to, and exclusion from, human subgroups: a gender group, a given age group, a family, religion, race, community, nation, etc.” (Bruter 2004: 25). Applying this definition to the relationship of Rudi and Yu we can see that what connects them goes beyond that: Yu and Rudi are of opposite sex, from different cultures, have a different age, different social status, different religion, but they are linked by the feeling of not belonging, of being outsiders. Rudi’s character as a stranger in this respect is quite important, since “[s]trangers remind us of the arbitrary and fleeting character of these associations gathered around the idea of home, for by their presence they define an in-between, transitional stage between a home lost and another home not yet found” (Pickering 2001: 218).

Rudi shares the absence of a home with Yu. The 18-year-old Japanese girl lives in a tent made of blue plastic cover among other homeless people in a park in Tōkyō. Whereas Rudi lacks a notional home, Yu lacks a real home; she virtually lives at the margins of society. That means in contrast to Rudi, who, before his wife's death, led a normal life according to the standards of his culture, Yu does not lead a normal life. In this respect 'normal' means that nowadays only few nomadic cultures are left, where living in a tent would be the normal. It has to be taken into account, especially when dealing with encounters of very different cultures, that what is called 'normal' has always to be seen in the context of one culture. Or as Pickering put it: "You are or are not normal in respect of a particular category. Normal is not something you can simply be." (Pickering 2001: 177) Looking back to history the European identity has been defined by contrasting Us and Them, by defining the Other as everything that is different from the We, something that is not normal (see Delanty 2002: 47). The colonial past of Europe with all its features of Othering people from other countries and continents shaped for a very long time how Europe saw itself in the world (see: Delanty 2002; Said 2003). On the other hand, the Japanese society is said to have a very strong feeling of what is normal for them and what is not. Conformity with the social rules is very important and so Yu's life at the margins of society weighs even heavier.

Rudi's son Karl on the contrary seems fairly integrated in Japanese society. He meets most of the features applied to the stereotype of a Japanese businessman: always in a business suit and working long hours (even on the weekend). He has adapted to life in Japan, as seen in his apartment (seq. 40), but nevertheless seems afraid of doing something wrong, for example during the cremation ceremony (seq. 93). Rudi on the other hand approaches the new culture in an open manner, without being afraid of doing something wrong. He passes over with a smile the note of Yu in the hotel at Mount Fuji, when he accidentally enters the *tatami* mats room with slippers (seq. 80). In a way Yu understands Rudi better than his children do. When she discovers that Rudi is wearing his wife's clothes she gives an understanding nod (seq. 63), whereas his children consider it strange and do not understand his behaviour at all (seq. 96). As a conclusion it can be said that Yu and Rudi, besides all their differences, are much more similar than Rudi and Karl, although they are of same sex, belong to the same culture, religion and family. This is in line with what Welsch says about transculturality, where he claims that cultures are interwoven and that sometimes individuals have more in common with

people from another culture, than with other individuals from their own culture (see: Welsch 1999: w/o).

### 3.2.3 A little bit of Bavaria in Tōkyō and vice versa

The film Kirschblüten – Hanami plays with differences. Scenes shown in the first part in Germany re-appear (although in different ways) in the second part in Japan. In the following, some examples from the film will be given that illustrate existing similarities between Japanese and German/European culture and society.

One of the rather obvious similarities is the cremation of the dead. Although in Germany and most other European countries cremation is not the most common way of burial, in Kirschblüten – Hanami Trudi's body is cremated in Germany (seq. 32), as later on Rudi's body is cremated in Japan (seq. 93). Another rather obvious similarity is the habit of taking off one's shoes in the hall. It is depicted several times in the film: Right in the beginning, when Rudi gets home from work, he takes off his shoes and Trudi helps him to put on his slippers (seq. 4), while he has to do it himself after her death (seq. 33). When Rudi arrives in Japan, Karl reminds him to take off his shoes in the hall of the apartment. It seems that Karl considers this a 'typical' Japanese habit and therefore he has to remind his father of taking off his shoes (seq. 40). However, the viewer knows that Rudi is used to that, because of the preceding sequences. We see Yu taking off her shoes in front of her tent in the park at night in sequence 75. Finally, in sequence 80 a truly unique Japanese habit of taking off shoes is depicted, when Yu and Rudi enter the hotel room with *tatami* mats and Rudi forgets to take off his slippers.

Although maybe not detectable on the first viewing of the film, there are some more minor and more general similarities that are contrasted in the film. Homeless for example are shown to be existent in both countries. In the second part we learn that Yu lives as a homeless in a tent in the park. In the first part, even if only briefly, the film shows a homeless in Berlin searching a rubbish container at the end of sequence 24. Even such a detail as the ticket vending machine has its appearance in both parts of the film. First in sequence 24, where Rudi and Trudi try to buy a ticket for the suburban train in Berlin, later in sequence 64, where Yu buys a ticket for Rudi in Tōkyō. Another smaller detail is the lunchbox: It starts in sequence 4, where the spectator gets to know about Rudi's daily routine to eat at one o'clock his lunchbox that Trudi prepared for him, later in the film Rudi prepares a similar 'German' lunchbox for his son in Tōkyō (seq. 55). Sequence 67 shows Yu eating cabbage rolls from the lunchbox Rudi brought

her, and finally both of them get a Japanese lunchbox, called *o-bento*, on the train to Mount Fuji (seq. 78).



**Figure 1-4.** Rudi takes off his shoes back home in Bavaria. Rudi and Karl take off their shoes in Karl's apartment in Tōkyō. Yu takes off her shoes in her tent in the park. Rudi forgets to take off his slippers in the hotel's *tatami* mat room at Mount Fuji.



**Figure 5-8.** Rudi eats his lunch box at work in the office. Rudi prepares a lunch box for Karl in Tōkyō. Yu eats Rudi's cabbage rolls from a lunch box in the park. Rudi eats a Japanese lunch box in the train to Mount Fuji.

The mentioned rather specific similarities between the quiet Bavarian countryside life and the buzzing Tōkyō city life, as well as the more general similarities can very well be seen as a transcultural connection. Although similar traditions – like the cremation – are not the result of an interdependent influence of cultures, they are still transcultural, since they feature a common ground of both cultures. Transculturality in terms of cultures influencing each other can be seen in sequence 66, where Rudi

prepares cabbage rolls for dinner. The viewer knows that he likes them, because he ate cabbage rolls back home in Bavaria (seq. 6), now he prepares them in Japan and brings some of them to Yu in the park (seq. 67). More in the background, another mutual influence is referred to with Trudi's fascination for *butō* dance which she kept in secret, as Rudi did not think it proper. Indeed he accepts it after his wife's death and opens up to it, culminating in his own *butō* performance at the lake at Mount Fuji (seq. 90).

#### 3.2.4 Representation of male and female characters

Looking back in European history and its dealing with Asia, the Orient or the East, many authors show how images of people from those countries over time have been constructed as weak, passionate and feminine (see e.g. Ambjörnsson 1997: 83; Pickering 2001: 148; Said 2003: 201). The latter being the most important one, since femininity itself has been constructed as a stereotype for women. According to Pickering “[w]ithin Europe, women have also been constructed as the subjugated Other of their masterful male counterparts” (Pickering 2001: 61). By stereotyping the East as feminine, Orientalism applied at the same time the image of the subjugated Other to the East. However, Yu's character does not fit this image. In Kirschblüten – Hanami it is Rudi, the Western man, who is weak and in need of help and it is Yu, the ‘Asian’ woman, who is strong and helps him. Although the characters of the protagonists are opposite to the stereotypes created by Orientalism, they are not inversed in the film. No stereotypes are applied to Yu and Rudi, their characters are the way they are, due to the specific circumstances they live through.

At a closer look at the representation of men and women in the film it is striking that there is no male Japanese protagonist. The only male protagonist is Rudi. As for female protagonists there are two, in the first part it is Trudi and in the second part it is Yu. There is not even a Japanese supporting actor, whereas there are several Western supporting actors. The only ‘West-Eastern’ interaction takes place between an elder German widower and a young Japanese dancer. Yu's character is shown as independent and open-minded. Nevertheless the film contains also representations of the stereotypical Asian woman as constructed in Orientalism, as being submissive and sexually promiscuous. A first image is given in sequence 40 shortly after Rudi's arrival to Japan when he flips through an erotic *manga* book in Karl's apartment. The other two portrayals are given in sequences 46 and 48, which in the fictional time of the story happen during the second day of Rudi's stay in Japan. After having waited for Karl the

whole day in a bar, Rudi wanders the streets of nightlife Tōkyō and ends up in a table dance bar with young female Japanese dancers (seq. 46). Some time later the same evening, he is shown being soaped by two young naked Japanese women. Interestingly after this, no more images of that kind are shown. Having withdrawn from the outside world for a few days Rudi's next contact with Japanese culture is when he first sees Yu (seq. 61) on the fourth day of his journey and the next day talks to her (seq. 63).

### 3.2.5 Lost in translation? – The question of language

When analysing a film that deals with the interaction of people from different cultures and subsequently with different languages, the question of intercultural communication becomes crucial. Intercultural communication in this respect means not only the verbal communication, but the communication via gestures and symbols, as well. According to Rodrigo a person may experience a culture shock when confronted with another culture quite different to his own. Furthermore, he says “to overcome this culture shock one has to communicate”<sup>14</sup> (Rodrigo 2003: 7).

In Kirschblüten – Hanami, Rudi experiences some kind of culture shock shortly after his arrival to Japan and during the first three days stays most of the time inside the apartment. Although, his retreat from the world might be explained rather by the grieving over his wife's death, than by an actual culture shock. He starts opening up to the world again when he meets Yu, as already mentioned in the previous chapter. Their verbal communication – starting in sequence 63 – is noteworthy, since they communicate via the *lingua franca* English. Rudi's previous encounters with Japanese are different to that effect, that most of them speak only Japanese (e.g. waitress in the bar – seq. 44; naked girls – seq. 49) and Rudi speaks mostly German with them. Moreover, the film gives only subtitles for the English dialogues, but none for the Japanese ones. On the one hand, this distances Japan and its people from the viewer; on the other hand, it makes the viewer feel closer to Rudi, as they might feel as lost as he does. By using English the two protagonists are free from one of the most important cultural features, their own language. English in this case can be seen as a neutral means of communication, since it is a foreign language for both Yu and Rudi. Thanks to what is generally called Bad Simple English (BSE) both characters are able to communicate verbally. The film shows no grave misunderstandings between the two. There is only

---

<sup>14</sup> Original phrase: “Para superar este choque cultural hay que comunicarse.”

one scene that shows a verbal misunderstanding, however in a comical sense, when Rudi asks Yu for her name (seq. 64).

Yu's character is very important, since she is Rudi's 'key' to Japan and Japanese culture and at the same time she helps him to overcome his grief. Her character works as a link between the two cultures. In the literature of colonial times the Oriental woman does not speak for herself, but is rather spoken for by a Western man, as Said argues in the case of Flaubert for example (see Said 2003: 6). This behaviour emphasises the dominance of the West over the East. Kirschblüten – Hanami mirrors quite clearly that those times have passed. Yu is shown as an independent woman that is able to speak for herself and organise her life. The former role allocation mentioned by Said has even been turned to the contrary. Rudi is the one who needs protection, as he feels lost in the buzzing city of Tōkyō, where he can neither read nor speak. This fact makes him weak and helpless like a child that needs the assistance of an adult, who speaks for him (see Kramsch 2006: 33). Rudi is spoken for by Yu who is the one that buys him the train tickets and virtually speaks for him during their trip to Mount Fuji (seq. 79 et seq.).

Besides the verbal communication a look on the nonverbal communication has to be taken as well. Rudi at first feels lost in the big city he is not used to, and moreover, with a language he cannot understand and signs he cannot read, as he complains in sequence 50. Interestingly James Monaco places pictograms as used in Chinese or Japanese writing systems between Western languages and film (see Monaco 2006: 159). Karl gives Rudi a book "Point it" with images. Although Rudi's first contact and most of his communication with Yu is verbally, he uses the book for a better understanding and to support the verbal language (seq. 71). As mentioned before, for both Yu and Rudi, English is a foreign language, therefore the symbols in the book, specially designed for a global understanding, help them to express themselves better. Rudi uses the book once in a shop to buy cabbage, in this case also to overcome his difficulties with the foreign language, as he does not know the word in English.

However, on the one hand collective symbols, that means symbols that are understood by members of a certain culture or in general a larger group of people, are not that significant in the film. On the other hand, Yu and Rudi create their own personal symbol that is quite strong: the symbol of the two cabbage rolls. The viewer sees two cabbage rolls in the beginning of the film, when Trudi serves them to Rudi (seq. 6), in Tōkyō Rudi prepares cabbage rolls and serves two of them to Karl (seq. 66),

in the next sequence we see Yu in the park finishing eating and leaving two cabbage rolls in the lunch box while saying “Now happy” (seq. 67). The meaning of the symbol is intensified when in the same sequence Yu and Rudi curl up in Yu’s blue plastic cover, resembling two cabbage rolls. From that point onwards the two cabbage rolls become a symbol for Rudi and Trudi. A symbol on an interpersonal level between Yu and Rudi, but also a symbol for the viewer as a third person not involved in the fictional action of the film. At the end of the film Yu uses the “Point it” book to explain this symbol to Karl. In sequence no. 94 she shows him a picture of what probably are two spring rolls and tells him that his father is happy now. However, judging from the look Karl gives Yu, he does not understand what she wants to say.



**Figure 9-12.** Trudi serves Rudi cabbage rolls back home in Bavaria. Rudi serves Karl cabbage rolls in Tōkyō. Rudi and Yu ‘become’ cabbage rolls in Tōkyō. Yu tries to explain Karl the symbol of the cabbage rolls.

### 3.2.6 Life and death

Life and death are central motifs in Kirschblüten – Hanami, shown not only by the actual death of characters, but in a lot of symbols throughout the film. Doris Dörrie uses German or European motifs in the first part, while using Japanese motifs in the second part. In the first part in Germany it is the fly that recurrently shows the viewer that something might happen. Dörrie not only uses close-ups of flies<sup>15</sup>, but she makes the animal or more specifically the mayfly an important symbol for the family. Karo

<sup>15</sup> A technique and special feature that allows the film in general to draw the spectators attention to small things, he would not have noticed in normal life (see Kracauer 1985:77).

and Klaus ask their mother to recite the mayfly poem<sup>16</sup> she used to tell them when they were children.

*Halt ein, was willst du tun, sie morden? / Grausamer, weißt du, was du tust? / Ein Tag ist ihr zuteil geworden, / ein Tag des Leids, ein Tag der Lust. / Oh lass sie leben, lass sie schweben, / bis ihre Feierstunde schlug: / Ihr Himmel ist ein Eintagsleben, / ihr Paradies ein Abendflug.*

*Stop, what do you want to do, kill her? / You villain, you know what you do? / Only one day has been endowed her, / one day of suffering and lust. / Oh, let her living, let her flying / till the end when she has to die: / Her heaven lasts only for one day, / her paradise is her last flight.<sup>17</sup>*

While the flies are still around in the first part in Germany, they have disappeared in the second part in Japan, which is even remarked by Rudi (seq. 66). Yet another motif appears in the second part in Japan that also foreshadows death: the cherry blossoms that are also included in the original film title Kirschblüten – Hanami.<sup>18</sup> Cherry blossoms play an important role especially in Japan, as an epitome of our life and a sign for mortality. Comparable to the mayfly, the time of the cherry blossom passes quickly and “[i]ts habit of flowering before leafing signifies man born naked into the world” (Bruce-Mitford 2008: 95). This correlates with the *butō* dancing scene in sequence 26, which resembles the reversed life of a human being, from an elderly age back to childhood and finally birth. This is what happens to Rudi in the course of the film, he gets back to be young again. His insecurity and vulnerability, like a child that needs protection, has already been discussed in the chapter on language.

However, the cherry blossom is not only a symbol for death, but also for rebirth, as it will return the following year. This motif is also present in Kirschblüten – Hanami, it is through Yu that Rudi keeps on living or in a way is even reborn. At the end of the film she wears Rudi’s clothes and the spectator knows that she has been influenced and changed by the encounter with Rudi.

---

<sup>16</sup> The mayfly poem is actually a German poem from romanticism.

<sup>17</sup> The poem has been translated into English by the author of this thesis.

<sup>18</sup> *Kirschblüten*, meaning ‘cherry blossoms’, is not the correct translation for the Japanese word *hanami*, which literally means ‘cherry blossom viewing’, while ‘cherry blossom’ would be *sakura*. However, this ambiguity is not important for the analysis, as it is probably a matter of having a title that sounds well.

## 4. Stratosphere Girl

### 4.1 Overview

#### 4.1.1 Basic Facts

**Director:** Matthias X. Oberg

**Writer:** Matthias X. Oberg (writer)

**Cast:** Chloé Winkel (Angela); Jon Yang (Yamamoto); Rebecca R. Palmer (Rachel); Tuva Novotny (Monika); Tara Elders (Polly); Linda Steinhoff (Ella); Filip Peeters (Kruilman); Togo Igawa (Oshima); Peggy Jane de Schepper (Larissa); Alan Westaway (Scotty); Burt Kwouk (Papa-San)

**Country:** Netherlands; Germany; Italy; Switzerland; UK

**Language:** English; Dutch; Japanese

**Year:** 2004

**Length:** 90 min (Japan: 81 min)

**Genre:** Drama; Mystery

#### 4.1.2 Short Summary

Angela, an 18-year-old Belgian girl that has only recently graduated from school, decides to go on her first adventurous journey. A Japanese DJ (Yamamoto) she met at her graduation party offers her a job as a hostess in Tōkyō. Angela leaves for Japan the next day and quickly finds herself surrounded by a hostile environment in the “Golden Gate Club” (run by a Japanese man named Papa-san) with jealous girls from all over Europe and importunate Japanese customers. She literally pictures her story by drawing comic strips in her free time. As the story moves on she discovers a secret – another hostess (Larissa) has been missing and apparently been killed. Angela starts to investigate this mystery where a Western customer of the club (Kruilman) seems to play a crucial role. The more Angela finds out, the more dangerous her live becomes. Help seems to be within reach, when Yamamoto arrives in Tōkyō. Both spend a night together at a love hotel, but the next day Yamamoto and her drawings are gone. Angela seems to be trapped in a dangerous situation, but the story turns in the end, when she finds out what really happened to Larissa, who is still alive, and moreover, Angela meets Yamamoto again who offers her a contract to publish her drawings.

#### 4.1.3 General Structure

Stratosphere Girl, like Kirschblüten – Hanami, can be divided into the five acts of Aristotelian drama. Sequences 1 to 15 mark the exposition, where the viewer gets to know some basic facts about Angela. Furthermore, the encounter of Angela and

Yamamoto is shown which leads to Angela leaving for Japan. The action rises already in sequence 16 during the flight to Japan, where it becomes clear that something is going wrong, it is intensified by Angela's OFF-commentary. Sequences that show that Angela is in danger continue from that point onwards and are stronger the closer the story gets to the end. The turning point comes with the arrival of Yamamoto in Tōkyō (seq. 60), where the story could end well with Yamamoto and Angela being together. However, the story is retarded by Yamamoto having disappeared with Angela's drawings (seq. 68). Henceforth, the action rises again, leading the viewer to believe that it will end with a catastrophe, that is a bad ending. In sequence 76 the story unexpectedly turns and resolves all mysteries and pending questions, culminating in a happy ending for Angela by being offered a contract (seq. 77). Moreover, the last sequence (78) shows Angela back home in Belgium, where the film started off, leaving the viewer uncertain about the question if all was just a story that Angela invented and drew 'at home'.

## **4.2 Analysis**

### **4.2.1 Where Europe and Japan meet**

The "Golden Gate Club" in the amusement district Roppongi in Tōkyō serves as a kind of 'melting pot' for people from different countries. However, most of them do not melt, but rather keep up a hostile interaction, pointing out the differences between them and the others. The two main groups are, on the one hand, the group of European female hostesses (in this case including Russia) and, on the other hand, the Japanese male customers. Nevertheless, the hostesses' group is divided in itself between the Western and Northern European girls and what they call 'the Russians'. One could even go one step further as to say that the Western and Northern European girls do not accept Angela and exclude her from their group, which leaves Angela being a 'lonely hero'.

The action centres on the Western and Northern European girls and the protagonist Angela, who on her part is from Belgium. Her nationality is mentioned by herself in sequence 24 in a conversation with a Japanese customer. The nationality of some of the other girls is also mentioned, like Monika from Sweden (seq. 11), Ella from Norway (seq. 30) and Larissa from Russia (seq. 29). Since in their case the nationality of the fictional character is the same as that of the actresses, it can be assumed that this is true for the other characters as well, although their nationalities are never explicitly mentioned. Analogue this means that Angela's flatmate Rachel is from Great Britain,

her flatmate Polly from the Netherlands, Ingrid (another girl from the club) from Denmark, Tanya (one of “the Russian girls”) from Poland and the ‘villain’ Kruilman, like Angela, from Belgium. The nationalities of the characters are in so far important, as they explain the grouping of certain people in the film.

As mentioned already, the story centres on the Northern and Western European characters, therefore it is only their reasons for coming to Japan that are mentioned. Those, in fact, are quite similar. All five girls (namely Angela, Monika, Ella, Rachel and Polly) have come to Japan to look for adventure, an unusual experience and an independent life away from home. Being young and having no money they happily grasp the chance of working as hostesses in Tōkyō. Thus, they represent the stereotype of the young generation in “advanced capitalist societies” today, where according to Jale Erzen “a nomadic lifestyle becomes the norm, and the way nomads previously followed fresh pastures habitat is where there is a job” (Erzen 2001: 290).

Huntington’s concept of areas of culture can very well be adapted to the representation of different cultures in Stratosphere Girl. The story is set in the Japanese area of culture, where Europe (as part of the Western area of culture) and Russia (as part of the orthodox area of culture) are confronted not only with the surrounding area of culture, but with themselves as well. On the one hand, the film reflects transculturality by depicting the social networks all around the world, which is common nowadays mostly among young people. The Japanese DJ at the party in Belgium, knowing a Swedish woman working in Tōkyō and so on. They are all connected somehow. On the other hand, the film still maintains the view of the world and its cultures in terms of homogeneous separated bowls. Therefore, it can be said that its main approach to the representation of the encounter between cultures is that of interculturalism.

In the case of inner European encounters, that is to say between the Western and Northern European girls and the Central and Eastern European girls (mainly from Russia), those encounters are literally a clash of civilisations, like for example represented in the fight between Tanya and Angela in sequence 23. The film further illustrates the remaining conflicts between the old East and West block: in sequence 29 Polly, one of the Western European girls, refers to the other girls as “those Babushka sluts”. Interestingly enough not all of the girls are actually from Russia. Tanya, the girl that Angela has a fight with in the beginning, has to be from Poland, since she is talking Polish on her mobile phone when she enters the girl’s taxi in sequence 19. However,

this distinction is never made obvious to the spectator, who probably is not able to distinguish Polish from Russian and therefore follows the distinction the film's characters make between the Western European girls, "the Russians" and the Japanese.

In the case of the encounter with Japan, it is mainly the Japanese customers of the club, the girls have contact with. Those customers are represented as one homogeneous group, which is reflected by Monika's comment shortly before they enter the "Golden Gate Club": "Take a good look. That's what they all look like." (seq. 19) Besides the conversations with the customers at the club and the club owner Papa-san, the girls hardly have any contact with other Japanese people. The Japanese surroundings furthermore are represented as hostile and dangerous. Larissa, a Russian hostess from the club, has been missing for quite some time (seq. 25), no help is to be expected on the part of the state, as the girls are working illegally (seq. 47) and therefore they are totally dependent on others, who are in all cases powerful men whose real intentions are hidden (e.g. Papa-san, Yamamoto-san, Scotty and Kruilman).

The only notable contact of another kind is in sequence 17, where Angela accidentally falls against the bathroom wall and lands in the living room of a Japanese family. It is an interesting sequence, as it contrasts the European girls' cramped and rough-and-ready furnished shared flat with the tidy, rather traditional (since they are having dinner on a low table on the floor) middle-class Japanese family flat. Angela literally 'falling' into such a place at first glance refers to the rather thin and unstable walls of Japanese houses, upon a closer look the sequence shows that Angela lives outside the society she has come to. Her life is with a group of other illegally working girls from Europe and she spends most of the time in the night club. She is barely shown walking along the streets at daytime and never visiting any cultural sites, public buildings (like museums, temples etc.) or parks.

