



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Landscape theory: post-68 revolutionary cinema in Japan

Hirasawa, G.

Citation

Hirasawa, G. (2021, September 28). *Landscape theory: post-68 revolutionary cinema in Japan*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3243318>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3243318>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Conclusion

Landscape theory was first proposed in 1969 and 1970. The impetus for this was the rise and subsequent process of repression of the student movement, centering around *Zenkyoto* (the All Campus Joint Struggle Committee) in 1968 – 69, by the overwhelming power of the state and capitalism. Another significant background factor was Japan's high economic growth from 1954 to 1970, and the homogenization of that growth through massive restructuring that was taking place nationwide, as epitomized by the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and the 1970 Osaka World Exposition. During this transitional period for movements, politics and society, landscape theory was created as a new, revolutionary schema, which was further developed into a theory of reportage and media. Matsuda and Adachi's discussions on their theory of reportage are referenced in Chapter Two and the second half of Chapter Three respectively. As for the development of theories of revolution after landscape theory, our task going forward is to reinvestigate media theories of the 1970's, especially that of Tsumura Takashi.⁴⁰⁴ In the mid-1970's, however, when the movement was in decline, key figures in the development of landscape theory moved in different directions. Adachi went to Palestine; Matsuda relocated to Paris—he was later deported as a political criminal, and after returning to Japan, he continued to work as a film critic. Meanwhile, Sasaki focused on working for television, which he had been involved with since early in his career. Nakahira destroyed all of his photographs, then lost his memory. Toward the mid 1990s, a depoliticization—through politics—progressed on various institutional and individual levels, and the 'bubble economy' came to an end, paving the way for a new structure of power to rise, which landscape theory had problematized.⁴⁰⁵

Under these circumstances, many of the filmmakers who had been struggling alongside Matsuda and Adachi, in practice and in thought, were also forced into difficult positions. After *Dear Summer Sister*

⁴⁰⁴ For his major argument, see Tsumura Takashi, *Media no Seiji* [Politics of Media](Tokyo: Shobunsha, 1974). Also, for discussions alongside the lineage above, see Kogawa Tetuso, *Shutai no Tenkan* [Changing the Subject] (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1978) among others. Also, as for Matsuda's argument, it is crucial to recapture his theories of film and revolution, by way of his *Fukanosei no media* [Impossibility of media](Tokyo: Tabata Shoten, 1973), in light of media theory, rather than specifying their development by tracing their path to the theory of reportage.

⁴⁰⁵ For a political and social analysis of the 1980's, see, Takashi Sakai, *Jiyuron*[On Liberty](Tokyo: Seidosha, 2001), "Posutomodan towa Nandattaka—On the '80s" [What was Postmodernism?: On the 1980's], *Gendai Shiso* [Contemporary Thoughts] 29, no.14 (November 2001).

(1973), Oshima dissolved Sozosha, stopped producing films with ATG, and sought production cost from abroad, meanwhile in Japan he continued to appear as a TV commentator and produced documentary programs. Wakamatsu continued to shoot pink film, however, was unable to create relevant films after Adachi left for Palestine in 1974. He regained acclaim around 1980 when he moved away from Pink films. Yoshida had to spend a long time away from filmmaking after *Coup d'etat* (1973). In addition, ATG, which had supported experimental art film production in Japan, was forced to change its policy: after *Denen ni Shisu* (Pastoral: To Die in the Country, 1974) by Terayama Shuji. Art Theatre Shinjuku Bunka, ended its role as the direct venue for ATG, and its producer Kuzui, an icon of ATG, also quit. The cinema movement thereafter moved on to different horizons—with Cinema Expressway led by Hara Masato and Goto Kazuo and the dawn of the PIA, which later took root as an independent film festival; in the domain of commercial films, Nikkatsu Roman Porno, with film directors such as Kumashiro Tatsumi, Sone Chusei, and Tanaka Noboru; *jitsuroku* (real-life account) series, the post-yakuza films of Toei, with Fukasaku Kinji, Ito Shuya and others; as well as new pink films by Takahashi Banmei and others. It also became evident that, as the latter half of the seventies was approaching, the attempt to create a new post-movement front gained a certain maturity, shifting to different phase.⁴⁰⁶ Broadly speaking, these attempts represented a new movement, however their political content was eviscerated, and, as art and culture were not excepted, discussing politics through cinema was strongly avoided.⁴⁰⁷ In other words Japan became subsumed by the system described by landscape theory. Though so-called discussions on landscape surfaced regularly, only Matsuda's landscape theory was not discussed. However, with the collapse of the Cold War structure and anti-globalization movements on the rise, a reevaluation of, and interest in his pioneering argument began to surface, gradually spreading internationally. However in order to recapture

⁴⁰⁶ Matsuda defended them as new cinematic movement by the younger generation. See Matsuda Masao, "Jishuseisakueiga – sono seikyo no imi," [Independent Movies –Meaning of their success], *Kinema Jumbo*, no.677 (15th February 1976): 91-92; "Wakai sedai no Eiga Shiso," [Cinematic thoughts of the young generation], *Shinario* (Scenario) 32, no.12 (December 1976): 44-49.