The contrast between different areas of culture in Stratosphere Girl can also be seen in which places of action are filmed and how they are filmed. The few sequences in Belgium, that is to say in the European area of culture, show a neat and clean house in the suburbs with garden. The sun is shining, everything seems bright and peaceful (seq. 1 + 2 and seq. 75 + 78). Even the sequences at the graduation party at night do not have any hostile atmosphere (seq. 6-11). They show young people dancing at a party in an old store house. The sequences are accompanied by electronic dance music in the ON. Whereas the sequences shot in Tōkyō are mostly shot at night, centre around the

'exotic' nightlife, the 'dark sides' of the big city and are always accompanied by a faint hum that cannot be distinguished whether it is in the ON or the OFF, or a somewhat louder sound which resembles spheric music. However, it has to be mentioned that the spheric music in the OFF is there from the beginning, indicating despite the peaceful shots of house and garden in the sunlight, that something is going to happen.

#### 4.2.2 "That's what they all look like"

Stratosphere Girl gives a very biased view of Japanese men. They are stereotyped from the beginning, as mentioned already in the previous chapter, by Monika saying "That's what they all look like" (seq. 19), while the camera shows a big group of Japanese business men walking along the street. The Japanese male customers of the "Golden Gate Club" are all stereotypical business men in black suits, although Sugimoto says that this kind of white collar workers only add up to a small part of the total workforce (see Sugimoto 2003: 94). However, since it is only them depicted in the film, it creates the impression that the majority of the Japanese workforce consists of business men, who moreover, after work like to go to establishments as the "Golden Gate Club". This stereotype is also mentioned by Monika's following comment in sequence 19: "The men here work very hard, and long hours. So, after work they want to be admired, flirt a little."

The film further creates an image of Japanese business men looking for adventure elsewhere, in a way cheating on their families. In sequence 31 in the background a Japanese man in a business suit is shown, who says goodbye to a woman and a child (supposedly his wife and daughter) and then leaves together with a group of other businessmen. From the men that were shown before in the "Golden Gate Club", this sequence makes the spectator believe that those men are now off to a similar establishment as customers.

An interesting minor character in the film is that of Papa-san, the owner of the club. On the one hand, he has a lot of power over the girls, he is the one who decides who can stay and who has to leave, furthermore, he orders them to the tables. On the other hand, his character is depicted as physically not powerful, for he is in a wheelchair. In the course of the film and the development of this minor character he is shown as a rather caring person, who is worried about his female employees, like for example in sequence 59, when Angela talks to him about Larissa. It is also his character's name that indicates a caring and soft personality. Papa-san could be seen as

a kind of father figure for the girls. In general names and their meanings or indications play an important role in Stratosphere Girl as we will see further on.

A crucial sequence in the depiction, or rather description, of what Japanese are like is the ‘bow scene’ in sequence 20. It pictures a classic intercultural misinterpretation of gestures. Rachel and Monika tell Angela in the lift that people bow in order to make themselves smaller. Whereas for Western cultures it is true that by bowing people make themselves smaller and show that they subordinate to the other person, in Japanese culture people bow to show respect for the other person (see Bruce-Mitford 2008: 334). Interestingly enough, throughout the film neither Angela nor any of the other girls is shown bowing in front of another person.

On the one hand, Stratosphere Girl stereotypes Japanese men, but, on the other hand, it deals differently with the Orientalist view of women. While in Orientalism Asia is represented primarily through submissive, sensual and weak women, who surrender themselves to the Western men, Stratosphere Girl inverts this image. Here it is the Western or European women, who are the sought-after objects of appetent and outspoken Japanese men. Despite the notion that Western women are stronger, more independent and self-determined, they are weak and unprotected in this situation, for they are working illegally in Japan. Some men, however, stand out from the generalised group of men. One is Kruilman, who is the only Western or European customer and apparently the most vicious one. The other is Yamamoto, whose role in the story is challenged at a point, but who turns out to be Angela’s ‘knight in shining armour’. It has further to be pointed out that Yamamoto is not in search of a European girl, but it is Angela that chases after him.

#### 4.2.3 Talking English, talking Japanese

Going back to the theme of representation of cultural and geographical frontiers in Stratosphere Girl, the issue of language also reflects the division into three areas of culture that clash in Tōkyō. While in the “Golden Gate Club“ English is the main language spoken, conversations between the customers or between the customers and Mama-san<sup>19</sup> (a female Japanese service employee at the club and possibly Papa-san’s wife) are in Japanese. Angela stays excluded from their conversations, while the spectator is able to follow the dialogue with the help of the subtitles and therefore has a

---

<sup>19</sup> She is never actually called Mama-san in the film, her name only appears in the credits.

head start in terms of knowledge compared to Angela, like in sequence 24 when the two Japanese customers argue whether Angela is still a virgin or not. Some of the girls know some basic Japanese (like the words for excuse me, thank you or please), as can be heard in sequence 17 ('bathroom scene') and sequence 37 ('noodle kitchen scene'). However, Angela does not speak one single word in Japanese throughout the whole film.

In Stratosphere Girl like in Kirschblüten – Hanami the *lingua franca* English again serves as the connecting language between different areas of culture on a broader scale and between people with different languages on a more specific scale. English is used in the club for the communication between European hostesses and Japanese customers and it is also used among the group of European girls, as all of them (at least the Western and Northern European girls) come from different countries and therefore speak different languages.

#### 4.2.4 At the borderline of the sex industry

The film is set in the Tōkyō nightclub district Roppongi, in a club that belongs to an entertainment business, called *mizu shōbai* in Japanese. This term refers to the work of hostesses in the bar and restaurant business, who “are expected to amuse male customers who eat and drink in these quarters before going home” (Sugimoto 2003: 162). This type of entertainment is a mixture of other form of entertainment existent in Japanese history: more specifically it combines “elements of the café culture of the 1920s and the elite world of the highly cultivated female entertainers known as *geisha*”, which both in their times involved occasional liaisons with customers (see Gordon 2003: 258). The term *mizu shōbai* is used by Yamamoto in sequence 11, when he first tells Angela about the hostess job. On mentioning it the drawing of a *geisha* is shown, followed by Angela’s question if the hostess job is like working as a *geisha*. Yamamoto then tells her that “foreign women cannot become *geishas*” (04’23). In this sequence the film plays with a pre-knowledge, spectators might have of Japan, which definitely includes the image of *geishas*, but then leaves the spectator still in the dark about what kind of work Angela is going to do. It turns out to be work far from any ‘exotic’ traditional Japanese entertainment, spectators might think of at first. Though the term *mizu shōbai* is only mentioned once in the whole film, and therefore is likely to be ignored or quickly forgotten by the spectator.

In Stratosphere Girl different kinds of *mizu shōbai* establishments are shown in sequence 22, where Angela goes looking for another place to work. On her way she encounters a club that is for “Japanese only” (13’45) and she is not even allowed to enter. Furthermore, a transvestite club, where Japanese men, dressed up as mermaids are fishing out coins from a small swimming pool that Japanese male customers are throwing in. Finally Angela comes along an establishment similar to the “Golden Gate Club”, called “Jungle Club”, where only black women are working.

It is to note that the *mizu shōbai* business is bordering on the sex industry (see Sugimoto 2003: 162). The thin line between hostess and prostitute is also discussed in the film. The Western and Northern European girls blame the Central and Eastern European girls or “the Russians” to offer ‘more service’ than needed, reflected by Polly’s already mentioned pejorative comment “those Babushka sluts”. The private party at Oshima’s house plays an important role in the girl’s balancing act between being hostesses or prostitutes. At the first party, where Larissa disappeared, she and Ella were kissing. According to Ella, they “knew exactly how far we could go without them thinking that we wanted sex” (48’37; sequence 51). Monika, who gives a slightly different account of the events of that evening in sequence 71, mainly blames Larissa for what happened, by saying “she was a real little whore at times” (67’55).

#### 4.2.5 The angel metaphor

In contrast to this allusion to the girls working at the borderline of the sex industry, the film clearly highlights Angela’s character as the still innocent and harmless girl, an angel so to say, which is primarily reflected by her very name. The same is true for her antagonist Kruilman, which sounds similar to the English “cruel man”. Angels can be found as messengers of God in Judaism, Christianity and Islam and esoteric circles in the Western world where they are believed to lend a hand (see Jäger 2002: 43). The European symbolism used in the depiction of Angela, as an angel is further developed when she receives a white dress with feathers as a gift from a customer by mail (seq. 35). The colour white in this case emphasises her character being depicted as an Angel and at the same time is a reference to her purity and virginity. The spectator has come to know in sequence 24 that Angela is still a virgin, although it cannot be taken for granted, as Angela plays with the customers wishes and with what Kristina Barancovaitė-Skindaravičienė calls the “socially preferred image of ‘virgin’ femininity” in Japanese society (Barancovaitė-Skindaravičienė 2009: 155).

The image of an innocent virgin becomes disordered already on her way back from the club that night, when Angela peeks over the shoulder of a Japanese business man on the train who is reading an erotic *manga* (seq. 27). In the following sequence the spectator is shown a short scene of Angela and Yamamoto in a completely white room, which at that point still does not make sense to the spectator. Angela comes closer to the question of sexuality in the hostesses' job the next morning, when Polly tells her that she makes a lot of money with "Mugendi"<sup>20</sup> the "Look into infinity" by allowing the customers to take a look at her genitals (seq. 29). Already on her regular first night in Tōkyō Angela starts playing with her image as a virgin Angel: in sequence 33 Angela is shown singing the Madonna song "Like a virgin" and in the following conversations with the customer starts "playing her Lolita trick" by pretending she is younger than 18. Her image is further damaged (from the outside) in sequence 45, where Angela, dressed in the white feather dress, encounters a piece of glass in her soup and leaves the club with blood running down her chin. This European symbolism portends to her loss of innocence and virginity. Increased by



**Figure 13-17.** Different images of Angela's character: Her first night at the "Golden Gate Club". Her angel image is literally destroyed by the piece of glass in her soup. The 'fallen angel' Angela in her white feather dress. Actual performance of the "Lolita trick", when Angela has to dress up as a school girl. Angela in a bright white love hotel room.

<sup>20</sup> Here there is a transcription error in the German language version and the German subtitle which call the look into infinity „Mugandi“, while Polly in the original English language version says „Mugendi“.

sequence 58, where she has to pack panties with half naked photos for Scotty. All leads finally to sequence 67, where Angela and Yamamoto make love in a bright white love hotel room.

Analysing the motif of virginity on a more symbolic level and having in mind the former portrayal of Orientalism in film by the colonisation of ‘virgin’ territories through Westerners (see Shohat 1997: 20 et seq.), we can conclude that Stratosphere Girl portrays the reverse ‘colonisation’. It is the Japanese man Yamamoto that gets together with the European girl Angela.

A motif already mentioned, is that of the character of Boris Pasternak’s novel *Lolita*. This motif has actually become an aspect of Japanese youth culture and “has greatly influenced Japanese manga and anime” (Onohara 2008: 221). Angela’s character is at the same time a representation of the European metaphor of the pure angel and innocent virgin on the one hand, while on the other hand, through her looks and behaviour (blond, straight-haired, big eyes, her ‘Lolita trick’), she represents the phenomenon of Japanese youth culture known as Lolita style (*rori*, in Japanese). However, when she is forced to perform what Onohara calls the Lolita complex (*roricon*) (see Onohara 2008: 221) of Japanese men – in this case the dressing up as a school girl in a pink uniform (seq. 59) – she refuses.

In sequence 43, where Kruilman is introduced, he denotes all girls as “Nordic elves”, that means as some kind of angels. When Angela enters he makes reference to the meaning of her name and states that she must have “descended from the Stratosphere” (38’42) (analogue to the divine providence of angels), thereupon naming her “The Stratosphere Girl”. The title of the film and its relation to the main character is insofar interesting, as there exists a story *manga* by Osamu Tezuka, called *Astro Boy*<sup>21</sup> that according to Sugimoto is internationally known (see Sugimoto 2003: 249). So it can be assumed that the title of the film makes reference to this *manga* – only by changing the sex of the protagonist – and by this could easily be the title of a very *manga* book. Which it is in a way, if we assume that the film is a *manga* drawn by Angela and turned into a real-picture film with constant insertions of the original cartoon, which we will see in the following chapter.

---

<sup>21</sup> The original Japanese title of this *manga* series that started in 1952 is *Tetsuwan atomu*.

#### 4.2.6 Dream or Reality – Stratosphere Girl, a comic strip turned into a film?

First of all we have to note, as Christian Metz writes for example, that realism is not the same as reality (see Metz 1991: 21). Fiction films never give a real account of a story or historical event. So the title of this chapter should rather be called “Dream or Realism?”. When looking at the story ‘inside’ the filmic narration, though, it is indeed the question of dream or reality. Are the events depicted in Stratosphere Girl only Angela’s imagination or did she – in her fictional surroundings – really experience those events? This question is important for the interpretation of the image of Japan in the film, because of the following: As seen beforehand, the film opposes different areas of culture. One could say it has a somewhat biased view on Japan. As mentioned in the chapter on methodology, this thesis’ aim is not to grasp the real intentions of the director, but how the film and its content affect the spectator. It is not clear until the end of the film if the story is imagined by Angela, truly experienced or a mixture of both. Most film theories suggest that the spectator believes in what is shown in a film. Not necessarily in terms of being ‘real’, but in terms of being credible. Therefore, it is to assume that the image of Japan conveyed in Stratosphere Girl shapes a spectator’s view on Japan. The film starts out quite normal and realistic and in its course becomes rather absurd and fantastic, which is developed until it culminates in the unexpected ending.

The question is, whether those implausible events and decisions made by Angela are there on purpose in Stratosphere Girl, in order to show or to give a hint to the spectator that the story told by Angela is not real. Metz says that “[t]he Plausible (the word says it sufficiently) is something that is not the true but does not seem too distant from the true” (Metz 1991: 249/250), being something that normally is applicable to most fiction films that although being usually invented stories, by their plausibility they convey an impression of truthfulness of the events shown. It is also to note that Angela literally tells her story to the spectator in two different ways: Firstly she explains her thoughts and the upcoming events with her OFF commentaries that accompany the story throughout the whole film. Secondly she draws what is going on and/or (as it is never clear to the spectator) what is going to happen (this indeed would indicate that the story is invented by Angela) and thus gives additional information to the viewer. Thereby the film spotlights similarities of two kinds of fiction telling, mentioned by Monaco, namely the amount of details and the first person narrator’s perspective (see Monaco 2006: 45). The two former mentioned aspects combined make the film akin to

a novel. Certainly, it is more appropriate to say ‘graphic novel’ in this case, a term that is often attributed to comic strips. Comic strips or graphic novels can be seen as a kind of intermediate form between novel and film, as it is impossible for the novel to describe all the surroundings and atmosphere, which can be seen in each picture of the comic strip. Film, however, goes a step beyond the graphic novel for its ability to not only depict things in real pictures, but also make them move.

In the case of Stratosphere Girl, the whole film is made partly like a comic strip, by the insertions of Angela’s drawings that cross-fade into real pictures. It is true, that those drawings can also represent what is called story-board in the film making business and describes the comic-like drawing of scenes before their actual shooting. However, in Stratosphere Girl they are part of the story and it is mentioned by Angela in the beginning, that she wants to become a graphic artist (seq. 24). She is the one that draws the comic strip, which is probably a *manga* and at the same time she is the protagonist of the same. In this respect it is interesting what Marion Grein says about *mangas* and their readers. According to her, surveys have shown that among the readership of *mangas*, in contrast to comic strips that are primarily read by boys, girls outnumber the male readers (see Grein 2002: 156). There are different types of *manga*, for example the erotic *manga*, which is depicted in Kirschblüten – Hanami and also in Stratosphere Girl. Considering the former mentioned angel metaphor and the development of Angela’s character in the course of the film, hints to another type of *manga*: namely the so-called *shōjo manga* for female adolescents, which deals with the topics of first love, virginity and first sexual experience (see Barancovaitė-Skindaravičienė 2009: 154).

*Manga*, the Japanese form of comic strips, is not only one kind of how to draw a comic strip, but has become a genre on its own that has been taken on by other countries outside Japan. We can suppose that Angela is familiar with the genre and that she had an interest in Japan, before she went there. In her room in Belgium an *origami* paper crane mobile can be seen in the background (seq. 2 and 75). Furthermore, she shows Yamamoto some (possibly self drawn) cards of female *manga* heroes in sequence 11, when she tells him that she has never been to Tōkyō, but has „some good friends over there“. Those things reflect a transcultural approach, as Angela apparently has dealt with Japanese culture and has been influenced to that extend, that she now draws a comic strip where she mixes those influences from Japanese culture – first and foremost the artistic phenomenon of *manga* – and her own history and cultural background – by

introducing not only conflicts between Europe and Japan, but also inner-European conflicts.

Nevertheless the film does not give an answer to whether the story is real or a mere invention of Angela. Towards the end of the story, Angela is shown in a short sequence sitting thoughtfully in her room in Belgium (at the beginning of sequence 75), before the story turns back to Japan. This is definitely a hint that the whole story is fictional and represents what Angela dreams of. Talking of dreams, a quick look shall be taken at Freud's theory of dreams and its representation in film that is criticised by Leslie Halpern who says that "[t]he general public, movie-goers, and filmmakers still embrace Freud's theory of dreams as repressed wishes, an eternal, universal condition to which we can all relate"; furthermore, those 'repressed wishes' consist of "aggression, violence, and sexual symbols" (Halpern 2003: 179). The same is true for the story in Stratosphere Girl, which follows this Freudian structure. The film represents the two main elements: sex and violence/death. And there are even more Freudian motifs, like the missing father figure, because Angela's father left the family. This missing father figure is replaced partly by her employer Papa-san, partly by her customer Kruilman. The latter is, on the one hand, the person who listens to her, she tells him about her father, family etc. (seq. 54 and 56), on the other hand, the spectator does not know what he is up to, since he has been introduced as Angela's antagonist (seq.s 41).

## 5. Wasabi

### 5.1 Overview

#### 5.1.1 Basic facts

**Director:** Gérard Krawczyk  
**Writer:** Luc Besson (writer)  
**Cast:** Jean Reno (Hubert Fiorentini); Ryoko Hirose (Yumi Yoshimido); Michel Muller (Maurice 'Momo'); Carole Bouquet (Sofia); Yoshi Oida (Takanawa)  
**Country:** France; Japan  
**Language:** French; Japanese  
**Year:** 2001  
**Length:** 94 min  
**Genre:** Action; Drama; Comedy; Crime; Thriller

#### 5.1.2 Short summary

The 47-year-old French police officer Hubert Fiorentini, known for his rather unusual work methods, is ordered by his superior to take a time-out. Shortly after, he comes to know about the death of his former love Miko; a Japanese woman with whom he had been in a short relationship 19 years ago, when he worked in Tōkyō for the French intelligence service, and who had left him unexpectedly. So Hubert travels to Japan for her burial. Back in Tōkyō he learns that he has a 19-year-old daughter Yumi, who inherited 200 million U.S. dollars from her mother. Apparently the money belongs to the Japanese mafia organisation Yakuza and they are after Yumi, who will have access to the money when she turns 20 in a few days. With the help of his former colleague Maurice (Momo), Hubert finds out more about Miko's death and her former life as a double agent for the Japanese intelligence service inside the Yakuza. When Yumi is kidnapped by the Yakuza boss Takanawa, Hubert is able to free her in a showdown inside a bank on Yumi's 20<sup>th</sup> birthday.

#### 5.1.3 General structure

The five acts structure of the Aristotelian drama can be applied to Wasabi just as to the other two films analysed, although the length and timely position of the acts are a little bit different, as is the whole structure of the film that consists of fewer, but longer sequences. The exposition is clearly in the first eight sequences of the film, which are set in France, where the spectator gets to know Hubert and a little bit about his past. The action starts to rise when Hubert travels to Japan in sequence 9. There he meets his

daughter, he did not know about until then. By and by more details are revealed, like the fact, that Miko was assassinated, Yumi inherits a lot of money, and the Yakuza is involved. Sequence 24 marks the turning point rather late, after more than two-thirds of the film. In this sequence Yumi is kidnapped by the Yakuza. The story is retarded by Hubert and Maurice travelling to Kyōto, to uncover the last secret of Miko (seq. 26 and 27). The showdown between Hubert and his antagonist, the Yakuza boss Takanawa, takes place in sequence 28, with Hubert shooting all Yakuza and freeing Yumi. Since the film is designed as a comedy it has a happy ending. However, the story of Hubert and Yumi is left open, as she stays in Japan, while he returns to France (seq. 30).

## 5.2 Analysis

### 5.2.1 A French 'cop' in Japan<sup>22</sup>

The spectator gets to know during the first sequences in France, that Hubert has already lived for some time in Japan, so the depiction of a culture shock is not very likely and in fact does not happen. However, 19 years have passed since Hubert's last stay in Japan. Taking the film's release in 2001 as the now and then of the fictional story, this would mean that Hubert had been to Japan in the early 1980s, a time of economic boom in Japan (see Gordon 2003: 291 et seq.) and much has changed in the country during those 19 years, but Hubert does not mention once any differences he might notice. It is not only the historical context of Japan then and now, which the film leaves out. The behaviour of Hubert and even more that of Maurice in Japan appear rather strange, given the fact that both have lived and worked in Japan. Maurice has been there for nearly twenty years, but does not speak a word of Japanese, nor does he seem to know how to behave properly. He appears to be insecure, for example, when he meets Yuki's aunt in sequence 16.

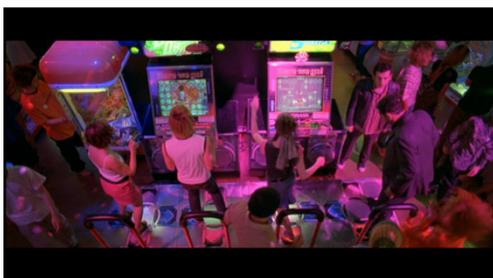
Surprisingly, most of the jokes and comical scenes in the comedy Wasabi are not based on the concept of a clash of cultures – which is a quite convenient concept to create comical scenes – but are rather 'ordinary' jokes that could have been included in a film set only in France or in a film set in any other culture as well. The only motif in those comical scenes related to Japan is the habit of bowing, and it has a comic function only twice. It can be seen in sequence 16, where Maurice asks Yumi's aunt if he could use the toilet, she apparently thinks he wants to leave and therefore bows, as then does

---

<sup>22</sup> Taken from the subtitle of the film's German version: Wasabi – Ein Bulle in Japan.

Maurice. The other one is the golf-scene in sequence 24, where the man holding the flags near the hole bows. A more interesting scene for analysis in this respect can be found in sequence 20, when Hubert meets Yuki's friends in the amusement arcade. Those young Japanese do not bow, but instead use different kinds of handshake, an originally Western form of greeting. This scene shows the spectator, that there are differences between the older and the younger generation, an issue that is represented in the film in various ways, as we will see in the following chapters.

Not only does the film leave out jokes about the culture clash, on the contrary, like *Kirschblüten – Hanami*, *Wasabi* contains similar scenes set in Europe and in Japan. The film begins with a scene in a night-club in Paris, where people are dancing (seq. 2). They are dressed stylishly, according to European perception, and supposedly all of them are full of age, i.e. over 18. A similar scene is shown in sequence 20 in an amusement arcade in Tōkyō, where Yumi and her friends (all of them still under age in Japan<sup>23</sup>) are dancing individually on machines. They are dressed like Yumi, thus quite colourful and combining different styles. For the European spectator they probably look and behave rather like 15-year-olds than 19-year-olds. This phenomenon will be analysed more in depth in chapter 5.2.3.



**Figure 18 and 19.** Nightlife entertainment in France and Japan.

**Figure 20 and 21.** Hubert, a cop that solves every problem, during a bank robbery by transvestites in Paris and a 'bank robbery' by the Yakuza in Tōkyō.

<sup>23</sup> According to Japanese law, one attains full age at 20.

A second scene with a French and a Japanese version is the bank scene: In sequence 6 Hubert overpowers a group of unprofessional bank robbers (two transvestites and a woman); while in sequence 28 he shoots the whole group of Yakuza inside the bank in Tōkyō. Both scenes serve to emphasize Hubert's superiority, not only in France and compared to rather weak opponents, but also in Japan, where he manages to eliminate even the dangerous mafia organization Yakuza.

The film Wasabi, as well as the previously analysed films, requires at least a basic knowledge of Japan. One of the rare scenes, where a specific Japanese cultural aspect serves to create a comical situation can be found in sequence 21. There Yumi and Hubert enter Miko's empty city apartment and Hubert asks Yumi if her mother has been on the 'Zen trip'. To understand this joke the spectator needs to have the previous information that one of the aspects of Zen is in fact emptiness.

#### 5.2.2 Tradition and modernity

The representation of Japan in Wasabi oscillates between the depiction of an old, traditional Japan and that of a young, modern Japan. This is in line with Kitamura's statement about the European "dualistic image" of Japan, "namely the view that tradition and modernization coexist in Japan" (Kitamura 2009: 73). One example for this coexistence is the crematorium scene (seq. 13) that portrays on the one hand the Japanese tradition of cremating the dead (Miko wears traditional white clothes for the dead) and in the presence of a Buddhist or Shinto priest. On the other hand, the influence of modern technology on Japanese culture is portrayed, firstly by the modern, plain interior of the crematorium and secondly by the simulcast of the cremation on a big TV screen, where Yumi and Hubert can watch the cremation. Another example is the place where Yumi lives with her aunt: a small, wooden, 'traditional' Japanese house with *tatami* mats. Though Yumi's room has a wooden floor and its interior is quite colourful, with a lot of posters and crammed with small figures. A third example can be found at the end of the film, where Hubert and Maurice travel to Kyōto (seq. 26 and 27). They go to the ancient Japanese capital by high-speed bullet train Shinkansen, which represents Japanese technological advancement. The scene in Kyōto is shot exclusively inside Kiyomizu temple at the top of a hill overlooking the city that represents the old, traditional and religious heritage of Japan.

### 5.2.3 Yumi as the prototype of a Japanese girl

The character of Hubert's daughter Yumi in Wasabi can be regarded as a depiction of the stereotypical 'young Japanese'. The young, fashionable, multicolour-dressed Japanese, which, besides high-tech, are the predominant image of modern Japan that is transmitted by the media in Europe. In addition to her habits, spending her free time at amusement arcades and being on the phone all the time, Yumi is presented as being psyched, a shopaholic, a carefree girl that does not stick to the rules (e.g. seq. 11, where Yumi puts her legs on the table in the lawyer's office) and despite being nearly 20, still behaves like a spoiled child. This last feature is, according to Kristina Barancovaitė-Skindaravičienė, a typical feature of Japanese women nowadays, the so called 'cuteness culture' (*kawaii*) that started in the 1970s. According to Barancovaitė-Skindaravičienė this behaviour was adopted to extend the carefree childhood and not have to follow the rather strict and traditional rules for adult women that still persist (see Barancovaitė-Skindaravičienė 2009: 151 et seq.). However, Yumi grows up in the course of the film. Not only by the fact that she attains full age, but because of the events (murder of her mother, meeting with her father) she becomes responsible and calms down. This is also reflected in her clothes. While she wears colourful and girlish clothes throughout the film, in the end at the airport she is dressed rather conservatively (seq. 30). Judging from Yumi's general clothing it appears strange that she goes shopping to an 'ordinary' big shopping centre in the Tōkyō district of Ginza (seq. 18), a district where mainly shops of international luxury brands can be found, rather than going to the 'centres of youth culture' like Shinjuku or Shibuya.

Wasabi draws in parts an orientalist image of women in Japan. Prostitution is mentioned various times during the film, yet mostly by Maurice: He tells Hubert that one can get a lot of prostitutes in Shinjuku (end of seq. 9) and later on comments to Takanawa that one could buy a lot of prostitutes with the money from the bank (beginning of seq. 28). According to Maurice's accounts, Tōkyō is a place for readily available and 'buyable' women. The prostitute issue appears allusively when Hubert and Yumi arrive at the hotel and the concierge asks for her age (seq. 19).

### 5.2.4 Yakuza – the Japanese mafia

Prostitution is also mentioned once by Yumi, when she tells Hubert that in order to get back to her father she will "sell" herself, until the whole Yakuza is after him (seq. 13). This commentary of Yuki makes the link between the Yakuza and the prostitution

business visible. The Yakuza is only mentioned explicitly at the end of the film by Maurice, who shows Hubert the photos of the Yakuza wedding party that Miko attended (seq. 25). Before this scene it is not explicitly mentioned that the men in black suits, who are after Yumi, belong to the Yakuza. This means that the film assumes that most of the spectators would recognise the men as members of the Yakuza. This is quite likely, given the fact that various popular films about the Yakuza have been released before Wasabi, in which the Yakuza has been depicted mostly as men in black suits that drive black Mercedes cars and fight with guns or swords. The most popular to mention in this respect is Black Rain from 1989.

#### 5.2.5 Everything French

A peculiarity that stands out in Wasabi, compared to the other two films already analysed, is the fact that the language of communication is only French. It is to note that the Japanese actors actually speak French and are not dubbed. Whereas it might be understandable that a concierge in a big international hotel (seq. 19) and Yumi know French, since her mother worked in the French embassy, it is harder to imagine that a customs officer at the airport might speak French fluently (seq. 9) or a bank employee (seq. 17). Other key characters in the film that also speak fluent French are superintendent Yasumoto, Yakuza boss Takanawa and lawyer Ishibashi.

Strikingly, Japanese is hardly used throughout the film. While an experience of culture shock is not used to create comical scenes, as mentioned in chapter 5.2.1, this is different in the case of language. Since no subtitles are provided, Japanese serves as a means to demonstrate the strangeness of the country. When Japanese is spoken in the film, it is within the context of swearing and people getting all excited about something, like the Japanese customs officer at the airport (seq. 9) or Yumi in the lawyer's office (seq. 11).

#### 5.2.6 Asian cuisine

The film shows Hubert in the beginning as being interested in Asian cuisine in the scene where he cooks for Sophia. Asian, and not Japanese, as the spring rolls he serves are originally from China, while the pork in caramel sauce is a Vietnamese dish. Therefore, it is even more astonishing, that Hubert apparently does not know the Japanese green horseradish *wasabi*, as it is shown in sequence 25, where Hubert eats the dip with his fingers and asks Maurice what it is. The fact that Hubert can eat the very

hot dip without any problems, serves to emphasize the strength and toughness of his character, as does the scene in the lawyer's office, where Hubert downs an entire jar of sake directly from the very container (seq. 11). Apart from sequence 25, the green dip that gave the film its title appears only twice: in the end, where Maurice gives Hubert a package of *wasabi* as farewell gift (seq. 30), and earlier in the film quite allusively, in the scene in Miko's city apartment, where the word '*wasabi*' is written in Japanese *hiragana* letters on a neon sign outside (seq. 21).

## II. Comparative analysis

In this second part, a comparative analysis<sup>24</sup> of the three films analysed individually in the first part will be given. It will be mainly looked for recurring topics, themes and motifs in all three films, but some differences between the films will also be shown. In his approach to the analysis of cinema and television productions, Lothar Mikos says that the focus of the analysis can be laid on five different fields, which are content and representation, narration and dramaturgy, characters and protagonists, aesthetics and composition, and finally the contexts (see Mikos 2008: 43). Given that the thesis' aim is to analyse the representation of European encounter with **contemporary** Japan, all five fields have to be taken into account. This approach is supported by Yoshiko Ikeda, a Japanese film analyst, who quotes John G. Cawelti, who “suggests that when analyzing symbols, stereotypes or representations, we need to pay attentions to the entire story, to other elements of the story as well as given symbols, stereotypes or representations themselves” (Ikeda 2009: 49). Therefore, the topics that are given a closer look in this second part are subdivided into the five fields of study mentioned by Mikos.

---

<sup>24</sup> Where examples from the films are given referring to the film analysis protocol, the respective film is indicated by a letter prior to the sequence number: H for Kirschblüten – Hanami, S for Stratosphere Girl and W for Wasabi.

## 6. Content and representation

### 6.1 Clash of civilisations

The title of this chapter is taken from the book of the same title by Samuel P. Huntington, who has already been mentioned in the part on methodology. His concept of a clash of cultures is interesting in many ways for the analysis of films that deal with the encounter between Europe and Asia. Europe, which always sees itself as a very diverse continent, is rivalled by Asia, a continent that Huntington refers to as a “melting pot of cultures” (see Huntington 2006: 351). Huntington predicts the decline of the West that had reached its economical zenith in the 1920s. Though, he does not indicate which part of the world will take the lead in the world, nor if the existent structure of the distribution of power will be maintained. For what has happened in recent years, a shift of power is very likely to happen and has even started to happen. Those changes that are happening, suggest that Asia will play an important role in the near future. However, in the films analysed in this thesis (which all have been released during the past decade) the West, or more specifically Europe, is still mostly represented as a global player. Especially Wasabi reflects a feeling of superiority towards Asia, since it takes a French police officer to eliminate part of the Japanese mafia Yakuza.

Generally speaking, the films do care more about Europe and Europeans than about Japan, its people and culture. The focus is more on personal conflicts and problems of the protagonists or between the Europeans shown in the film. Like for example Rudi’s difficulties to cope with his wife’s death in Kirschblüten – Hanami, the inner-European conflicts that arise between Eastern and Western European girls in Stratosphere Girl, or Hubert’s difficulties in Wasabi to approach his half-Japanese daughter Yumi, which he has not known for the past 19 years.

Hardly any of the films turns its attention to the ordinary life of contemporary Japanese society. The Japanese characters in the film or encounter of the European protagonists with Japanese life are always set in an unusual context. Yu in Kirschblüten – Hanami lives at the margins of society, Stratosphere Girl focuses on the habits of only a small group of Japanese, moreover, only men, and Wasabi shows a sprightly youngster in a rather unusual situation, chased by the Yakuza and meeting her father from France she has not known about. When the films give an insight into Japanese living space it is rather the depiction of a traditional way of living, than a depiction of

the current situation. In Kirschblüten – Hanami we see the inside of a Japanese style hotel, called *ryokan*, with *tatami* mats and *futon*. Although this type of accommodation is still very popular nowadays, it nevertheless is a special kind of living space. Karl's single apartment probably comes closest to the current type of a Japanese living space. Stratosphere Girl allows the spectator to get a short glimpse into the apartment of the girl's Japanese neighbours, with a traditional interior, when Angela accidentally crashes through the wall. The family is sitting on the *tatami* mat floor, eating on a small table, which does not reflect the living situation of the majority at the moment, as floor-level seating has already been replaced by chairs and tables in most households during the second half of the last century (see Gordon 2003: 257). Moreover, their apartment is side by side with the girl's apartment that is furnished entirely Western style. Yumi's aunt in Wasabi lives as well in a traditional, small, wooden and Japanese style furnished house with *tatami* mats on the floor. However, Yumi's room has no *tatami* mats and resembles more the room of a European adolescent. Miko's city apartment misses *tatami* mats, as well, but since all the furniture has been taken away, we cannot draw any conclusions about its interior.

Notwithstanding, all three films deal with the representation of tradition and modernity living side by side in Japan. This is represented for example through Yumi's room in the traditional house of her aunt that has already been mentioned. Furthermore, in the crematorium scene (seq. 13), where the Japanese tradition of burning the dead is combined with the latest technology. The tradition of cremation is also present in Kirschblüten – Hanami, where first Trudi in Germany and later Rudi in Japan are cremated. However, Rudi's cremation lacks any high-tech involvement, but depicts in detail a Japanese cremation ceremony, something that a foreigner hardly ever will experience. The film focuses on rather traditional elements of Japanese culture, like *hanami*, the cherry blossom viewing or the depiction of Mount Fuji, another important element of Japanese culture and art. Only a short look is given to the modern world and popular culture in the scene where Rudi gets lost in the amusement district. A complete contradictory view on Japan and its culture is represented in Stratosphere Girl. The film is mainly set in the amusement district and not necessarily the part where the youth culture meets or foreigners go to, but rather the 'dark side' of the amusement industry with its nightclubs and hostesses, called *mizu shōbai*.



**Figure 22-24.** Modern Japan, young Japanese and the accomodation of foreigners: Karl's apartment in Tōkyō. The European girls' crammed apartment, next to their Japanese neighbours. Yumi's teenager room inside the traditional house of her aunt.



**Figure 25-27.** Traditional Japan, elderly Japanese and an unusual accomodation: Yu's rather unusual accomodation in a tent among the homeless in the park. The traditional apartment of the European girls' Japanese neighbours. The traditional Japanese house of Yumi's aunt.

Another important aspect of the three films is the age of their European protagonists and Japanese main characters. Both, Kirschblüten – Hanami and Wasabi have an elder male European protagonist and a young Japanese female protagonist that are even the same age (Yu is 18, Yumi is 19). The situation is partly reverse in Stratosphere Girl; there the European protagonist Angela is a young girl of 18, while the Japanese protagonist (Yamamoto) – if he can be called a protagonist, since he is physically absent for great part of the film – is in his twenties. It is noteworthy that none of the girls is full of age according to Japanese law. The question is, if Angela would be actually allowed to work – apart from the fact that she is not, because she does not have a working permit, or if Yu is allowed to live all by herself on the street and is not taken into some state care institution for orphans or homeless.

Elderly people hardly ever appear in the films, and if they do, they are linked to a traditional depiction of Japan, be it clothes, habits or buildings. Examples are firstly, the

woman in the hotel at Mount Fuji in Kirschblüten – Hanami (H seq. 80); an elderly woman in a traditional Japanese guest house. Secondly, Papa-san's wife in Stratosphere Girl, also an elderly woman. Her physical appearance can be seen as the link between the old, traditional Japanese entertainment business, namely the *geishas*, and the modern entertainment business with 'normal' hostesses, that is to say girls without any special apprenticeship and from all over the world. While the Western girls working in the club wear mostly ordinary clothes, Papa-san's wife is dressed in a *kimono*, the traditional Japanese clothing, also worn by *geishas* (S seq. 24). Thirdly, there is the character of Yumi's aunt, an elderly woman also, dressed in a *kimono* and living in an old, traditional house (W seq. 16).

The dichotomy and clash of tradition and modernity can as well be seen in the setting of the films. The depiction of a buzzing city prevails in all of them. None of the films is mainly set in the country; all are primarily set in Tōkyō. The same is true for many other recent European and American films about Japan, such as Map of the Sounds of Tokyo, Tokyo!, Lost in Translation or the part of Babel set in Japan. Exceptions are trips to Mount Fuji in Kirschblüten – Hanami (H seq. 78-93) and to Kyōto in Wasabi (W seq. 26-27). It is striking that both of those trips are shown shortly before the end of the film, and moreover, are linked to the protagonists going back in the history of their own memory. Rudi traces back the dreams and unfulfilled wishes of his wife, while Hubert travels back to the place where he met Miko 19 years earlier.

The question of a clash of civilisations or more precisely a clash of Europe and Japan can be observed in the way the European visitors react to and interact with their Japanese surroundings, the culture and people. In this observation one has to keep in mind that "in modern, historically complex, open societies it is much more difficult to define the boundaries of any particular social group and the linguistic and **cultural identities** of its members" (Kramsch 2006: 66). However, there exists a difference between the cultural areas, as defined by Huntington, of Europe and Japan. While Europe has a long history of cultural exchange and migration, Japan, even nowadays, can still be seen as a comparatively homogeneous society. The issue of differences in physical appearance is broached in two of the films: Stratosphere Girl shows an incident that often happens in Europe when talking about Chinese, Japanese, Koreans etc.; they are all lumped together as equally looking Asians – like Monika in Stratosphere Girl does, when she says "That's what they all look like" – or are labelled as belonging to an

East Asian country that first comes to mind, nowadays usually China. The hostesses, being mostly blond-haired, tall girls, differ from the rather small and dark-haired people around them, mostly men, dressed in black suits. In Wasabi it is Yumi that sticks out of the Japanese crowd, or at least she thinks she does, because of the big nose she got from her European father.

Grouping and delimiting that group to others is an important feature of identity formation, but at the same time may lead to clashes between groups, by whatever common characteristic they might be defined. In the case of a clash of civilisations it is the cultural and in parts also national identity that defines a group. This can be observed best in Stratosphere Girl, where the group of European hostesses (with their own internal conflicts) is opposed to the group of Japanese customers. The European girls restrict themselves from their Japanese surroundings, although most of them have had intercultural experience in the past. Though, there is one conjunctive element between Japan and Europe shown in the film, that is popular culture. One example is music: Angela and Yamamoto meet at a party, where he works as a disc jockey (S seq. 4). Another example are *mangas*, a recurrent motif throughout the film that links Europe to Japan and in the end Yamamoto again is involved, when he gets the contract for Angela (S seq. 77). In Kirschblüten – Hanami on the other hand, Rudi is not at all a cosmopolitan character. He comes from rather homogeneous and traditionally coined surroundings. Nevertheless, he interacts with his Japanese surroundings by developing a friendship with Yu. This behaviour is in line with what Welsch said about transculturality as opposed to interculturalism, namely that a mere acceptance of the other person is not enough, but interaction is needed (see Welsch 2000: 345/346). In this respect the approach taken in Wasabi can also be seen as rather transcultural, since Hubert interacts with Yumi. Admittedly, no further interaction and understanding of the Japanese culture is shown in the film

## **6.2 Mobility**

The theme of mobility is a basic requirement for films that deal with the encounter of two or more areas of culture. Certainly, there exist different forms of mobility or different reasons that lead to mobility. One can roughly differentiate between forced and voluntary mobility. While the mobility of migrants is mostly a forced one, in search for work and better living conditions, tourists, expatriates, students and cosmopolitans have chosen their mobility voluntarily. Terry Eagleton gives an

additional notion to this, as he argues that migrants cannot return home, while cosmopolitans do not have a home where to return (see Eagleton 2001: 89).

Looking at the characters in the films analysed, it can be said that none of the protagonists is a migrant in that definition, since all of them left their home voluntarily. Rudi comes as a kind of tourist to Tōkyō, however, he cannot be regarded as a real tourist. In a way his character changes from a stable and rooted character to that of a cosmopolitan. He leaves his home, maybe knowingly that he will not return. As mentioned in the individual analysis of Kirschblüten – Hanami, Rudi's real home until then was not the place where he lived, but rather his wife he lived with. Through her death he lost his home and therefore becomes a cosmopolitan in Eagleton's definition. Moreover, Rudi has had links to the globalised world before, since his son Karl moved to Japan as an expatriate worker. A fact that is also mentioned by Hannam, Sheller and Urry, who talk about the “‘networked’ patterning of economic and social life” in today's world that also influences those who have not moved (see Hannam, Sheller, Urry 2006: 2). Hubert in Wasabi has worked in Tōkyō as an expatriate, but comes back, like Rudi, as a kind of tourist. Hubert for his part is not a real tourist, since he comes for the funeral of the woman he once loved. Hubert cannot be regarded neither as a cosmopolitan nor as a migrant, since he has a home where he returns to in the end. This term fits best to the character of Angela in Stratosphere Girl. She is a young girl that uses all available modern means of communication and worldwide networking, a feature of today's world that will be discussed in depth later on. With her trip to Japan she fulfils her dream of coming to that far away country and living on her own for the very first time – although it is not for sure that she actually makes this journey or only gives account of her dream by drawing a *manga*.

Another, older term to describe people that are constantly on the move is that of the nomad, which from its definition is closer to the term of migrant than that of cosmopolitan. However both terms fit to describe Angela's character, because on the one hand she is a cosmopolitan moving through the world voluntarily, on the other hand, she comes to Japan neither as a tourist, nor as a proper worker, but as some kind of migrant and starts working illegally. This modern form of nomadism is discussed by Jale Erzen, who states:

“The [‘traditional’] nomad creates a culture which transcribes the land onto the people, to their habits, their dress, songs, and mobile shelters. This is not a culture of

placelessness, rather a culture which constantly territorializes, as it moves, it spreads and grows many roots and creates a symbiosis of place.” (Erzen 2001: 291/292)

So to say the traditional nomad takes his culture with him, whereas the modern nomad loses parts of his culture and his identity and takes on features of the culture where he comes to. This is comprehensible, if we consider that traditional nomads normally move in a vast, uninhabited territory, whereas the modern nomad moves from an inhabited place, often with another culture, to another such place. There he gets in contact with the culture that is already there and so he adapts to this new culture and picks up features from this culture, but at the same time he influences the culture he came to, a process that is the essence of transculturality. In the ideal case this reciprocal influence takes place without major confrontation or conflict.

Besides the obvious necessity of mobility for the European characters in the film, there is also mobility for the Japanese characters. In Stratosphere Girl it is Yamamoto that moves through the world as a cosmopolitan. He, like Angela, is a prototype of the modern young generation that is used to constantly changing places and getting to know people from all over the world. He works as a disc jockey in Europe and at times returns to his home country Japan. The mobility of Yu’s character in Kirschblüten – Hanami is another one. It comes closer to the definition of traditional nomadism, since she is homeless and lives in a tent in the park on the one hand, but is not a migrant worker to a foreign country on the other hand. She does not cross borders, which due to the geographical situation of Japan is not possible anyway, but is a nomad in her own country.

### **6.3 Orientalism**

As already mentioned, Huntington sees the Japanese culture as an independent area of culture. He argues that the concept of Orientalism generalises an area of the world, namely Asia, that consists of quite different cultures. According to his division, Asia is made up of seven areas of culture (see Huntington 2006: 56 et seq.). Therefore, when analysing a film about Japan, special attention should be paid to the question, if Japan is represented as an independent culture or shown as a generalised oriental culture. Huntington’s definition of areas of culture comes closer to reality than does the division of the world into continents (that, as mentioned in the beginning, are never precise and seldom have clear borders). Nevertheless, in his book *Orientalism* Edward Said talks of the continent Asia as a whole that has been subject to Orientalism and

thereby has been orientalised, i.e. made the same, by Western scholars in the past. Nevertheless, when speaking about Asia he mainly refers to the countries of the ‘Near and Middle East’, rather than the ‘Far East’. The same goes for Anthony Pagden, when he states that most of the concepts, institutions, myths and even the religion Europe is based upon have their roots in Asia (see Pagden 2002: 35 et seq.). In this case Asia again means especially the Near East. It might be due to the size of the continent (if we leave out Russia), why Europeans claim to be Europeans and have something in common in contrast to Asia or other images of the Other. If we look at Asia, it is a much larger territory and therefore logically we will find more differences between the people, i.e. more cultures, which can be differentiated. There is no proper link to be found between Lebanon for example and Japan, but both are Asian countries.

An orientalist view of Japan cannot be detected in Kirschblüten – Hanami. According to Pickering “[t]he essentialised conception of the East in Orientalism operated with a particular regime of stereotypical figures and notions, the aim of which was to make Europe and Asia appear to be fundamentally different from each other” (Pickering 2001: 148). However, they are not so different from each other, as the film clearly shows in several scenes with more or less the same content in Germany and Japan. Therefore, it can be said that the film takes on a transcultural view of the world. By this meaning not only the interaction of different cultures, but also the mutual influences and thereby confirming Welsch who said that “[c]ultural conditions today are largely characterized by mixes and permeations” (Welsch 1999: w/o). It could be stated, however, that the film draws near a special kind of Orientalism towards the end, to wit the self-orientalising of Japan, or more precisely, the depiction of Japan as a unique culture in the world with strong traditional roots, how it is seen by some today and has throughout its history. A trend that Michiko Mae defines as a response (self-orientalisation towards a Japonocentrism) to the orientalisation by Eurocentrism (see Mae 2007: 291). It becomes manifest in Kirschblüten – Hanami in sequence 90, where Rudi dances *butō*, with his face painted white and dressed in his wife’s clothes with Mount Fuji in the background. This scene, besides the fact that *butō* is a relatively new dance and not traditional, conveys the impression to the spectator that the modern, buzzing city of Tōkyō with its many people, high buildings and lights is somewhat threatening, scary and chaotic, whereas the countryside near the well-known and for Japanese culture important Mount Fuji is the place where Rudi can come to rest.

Orientalism can be detected in the films inasmuch, as certain features are ascribed to the Japanese, which is in line with the stereotyping of Japanese (which will be discussed separately in the chapter on stereotypes). Orientalism in terms of making all Asia or even only East Asia the same with respect to culture, tradition and habits cannot be detected in neither of the films – the question of physical aspect has already been discussed in the previous chapters. A good example for this kind of orientalising can be found in Peter Greenaway's film The Pillow Book, where he mixes Japanese and Chinese culture and tradition in a very artistic, but also sensual film that like Stratosphere Girl deals notably with the theme of sexuality.

Although the analysed films are contemporary works, that is to say they do not explicitly deal with the question of colonialism, it is interesting to have in mind what Ella Shohat says about this kind of films; namely that they are always shot from the perspective of the colonizer, the Westerner or European for that matter (see Shohat 1997: 27). This statement is true for most of the contemporary films about Asia. The three films analysed have a European protagonist and are shot from his/her perspective. However they are not the only examples, others are Stupeur et tremblements (whereas this film is based on a novel), Lost in Translation, Der Fischer und seine Frau or Erleuchtung garantiert. The Pillow Book marks an intermediate form, since it contains two points of view (that from an Asian woman and a Western man), while Der rote Punkt, although being a European production, is shot from the perspective of the Japanese protagonist. However, the film is opposed to the films analysed, since it tells the story of a young Japanese girl coming to Europe.

#### **6.4 Popular culture**

As already mentioned, the films focus very much on Tōkyō and are set for the most part in the Japanese capital and not only this, but moreover, in famous amusement, night-life and shopping districts: Kirschblüten – Hanami contains a sequence in Shinjuku, as does Wasabi that additionally contains sequences set in Ginza, while Stratosphere Girl is for the most part set in Roppongi. The rural areas of Japan are not shown, creating an image or rather amplifying an already existing stereotype of Japan being an overcrowded country with large cities, skyscrapers, lights, technically very advanced etc. The depicted facets of the city also bring forth an amplification of existing images and stereotypes, especially about Japan's mass and popular culture. Sugimoto highlights four "obvious phenomena" in this mass culture: the great quantity

of (also adult) Japanese that read *manga*, the obsession with the *pachinko* pinball game, *karaoke* singing and the commercialisation of love and sex (see Sugimoto 2003: 249).

The reading of *manga* (especially erotic *manga*) is shown in Kirschblüten – Hanami and Stratosphere Girl, while it even plays a central role in the latter (H seq. 40 and S seq. 27). Another specifically Japanese phenomenon that plays a central role in Kirschblüten – Hanami is *butō* dancing. Admittedly *butō* was founded after the Second World War, so it must be considered a modern invention based on traditional dancing. Nevertheless, in general for what and how it is depicted, Kirschblüten – Hanami represents a more elite approach to Japanese culture, than do the other two films. Stratosphere Girl represents most of the aspects of mass culture mentioned by Sugimoto: *manga*, *karaoke* and the sex industry. Although *pachinko* is not shown in the film, there is a scene in a gaming parlour or amusement arcade, where Ella and Angela are taking pictures (S seq. 30). An amusement arcade is also shown in Wasabi (W seq. 20). On the whole, the technical entertainment industry in Japan plays a role in the two films that focus more on the contemporary mass culture. The last phenomenon mentioned by Sugimoto, the commercialisation of love and sex is featured in all films. Again it is central to Stratosphere Girl that is set in the surroundings of the *mizu shōbai* business. The phenomenon is indirectly picked up in Wasabi, where it is mentioned various times by Yumi and Maurice (S seq. 9, 12,13, 28) and even Kirschblüten – Hanami shows images from that business that stand in opposition to the sequences set in the park in Tōkyō (H seq. 46 and 48).

### **6.5 Manga – the Japanese comic strip**

According to Werner Faulstich, the storyboard is expendable for the analysis of the film, since it is part of the pre-production process, like the screen-play and shooting schedule (see Faulstich 2008: 65). However, in the case of Stratosphere Girl the very storyboard is a key element of the film. A storyboard, that is the illustration of certain scenes by plotted drafts, is comparable to a comic strip, or its Japanese version of *manga*. In Stratosphere Girl the real life pictures consistently cross-fade with Angela's drawings, thereby enabling a glance at the pre-production process of the film (if the drawings are seen as a storyboard) and adding to the filmed story itself (if the drawings are seen as a *manga*). *Mangas* also have a moving counterpart, called *anime*, which is a Japanese form of cartoon. In the film, however, the *manga* drawings do not turn into anime, but 'real' pictures, while the action, montage and language (Angela's OFF-

commentary throughout the film) is geared to the *manga* format. The art form of *manga* could be roughly described as a Japanese version of comic strips. The term was first used in 1814 by the woodcarving artist Katsushika Hokusai (see Grein 2002: 135). Although there is in no obvious relation the artist Hokusai appears in Kirschblüten – Hanami in sequence 37, where Rudi flips through a book with the title *One Hundred Views of Mt. Fuji* that contains woodcarvings of this artist.

Hepp sees *mangas* as an example for transcultural communication, pointing out that the Japanese word refers to comic strips in general, whereas it is used in Europe to describe the specific Japanese form of comic strips with their special features of being read ‘from back to front’ and right to left (see Hepp 2006: 7). On the one hand, he argues that *manga* has become an independent form of art known around the world; on the other hand, he says that *mangas* were inspired by the American comic strips in the 1940s. It is debatable to what extent today’s *mangas* are based on Western influence and to what extent they are based on the Japanese tradition of combining writing and painting, as Haruhiko Fujita points out for example (see Fujita 2008: 88). Nevertheless, *mangas* are definitely an example of transculturality and transcultural communication, given the fact that they have become popular in countries outside Japan.

## 6.6 The issue of language

How communication is represented in films about the encounter of people from different cultures and with different languages, reveals much about how the other culture is seen and dealt with and how the own culture is seen in opposition to that. The issue of language in the three films analysed is especially important, since none of the European protagonists knows Japanese. They either communicate in their own European language (Wasabi), via the *lingua franca* English (Stratosphere Girl, Kirschblüten – Hanami) or they are spoken for (Kirschblüten – Hanami).

Apparently the Japanese language is considered too difficult for people to learn. Rudi in Kirschblüten – Hanami cannot be expected to know Japanese, because of the social environment he lived in Germany and since the trip to Japan was rather spontaneous. Thus, it is much more striking that he can speak English quite well. His son Karl, although having lived in Japan for five years, only knows some words in Japanese. It is the same in Stratosphere Girl, where some of the girls do speak some basic words, while Angela does not know even one word. Nevertheless, there is always the *lingua franca* English that enables the protagonists to communicate with their

Japanese speaking surroundings and, in the case of Stratosphere Girl, to communicate among each other. Huntington calls a *lingua franca* a method to overcome cultural and linguistic differences, but points out that it is not a method to abolish them (see Huntington 2006: 85). He further sees the *lingua franca* as a means for communication that does not shape identity or community. However, exactly this is the case in Stratosphere Girl. There are the group of Japanese customers talking in Japanese, the group of the ‘Russian’ girls (including Central Europeans) that communicate in Russian and the group of Western European girls that communicate in English. Although English is the mother tongue for only one of the girls in the latter group (namely Rachel, who is from Great Britain), it is the language that constitutes their group and enables communication among them and with the other groups.

A different situation is shown in Wasabi, where the predominant language throughout the film is French. On the one hand, it is striking that neither Hubert nor Maurice speak any Japanese although both have lived and worked in Japan for quite a time. On the other hand, it is also striking that the film conveys the message that French is a widely-used language in Japan. Not once English is used in the communication between the French protagonist and the Japanese. All Japanese characters speak a more or less fluent French: Hubert’s daughter Yumi, lawyer Ishibashi-san, the customs officer at the airport, the bank employee, superintendent Yasumoto and the Yakuza boss Takanawa.

Bearing in mind that language has been a symbol of independence and distinctiveness during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the nation-states emerged (see Mae 2007: 294), this means that the French film unlike the other two in the issue of language still draws on a nation-state concept of the world;<sup>25</sup> whereas the German production Kirschblüten – Hanami and the European production Stratosphere Girl depict a more transcultural approach in the issue of language. Looking at those two films with respect to Mae’s statement, it can be concluded that through transculturality language barriers, and therewith national borders dissolve.

---

<sup>25</sup> What is striking, is the fact that the original version of the film is not dubbed at all, but the Japanese actors actually speak French. In another recent French film about Japan – Inju, la bête dans l’ombre – the language of communication is also only French in the original version.

## 7. Narration and dramaturgy

### 7.1 Composition

The composition of all three films follows, as shown in the individual analysis, the five act structure of the Aristotelian drama, while they differ significantly in their content. The main theme in Kirschblüten – Hanami is that of the loss of a beloved one, while Stratosphere Girl broaches the issue of coming-of-age and Wasabi centres on a father-daughter relationship.

Besides the themes the films deal with, also the way in how they transmit the content differs. Kirschblüten – Hanami uses to a great extent the visual aspect of film. It shows similar scenes in Germany and Japan, thereby pointing out the similarities between the two countries. Thus, it is no surprise that the film is divided into two parts, the first set in Germany and the second set in Japan. A different way to tell a story can be seen in Stratosphere Girl, or can rather be heard. Besides the visual depiction of certain symbols – like the angel metaphor – throughout the film an OFF-commentary of the protagonist accompanies and supports the story. It focuses more on the personal story of the protagonist, than it intends to compare Europe and Japan, therefore there are only few scenes in the beginning and in the end that are set in Belgium. Moreover, due to the way that those scenes are filmed, they rather contrast the two countries than they show similarities. In this respect Wasabi, as discussed in the individual analysis, shows similarities between France and Japan, although only the first 17 minutes are set in France. The importance of visual and spoken content is more or less equal, but in Wasabi music additionally plays an important role, to support the mood of certain scenes. For example, every time Hubert thinks of or talks about Miko and Japan, Japanese music is heard.

### 7.2 Intertextuality

It is a characteristic trait of the medium of film that it often refers to other films or literary artworks. However, it is significant that two of the films analysed are linked to other films and artworks that deal with Japan through intertextuality. An OFF-narrator in Wasabi that only appears once in the beginning (W seq. 2), tells the spectator about Hubert's height, weight and age. The latter is significant with respect to intertextuality. Hubert is 47 years old, a number, which refers to the Japanese story of

the 47 *rōnin*<sup>26</sup> that in 1703 took revenge for the forced suicide of their master *daimyō* Asano. The most widely known literary version of the story is the *bunraku* (puppet theatre) play by Chikamatsu Monzaemon, called *Chūshingura: The Forty-Seven Samurai*. The reference to the story of the 47 *rōnin* is not directly linked to the plot of Wasabi, but rather to another film called Ronin with Jean Reno (who plays the protagonist in Wasabi), although its plot in turn is not linked to Japan. Furthermore, the plot of Wasabi resembles very much the plot of Sydney Pollack's film The Yakuza from 1974, where the protagonist also returns to Japan to rescue his daughter, who has been kidnapped by the Yakuza. Even the names of the Japanese women the protagonists were in love with are similar, in The Yakuza she is called Eiko, while in Wasabi the first letter is changed and becomes Miko. Staying with the issue of similarities in names, references to a third action film that is set in Japan and centres on the topic of the Yakuza can be detected. Namely in Black Rain, where the Japanese superintendent's name is Matsumoto, while the superintendent in Wasabi is called Yasumoto.

In Stratosphere Girl it is the very title of the film that gives intertextual reference, not to another film, but to a Japanese *manga*, which is insofar important as the film itself has *manga* and the drawing of *manga* as a central recurrent theme. The stratosphere girl in this respect can be seen as the female version of the *manga* *Astro Boy* (in Japanese: *Tetsuwan Atomu*) by Osamu Tezuka that was one of the first *mangas* that were turned into a film, to wit an *anime* version. The references to outer space in both titles – stratosphere and astro – are highly visible.

---

<sup>26</sup> Masterless *samurai*/warriors.

## 8. Characters and protagonists

### 8.1 The Other and the Stranger

Although Huntington admits that people have various identities and feel appendant to various groups, for him the concept of culture and the area of culture (which in a broader sense reflects the concept of nation states) make up the measure of all things. He sees the areas of culture as a conjunctive element for the sense of the “We” in contrast to “Them” (see Huntington 2006: 56). As the title suggests, this thesis focuses on how a certain area of culture, in this case Europe, sees and therefore represents another area of culture, in this case Japan. Looking back to history, the European identity has been defined by contrasting Us and Them, by defining the Other as everything that is different from the We, that is not normal (see Delanty 2002: 47). In other words, Europe used to look through its cultural glasses, the so-called Eurocentrism. On the one hand, cultural glasses prevent us from seeing certain things. On the other hand, they are a sign of ‘*kultureller Zentriertheit*’ (‘cultural centrism’) (see Gippert, Götte, Kleinau 2008: 14) that is needed in order to recognize the Other as such. Like with stereotypes, as we will see later, the Other is an ambivalent concept, which, used appropriately in a positive way, is a good and helpful instrument to get a structure to the world, but if used as a fixed concept, it turns into something negative that excludes certain groups and often labels them as inferior to oneself or the own group, the so called We.

According to Yoshiko Ikeda, who analyses the image of Japan and the United States in film, states that “[r]epresentations of the Other in films have been studied either in terms of their political function or from the viewpoint of psychological factors. However, the cultural and symbolic functions of these films have been little explored.” (Ikeda 2008: 176/177) This is what this thesis aims at. When speaking about the Other, a differentiation is made between two opposed groups: On the one hand, Japanese and their culture are depicted, but their depiction mirrors at the same time how we, the Europeans, see ourselves, precisely because of the differentiation between Us and Them. This is where transculturality applies, which focuses rather on the similarities and conjunctive elements of culture, than on differences and disjunctive elements.

In none of the films the Europeans are clearly identified as such. Moreover, it seems that the protagonists do not see themselves as Europeans, at least not consciously.

In Stratosphere Girl the Western European girls group themselves automatically, as do the Central and Eastern Europeans and Russian girls. Furthermore, both constitute a group as opposed to the Japanese customers. In Wasabi the conjunctive element is on the one hand the French nationality for Hubert and Maurice, on the other hand, it is kinship that brings together Hubert and Yumi. An interesting example though, since they are from two different areas of culture (Yumi was raised in Japan). The film with the most transcultural approach in this respect is Kirschblüten - Hanami, where Rudi meets a Japanese girl in a park. As discussed in the individual analysis, the film contains several aspects of both the German and the Japanese culture, which are shown as being interrelated.

This leads us to a special form of Otherness, namely that of being a Stranger. Zygmunt Bauman calls the meeting of strangers “an event without a past”, and moreover, states that it is also often “an event without a future” (see Bauman 2000: 95). In Kirschblüten – Hanami two strangers from two different cultures meet, but the film shows that Rudi and his son Karl are more like strangers, than Rudi and the Japanese girl Yu are. However, their friendship that develops in the course of the film is without a future, due to Rudi’s death at the end of the film. In Stratosphere Girl various strangers meet, or in other words: the protagonist Angela meets various people that are strangers to her. Most important are the girls she works with, the customers in the club and Yamamoto (whom she already meets at the beginning of the film). Most probably there is no future for the relation between the girls and Angela that anyway has been rather hostile, than friendly. Angela’s relation with the customers is per se a temporary relation, unlike that with Yamamoto, a stranger from Japan she meets at a party in Belgium and falls in love with. His appearance in the end of the film in Angela’s garden in Belgium definitely indicates that there is a future for this relation. The same is true for the relation between Hubert and Yumi in Wasabi. Although both are related, being father and daughter, they meet as strangers at first, for they did not know about the others existence. The end of the film foreshadows that both will get together again. In summary, this shows that in the three films analysed the European protagonists meet as strangers with a Japanese and eventually become friends or lovers.

Going back to the statement that films not only reflect how other cultures are seen, but also how the own culture is seen or rather how it wants to be seen, it is remarkable that no uniform representation of Europe, as an area of culture, can be

found. Yet on the contrary, differences can be observed in how single European countries see themselves or want to be seen, that is to say that it is not necessarily true. In the case of Kirschblüten – Hanami, Germany is depicted as cosmopolitan (Rudi quickly makes friends with Yu) and very culturally-minded (Hokusai drawings and *butō* dance). Moreover, even elderly people, who rarely left the country, do speak English relatively well, as implied through Rudi's character. A totally different image conveys Wasabi that only uses French for communication and not once the protagonists have difficulties to be understood or have to speak English. The French police officer is capable of solving the Yakuza problem, a task that the Japanese police could not accomplish (see especially the end of W seq. 28). The film, that if any, reflects **one** image of Europe that is not linked to a certain nation state, is Stratosphere Girl. Being a European co-production, it features a Belgian francophone protagonist that went to school in Germany and speaks fluent English. In the first place it conveys the image of a Europe without borders and multilingual inhabitants. However, it also shows that differences between East and West in Europe still exist.

## 8.2 Stereotypes

Before going into the analysis of representation of stereotypes in film, a differentiation has to be made between the representation of cultural stereotypes in film and stereotypes of characters in film. While the first type serves to construct reality, the latter is used in works of fiction only (see Schweinitz 2006: 50). For the present analysis only the first type is relevant, since it focuses on the representation of realities and not on the representation of 'film stereotypes' as such. The only 'film stereotype' that can be detected in the films analysed is that of the 'gunslinger' Hubert in Wasabi, a comedy and therefore a clear distinguishable genre film that contains certain 'film stereotypes'. The present analysis, however, focuses more on the representation of cultural stereotypes in film, in this case the representation of Japanese. Those stereotypes are rather obvious in Stratosphere Girl and Wasabi, while stereotypes, if any, in Kirschblüten – Hanami can be found among the supporting characters, for example in the scenes set in the Tōkyō nightlife (H seq. 46 and 48). It is to note that it is more likely to find stereotypisation among supporting characters, since they only provide the framework for the plot and are usually flat characters that are not further developed. While the main characters are usually round characters that have personalities with a

multitude of facets and therefore cannot easily be pressed into a certain stereotypical image.

Said says in the preface of the 2003 edition of his book *Orientalism* that

“[o]ne aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed. Television, the films, and all the media’s resources have forced information into more and more standardized molds” (Said 2003: 26).

However, this is certainly not true for the film Kirschblüten – Hanami, which emphasises, as shown, the similarities and interaction between Japan and Germany/Europe and abstains for the most part from depicting stereotypes. Furthermore, the film deals exclusively with Japan and its culture and avoids an orientalisation of the culture, as for example Peter Greenaway’s film The Pillow Book, which mixes features of different East-Asian cultures. On the other hand, when analysing the film it has to be kept in mind that it is already Doris Dörrie’s third film about Japan<sup>27</sup>. That is to say that she supposedly has a deeper insight in the Japanese culture and is less likely to reproduce in her films well-known stereotypes, than directors that only once made a film about Japan.

According to Catharina Blomberg Japan has been seen by Westerners throughout the history in black and white terms (see Blomberg 2008: 64). At least in the films analysed no mere black and white painting can be detected. The conveyed image might sometimes tend to portray Japan in a certain way, but there is always a counterbalance: In Kirschblüten – Hanami on the one hand the ‘dark side’ of the entertainment industry, which is at the borderline to prostitution, is shown, where stereotypically submissive oriental/Japanese women serve men. On the other hand, there is the strong and independent character of Yu. All in all the film draws a rather positive image of Japan. Stratosphere Girl as well shows the entertainment industry with hostesses and the borderline to the sex industry, a theme that unlike in Kirschblüten – Hanami is central to the film. Though a counterbalance exists, too, in the character of Yamamoto who helps Angela and finally manages to get a contract for her *manga*. The counterbalance in Wasabi is linked to two stereotypes. On the one hand, there are the literally ‘bad guys’ from the Yakuza that are only men. On the other hand, there are two women, Miko and

---

<sup>27</sup> The other two are:  
Der Fischer und seine Frau (Germany: 2005).  
Erleuchtung garantiert (Germany: 1999).

her daughter Yumi: Miko, who sacrificed her love and herself for her country and the young, innocent and quirky girl Yumi.

Generally speaking stereotypical differences in the representation of Japan still persist (especially in Stratosphere Girl and Wasabi), differentiating between strong, fierce and sometimes cruel men on the one hand and innocent, soft and partly submissive women on the other hand. This is in line with what Mikako Iwatake says about the European representation of Japanese otherness through the stereotypes of the *geisha* and the *samurai* that “sits well in a particular European world view in which dichotomies such as modernity/tradition, male/female, culture/nature and individual/collective are deeply inscribed” (Iwatake 2008: 104). However, in none of the films the motif of the *geisha* appears directly, that is to say in form of an actual *geisha*. It is indicated in Stratosphere Girl, when Yamamoto tells Angela about the hostessing job (S seq. 11) and is persistent throughout the whole film in a modern and reversed version. More precisely it is reversed in that sense that Angela acts as a kind of Western *geisha* in her hostessing job at the “Golden Gate Club”. The motif of the *samurai*, as well in a reversed version, can be detected in Wasabi, where Hubert as a kind of Western *rōnin* takes revenge on the Yakuza for the death of his love Miko.

Further obvious and persistent cultural stereotypes of people cannot be detected. This may be due to globalisation in general and globalisation of communication, as mentioned earlier, that has facilitated intercultural contact and according to Andreas Hepp has made it more and more difficult to assign certain national representations to the own culture and the foreign culture (see Hepp 2006: 181). A fact, that again, hints at a world that is gradually becoming transcultural. Although the films, as seen in the analysis, still make a distinction between certain nation states (Stratosphere Girl) and differences between how the respective country of production sees itself (Kirschblüten – Hanami and Wasabi), stereotypical representations of people from certain countries outside Japan cannot be detected.

### **8.3 Women and Gender**

The mentioned Japanese stereotypes of the *geisha* and the *samurai* are also important when looking at the representation of gender in films that deal with Japan. According to Kyoko Koma the concept of the *geisha* “is used to designate one idea or one representation, or to construct a fixed idea that a *geisha* is the most submissive woman in the world and thus a stereotype may be formulated: Japanese women are

obedient” (Koma 2009: 36). A stereotype of not only Japan, but what is called ‘the Orient’ in general that is also taken up by Michael Pickering, who discusses the

“general blending together of romantic images of femininity with images of the Orient as enigmatic and mysterious, suggesting a dark secret behind the veil of both ‘woman’ and ‘the East’ in the contradictory stereotypes of corruption and mysticism, exoticism and sexual insatiability” (Pickering 2001: 163).

As mentioned previously this image appears in all the films, either directly shown in some sequences like in Kirschblüten – Hanami, indirectly by mentioning in Wasabi or directly shown, but reversed like in Stratosphere Girl. It is to not that the latter takes side with the European girls that are presented as sexual objects for the Japanese customers, while stories and films in the past about the East on the majority took side with the European men whom the Japanese or ‘oriental’ girls served as sexual objects. However, the main villain in Stratosphere Girl, Kruilman, is also a European and not a Japanese, as one might suspect.

Sexuality in general plays an important role in Stratosphere Girl, and it is linked to Japan through the depiction on erotic *mangas* in various other films about Japan. Among the analysed films that kind of *manga* also appears in Kirschblüten – Hanami, another example is Lost in Translation. It is striking that it is always men that are shown reading those *manga* books, while there are similar kinds of *manga* for women. In the analysed films women are rather shown as victims of dominant and evil men, this is the case of Miko and Yumi in Wasabi and the European hostesses in Stratosphere Girl.

In summary it can be stated that none of the analysed films depicts directly a traditional image of the *geisha*. This is in line with Yoshiko Ikeda, who sees a change from a rather one-sided representation of *geishas* in film towards a more differentiated representation, taking as a contemporary example Memoirs of a Geisha from 2005 (see Ikeda 2009), a film that, however, is not set in contemporary Japan. Looking at other recent European productions that are set in contemporary Japan, it becomes clear that the three films analysed cannot be taken as an example for the representation of Japan in general. The most recent one Map of the Sounds of Tokyo bears resemblance to Stratosphere Girl in its depiction of the dark side of the entertainment industry and its combination of sexuality and violence. A rather orientalist representation of Japan and Japanese women that is contradictory to Ikeda's conclusion, is Inju, la bête dans l'ombre, set in the ‘old-style’ entertainment district of contemporary Kyōto and featuring a mysterious, sensual, but also perfidious Japanese *geisha*.

Bearing in mind the recurrent representations of Japanese women the statement of Sugimoto is questionable, who says that outsiders “tend to think of men rather than women” when they visualize the Japanese (Sugimoto 2003: 1). The analysed films, however, show mainly Japanese women and Western men. Moreover, it is mostly middle-aged and elderly Western men and young Japanese women. In Kirschblüten – Hanami, an elderly German meets a young Japanese girl, in Wasabi a middle-aged French man meets his young half-Japanese daughter, while the only exception is Stratosphere Girl, where a young European girl meets a middle-aged European man and a young Japanese boy. Compared to other films that deal with Japan this combination of middle-aged or elderly men and young girls seems to be a recurrent motif: In Lost in translation a middle-aged American man meets a young American girl, in Map of the Sounds of Tokyo a middle-aged European man meets a young Japanese girl. However, this might be a general motif depicting men as protectors of women. This would also be an explanation for the recurrent motif of the missing father in all three films: Yu in Kirschblüten – Hanami supposedly has no father and her mother has died some months ago, in Stratosphere Girl Angela’s father left the family (as she tells Kruilman) and Yumi in Wasabi has not known her father for 19 years, until he unexpectedly appears in Tōkyō. Nevertheless those motifs seem to be general motifs, rather than specific motifs in Japan related films.

Another conjunctive element in all three films is that they play with femininity and the question of gender, although in various ways and with various aims. One of them is the motif of transsexuality through disguise. Men with blond wigs appear in Stratosphere Girl, where it is Japanese men, and in Wasabi, where it is a French man that has no connection to Japan (S seq. 22, 51, 57 and W seq. 2, 6). Dressing in women’s clothes can also be seen in Kirschblüten – Hanami, however, here it not necessarily expresses transsexuality, but emphasises Rudi’s mourning for his late wife (H seq. 56).



**Figure 28-30.** The European protagonists: The elderly German man Rudi. The young Belgian girl Angela. The middle-aged French man Hubert.

**Figure 31-33.** The Japanese protagonists: The young female *butō* dancer Yu. The young male DJ Yamamoto. The young female student Yumi.

## 9. Aesthetics and composition

### 9.1 Atmosphere

In the following a look shall be taken on the atmosphere that is created in the films. Since the analysis focuses less on the technical aspects, than rather the story-telling aspects, as it was mentioned in the methodology, the creation of atmosphere will be discussed only briefly and superficially.

Stratosphere Girl conveys a rather dark and hostile image of Japan. It contrasts daytime and nighttime, darkness and light, which also plays an important role when comparing the scenes set in Belgium and those in Japan, as analysed in depth in the first part of the thesis. While the Belgian scenes are sunny and shot in bright colours, the scenes in Tōkyō are gloomy and dreary. A third variation can be found in the way the two retrospective scenes – Ella’s story and Monika’s story – are shot (S seq. 50-52 and seq. 71). They are nearly colourless and a shade of grey and blue is dominant. Apart from the visual, additionally the whole film is underlaid with a monotonous humming, which amplifies the dreary and hostile atmosphere. The symbolism used in Stratosphere Girl is exclusively European or Western and therefore it can be concluded that the film can be understood by most European spectators, which seem to be the main target audience.

Kirschblüten – Hanami on the other hand uses European and Japanese symbolism (e.g. flies and *sakura* as symbols of death). Especially the Japanese symbolism is probably not understandable for most European spectators, which is not a necessary requisite to understand the message of the film. As for the colouring of the film nothing exceptional could be found. The only noteworthy scene with respect to special shooting is Trudi’s death scene, where the waves of the sea move oddly and appear rather dark (H seq. 30).

Wasabi for its part does not use symbols to create atmosphere, neither are the scenes shot in a special colour scheme. However, as mentioned in the individual analysis, the film draws on music to create atmosphere, whether used ON or OFF. The prevalent types of music used throughout the film are electronic and dynamic music, used for the action scenes that create an agitated atmosphere full of suspense. For calmer scenes two different types of soft music are used: one is Western guitar music,

while the other is traditional Asian music. The latter is heard every time Hubert thinks of Japan and of Miko.

In conclusion, no similarities with respect to atmosphere can be found between the three films analysed. Not only is the atmosphere they create different, but also the means of how the respective atmosphere is created.

## **9.2 Fiction versus reality/dream**

It has to be kept in mind that nevertheless film is always fiction. While watching the film the spectator gets an insight into another world, into another culture even and certainly takes part of what he sees out of the cinema, as an authentic and therefore credible representation of the world. However due to the constitution of the film industry many times the viewer gets to see invented or rebuilt worlds. Not everything is what it seems to be. Sets are rebuilt in a studio in Europe, but pretend to be real-life buildings in another country. What can be used for unmovable things can also be used for people, like in Memoirs of a Geisha, where several characters, which are all Japanese in the film, are played by Chinese, Korean or American actors.

While Wasabi, being an action comedy, has an obvious fictional and invented plot, the same is not that clearly to say for Stratosphere Girl. What makes it even more difficult is the fact that the spectator does not know if Angela's story itself is true or invented. That means if there is a fictional story inside another fictional story. Altogether Kirschblüten – Hanami seems rather realistic and resembles especially towards the end of the second part a documentary, where the Japanese guests in the hotel at Mount Fuji are shown by merely filming them in the dining room without interaction with the protagonists, relevance for the plot or any explanation (H seq. 81 and 85). Nevertheless this does not mean that the film depicts reality. It is rather that “[t]he cinema constructs and legitimates an idea of the real” (Peckham 2007: 422). In other words it is a representation of how Doris Dörrie perceives and sees Japan, bearing in mind that she grew up and therefore is influenced by a European, namely German culture and surroundings. The same is true for the other two films that represent how their European directors see or imagine Japan.

## 10. Context

Since all three analysed films are set in contemporary Japan and are produced in a time span of seven years between 2001 and 2008, there is no need to view them in a historical context. Nevertheless some words should be said about the contemporary context.

### 10.1 Globalisation

A general context that applies to all recent films that deal with the representation of the contemporary world is globalisation with its distinctive features such as fast communication, fast travel and multinational corporations, but also insecurity and its moving nature. Something that Zygmunt Bauman called 'liquid modernity', where nothing is for sure and nothing is stable. "In a life ruled by the percept of flexibility, life strategies and plans can be but short-term." (Bauman 200: 137/138) This is also reflected in the films analysed. Angela in Stratosphere Girl mentions it in her OFF-commentary: "Most people seem to have a goal in life. But what happens to those who don't?!" (S seq. 19). It is not only her, but also the other girls that are 'floating', that go from one part-time job to the next, from one place to the next, without having a certain goal. In Kirschblüten – Hanami it is Yu who is 'floating', since she lives on the street, a live that is defined by uncertainty and insecurity. Her character is opposed to Rudi, who is stable and an 'oddment' from the 'solid' modernity.

Having its origins in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and keeping on in the 21<sup>st</sup> the phenomenon of globalisation and the growing together, interlinking and interchange all around the world had its effect on several areas of life like politics, economy, culture, society and media. A more frequent contact, higher mobility and faster exchange of information thanks to technological achievements have made the whole world networked. As stated by many scholars people nowadays not only have one, but often multiple identities, various places where they feel at home and are members of various cultures. The increase of intercultural contact and exchange due to globalisation also creates "universal symbol systems" (see Bruce-Mitford 2008: 278). In this respect transculturality offers a valuable approach to explain and understand those developments and changes in the field of culture, society and media. Wolfgang Welsch is convinced that the next generations will increase transcultural communication and interaction (see Welsch 1997: 21). This is an interesting statement with respect to

Kirschblüten – Hanami, which could be regarded as being the most transcultural of the three films analysed and that features a protagonist from the ‘older generation’. While Stratosphere Girl on the other hand, features a ‘young generation’ protagonist that has grown up in a globalised and networked society, but nevertheless mirrors a rather intercultural and even nation state based approach.

One of the crucial features of globalisation, namely fast and easy communication and an “ever increasing technological progress, accompanied by its concomitant acceleration of speed in almost all processes of daily life [...]” (Gehmann 2009: 54), is shown in two of the films. Stratosphere Girl shows the every time and everywhere networked contemporary society, for example when Yamamoto checks his e-mail on his laptop while driving in a car through a dark Belgium countryside (S seq. 15). Angela and Yamamoto, although from different countries, are both prototypes of a uniform contemporary globalised young generation, or like some call it the ‘Web 2.0 generation’. New technology is shown in Wasabi, for example in the bank, where Yumi gives an electronic signature, something that is normal for her, but strange for her father, who belongs to the ‘older’ generation (W seq. 17). Comparing this to the earlier statement about transculturality, Kirschblüten – Hanami – despite its open and apparently unbiased approach towards Japan – can be said to have also somewhat romanticised approach that leaves out features of globalisation.

It should not only be looked for globalisation, as it is represented in films, but as well how it influences film and the mass media in general that has its origins long before the start of globalisation. According to Andreas Hepp “[t]he rise of national cultures is related to the diffusion of the so-called mass media” (Hepp 2009: w/o). This might be one aspect, another is that mass media, especially in times of globalisation, has contributed to the communication, interaction and interconnectedness of people from different cultures. It promoted intercultural exchange and helped to overcome national borders that according to Hepp in the beginning were strengthened by the mass media. Thus, it can be said that a regressive process is taking place. Globalisation certainly has also its bad sides, like regionalisation, which goes hand in hand with a newly risen emphasis on the authentic, original and traditional. This means that nowadays we live in a dichotomous world in which the mass media, including film, play an important role.

## 10.2 Contemporary Japan

As shown previously the analysed films represent contemporary Japan as a dichotomous country, split in a traditional and a modern part. The typical direct representation of the two Japanese person stereotypes, namely the *geisha* and the *samurai*, seem to have disappeared in film. The image that prevails in films representing contemporary Japan is that of the Japanese popular culture, portrayed by electronic gadgets, gaming parlours, *manga* books and other phenomena among the youth culture. This is not astonishing, since the Japanese government aims for turning Japanese popular culture into a profitable cultural product and therefore encourages its export to the United States and Europe (see Ito 2008: 202). Mikako Iwatake lists a number of contemporary trends in Japanese youth culture of which one, named cosplay, can be seen in Stratosphere Girl and Wasabi. According to Iwatake's definition it is "a play in which a person wears dress and by extension identity that belongs to another time and space. The identity could derive from anime, science fiction, historical incidents or historical figures." (Iwatake 2008: 106) The female protagonists of the two films mentioned, Angela and Yumi show features of this kind of dressing. Angela at the beginning wears 'normal' clothes, like jeans and T-Shirt. In the course of the film her look and her identity changes into the untouchable, innocent, upright and bright hero, reflected in her white, angel-like dress. Her 'Lolita trick' goes along with this dress. Yumi is also dressed in a kind of Lolita style with colourful, girlish clothes that resemble characters from *anime*. In contrast Yu in Kirschblüten – Hanami is also dressed colourfully, but supposedly not out of fashion style but rather need, since she lives on the street and has no job.

The fact that Japan followed a containment policy during the Edo period from 1603 to 1868 and was forced to open up for trade from the outside, is according Mae an image that still is persistent inside Japan and thus the image of being a homogeneous and unique culture and society is still projected on Japan from the outside see Mae 2006: 271). This applies not to all the films and if, only in parts. Another myth that is not true for contemporary Japan is that of stability in labour and lifetime employment (see Sugimoto 2003: 110). Meaning hereby working at the same company 'from the cradle to the grave' that is not assured anymore and unemployment and the loss of a home is possible, as can be seen in the case of Yu in Kirschblüten – Hanami.

## 11. Conclusion

### 11.1 Japan – A country and culture far away from Europe?

As stated repeatedly, the representation of Japan (or any other subject) in film is not the representation of reality, but a representation of reality as seen through the eyes of another – in this case mostly the director – that influences also the perception of Japan among the spectators. Brigitte Schulze says that emotions in cinema push aside individuality and create community, but not to the end to dissolve individuality, but rather to broaden the individual's mind (see Schulze 2008: 16/17). A similar statement comes from Margit Dorn who emphasises the cinema film's characteristic as being received in a group in cinemas (see Dorn 2004: 218). Although little is left to the imagination of the spectator in films (in contrast to books), since he gets everything presented in an audiovisual form, how the spectator receives a film nevertheless depends on his previous knowledge, mood, possible prejudices etc. There is no doubt that the images shown in film have an influence on the whole audience and shape their perception of the themes, characters and countries shown in the film – in the case of the present analysis the perception of Japan, its society and culture.

The spectator is most likely to identify with his/her own group, in this case the Europeans, so the way in which the European characters in the film approach Japan will also have an influence on the spectator's approach towards Japan. Kirschblüten – Hanami shows with the protagonist Rudi an open and unprejudiced approach towards Japan. The character of his son Karl, who apparently has some prejudices, is presented to the spectator as rather dislikeable. Although the protagonist Angela in Stratosphere Girl has not any outstanding prejudices either, most of the people in her surroundings do. Moreover, the Japanese surroundings which she lives in are represented as hostile and untrustworthy. In Wasabi the protagonist Hubert seems to keep an unbiased, but also romanticised idea of Japan, due to his remembrance of his former love Miko. His character is complemented by that of Maurice, who has a one-sided and to a great extent also biased view of Japan.

Prejudices are an important issue, since no one is free of them. That is to say, prejudices of the directors may also be reflected in the films, and due to his own prejudices the investigator might also overlook certain aspects, since it is a “fundamental principle of philosophical hermeneutics” to bring in own experience and

prejudgements in any kind of analysis (see Deutsch 2001: 164). In conclusion, the present analysis about the image of Japan has to be seen in the context of those two factors: firstly the influence of the ‘creator’, that is the director, of the film and secondly the influence of the spectator and investigator. On the one hand, the directors did not interpret an object of art, but a culture, a society, a country and portrayed their version of it, or how they perceived it in their own work of art, namely a fictional feature film. On the other hand, although the films are from the same area of culture, the observer and investigator is not immune against interpretations according to own experience.

Differences among the three films can be seen regarding how they represent Japan, its society and culture in general. However, it can be said that a transcultural approach is visible in every film to a lesser or greater extend, which means that in none of the films Japan is represented as an alien or unique country that has no similarities with Europe. As Ben-Ami Scharfstein notes “[a]rt gives good evidence that there can be life-enhancing exchanges of intimacy among persons who never meet and among times and cultures that are distant from one another” (Scharfstein 2001: 183). Geographical distance in the case of representation of Europe and Japan does not necessarily mean distance in culture, behaviour or values. This is most evident in Kirschblüten – Hanami, where parallels between Europe/Germany and Japan are drawn throughout the film. In Stratosphere Girl on the other hand, no direct comparisons between Europe and Japan are shown, but rather a mere representation of Japan, which is quite likely to be only the imagination of the female protagonist. Parallels and similarities between cultures can be detected in the representation of globalisation, a recent phenomenon that enables and encourages interaction and conjunction of different cultures. Like Kirschblüten – Hanami, Wasabi also contains similar scenes in Europe/France and Japan, but rather to show that it is always Hubert that solves the problem, than to show similarities between the two cultures. The link between Europe/France and Japan is made through family relations: Hubert and his half-Japanese daughter Yumi represent this link.

All three films analysed show that they have had an insight into Japanese culture: Kirschblüten – Hanami, which resembles towards the end a documentary and also picks up the topic of homeless; a rather unusual depiction of Japan. In Stratosphere Girl the insight is only marginally visible by the *origami* cranes in the protagonist’s room, while the central theme of *manga* is no insight into Japanese culture, but rather mirrors the influence that Japanese popular culture has on contemporary European culture. In

Wasabi an insight into Japanese culture and history can be detected in the intertextuality of the ‘hidden’ story of the 47 *rōnin*, which also serves as an intertextual link to other Western works of art, in this case fiction films.

### 11.2 Transculturality – A concept towards a universalistic culture?

The concept of transculturality could be criticised to promote a universalistic culture, where no or only slight differences exist. It is true that the same products can be found all around the world and thanks to the internet, information reach nearly every point in the world within seconds. Huntington also observes the phenomenon that modern societies do have many things in common, but he questions if this necessarily means that they melt together. According to him, a melting together means that other cultures become more and more like the Western culture, which then would be dominant and would equal the modern culture (see Huntington 2006: 99). Huntington, on the one hand, thinks the assumption of the melting of cultures to be mistaken; on the other hand, he does not observe a phenomenon that could be labelled ‘transcultural’, since he still insists in the existence of marked-off cultural areas in the world. However, those areas in recent years have begun to dissolve, or rather to intermingle. Due to globalization and new technological possibilities of the mass media, people are highly influenced by images from other cultures. There are those, who fear that globalisation threatens the ‘old’, traditional cultures and that culture itself might become “dull and flat” (Hamashita 2001: 506) and those, who see new opportunities in this development. Welsch for example argues, that increasing exchange and interaction does not mean that a uniformisation of cultures is taking place, but rather the opposite: the frequent contact of cultures produces new forms and thus brings forth diversity (see: Welsch 1999: w/o).

As shown in the analysis, all films depict similarities between the – according to Huntington – quite different areas of culture, namely Europe and Japan. Moreover, those similarities are by no means only features of Western culture that have been adopted by Japanese culture, but also vice versa, as can be seen in the depiction of *manga* in Stratosphere Girl, Trudi’s enthusiasm for *butō* dance in Kirschblüten – Hanami or Hubert’s love for Asian food in Wasabi. Furthermore, similarities do not necessarily have to be traceable to a common origin or reciprocal influence, but could also be similarities that evolved in different cultures independently. This is especially true for the similarities shown in Kirschblüten – Hanami, such as cremation, lunch boxes or the habit of taking off one’s shoes when entering a house. Those are

similarities that are likely to exist in many different cultures (although they might be more apparent in some), which does not mean that they are peculiar to this culture.

Welsch's concept of transculturality does not make a division between cultural areas, as Huntington does, but divides the world in different subcultures, where literally everything could become a 'culture'. This approach is put into question, for example by Eagleton, who criticises the pluralisation of cultures in the postmodern world in general, for being unspecific and tempting for romanticists (see Eagleton 2001: 27). This is certainly a point of criticism especially for Kirschblüten – Hanami, where no conflicts between Japan and Europe are shown. However, I agree with Welsch on the argument that there must be no fear of the uniformisation of cultures, since transculturality rather produces diversity, than it uniformises cultures. Therefore, this "new type of differentiation by its very structure favors coexistence rather than combat" (Welsch 1999: w/o), as has been proposed by Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*.

### **11.3 Concluding thoughts**

According to Christian Metz "[...] a film is always understood, but always *more or less* so, and this "more or less" is not easily quantifiable, for there are no discernible degrees no units of signification that can be immediately counted" (Metz 1991: 72). He further says that some films are entirely or in part incomprehensible, because certain realities or concepts are too subtle, too exotic or thought to be familiar, where they actually are not. After having conducted a thorough analysis of three European films that deal with a different area of culture, I do agree with Metz. As shown in the analysis some concepts and symbols used by the films are only understandable for spectators that are familiar with Japanese culture and society, others (especially the depicted similarities between Japan and Europe) can only be detected after watching the films several times, although they might be experienced subconsciously. Additionally, it always depends on the spectators pre-knowledge of films, which symbols and action scheme he/she is able to recognise and interpret, or in Metz' words the spectator's knowledge of "film language". Therefore, this analysis cannot claim to be complete, as some aspects or symbols might not have been visible for me.

Coming back to the question posed in the chapter on methodology, whether the films analysed represent a true European or merely a Western European view of Japan, I would say that the latter is true. Kirschblüten – Hanami reflects the perception of Japan from a mainly German point of view. That is to say, the perception of a country that is

highly economically developed and holds a high living standard, similar to Japan and most Western European countries. Stratosphere Girl clearly has a Western European point of view, which can be seen in the fact that in the film the Western European girls and the Central and Eastern European girls (however, mostly Russians) are opposed. As discussed in the individual analysis, the film mirrors the differences and conflicts, which twenty years after the Cold War are still existent in Europe. Wasabi, as shown in the analysis, with respect to Europe is very much centred on France and therefore also represents a mere Western European view of Japan. Interestingly, during the process of pre-selection of films I did not come across a Central or Eastern European film about Japan.

As mentioned in the beginning, the present thesis represents the analysis from a European observer's point of view. Nevertheless, it cannot give evidence of how a Japanese observer perceives the films, since arts and visual arts in particular, due to their language of signs and symbols, are perceived differently in every culture. This would be an interesting project for the future, to conduct a survey on how a Japanese audience perceives the films and contrast those findings with the European analysis. Or to compare them with the findings of an analysis of American films like Lost in Translation, with a focus on the question if there exists a common Western (as one area of culture) representation of Japan. Furthermore, it would also be interesting to make a comparison with older films, if and how the representation of Japan has changed in the last 100 years, having in mind the dramatic changes in information technology, globalization and cultural exchange during this period.

## 12. Sources

### 12.1 Books – Monographs

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.

Delanty, Gerard. *Inventing Europe. Idea, Identity, Reality*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

Eagleton, Terry. *Was ist Kultur? Eine Einführung*. München: C.H. Beck, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2001.

Faulstich, Werner. *Grundkurs Filmanalyse*. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2008.

Gordon, Andrew. *A Modern History of Japan. From Tokugawa Times to the Present*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Halpern, Leslie. *Dreams on Film. The Cinematic Struggle Between Art and Science*. Jefferson, North Carolina; London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003.

Hepp, Andreas. *Transkulturelle Kommunikation*. Konstanz: UVK, 2006.

Huntington, Samuel P. *Kampf der Kulturen. Die Neugestaltung der Weltpolitik im 21. Jahrhundert*. Hamburg: Spiegel, 2006.

Korte, Helmut. *Einführung in die Systematische Filmanalyse. Ein Arbeitsbuch*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 3<sup>rd</sup> revised and extended edition 2004.

Kracauer, Siegfried. *Theorie des Films. Die Errettung der äußeren Wirklichkeit*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, by the author revised translation by Friedrich Walter and Ruth Zellschan 1985.

Kramsch, Claire. *Language and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Metz, Christian. *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Mikos, Lothar. *Film- und Fernsehanalyse*. Konstanz: UVK, 2<sup>nd</sup> revised edition 2008.

Monaco, James. *Film verstehen. Kunst, Technik, Sprache, Geschichte und Theorie des Films und der Medien. Mit einer Einführung in Multimedia*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 8<sup>th</sup> edition October 2006.

Pickering, Michael. *Stereotyping. The Politics of Representation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. London: Penguin, reprinted with a new preface 2003.

Schulze, Brigitte. *Kino im interkulturellen Kontext*. Nordhausen: Traugott Bautz, 2008.

Schweinitz, Jörg. *Film und Stereotyp. Eine Herausforderung für das Kino und die Filmtheorie. Zur Geschichte eines Mediendiskurses*. Berlin: Akademie, 2006.

Sugimoto, Yoshio. *An Introduction to Japanese Society*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2003.

### 12.2 Articles, papers and essays

Ambjörnsson, Ronny. "East and West. On the Construction of a European Identity." From: *Cultural crossroads in Europe*. Stockholm: Swedish Council for Planning and Coordination of Research 1997. 78-96.

Barancovaitė-Skindaravičienė, Kristina. "Gender Images in Contemporary Japanese Society." From: Koma, Kyoko (ed.). *Contemporary Japan from European Perspective*. Kaunas: Vytautas Magnus University, 2009. 151-172.

Blomberg, Catharina. „Isles of Gold or Police State – the Western View of Japan from Marco Polo to the Present.” From: Koma, Kyoko (ed.). *Image of Japan in Europe*. Kaunas: Vytautas Magnus University, 2008. 53-64.

Bruter, Michael. "On What Citizens Mean in Feeling 'European': Perceptions of News, Symbols and Borderless-ness." From: *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies* 30.1 (Jan. 2004): 21-39. SocINDEX with Full Text. EBSCO. Library of Univerzita Palackého, Olomouc, CZ. [<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=12407273&site=ehost-live>] (Last access: 12/05/2009).

Cuccioletta, Donald. "Multiculturalism or Transculturalism: Towards a Cosmopolitan Citizenship." From: *London Journal of Canadian Studies* 17, 2001/2002. 1-11. [[http://www.canadian-studies.info/lccs/LJCS/Vol\\_17/Cuccioletta.pdf](http://www.canadian-studies.info/lccs/LJCS/Vol_17/Cuccioletta.pdf)] (Last access: 10/09/2009).

Deutsch, Eliot. "Interpreting Artworks: Prolegomenon to a Cross-Cultural Hermeneutic." From: Marchianò, Grazia; Milani, Raffaele (eds.). *Frontiers of Transculturality in Contemporary Aesthetics*. Turin: Trauben, 2001. 163-173.

Dorn, Margit. „Film.“ From: Faulstich, Werner (ed.). *Grundwissen Medien*. München: Wilhelm Fink, 5<sup>th</sup> completely revised and considerably extended edition 2004. 218-238.

Erzen, Jale. "Aesthetics of the Placeless." From: Marchianò, Grazia; Milani, Raffaele (eds.). *Frontiers of Transculturality in Contemporary Aesthetics*. Turin: Trauben, 2001. 285-297.

Fujita, Haruhiko. "Letters on Images: Concerning Japanese Art." From: Erzen, Jale (ed.). *International Yearbook of Aesthetics* 12. Ankara: SANART Association of Aesthetics and Visual Culture, 2008. 68-90.

Gehmann, Ulrich. "Mobility extended." From: *Journal of New Frontiers in Spatial Concepts* 1, 2009. 51-59. [[http://ejournal.uvka.de/spatialconcepts/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/spatialconcepts\\_article\\_749.pdf](http://ejournal.uvka.de/spatialconcepts/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/spatialconcepts_article_749.pdf)] (Last access: 09/09/2009).

Gippert, Wolfgang; Götte, Petra; Kleinau, Elke. „Transkulturalität: gender- und bildungshistorische Perspektiven. Zur Einführung in den Band.“ From: Gippert, Wolfgang; Götte, Petra; Kleinau, Elke (eds.). *Transkulturalität. Gender- und bildungshistorische Perspektiven*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2008. 9-24.

Grein, Marion. "Die Rezeption japanischer Comics (Manga) in der deutschen Literatur." From: Ariizumi, Yasuo; Kasamatsu, Kōichi; Meisig, Konrad (eds.). *Interkulturalität. Aktuelle Entwicklungstendenzen in Literatur, Sprache und Gesellschaft. Vorträge des 3. Interdisziplinären Japanisch-Deutschen Symposions in Mainz 2.-5. September 2002*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006. 135-156.

Grendaitė-Vosyliienė, Greta. „Corporeality and Contemporary Japanese Art as Presented in Europe.” From: Koma, Kyoko (ed.). *Image of Japan in Europe*. Kaunas: Vytautas Magnus University, 2008. 81-100.

Hamashita, Masahiro. "Taste and Novelty from the Viewpoint of Modernity in Japan." From: Marchianò, Grazia; Milani, Raffaele (eds.). *Frontiers of Transculturality in Contemporary Aesthetics*. Turin: Trauben, 2001. 499-506.

Hannam, Kevin; Sheller Mimi; Urry, John. "Editorial: Mobilities, Immobilities and Moorings." From: *Mobilities* 1, Issue number 1, March 2006. 1-22. [[http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/607403\\_\\_741385574.pdf](http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/607403__741385574.pdf)] (Last access: 13/09/2009).

Hepp, Andreas. "Transculturality as a Perspective: Researching Media Cultures Comparatively." From: *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 10, Issue number 1, January 2009. 14 pages. [<http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1221/2658>] (Last access: 23/08/2009).

Ikeda, Yoshiko. „Image of Japanese Men in American Films from WWII to the Present: Representations of the Other and National Identities.” From: Koma, Kyoko (ed.). *Image of Japan in Europe*. Kaunas: Vytautas Magnus University, 2008. 175-200.

Ikeda, Yoshiko. "Changing Images of Japanese Women in American films: from *the Teahouse of the August Moon* (1956) to *Memoirs of a Geisha* (2005). From: Koma, Kyoko (ed.). *Contemporary Japan from European Perspective*. Kaunas: Vytautas Magnus University, 2009. 47-62.

Ito, Yu. „Exported Japan: On Japan’s Popular Culture Policy.” From: Koma, Kyoko (ed.). *Image of Japan in Europe*. Kaunas: Vytautas Magnus University, 2008. 201-213.

Iwatake, Mikako. „Differencing Body, Performing Race; Noriko Show in Finland.” From: Koma, Kyoko (ed.). *Image of Japan in Europe*. Kaunas: Vytautas Magnus University, 2008. 101-113.

Jäger, Stefan. "The World of Angels in a Historical Perspective." From: Ariizumi, Yasuo; Kasamatsu, Kōichi; Meisig, Konrad (eds.). *Interkulturalität. Aktuelle Entwicklungstendenzen in Literatur, Sprache und Gesellschaft. Vorträge des 3. Interdisziplinären Japanisch-Deutschen Symposions in Mainz 2.-5. September 2002*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006. 43-52.

Kitamura, Takashi. "Remarks on the Creativity of Japanese Reception of Western Culture: from Literature to Popular Art." From: Koma, Kyoko (ed.). *Contemporary Japan from European Perspective*. Kaunas: Vytautas Magnus University, 2009. 73-86.

Koma, Kyoko. "Evolution of the Traditionally Stereotypical Term *geisha* in French Contemporary Newspapers." From: Koma, Kyoko (ed.). *Contemporary Japan from European Perspective*. Kaunas: Vytautas Magnus University, 2009. 33-46.

Mae, Michiko. „Das transkulturelle Potenzial der Japanforschung. Ein Beitrag zum Paradigmenwechsel in den Geisteswissenschaften.“ From: Gauger, Jörg-Dieter; Rüter, Günther (eds.). *Warum die Geisteswissenschaften Zukunft haben! Ein Beitrag zum Wissenschaftsjahr 2007*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2007. 287-298.

Mae, Michiko. „Vom territorialen Raum der Nationalkultur zum entgrenzten Raum der Transkulturalität.“ From: Schröder, Nicole; Friedl, Herwig (eds.). *Grenz-Gänge. Studien zu Gender und Raum*. Tübingen; Basel: Francke, 2006. 271-283.

Onohara, Noriko. „Whom do you dress up for? Gothic Lolita fashion in Japan.” From: Koma, Kyoko (ed.). *Image of Japan in Europe*. Kaunas: Vytautas Magnus University, 2008. 215-239.

Pagden, Anthony. „Europe: Conceptualizing a Continent.“ From: Pagden, Anthony (ed.). *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 33-54.

Peckham, Robert Shannan. „Landscape in Film.“ From: Duncan, James S.; Nuala, Johnson; Schein, Richard (eds.). *A Companion to Cultural Geography*. Malden: Blackwell, 2007. 420-429.

Rodrigo, Miquel. “La comunicación intercultural.” Uploaded: 07/13/2003. [<http://www.aulaintercultural.org/IMG/pdf/comintercultural>] (Last access: 20/05/2009).

Saal, Britta. “Kultur in Bewegung. Zur Begrifflichkeit von Transkulturalität.“ From: Mae, Michiko; Saal, Britta (eds.). *Transkulturelle Genderforschung. Ein Studienbuch zum Verhältnis von Kultur und Geschlecht*. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007. 21-36.

Scharfstein, Ben-Ami. “Can there Be a Common Measure for All Art? or How Art communicates Incommunicable Experience.” From: Marchianò, Grazia; Milani, Raffaele (eds.). *Frontiers of Transculturality in Contemporary Aesthetics*. Turin: Trauben, 2001. 175-186.

Shohat, Ella. “Gender and Culture of Empire: Toward a Feminist Ethnographz of the Cinema.” From: Bernstein, Matthew; Studlar, Gaylyn (eds.). *Visions of the East. Orientalism in Film*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997. 19-66.

Welsch, Wolfgang. „Transkulturalität. Zwischen Globalisierung und Partikularisierung.“ From: Wierlacher, Alois et al. (eds.). *Jahrbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache* 26. München: iudicium, 2000. 327-351.

Welsch, Wolfgang. “Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today.” From: Featherston, Mike; Lash, Scott (eds.). *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*. London: Sage, 1999. 194-213. [<http://www2.unijena.de/welsch/Papers/transcultSociety.html>] (Last access: 14/05/2009).

Welsch, Wolfgang. “Transkulturalität.” From: *Universitas. Zeitschrift für interdisziplinäre Wissenschaft* 52, issue number 607 (January 1997). 16-24.

### 12.3 Reference works

Bruce-Mitford, Miranda. *Signs & Symbols. An Illustrated Guide to Their Origins and Meanings*. London: Penguin, 2008.

### 12.4 Internet resources

Information on Kirschblüten – Hanami [<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0910559/>] (Last access: 22/08/2009).

Information on Stratosphere Girl [<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0306097/>] (Last access: 22/08/2009).

Information on Wasabi [<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0281364/>] (Last access: 22/08/2009).

United Nations’ definition of Europe [<http://esa.un.org/unpp/definition.html#Europe>] (Last access: 22/08/2009).

### 12.5 Films

#### 12.5.1 Films analysed

Dörrie, Doris, dir. Kirschblüten – Hanami. 2008. DVD. Majestic Home Entertainment, 2008.

Krawczyk, Gérard, dir. Wasabi. 2001. DVD. Universum Film, 2003.

Oberg, Matthias X., dir. Stratosphere Girl. 2004. DVD. Rapid Eye Movies, 2005.

#### 12.5.2 Other films referenced

Bong, Joon-ho; Carax, Leos; Gondry, Michel, dirs. Tokyo! (France/Japan/Germany/South Korea: 2008).

Coixet, Isabel, dir. Map of the Sounds of Tokyo (Spain: 2009).

Corneau, Alain, dir. Stupeur et tremblements (France/Japan: 2003).

Coppola, Sofia, dir. Lost in Translation (USA/Japan: 2003).

Dörrie, Doris, dir. Der Fischer und seine Frau (Germany: 2005).

Dörrie, Doris, dir. Erleuchtung garantiert (Germany: 1999).

Frankenheimer, John, dir. Ronin (UK/USA: 1998).

González Iñárritu, Alejandro, dir. Babel (France, USA, Mexico: 2006).

Greenaway, Peter, dir. The Pillow Book (France/UK/Netherlands/Luxembourg: 1996).

Haggis, Paul, dir. Crash (USA/Germany: 2004).

Marshall, Rob, dir. Memoirs of a Geisha (USA: 2005).

Miyayama, Marie, dir. Der rote Punkt (Germany/Japan: 2008).

Pollack, Sydney, dir. The Yakuza (USA/Japan: 1974).

Schroeder, Barbett, dir. Inju, la bête dans l'ombre (France/Japan: 2008).

Scott, Ridley, dir. Black Rain (USA: 1989).

#### 12.6 List of illustrations<sup>28</sup>

Figure 1. Kirschblüten – Hanami, 04'25.

Figure 2. Kirschblüten – Hanami, 49'38.

Figure 3. Kirschblüten – Hanami, 95'23.

Figure 4. Kirschblüten – Hanami, 102'23.

Figure 5. Kirschblüten – Hanami, 03'03.

Figure 6. Kirschblüten – Hanami, 67'43.

Figure 7. Kirschblüten – Hanami, 85'51.

Figure 8. Kirschblüten – Hanami, 98'59.

Figure 9. Kirschblüten – Hanami, 04'30.

Figure 10. Kirschblüten – Hanami, 84'08.

Figure 11. Kirschblüten – Hanami, 87'02.

Figure 12. Kirschblüten – Hanami, 115'42.

Figure 13. Stratosphere Girl, 17'39.

Figure 14. Stratosphere Girl, 40'35.

Figure 15. Stratosphere Girl, 41'04.

Figure 16. Stratosphere Girl, 58'11.

Figure 17. Stratosphere Girl, 64'13.

<sup>28</sup> All illustrations are screenshots taken from the referenced DVD version of the respective film.

- Figure 18. Wasabi, 02'07.
- Figure 19. Wasabi, 08'12.
- Figure 20. Wasabi, 55'01.
- Figure 21. Wasabi, 78'51.
- Figure 22. Kirschblüten – Hanami, 50'27.
- Figure 23. Stratosphere Girl, 31'20.
- Figure 24. Wasabi, 36'35.
- Figure 25. Kirschblüten – Hanami, 94'38.
- Figure 26. Stratosphere Girl, 08'21.
- Figure 27. Wasabi, 35'21.
- Figure 28. Kirschblüten – Hanami, 03'40.
- Figure 29. Stratosphere Girl, 61'19.
- Figure 30. Wasabi, 02'18.
- Figure 31. Kirschblüten – Hanami, 76'07.
- Figure 32. Stratosphere Girl, 02'02.
- Figure 33. Wasabi, 27'20.

### **13. Annex (Film analysis protocol)**

## Kirschblüten – Hanami (Dir.: Doris Dörrie / Germany; France: 2008)

No.	Time	Scene/Sequence	Subsequence/Content	Music/Sound/Dialogue	Length
1	00'00	<b>1 Opening credits</b>	9 different views of Mount Fuji (paintings)	fade-in music (OFF); towards the end Trudi's prologue starts (OFF) (00'47)	<b>01'04</b>
	<b>01'04</b>	<b>2 At home in Bavaria</b>			
2	01'04		Hospital: Trudi gets Rudi's diagnosis of cancer, doctors propose a trip	Prologue Trudi (OFF); talk with doctors (ON)	0'45
3	01'49		Views of the village (morning)	Sounds of nature (ON); Commentary Trudi (OFF)	0'20
4	02'09		Flashback: Rudi's daily routine; on the train, at work, getting home	Music (OFF); commentary Trudi (OFF)	1'12
5	03'21		Views of the village (late afternoon)	Music (OFF)	0'15
6	03'36		Rudi gets home from work, undresses in the hall, Trudi and Rudi eat dinner in the kitchen (stuffed cabbage)	Dialogue (ON)	1'08
7	04'44		Trudi at the gym	Music (ON)	0'20
8	05'04		Views of the village (evening)	Sounds of nature (ON)	0'07
9	05'11		Trudi gets home; Trudi and Rudi on the living room sofa, in bed, Trudi cannot sleep and tries to call Karl (youngest son)	Dialogue (ON); Music (OFF)(05'44-06'06)	1'12
10	06'23		Views of the landscape (night)	Sounds of nature (ON)	0'04
11	06'27		Views of the landscape (early morning)	Sounds of nature (ON)	0'05

12	06'32		Trip to Neu Schwanstein, Trudi proposes other trips and even a journey to Japan	Music (OFF); dialogue (ON)	0'43
13	07'15		Preparations for the trip, Rudi and Trudi pack their bags	Music (OFF) (07'37)	0'41
14	07'56		Trudi and Rudi on the train to Berlin	Music (OFF) (ends: 08'04); dialogue (ON)	0'57
	<b>08'53</b>	<b>3 Trip to Berlin</b>			
15	08'53		1 <sup>st</sup> day: Trudi and Rudi arrive in Berlin, meeting with Klaus (eldest son)	Dialogue (ON)	0'49
16	09'42		At home with Klaus and his family, they have coffee, Karo arrives (daughter), dinner, Trudi talks about the <i>butō</i> dance performance, mayfly story	Dialogue (ON)	6'23
17	16'05		Klaus, his wife and Karo in the living room, eating Japanese sweets in form of Fuji mountains	Dialogue (ON); music (ON)	1'39
18	17'44		Trudi and Rudi in their grandchildren's room	Dialogue (ON); music (OFF) (starts: 17'58)	1'00
19	18'44		Views of the house interior and a Berlin suburb (night)	Sounds of nature (ON)	0'09
20	18'53		2 <sup>nd</sup> day: Views of Berlin downtown (morning)	Sounds of the city (ON)	0'18
21	19'11		Karo's place: Karo and her girlfriend Franzi	Dialogue (ON)	1'45
22	20'56		Klaus' house: Franzi picks up Trudi and Rudi	Dialogue (ON)	0'14
23	21'10		Sight-seeing tour with Karo's girlfriend Franzi, coffee and cake at Karo's place	Dialogue (ON)	4'08
24	25'18		Trudi and Rudi at the ticket machine of the suburban train	Dialogue (ON); sounds of train station (ON); music (OFF) (26'32-27'23)	2'24

25	27'42		In Klaus' house, everyone sleeping except for Trudi	Sounds of nature (ON/OFF)	0'34
26	28'16		3 <sup>rd</sup> day: <i>Butō</i> dance the next evening, Trudi and Franzi inside, Rudi outside peering inside	<i>Butō</i> music (ON/OFF); music (OFF) (starts: 30'21)	2'07
	<b>30'23</b>	<b>4 Trip to the Baltic Sea</b>			
27	30'23		1 <sup>st</sup> day: At the seaside (daytime)	Music (OFF); dialogue (ON)	1'18
28	31'41		Night: Trudi and Rudi in the hotel room, Trudi dancing <i>butō</i> with Rudi	Dialogue (ON); music (ON); music (OFF) (starts: 32'20)	1'49
29	33'30		2 <sup>nd</sup> day: morning walk along the sea	Sounds of nature (ON); dialogue (ON)	1'37
30	35'07		Evening: Views of the Baltic Sea; in the hotel room Rudi is sleeping, but Trudi is awake; dream sequence of Trudi as a <i>butō</i> dancer	Sounds of water (ON); music (OFF) (starts: 35'15)	0'41
31	35'48		3 <sup>rd</sup> day: Rudi finds Trudi dead in bed	Monologue (ON)	0'54
32	36'42		Cremation of Trudi's corpse; Klaus, Karo and Karl (who flew in from Tōkyō ) gather with Rudi at a restaurant on the seaside for the funeral feast	Sounds of nature (ON); music (OFF) ( 36'47-38'16); dialogue (ON); music (ON/OFF)	5'17
	<b>41'59</b>	<b>5 Back home in Bavaria</b>			
33	41'59		Rudi alone at home, in the hall, on the sofa, in bed	Normal sounds (ON)	1'50
34	43'49		Burial of Trudi's ashes in the local cemetery; Rudi and Franzi are present	Dialogue (ON)	0'30
35	44'19		Rudi shows Franzi photos of Trudi's <i>butō</i> dance performance	Dialogue (ON); music (OFF) (starts: 45'27)	1'47

36	46'06		Rudi takes Franzi to the train station	Dialogue (ON)	0'39
37	46'45		Rudi alone again at home; leafs through photos of Mount Fuji and a book (One Hundred Views of Mt. Fuji by Hokusai) he found in Trudi's night table; Rudi in bed with Trudi's Kimono beside him	Music (OFF) (starts: 46'59)	1'07
38	47'52		Views of the landscape (evening)	Sounds of nature (ON)	0'05
	<b>47'57</b>	<b>6 Journey to Japan (1<sup>st</sup> day)</b>		cross-fading into	
39	47'57		Arrival in Tōkyō (Shinjuku Station); walk through the city	Sounds of train station and the city (ON)	1'37
40	49'34		Inside Karl's apartment; Rudi explores the apartment; leafs through an erotic <i>manga</i> book; finds postcard with views of Bavaria sent by Trudi; mayfly story	Dialogue (ON); music (OFF) (starts: 51'47)	3'23
41	52'57		Views of Tōkyō downtown (evening)	Music (OFF)	0'29
42	53'26		Dinner with Karl in a Japanese noodle kitchen	Dialogue (ON)	0'48
43	54'14		At night in Karl's apartment: Rudi unpacks his suitcase and Trudi's clothes he brought with him (Kimono, skirt, cardigan, necklace)	Music (OFF) (starts: 54'30)	1'12
	<b>55'26</b>	<b>7 Journey to Japan (2<sup>nd</sup> day)</b>			
44	55'26		Karl leaves Rudi in a bar	People talking Japanese (ON); music (ON)	1'27
45	56'53		Evening: Karl has not turned up and Rudi leaves the bar; Wandering about the streets of Tōkyō, Rudi ties his handkerchief to a banister	Sounds of street life (ON)	0'54
46	57'47		Rudi in a table dance bar	Music (ON)	1'03
47	58'50		Rudi again on the street	Sounds of street life (ON)	0'32

48	59'22		Rudi with two naked Japanese girls	Girls talking Japanese (ON)	1'09
49	60'31		Rudi's handkerchief at the banister	Sounds of street life (ON)	0'06
	<b>60'37</b>	<b>8 Journey to Japan (3<sup>rd</sup> day)</b>			
50	60'37		Next morning: Rudi sleeping in front of Karl's apartment, Karl finds him the next morning	Dialogue (ON)	0'45
51	61'22		Rudi in Karl's apartment with paper sign, mobile phone and picture book ("point it"); zapping on TV he finds a recording of a <i>butō</i> dancer (same as in Berlin); dresses up in the clothes of his wife	TV sound (ON); Music (ON/OFF)	2'23
52	63'45		Karl gets home; Rudi in his clothes again	Dialogue (ON)	1'13
53	64'58		Hanami – Cherry blossom viewing in the park; Rudi, Karl and his colleagues	Dialogue (ON); people talking Japanese (ON)	1'23
54	66'21		Rudi brings the drunken Karl back home	Dialogue (ON)	0'53
	<b>67'14</b>	<b>9 Journey to Japan (4<sup>th</sup> day)</b>			
55	67'14		Rudi prepares a lunchbox for Karl; cleans the apartment	Dialogue (ON); normal sounds (ON)	1'24
56	68'38		Rudi leaves the apartment for the first time on his own; ties another handkerchief to a banister in front of the apartment; Rudi walks to the park; opens his coat underneath the cherry trees; he is wearing Trudi's clothes	Music (OFF)	1'17
57	69'55		Night: Rudi in the apartment; Karl gets home	Dialogue (ON)	0'58
58	70'53		Rudi on sightseeing boat (alone); drives by tents of the homeless on the riverside	People talking Japanese (ON); music (OFF) (starts: 70'58)	0'33

59	71'26		encounters a group of young Japanese giving “free hugs”	Dialogue (ON); music (OFF)	0'30
60	71'56		Rudi visits a Japanese graveyard	Music (OFF); sounds of nature (ON)	0'43
61	72'39		Rudi in the park; people viewing cherry blossoms; sees a young female <i>butō</i> dancer	People talking Japanese (ON); fade-in music (OFF) (starts: 73'01)	1'38
62	74'17		Night: Rudi on the balcony of Karl's apartment; Karl gets home and calls his sister in Germany	Sounds of the city (ON); Dialogue (ON)	1'18
	<b>75'35</b>	<b>10 Journey to Japan (5<sup>th</sup> day)</b>			
63	75'35		Rudi in the Park watching the young <i>butō</i> dancer; talks to her; she shows him how to dance <i>butō</i> ; she discovers that Rudi wears his wife's clothes	Sounds of nature (ON); music (OFF) (75'41-76'47)	4'53
64	80'28		Yu takes Rudi to the train station; Rudi on the train	Dialogue (ON); sounds of train (ON)	2'19
65	82'47		Rudi buys cabbage	Dialogue (ON)	0'41
66	83'28		Inside Karl's apartment; Rudi cooks stuffed cabbage; Rudi and Karl have dinner; Rudi remarks that there are no flies	Dialogue (ON)	2'12
	<b>85'40</b>	<b>11 Journey to Japan (6<sup>th</sup> day)</b>			
67	85'40		Rudi and Yu eating stuffed cabbage in the park	Dialogue (ON); music (OFF) (starts: 85'49)	1'23
68	87'03		Yu takes Rudi to the train	Music (OFF), dialogue (ON)	1'08
	<b>88'11</b>	<b>12 Journey to Japan (7<sup>th</sup> day)</b>			
69	88'11		Views of downtown Tōkyō (morning)	Sounds of the city (ON)	0'05

70	88'16		Rudi cleans the apartment; starts dancing <i>butō</i> ; breaks down in pain	Normal sounds (ON); music (OFF) (88'38-89'00)	1'07
71	89'23		Rudi meets Yu in the park; they leaf through the "point it" book	Dialogue (ON); music (OFF) (89'55-91'28)	2'23
72	91'46		Yu dances <i>butō</i> ; Rudi starts dancing with her	Music (OFF) (starts: 91'51)	1'25
73	93'11		Yu takes Rudi to the train; Rudi gets off the train and follows Yu to the tent in the park, where she lives	Sounds of the train station (ON); music (OFF) (93'40-94'55 fade -out)	2'18
74	95'29		Inside Karl's apartment; Yu in the bathroom; Karl gets home complaining about Yu	Dialogue (ON)	0'31
75	96'00		Yu in her tent at night	Music (OFF)	0'27
	<b>96'27</b>	<b>13 Journey to Japan (8<sup>th</sup> day)</b>			
76	96'27		Early morning: Rudi leaves Karl's apartment with a suitcase	Music (OFF)	0'47
77	97'14		Yu gets up; finds Rudi sleeping on a bench in the park; Rudi proposes trip to Yu	Dialogue (ON)	1'06
	<b>98'20</b>	<b>14 Trip to Mount Fuji (1<sup>st</sup> day)</b>			
78	98'20		Rudi and Yu on the train	Dialogue (ON); dialogue in Japanese (ON)	1'53
79	100'13		Arrival; Rudi and Yu on a small lake; Mount Fuji is not visible because of the clouds	Sounds of nature (ON); dialogue (ON); dialogue in Japanese (ON)	1'40
80	101'53		Rudi and Yu check in the hotel; dressing in hotel kimono; look outside window: no Mount Fuji	Dialogue in Japanese (ON); music (OFF) (starts: 102'48); sounds of nature	2'08

				(ON)	
81	104'01		Dinner together with other hotel guests	People talking Japanese (ON)	0'37
82	104'38		Rudi and Yu have a look outside; Mount Fuji is not visible	Sounds of nature (ON)	0'19
83	104'57		At night in the hotel room	Silence (ON)	0'06
	<b>105'03</b>	<b>15 Trip to Mount Fuji (2<sup>nd</sup> day)</b>			
84	105'03		Look outside the window: no Mount Fuji	Music (OFF); dialogue (ON)	0'25
85	105'28		Breakfast; look outside: still no Mount Fuji	Music (OFF); people talking Japanese (ON); dialogue (ON)	0'49
86	106'17		At night in the hotel room; Rudi has fever	Dialogue in Japanese (ON)	1'20
87	107'37		Still night: Rudi gets up, opens the window and sees Mount Fuji in the moonlight	Silence (ON)	0'15
88	107'52		Rudi paints his face white	Silence (ON)	0'21
89	108'13		Rudi leaves the hotel	Normal sounds (ON)	0'20
	<b>108'33</b>	<b>16 Trip to Mount Fuji (3<sup>rd</sup> day)</b>			
90	108'33		Rudi at the lake (Mount Fuji is visible in the background); white painted face, dressed in his wife's Kimono; starts dancing <i>butō</i> ; dances with his wife (imaginary); in the end Rudi is lying on the ground	Normal sounds (ON); music (OFF) (fade-in at 109'14, ends: 111'03); sounds of nature (ON)	2'30
91	111'13		Yu realises that Rudi is not in the hotel room; goes looking for him	Dialogue in Japanese (ON)	0'40
92	111'53		Yu in the hotel room wearing Rudi's clothes; Yu	Music (OFF) (starts:	1'09

			leafs through the things in Rudi's suitcase; finds the photos of Trudi, the book about Mount Fuji and an envelope addressed to her with Euro banknotes in it	111'56)	
93	113'02		Rudi's funeral; his ashes are buried according to Japanese tradition; Yu and Karl put together Rudi's bones in the urn	Sounds of nature (ON); ceremony in Japanese (ON); Japanese singing (ON); music (OFF) (starts: 114'46)	1'56
94	114'58		Journey back to Tōkyō; Yu and Karl in the taxi; arrival in front of Karl's apartment; Yu and Karl say goodbye; Rudi's handkerchief is still on the banister	Music (OFF) (stops: 116'21); Dialogue (ON)	1'52
	<b>116'50</b>	<b>17 Back in Bavaria</b>			
95	116'50		Burial of Rudi's ashes; all children (Karl, Karo and Klaus) and Franzi are present	Sounds of nature (ON)	0'10
96	117'00		Funeral feast in Trudi's and Rudi's house	Dialogue (ON)	0'33
97	<b>117'33</b>	<b>18 Yu dancing <i>butō</i> in the park</b>		Music (OFF); sounds of nature (ON)	<b>1'06</b>
98	<b>118'39</b>	<b>19 End credits</b>	10 different views of Mount Fuji (camera shots); followed by credits with three smaller pictures on the left showing scenes from the film	Music (OFF)	<b>4'11</b>

## Stratosphere Girl (Dir.: Matthias X. Oberg / Netherlands; Germany; Italy; Switzerland; UK: 2004)

No.	Time	Scene/Sequence	Subsequence/Content	Music/Sound/Dialogue	Length
1	00'00	1 Opening credits	A white paper on which a pencil draws a straight line; CUT; black screen with the name of the director in white; CUT; the pencil draws an irregular line; CUT; black screen with the film title in white	Scraping of a pencil on paper (ON and OFF); prologue (OFF) starts with the second shot of the pencil drawing (starts: 00'13); spheric music, very faint (OFF) (starts: 00'22)	00'32
	00'32	2 At home (Europe)			
2	00'32		Pencil draws the figure of a girl; the hand that holds the pencil belongs to a girl; we see her face in the next shot; she draws a girl packing her suitcase; looks out the window: sees a 'European' style rooftop (it is day); she gets up and packs her suitcase, in the background a <i>origami</i> crane mobile can be seen; looks out the window: two women in the garden talking	Scraping of a pencil on paper (ON); spheric music – getting a bit louder (OFF); prologue (OFF)	00'41
3	01'13		Pencil drawing something; the picture is cloudy	Scraping of the pencil (ON); spheric music (OFF)	00'07
4	01'20		Night: a party; the girl is sitting in front of what looks like an old storehouse; inside young people are dancing; an East Asian looking DJ behind a mixer	Music (ON); people laughing and talking (ON)	00'25

5	01'55		a hand with a pencil draws the scene of the DJ at his mixer	Scraping of the pencil (ON); music (ON); commentary (OFF) (starts: 01'58)	00'04
6	01'59		from the OFF-commentary we get to know that it is the girl's graduation party	Music (ON); Commentary (OFF)	00'16
7	02'15		The girl is on her way out	Music (ON, turning into OFF); scraping of a pencil (OFF) (starts: 02'22)	00'16
8	02'31		Drawings of the DJ and the girl; the girl is named Angela, the DJ is named Yamamoto drawing fades into actual picture again	Dialogue (starting OFF at 02'32, turning into ON along with the picture); Music (OFF)	00'18
9	02'49		Angela and Yamamoto walking through a park outside the storehouse	Dialogue (ON); music (OFF); sounds of nature (ON)	00'29
10	03'18		Drawing of the Angela and Yamamoto with speech balloons reproducing the dialogue	Dialogue (OFF); music (OFF); scraping of the pencil (ON)	00'05
11	03'23		Angela and Yamamoto sit down near a river; Angela shows him some self drawn cards and a drawing of Yamamoto and her; one of the cards looks like Angela and is labelled "Angel Star"; Yamamoto tells Angela about a Swedish women (Monika) working in Tōkyō as a hostess; drawing of a <i>geisha</i> (04'17-04'19) Yamamoto throws a stone in the lake	Dialogue (ON); music (OFF) (ends: 04'18); sound of water (ON); commentary Angela (OFF) (starts: 04'04); splashing of water (ON) (starts: 04'38)	1'18
12	04'41		Drawing of a street with houses, a girl (supposedly Angela) walking along the street; drawing fades into	Echo of the splashing of water (OFF) (ends: 04'43);	00'08

			real picture	music (OFF); scraping of the pencil (ON)	
13	04'49		Angela walking along a street alone at night	Music (OFF); scraping of a pencil (OFF); commentary Angela (OFF)	00'04
14	04'53		Close-up drawing of Angela's face, fades into real picture	Music (OFF); scraping of a pencil (ON)	00'03
15	04'56		Angela inside a car at night, looking out the window; car drives along an empty road in the countryside; inside the car is Angela and Yamamoto on the back seat; Yamamoto writes down Monika's address in Japanese characters	Music (OFF); commentary Angela (OFF); dialogue (ON) (starts: 05'23)	00'48
	<b>05'44</b>	<b>3 Journey to and arrival in Japan</b>			
16	05'44		Inside a plane; mainly Japanese men in business suits sleeping or reading the newspaper, in the first row part of a Western looking man are visible; on a big screen a horse race is shown, every now and then horses and their riders fall (laughing of the Western man audible)	Music (OFF); laughing of the Western man (ON); sound of video over earphones (ON); commentary Angela (OFF) (starts: 05'59); uneasy squeaking (starts: 06'29)	00'52
17	06'36		Angela asleep on a bed, wakes up; inside tiny cramped apartment; two other girls (blond) are playing a computer game; Angela has a look around; photos at the fridge show three blond girls and a brown-haired girl with darker skin; Angela enters bathroom; steps on a plastic stool in order to look outside a tiny window; sees a busy street at night; when she steps down she slips, falls against the wall and lands in the living room of a Japanese family; the	Squeaking continued (OFF)(ends: 06'40); sound of computer game (ON); dialogue (ON); sound of the city (ON) (07'56-08'17); dialogue in Japanese (08'21); music (OFF) (starts 08'39) commentary Angela (OFF)	02'15

			two girls and a third girl turn up and fix the wall	(starts: 08'40)	
18	08'51		Girls go back into the kitchen; Monika is introduced	Commentary Angela (OFF); music (OFF); dialogue (ON)	00'17
19	09'08		Images of Tōkyō street life at night alternate with shots inside a big taxi where the girls are in; a fifth girl enters talking in polish on a mobile phone (Tanya); a motorbike with two Japanese men passes the taxi (10'36)	Sound of traffic, people talking, advertisement videos (ON); music (OFF); commentary Angela (OFF) (starts: 09'22); dialogue (ON)	01'44
20	10'52		Arrival at the “Golden Gate Club”; girls get out the taxi; go up the building in an elevator with two Japanese men, meanwhile Monika and Rachel show Angela how to bow; they enter the Club’s changing room where other girls are already sitting; Angela talks to an elderly Japanese man (Papa-san), apparently the boss who is eating; he sends Angela away; in between she gets into an argument with the Polish girl (Tanya); Angela then enters the actual club; a dark brown and golden a bit run-down interior; Japanese businessmen sitting at small round tables with blond Western girls; Angela leaves	Dialogue (ON); faint music (ON); girls talking and laughing (ON)	01'55
21	12'47		Angela on the street; crosses a zebra crossing, stops, turns around and goes back to the building of the club	Noise of the street (ON); commentary Angela (OFF) (starts: 12'54)	00'36
22	13'23		Angela goes up to another floor of the building; two Japanese women are sitting in front of a club entrance; a man comes out the door and points to a sign saying “Japanese only”; Angela takes a staircase	Faint music (ON); dialogue (ON); commentary Angela (OFF) (starts: 14'44); scraping of	02'14

			downwards, the music gets louder; inside this club Japanese men in bathing suits and with blond wigs inside a small swimming pool are fishing out coins from the water that Japanese male customers are throwing in; drawing of the transvestite mermaids; Angela goes up some stairs and enters a club called “Jungle Club”; inside are a couple of black women looking at her strangely; drawings of the women; CUT; inside the elevator	a pencil (OFF) (accompanies the shots of the two drawings)	
23	15'37		Back in the “Golden Gate Club”: Angela talks to Papa-san, asking again for work; gets into a fight with the Polish girl (Tanya) who takes her inside the club room; back in the dressing room Angela prepares to leave when she is called back by Papa-san sending her to a table in the club room	Dialogue (ON); Music (ON)	01'03
24	16'40		Girls are sitting at tables with Japanese men talking, others are singing karaoke; Angela is with another girl (Ingrid) and two Japanese men at a table (we learn that Angela is from Belgium); as the night progresses the conversation gets more obscene; the two customers are talking in Japanese whether Angela is still a virgin or not, Ingrid is sent away; in a short flashback we see a close shot of Yamamoto and Angela at the river during the graduation party (19'43-19'54)	Dialogue (ON); Music/ Karaoke singing (ON); music (OFF) (starts: 19'30, ends: 19'54)	03'23
25	20'03		Angela on the street leaving the club, she walks to a phone box; another Western girl steps in (her flatmate Polly as we later learn) and helps her to make a phone call; the answering machine from	Street noise (ON); dialogue (ON); answering machine (ON/OFF); music (OFF) (starts: 20'45);	02'23

			Yamamoto is audible; Angela leaves the phone box, walks along the busy streets, encounters a police man on a motor bike who looks like Yamamoto; Angela follows him inside the police station where she realises that it is another man; she discovers a missing notice of a hostess girl named Larissa Petrovna; in short flashbacks the pictures of the notice alternate with the pictures on the refrigerator door in the apartment	commentary Angela (OFF) (starts: 21'57)	
26	22'26		Drawing book with the drawing of Larissa, a pencil writes "Larissa"; CUT; Larissa shows the missing notice to the Japanese woman of the "Golden Gate Club" (Mama-san) who denies that Larissa worked in the club	Scraping of a pencil (ON); dialogue (ON); music (ON)	00'28
27	22'54		Early morning; Angela and Ella are on the commuter train on her way back home, Angela looks at a Japanese businessman who is reading an erotic <i>manga</i> ; Angela and Ella enter the white building block of their apartment; views of the surrounding	Train noise (ON); music (OFF) (starts: 23'02)	00'48
28	23'42		Close shot of Angela and Yamamoto in a completely white room	Music (OFF)	00'11
	<b>23'53</b>	<b>4 First night in Tōkyō</b>			
29	23'53		Morning inside the apartment; Angela sleeping and Polly leafing through her sketch-book (drawings of Angela and Yamamoto); drawing of the apartment building with a hand rubbing out parts of it; Angela and Monika talk about Yamamoto outside the apartment; inside the apartment: Angela drawing the sleeping Ella and talking to Polly; Polly tells Angela	Dialogue (ON); scraping of a pencil (ON)	01'50

			about “Mugendi”; close-up of the drawing of a vagina		
30	26’43		Angela and Ella enter a amusement arcade and take pictures in a photo booth	Dialogue (ON); noise of amusement arcade (ON)	00’51
31	27’34		Street at night; Angela leafs through a <i>manga</i> book, the drawings show a Japanese boy and a Western Girl resembling Angela and Yamamoto; in the background a woman with her child say goodbye to a man in a business suit who then gets together with a group of other businessmen	Music (OFF); street noise (ON)	00’31
32	28’05		Inside the dressing room the girls are getting ready; Rachel and Ingrid have an argument	Dialogue (ON)	00’50
33	28’55		Inside the club room; shots of Angela singing “Like a virgin” alternate with Angela talking to customers; two of them get into an argument about Angela; Angela starts to “play her Lolita trick”, pretending to be younger than 18	Music (ON); dialogue (ON); music (OFF) (starts: 28’59)	00’43
34	29’38		Inside the dressing room; the girls are getting ready to leave, Angela is looking for something and finally pulls out her jacket from the dust bin; CUT; Angela standing alone in the club room; CUT; Papa-san in his wheel chair enters the empty dressing room and turns off the lights; CUT; Angela leaves the dark club room; CUT; commuter train; CUT; Angela alone passing the entrance gate to the train station	Music (OFF); ambient noises (ON)	00’51
	<b>30’29</b>	<b>5 Second night in Tōkyō</b>			
35	30’29		Next day; view of a street; CUT; inside the apartment; Ella gives Angela a pair of shoes that belonged to Larissa; girls talk about looking for a	Ambient noises (ON); music (OFF) (ends: 30’33); dialogue (ON);	1’51

			new flat for Angela; Angela gets a parcel with a white dress with feathers and a necklace	faint spheric noise (OFF)	
36	32'20		A drawing of Larissa and the other four girls alternate with their pictures on the refrigerator	Scraping of a pencil (OFF/ON)	00'11
37	32'31		Night; Polly, Ella and Angela get take-away food in a Japanese noodle kitchen and go to the club by taxi	Dialogue (ON); kitchen noise (ON); Japanese music (ON)	00'40
38	33'11		Girls at work in the club, Angela is offered to go shopping with a customer; by the end of the night Papa-san pays the girls in his office in the dressing room	Music and karaoke singing (ON); dialogue (ON); faint spheric noise (OFF) (starts: 33'59)	01'09
39	34'20		Still night; Angela wants to store her money at a locker near a train station, but finally decides otherwise	Street noise (ON); spheric noise (OFF); commentary Angela (starts: 34'36)	00'20
	<b>34'40</b>	<b>6 Third night in Tōkyō</b>			
40	34'40		Early morning; inside the girl's apartment; Angela's air mattress has a leak, she hides her money in a flowerpot; Monika borrows Angela's shampoo, shortly afterwards is screaming of pain in the bathroom	Spheric noise (OFF); dialogue (ON); commentary Angela (OFF)	00'58
41	35'38		Japanese business men entering the club; girls in the dressing room, Monika wears a blond wig; CUT; a Western man (Kruilman as we later learn) in a car with two Japanese men; CUT; inside the dressing room the girls get dirndl dresses; Papa-san tells them about the arrival of Mr Kruilman, Rachel Monika and Ella exchange curious looks	Music (OFF); commentary Angela (OFF); dialogue (ON)	01'16
42	36'54		Monika and Rachel are talking alone in a room and	Music (ON); dialogue	00'18

			are disturbed by Angela	(ON)	
43	37'12		The girls in dirndl dresses enter a private room of the club, where Kruilman and three Japanese men are waiting	Music (ON); dialogue (ON); commentary Angela (OFF) (starts: 39'08)	02'14
	<b>39'26</b>	<b>7 Fourth night in Tōkyō</b>			
44	39'26		Angela washing up in the apartment	Commentary Angela (OFF); spheric noise (OFF)	00'15
45	39'41		Night; inside the dressing room at the club; the girls are taking a break, eating noodle soup; Angela in her white dress is drawing while eating and does not listen to Papa-san sending her to table number three; Angela discovers a piece of glass in her soup, takes it out her mouth, blood running down her chin; Angela leaves the club and walks along the street	Commentary Angela (OFF); scratching of a pencil (ON); faint music (ON); dialogue (ON); music (OFF) (starts: 40'36)	1'48
46	41'29		Angela enters a <i>manga</i> book shop, leafs through a <i>manga</i> , on the open page drawings of a street at night, a shoulder with a tattoo in Kanji and a hand touching a body; the shots of the drawings alternate with actual moving pictures; Angela writes an e-mail from a computer inside the shop; Angela walks along the street at night in the rain	Music (OFF); ambient noises (ON); commentary Angela/e-mail to Yamamoto (OFF) (starts: 42'41)	01'35
	<b>43'04</b>	<b>8 Fifth night in Tōkyō</b>			
47	43'04		Sunny day; shots of a commuter train from above; CUT; Angela and Ella inside the train; CUT; Angela and Ella walking along the street; CUT; Angela and Ella enter a laundrette; Monika is sitting inside behind a curtain staring hostile at Angela	Dialogue (OFF/ON); ambient noises (ON)	01'16

48	44'20		Angela and Ella walking along a street; Ella tells her about a man where she can deposit her money	Music (OFF); dialogue (ON)	00'48
49	45'08		Angela enters the green door under the bridge she has been shown by Ella; steps lead downstairs into a spacious but rambling and shabby space where she encounters a man (Scotty); he takes her money; Angela asks him if she could live with him	Dialogue (ON)	01'33
50	46'41		View of the outside of the apartment block; inside the apartment Angela is packing her bag, takes Larissa's handbag secretly with her; Ella is with her in the apartment, discovers the missing notice; Ella shows Angela a Cumo pipe; both have a smoke; from this point on shots of Angela and Ella are shown in a not-chronological order; in between Angela talks to Yamamoto at the telephone; Ella tells Angela the story of Larissa's disappearance – flashback	Spheric noises (OFF); dialogue (ON)	01'28
51	48'09		Close-up shots of Ella's face alternate with flashback shots of her story about Larissa: girls inside a house with Japanese business men; Kruilman appears with two persons with blond, curly hair; the girls are smoking Cumo pipes; Ella wakes up; behind a smoky glass panel outlines of the two persons with the blond hair and a third person are shown; as one comes near the panel it becomes visible that it is a man with a wig	Music (OFF) (starts: 48'19); monologue Ella (ON/OFF)	01'36
52	49'45		Last flashback shot of Ella's story cross-fades with a stationary shop, Angela buys paper and a red pencil; CUT; close-up of Angela smoking a cigarette, in the background a confusing clutter of buildings and Japanese billboards; CUT; night, Angela walking	Ambient noises (ON); spheric noises (OFF)	00'52

			along a narrow road and a street near a train station		
53	50'37		Angela enters her new room at Scotty's; takes out the stuff from Larissa's handbag; close-up of a business card	Spheric noises (OFF); commentary Angela (OFF) (starts: 50'53)	00'33
54	51'10		(Flashback?) Inside the dressing room at the club, the girls are wearing dirndl dresses, Papa-san sends Angela to table number 1; Angela with Kruilman alone at a table talking	Dialogue (ON); Music (OFF) (starts: 51'19); faint karaoke singing (ON); commentary Angela (OFF) (starts: 52'27)	01'19
55	52'29		Back at Angela's new place; Angela starts to draw; close-up shots of Angela's hand drawing a picture of Kruilman and her	Commentary Angela (stops: 52'31); scraping of a pencil (ON); spheric noises (OFF) (start: 52'48); Kruilman talking (OFF) (starts: 53'03)	00'40
56	53'09		Drawing of Angela cross-fades into the real picture of her in the club talking to Kruilman; part of the dialogue is OFF, while Angela and Kruilman are shown with their mouths shut; Angela and Kruilman dance closely; in the glass of an aquarium in the back the three Japanese business men are reflected	Spheric noises (OFF); dialogue (ON and OFF); music (starts: 53'46); faint whispering of male voices (ON)	01'25
57	54'34		Drawings of a house; CUT; real picture: Japanese business man in front of the house; CUT; Angela at her place drawing, looks inside Larissa's bag, looks at the missing notice; CUT; drawing of Larissa and a Japanese man smoking a Cumo pipe; CUT; Angela drawing; CUT; drawings of two Japanese men; CUT; real picture of the two men, Ella and Larissa kissing; CUT; same scene as a drawing; CUT; real picture:	Scraping of a pencil (ON); spheric noises (OFF); music (OFF); echo of Ella's voice telling her story (OFF) (starts: 54'37); whispering of different voices (OFF) (starts: 54'37)	01'35

			Ella and Larissa kissing; CUT; entire story-board of the whole scene; CUT; Angela drawing; CUT; real picture: Kruilman enters the party; CUT; drawing of Kruilman; CUT; real picture: Kruilman with a Cumo pipe at the party; CUT; drawing of a girl (probably Ella) in front of a glass panel; CUT; Angela rips off the paper; CUT; shadowy figures dancing behind the glass panel; CUT; Angela; CUT; drawing of the figures; CUT; close-up Angela's face; CUT; drawing of the figures; CUT; real picture: figures, one approaching the panel, it is a Japanese man wearing a blond wig; CUT; Angela drawing; CUT; real picture: figures; CUT; drawing of the figures; CUT; close-up Angela; CUT; drawings of the figures; CUT; real picture: figures; CUT; Angela drawing; CUT; drawing; CUT; real picture: Larissa; CUT; drawing of a knife; CUT; drawings of Larissa's head being cut with a knife alternate at a high speed with real pictures of the scene		
58	56'09		Scotty and two girls enter the room; Scotty looks at Angela's drawings, has a look at the business card lying on the table and takes it; Angela goes to another room where the other two girls are taking pictures half naked; Scotty puts price stickers on the photos	Sudden silence; spheric noises (OFF); dialogue (ON)	01'26
59	57'35		Inside the dressing room of the club; CUT; Angela in a pink Japanese school uniform and another girl dressed the same way inside a mock-up of a commuter train compartment, two Japanese customers are with them; Angela leaves the room and talks to Papa-san	Music (ON); dialogue (ON)	00'56

			about Larissa, he sends her to table 3		
60	58'31		Inside the club, a man singing karaoke, Angela and Polly sitting at table 3; Angela sees Yamamoto entering the club, she leaves the table; inside the dressing room Monika is talking to Yamamoto, Angela hugs him	Karaoke music (ON); dialogue (ON); commentary Angela (OFF) (starts: 58'34); music (OFF) (starts: 58'52)	00'48
61	59'19		The camera is moving fast along a street in Tōkyō at night	Music (OFF); commentary Angela (OFF) (starts: 59'29)	00'14
62	59'33		Angela and Yamamoto are eating in a small restaurant on the street	Music (OFF); commentary Angela (OFF)	00'31
63	60'04		The camera is moving fast along a street in Tōkyō at night	Music (OFF)	00'11
64	60'15		Angela and Yamamoto at a bar, Angela tells Yamamoto what she found out about Larissa; Angela leaves and goes back to her place; CUT; close shot of Yamamoto	Music (OFF) (ends: 60'23); dialogue (ON); street noises (ON)	00'08
65	61'23		Angela enters her room, takes the drawings, suddenly Kruilman comes up behind her, he wants to take her drawings, Angela turns off the light and escapes with the folder with her drawings; Angela runs out and on the street runs into Yamamoto	Spheric noises (OFF); dialogue (ON); music (OFF) (starts: 62'53)	01'43
66	63'06		The camera is moving fast along a street in Tōkyō at night	Music (OFF)	00'08
67	63'14		Inside a love hotel, Angela and Yamamoto enter a bright, completely white room; as they start kissing, the shots of this scene alternate with shots of the camera moving along a street; Angela looks out the	Music (OFF)	01'45

			window on to a street with colourful advertisement lights; shots of Angela and Yamamoto making love alternate with shots of the camera moving along a street		
	<b>64'59</b>	<b>9 Sixth night in Tōkyō</b>			
68	64'59		Night view of the street cross-fades into a daylight view; CUT; inside the love hotel room Angela awakes, gets up and discovers that her folder with the drawings is empty	Music (OFF) (ends: 65'16, starts again: 65'40); ambient noises (ON)	00'48
69	65'47		Fast compilation of flashback shots, showing Kruilman at the party, Angela's drawings, Kruilman's business card, Kruilman in the car, photos on the refrigerator, Yamamoto in the car, Angela on the plane (with Kruilman – the Western man), Yamamoto at the river	Music (OFF)	00'11
70	65'58		Day; Angela goes to the girl's apartment, Monika is inside crying; Monika tells Angela her version of what happened at the party	Spheric noises/music (OFF); dialogue (ON)	01'19
71	67'17		Flashback of Monika's story: arrival of Monika and Rachel with Kruilman at the party, Larissa and Ella kissing, Larissa undressing, the other girls looking angry, figures behind the glass panel, the figures are Rachel and Ella trying to cut Larissa's hair, Monika is on the other side of the panel looking at the scene, Rachel stabs Larissa with the scissors in the stomach	Monika's story (OFF); music (OFF)	01'25
72	68'42		Angela and Monika inside the apartment; Rachel comes in (overheard part of their conversation)	Spheric noises (OFF); dialogue (ON)	00'28
73	69'10		A taxi drives along a street at night; inside the taxi	Music (OFF); dialogue	00'31

			are the girls	(ON); commentary Angela (OFF) (starts: 69'30)	
74	69'41		Arrival at the house of the Japanese business man; CUT; drawing of a luxury living room; CUT; real picture of the living room; CUT; shadowy figures behind a glass panel; CUT; girls on the sofa being offered a Cumo pipe, Angela refuses to smoke, but Rachel forces her; real picture shots of Larissa, the girls, Tōkyō and the love hotel room alternate with close shots of Angela smoking the Cumo pipe	Music (OFF); dialogue (ON); echoes of voices (OFF); scraping of a pencil (OFF)	01'38
75	71'19		Inside Angela's room in Belgium, Angela is sitting on the sofa smoking; CUT; the sleeping Angela is put down on a sofa in the Japanese living room; CUT; Angela in her room in Belgium takes out a pearl necklace from a suitcase (underneath is the missing notice of Larissa), Angela sits down on her table and starts drawing; draws a black vertical line on a white paper	Sudden silence; ambient noises (ON); commentary Angela (OFF) (starts: 71'43); scraping of a pencil (OFF)	00'45
76	72'04		Drawing of the black line cross-fades into the real picture of a door that is opened by two Japanese men; in the room behind the door Angela is lying on a sofa, the other girls are in a room next door, Kruilman passes through with a cake in hand; Angela follows him to another room, where Larissa is lying in underwear with her stomach bandaged on a chair; Kruilman intimates Angela to be quiet, Larissa sticks out her tongue	Music (OFF); whispering (ON)	01'11
77	73'15		Angela goes back to the room, where the other girls are; as she tries to leave the house she is held back by a men; Yamamoto and Oshima are there, Yamamoto	Spheric noises (OFF); scraping of a pencil (OFF); clapping of hands (OFF)	00'42

			holds up a contract, Oshima opens a suitcase with money; close shot of Angela and Yamamoto shortly before kissing		
<b>78</b>	<b>73'57</b>	<b>10 Back home (Europe)</b>	Previous real picture shot cross-fades into a drawing; zoom out: Angela at her desk in Belgium drawing the picture; Angela looks out the window, in the garden she sees two women talking, on the right-hand side Yamamoto is lying in a sunbed; CUT; close shot of Angela, Angela writes "The end" underneath the last picture of her comic	Scraping of a pencil (ON); commentary Angela (OFF); music (OFF) (starts: 74'07); ambient noises (ON)	<b>00'41</b>
<b>79</b>	<b>74'38</b>	<b>11 End credits</b>	Small picture on the top shows Angela dressed in white dancing with a portable CD player inside the love hotel room; underneath the picture the credits are shown	Music (OFF)	<b>6'50</b>

### Commentary Angela:

Every line you draw, leads to something. And often you don't even know to where. You go on a journey without knowing how it will end. In comics everything is possible, and every comic has a hero. Heroes only do what they believe is right.

Most comics begin in faraway places, sometimes even other galaxies. This story began at my graduation party.

I had not even started to look for adventure, when the adventure found me.

The night is the best time to leave everything behind. Real heroes just leave. They don't ask for permission.

If you find the beginning, you have already reached the half. And at this point your destiny has been decided. Of course, I didn't realise that the beginning would be so linked to the end.

It must have been the worst time to meet Monika, but I liked her from the very first moment. It's not easy to know friends from enemies. That's what I was about to learn.

Most people seem to have a goal in life, but what happens to those who don't? They drift with no clear destination. And then they get lost and disappear.

A hero never gives up. After all, her mission is waiting – somewhere.

When I draw, I never know what comes first: the idea or the drawing. In the same way there are things one cannot find, one has to be led to them.

A girl has vanished. Another hostess. Is this the reason why you sent me to Tōkyō ? Is this what I was meant to find?

My third night in Tōkyō brought me a little closer to my antagonist. It's easier to recognize evil when one's expecting it. And I was ready.

Kruilman seemed harmless – at least in the beginning. He was a well-known guest in the club. Everyone seemed to know him. I sensed there was a link between him and Larissa. But what was it? – A hero must always be alert, especially when he enters hostile territory. He must understand the tactic of the enemy. This will help to protect him.

[Mail to Yamamoto]: Dear Yamamoto, I don't know where you are at the moment, but I'm looking forward to seeing you. When are you coming? I tried to reach you on the telephone. There is so much I have to tell you. I think I'm uncovering a secret. I must be careful.

When one is looking for something, everything has a meaning. I didn't find very much in Larissa's bag. Just enough to confirm my suspicion.

Whatever he knew, he wasn't going to share it with me.

I was trying to put all the pieces together. A girl had been killed. Slaughtered in a ritual. I wanted to forget all of it, escape my thoughts. I missed you so.

I needed to tell you everything, but I didn't know how. When you were by my side everything seemed so unreal. But what if you didn't believe me? What would become of us then?

So now I would be the next to disappear. What traces had I left behind?

Real heroes never die, because if they did, who would finish their mission? Whatever happens during the journey, it is important to bring the story to a good end.

This is how I became a visitor in my own world.

## Wasabi (Dir.: Gérard Krawczyk / France; Japan: 2001)

No.	Time	Scene/Sequence	Subsequence/Content	Music/Sound	Length
1	00'00	1 Opening credits	Lead of the production company "Europa Corp." (until 00'25); credits are shown in white in form of sound waves on black background; background cross-fades into shots of a club with people dancing (00'41)	music of the production company's lead (OFF); techno music (ON) (starts: 00'26)	01'42
	01'42	2 France			
2	01'42		People dancing in a club; back view of a dancing blond woman in a silver mini skirt; a male narrator in the OFF tells the spectator basic facts about Hubert Fiorentini (the protagonist); Hubert beats the dancing 'girl' and takes her into an interrogation room, with him are two colleagues; Hubert takes off the 'girl's' wig, we see that it is a man	techno music (ON); narrator's commentary (OFF) (01'46-02'12); dialogue (ON)	01'14
3	02'56		Hubert in the police station, gets a call from a bank employee telling him about the overdraft of his bank account; Hubert enters the office of his superior Le Squale [the shark]; Le Squale tells him to stop beating up people; flashback to the club: Hubert beats a couple of other men, than he beats a young men who is telling him that he is the prefect's son	Office sounds (ON); dialogue (ON); techno music (OFF, ON during the flashbacks) (03'50-04'28)	01'51
4	04'47		Inside a hospital room; the injured prefect's son is lying in a bed; Hubert enters, puts a bunch of flowers in the boy's water glass, apologizes and leaves slamming the door; the table with the bunch of flowers crushes, initiating a series of reactions that lead to the bed's collapse and other vases with flowers falling down; Hubert in the hallway gets another phone call from a woman (Sophia) that invites him for lunch the next Sunday, Hubert refuses	Noise of hospital machines (ON); dialogue (ON)	01'20

5	06'07		Back in the interrogation room with Hubert's two colleagues and the transvestite; the colleagues tell Hubert that they haven't been successful; Hubert slaps the transvestite hard in the face and gives him a lighted cigarette; the transvestite admires Hubert's pen; Hubert tells him that it is a gift from the only woman he ever loved and who left him; the transvestite tells him where and when the bank robbery will take place	Dialogue (ON); soft guitar music (OFF) (starts: 06'22; when Hubert slaps the transvestite)	01'24
6	07'31		At the site of the bank robbery, near the Arc de Triomphe; Hubert arrives at the site where an armed police force is guarding the entrance and other police officers are on site; Hubert enters the bank, where two other transvestites and a woman have taken hostages; Hubert manages to take them by surprise kicks one of them in the crotch and beats the other two	Electronic background music (OFF); dialogue (ON)	02'25
7	09'56		Hubert on the golf court (it's Sunday); Le Squale arrives and talks to him about the hospital scene, where the prefect's son suffered more injuries, and about Hubert's "unusual methods", tells him further that the prefect advises him to take a time out for two months; Hubert sees a man trying to break open his superior's car, hits the golf ball and knocks out the man; Le Squale tells him that he has "no friends, no family, which means no roots" and therefore should start a family; Hubert starts telling him about the woman he loved in Japan 19 years ago	Dialogue (ON); dynamic music (OFF) (10'47-11'07; during car breaking); soft classic music (11'36-11'41; during Hubert remembering the love of his life); Asian music (OFF) (starts: 12'15)	02'21
8	12'17		Night in Hubert's house: Sophia has come for dinner; Hubert serves spring rolls and pork in caramel sauce, Chouchen as an aperitif and coffee after dinner; we get to know that his relationship with the Japanese woman lasted only eight months; Sophia leaves because Hubert still regrets the loss of his Japanese girlfriend; Hubert looks at a photo of him and a Japanese woman in his study and	Asian music (OFF) (ends: 13:49); dialogue (ON); classical piano music (OFF) (13'50-14'29; starts when Hubert serves the coffee); dramatic music (OFF) (14'55-16'11; starts when	05'10

			puts in a drawer; that very moment his telephone rings; a Japanese lawyer (Ishibashi) tells Hubert about the death of Miko Kobayashi in Tōkyō who mentioned Hubert as the only beneficiary in her testament; Ishibashi further tells Hubert that he has to leave the next day	Sophia leaves); Asian music (starts: 16'30)	
	<b>17'27</b>	<b>3 Arrival at Tōkyō</b>			
9	17'27		Landing of an airplane; CUT; Hubert inside the airport, gets his luggage, passes the passport control, gets stopped by a customs officer; CUT; a Western looking man (Maurice/'Momo') and a Japanese man (superintendent Yasumoto) walk along a hallway in the airport; they enter a room, inside is Hubert and the customs officer swearing in Japanese and with blood on his face; we get to know that Hubert and Maurice have worked together for the French intelligence service in Japan in the 80s; both leave the airport and sit in Maurice' car talking; leave for Shinjuku	Dynamic music (OFF) (ends: 18'21; when Hubert gets stopped, starts again: 18'26-19'22); airport announcements in Japanese (ON); dialogue (ON); pop music (OFF) (20'38-21'03; from where Hubert and Maurice leave the airport till both are in the car); electronic music (OFF) (starts: 22'06; when they leave in the car)	04'54
10	22'21		Different views of Tōkyō from above	Electronic music (OFF)	00'19
	<b>22'40</b>	<b>4 At the lawyer's office</b>			
11	22'40		Maurice drops Hubert in a bustling street in Shinjuku; Hubert enters the lawyer's office, Ishibashi-san tells Hubert about the testament, Hubert takes and opens a box with Miko's remaining possessions: a key, a letter, a photo; Ishibashi-san tells Hubert that Miko's only will was that he should care for her (respectively their) daughter (Yumi) till she attains full age; Hubert peeks through the keyhole in the other room where his daughter is, she opens the door; Yumi, an ultra-hip young girl with dyed hair, a mini-skirt and tawdry clothes; she screams in Japanese and jumps around, then talks to Hubert in French; Ishibashi-san leaves	Electronic music (OFF) (fade-out, ends: 23'22); street sounds (ON); dialogue (ON); soft music (OFF) (23'42-24'32); starts when Hubert gets the box with Miko's possessions); dynamic music (OFF) (24'38-25'18; starts when Hubert gets to know about the daughter); spheric music (OFF) (26'10)	06'49

			to bring some sake, Yumi starts shouting in Japanese again, Hubert drinks sake from the jar; Ishibashi tells Yumi that Hubert will be her guardian till she attains full age (in two days); Hubert and Yumi leave the office		
12	29'29		Hubert and Yumi walking along a crowded street in Shinjuku, Maurice is waiting in the car	Dialogue (ON); Yumi talking on the phone in Japanese (ON)	01'00
	<b>30'29</b>	<b>5 Crematorium and Miko's burial</b>			
13	30'29		Inside a crematorium; Miko's corpse dressed in white is lying in a coffin; incense sticks besides the coffin; five men in black suits and a priest approach the coffin, while Hubert is talking to Miko's dead body; Hubert picks up something looking like beads with a pair of tweezers from Miko's face and takes dirt from under her fingernails; Miko's body is been taken away, Hubert and Yumi sit down in front of a TV and watch the cremation of the coffin	Asian music (OFF; ends: 32'12); Yumi talking in Japanese (ON); dialogue (ON); soft Western music (OFF) (starts: 32'55)	03'12
14	33'41		Yuki standing on a wall, facing the Rainbow Bridge, disperses her mother's ashes into the river; Hubert introduces Yumi and Maurice	Soft Western music (OFF) (ends: 34'10); dialogue (ON)	00'47
15	34'28		Hubert, Maurice and Yuki walking in a temple area; Yumi's phone rings, she talks in Japanese; while Hubert and Maurice are talking in French	Monotonous singing of monks (ON); dialogue (ON)	00'48
16	35'16		Hubert, Maurice and Yuki enter a small wooden 'Japanese style' house with garden; inside an elderly woman, Miko's elder sister; Hubert and Yumi enter Yumi's room, a mostly pink decorated, crammed room; Yumi gives Hubert Miko's death certificate; Yumi takes a photo of her mother from the wall, Yumi starts crying, Hubert proposes to go shopping; both leave the house, Hubert gives Maurice the things he has to check upon	Dialogue French and Japanese (ON); Japanese electronic music (ON); soft music (OFF) (starts: 38'19; when Yumi takes Miko's photo)	04'06
17	39'22		Yumi and Hubert enter a bank to check Yumi's bank account; Yumi gets a phone call; Hubert has a look at the	Dialogue (ON); dynamic music (OFF) (40'21-41'26);	02'50

			print-out of the bank account: 37,000,000 \$ and that of the interest: 163,000,000\$; Yumi comes back; both leave the bank; CUT; two Japanese men in black suits and with sunglasses appear from behind a column and follow them	mysterious faint electronic music (OFF) (starts: 42'03; when the two men appear)	
	<b>42'12</b>	<b>6 Department store and shopping</b>			
18	42'12		Hubert and Yumi walking on a big zebra crossing in Tōkyō 's (luxury) shopping district Ginza; they enter a shopping mall, Yumi is running around trying all different kinds of stuff; Hubert sees the two men in black in a mirror, borrows Yumi's mobile, calls Maurice, who tells him about the analysis of the beads and dirt from Miko's corpse; Hubert anxiously takes Yumi to the elevator, inside is one of the men, we see four others outside running towards the elevator and a fourth on the escalator; when Yumi and Hubert leave the elevator, Hubert hits the man inside; Yumi running around another floor with clothes, Hubert hits a man in black hidden in a changing room, another hidden behind a mirror, one behind a hallstand, a fourth one and the one on the escalator while following Yumi on her way through the hallstands and out of the mall, where they take a taxi	Faint street sounds (ON); mysterious faint electronic music (OFF), getting loud at 42'54, when Hubert sees the men and turning into electronic dance music at 43'49	04'05
19	46'17		Hubert and Yumi arrive at the Imperial Hotel Tōkyō; the concierge asks for Yumi's age, Hubert tells him that she is his daughter (Yumi still doesn't know and thinks he made it up); they enter the room with a page following with a lot of shopping bags; Yumi runs and jumps around the room, while Hubert checks it; when the doorbell rings he sends Yumi to her room, Maurice enters with two suitcases with all kinds of weapons; Yumi enters dressed in her new clothes, every time she leaves Maurice and Hubert carry on examining the suitcases; Yumi enters a third time in a neon-colour dress and announces she wants to go out;	Electronic dance music (OFF) (ends: 46'46); dance music (OFF) (49'00-49'18; 49'43-50'01) during Yumi's catwalk show); music can be heard faint from the background during Yumi changing for the third time; dialogue (ON); slow electronic music (OFF) (starts: 52'04)	05'54

			Hubert and Maurice decide to go with her		
	<b>52'11</b>	<b>7 Tōkyō Night</b>			
20	52'11		Inside an amusement arcade at night; young Japanese are playing games on different machines; Yumi presents Hubert and Maurice to her friends; Yumi and her friends start dancing on one of the machines, Hubert has to take a turn and 'fails', then Maurice tries; CUT; outside the amusement arcade: a couple of black Mercedes cars stop and men in black suits and with sun glasses get out; CUT; inside Maurice is still dancing, Hubert sees the men in black and is happy, when Yumi and her friend ask him to go to another game machine (a Western shooting game); Hubert sees the men approaching, draws his gun and shoots seven of them, Maurice shouts something in Japanese; outside the amusement arcade Yumi throws up, questions Hubert who he is, starts crying and mumbling Japanese; Hubert sends Maurice off to get more information about Miko's death; Hubert tells Yumi the truth why he came to Japan and that the men in black are after her; Yumi tells Hubert about the flat in the city, where Miko lived during the week	Sound of electronic gadgets, devices and machines (ON); Electronic Music (ON); dialogue (ON); 'score sound' of a game machine (when Hubert shoots the men in black) (OFF); Music (OFF) (starts: 58'20)	09'41
21	61'52		Night: Hubert breaks open the door of an empty flat, he and Yumi enter; Hubert asks if Yumi's mother has been on the "Zen trip" (because of the empty flat) and concludes that somebody has been there before them; outside on a neon sign is written <i>wasabi</i> in <i>hiragana</i> ; Hubert knocks at the wall and finally punches a hole in the wall, he draws out a notebook and asks Yumi what is written there – names and numbers	Music (OFF); sounds of people from the staircase (ON); dialogue (ON)	01'34
22	63'26		Inside the hotel room; the room is devastated; Hubert tells Yumi to sit down and wait; meanwhile he tries to teach Yumi a correct French pronunciation; the telephone rings,	Music (OFF) (ends: 63'58, when Hubert and Yumi sit down to wait); dialogue (ON)	01'52

			a male voice (Kasuhiro Takanawa [Katanawa in the German language version]) asks Hubert for a meeting play golf, he says further that his men are downstairs to pick Hubert up; Hubert agrees		
23	65'18		In the hotel lobby: Hubert and Yumi are standing at the front desk; in front of the main entrance door two men in black suits and with sun glasses are standing; Maurice comes up behind them, calls out for Hubert, waving a file and runs towards the front desk; Hubert tells Maurice that the men at the entrance are waiting for him and Yumi; Maurice tells him he has Miko's file and the analysis of the earth under her nails, Hubert passes him the notebook, tells him to follow them and tells him to intervene in the case of emergency; Yumi and Hubert leave the hotel and get in a waiting black Mercedes; Maurice leaves, too, gets into his car, which then does not start up	Dialogue (ON); Music (OFF) (starts: 65'35)	01'01
	<b>66'19</b>	<b>8 Meeting the Yakuza</b>			
24	66'19		Night: the black Mercedes drives along an empty street and stops at what looks like an underground entrance to a building; Hubert, Yumi and the men in black get out and enter the building; views of a brightly illuminated golf training field; shots of Hubert, Yumi and the men approaching alternate with shots of a man putting on a black leather golf glove; when they arrive the man turns around and shows his face with three scars on the left; he prepares for his stroke, Hubert tells him that it won't work and it doesn't; Takanawa passes him the golf club and asks why he has come back; Takanawa asks if he has come for the money of his daughter; Hubert strikes the ball and hits the hole; Yumi realizes that Hubert is her father and runs towards him screaming; Hubert explains her the circumstances; Takanawa says he wants his money back,	Electronic music (OFF) (ends: 67'26); dialogue (ON); soft music (OFF) (starts: 68'13, when Yumi realizes that Hubert is her father; ends: 69'21, when the men take Yumi away); electronic music (OFF) (starts: 69'23; ends: 70'41, with the end of the fighting scene)	04'59

			Hubert tells him that not even Yumi can withdraw money from her account until she has reached full age (which will be in nine hours); some men leave with Yumi, Takanawa also leaves, Hubert picks up two golf balls with a golf club; fighting scene starts; Hubert with golf balls and golf club versus Japanese men with guns and wins; Maurice crushes through the wall in a Japanese taxi; Hubert tells him he is late, Maurice throws away the unlocked hand grenade, both leave running through the hole shortly before the grenade explodes		
25	71'18		Inside a restaurant downtown Tōkyō, night: Maurice tells Hubert what he found out and shows him a couple of photos of a wedding, the groom is the son of an influential Yakuza boss (Takanawa), called the zebra because of the scars in his face, among the wedding party is Miko; she was a double agent, that was the reason why she left Hubert; a waitress brings a tray with soya sauce and a plate of <i>wasabi</i> ; Hubert takes some with his finger and eats it, asks Maurice the name of it; Maurice tries a little bit himself and can hardly speak any more when Hubert asks him where the dirt under Miko's nails came from - Kyōto	Dialogue (ON)	02'44
	<b>74'02</b>	<b>9 Trip to Kyōto</b>			
26	74'02		Five sequenced shots of a Shinkansen train approaching; passing by Mount Fuji, arriving at the Kyōto train station (2) and the 'Kyōto' train station sign.	Sounds of train (ON); public address announcement at the train station in Japanese (ON)	00'13
27	74'15		Hubert and Maurice get off the train; CUT; both walking in a temple area, they approach a stand with small wooden (wish) boxes, Hubert takes one and opens it with a key he pulls out from his jacket; inside the box is a scroll, a letter from Miko in which she explains everything to Hubert	'Traditional' Asian music (OFF) changes into guitar music (OFF) (starts: 75'14, with Miko's letter); dialogue (ON); sound of water (ON); Miko's voice reading the letter (OFF)	02'04

	<b>76'19</b>	<b>10 Showdown in Tōkyō</b>			
28	76'19		Shot of a clock outside a department store building in Tōkyō (Ginza) showing 10 o'clock; CUT; two black Mercedes approaching, Japanese men in black suits, Takanawa and Yumi get out and enter a bank; Hubert hides in the foyer, at the counter is Maurice, pretending to be a bank employee; Takanawa asks for a bank transfer and fills in a form; Maurice manages the bank transfer on the computer, but types in Hubert's bank account number instead; Yumi has to sign, but hesitates, Maurice motions to her to sign; when Takanawa asks for a receipt Hubert reveals himself; as Takanawa wants to draw his gun, Maurice holds him at gunpoint, the Yakuza men draw their guns, as then do the undercover agents in the bank; CUT; police cars arrive in front of the bank; CUT; showdown: Takanawa draws his gun, shooting begins, Hubert shoots all Yakuza; superintendent Yasumoto waits outside when Hubert, Maurice and Yumi leave the bank	Street noise (ON); dramatic music (OFF); gun-shot noise (ON)	05'28
29	81'47		Inside the bank in France; a secretary tells Hubert's bank manager that his bank account has been balanced	Dialogue (ON)	00'23
	<b>82'10</b>	<b>11 Goodbye Japan</b>			
30	82'10		At the airport in Tōkyō; Yasumoto is there to say goodbye to Hubert, who is approaching with Maurice and Yumi; Maurice gives Hubert a package of <i>wasabi</i> ; Yumi starts crying; Hubert gives her the pen he once got from Miko; Hubert leaves; at the passport control is the same officer he beat on his arrival	Dialogue (ON); airport announcements (ON); soft Japanese pop music (OFF) (starts: 82'54, when Hubert and Maurice hug)	02'40
31	84'50		Hubert on the plane talking to a stewardess; a police officer comes into the cabin and asks whom the two suitcases belong (the weapon suitcases of Maurice)	Dialogue (ON); soft Japanese music (OFF) (ends: 85'08; when the police comes in)	00'24
32	85'14		Shots of a plane leaving, followed by end credits	Energetic Japanese pop music (OFF)	04'45