⁴⁰⁷ Film theories focusing on the analysis of images on the screen became dominant around latter half of the '70s, with literature scholar Hasumi Shigehiko as a central figure. Critiquing talking about politics in cinema, as a result, it established an extremely exclusive and thus 'political' sphere of cinematic debate. For conversation encapsulating this transition, see Hasumi Shigehiko and Matsuda Masao, "Nihoneiga no tenkeiki o megutte '80nendai nyu webu eno kiki to kigu," [Concerning the transformational period in Japanese cinema: Expectation and Fear towards '80s New Wave], *Bessatsu shithi roodo* [City Road Extra Issue], No.1 (June 1981): 40-56.

landscape theory, a clarification of its theoretical and historical position, as well as its political context—which was difficult to identify at the time—was required.

Based on the establishment of this problem, Chapter One traces the introduction of landscape and theories of landscape to Japan. Theories of landscape in Japan started during the process of Japan's modernization (or the Meiji Restoration) with Shiga Shigetaka's *On the Japanese Landscape*, and were subsequently systematized thereafter. By following their historical development, while referencing landscape in photography and film, I focus on the discussion between writers and critics, including Kamei Fumio, Dazai Osamu, Sakaguchi Ango, and Hanada Kiyoteru, that are rarely mentioned in the context of existing theories of landscape, and I discover a problematic that can be connected to Matsuda's landscape theory. In addition, I explored theoretical connections between writers and critics who were considered to have little relevance to Matsuda's landscape theory -- Kanzo Uchimura Kanzo, Kunio Yanagita Kunio, Kunikida Doppo, Tokutomi Roka, and Mizoguchi Kenji. Given the fact that landscape theory and Matsuda's argument rigorously rejected theories of "art" and "culture," and developed in a singular context, it might be against the intention of Matsuda and others to place their argument in the existing theoretical lineage. However, in order to clarify the possibility of landscape theory, I found it necessary to refer to the prevailing history of art, including theories of Japanese landscape, and culture, and to reinterpret it in that context. In fact, it can be said that this task of reinterpreting landscape theory was effective as a response to criticism of it, due to both its political aspects as well as its lack of historical and theoretical dimensions.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁸ For an excellent summary of theories of landscape, including a (not thoroughly explained) mention of Matsuda's theory, see the following texts: Ueno Koshi, "Fukey toiu bunmyaku," [The context of landscape], *Shashin Sochi* [Photographic Apparatus], no.4 (March 1982): 56-67; Matsuhata Tsuyoshi, "The Epistemology of Landscape: On the Origin of the Landscape," *10+1*, no.9 (Spring 1997): 68-87. Whereas the former discusses landscape photography with a focus on *Provoke* for the special issue on "Landscape Photography," the latter mainly examines the concept and history of landscape from the perspective of urban studies for the special issue "Landscape" (Fukey/Randosukepu). For other discussions related to landscape during the period of 1970's to 1990's, see the following texts: "Gerira, toshikukan no byori," [Guerrilla: Pathology of urban space], *Gendaishiso* 6, no. 10 (August 1978); "Tokyo no fukey," [Landscape in Tokyo], *Gendaishitecho* [Modern poetry notes] 21, no.7, (July 1978); "Fukeyron Seitaigaku," [Ecology of landscape theory], *Gendaishiso* 20, no.9, (September 1992). In a separate context, Takanashi Yutaka who was a member of the journal *Provoke* argued that photography should move outside theories of landscape and urban studies, praising the work of Nakahira Takuma on one hand, critiquing his theoretical inclination to rescue work (sakuhin) with language (kotoba) on the other. Though Takanashi critiques

Chapter Two traces the development of landscape theory by Matsuda. Despite its nomenclature, landscape theory was not presented as a unified theoretical system on the theme of landscape, but was in fact a series of texts that Matsuda wrote on film, art, and politics for various journals and magazines according to their requests, which was later compiled into the book *The Extinction of Landscape*. I examined discussions related to landscape theory based mainly on the essays included in this book, as well as other texts and transcripts of conversations and roundtables conducted at that time. Because there were quite a few essays on politics in *The Extinction of Landscape*, while identifying landscape theory as central to my argument, I also considered important to review and analyze it not only as a theory per se, but also more broadly with his essays on revolution and movement as a background. I further extended my investigation into landscape theory by including Nakahira's argument, as well as referring to theories and criticism on landscape developed by Sasaki, Hara, and Tsumura Takashi. Whereas not all of debates on landscape theory may be noteworthy, due to the significant differences in understanding the concept of landscape between commentators, as well as the issue that there were factious political critiques, it was meaningful to organize those debates for the examination of landscape theory. Meanwhile, I also touched on theories on landscape in literature by Okuno Takeo, in architecture by Hara Hiroshi and Miyauchi Ko during the same period, as well as those by literary scholar such as Karatani Kojin and Hasumi Shigehiko that were developed after landscape theory by Matsuda and others. It can be argued that the clarification of theoretical and historical differences and similarities among these theories helps articulate the pioneering role and uniqueness of their landscape theory. The exploration of the theory of reportage as theoretical successor of landscape theory further delineates the relevance and impact of landscape theory.

Chapter Three traces Adachi's development as an author and theoretician based on the history of new wave cinema in Japan through examining two films, *A.K.A. Serial Killer*—the film upon which landscape theory could be developed—and *Red Army/PFLP: Declaration of World War*, which marked the transition from landscape theory to the theory of reportage, and examines them not only theoretically,

Matsuda's essay on Nakahira, the fact that Nakahira was vigorously involved in theorizing landscape theory was not mentioned. See Takanashi Yutaka, "Ronkei no Kanata e," [Beyond debates on the landscape theory] *Eureka* 16, no.4 (April 1984): 57-61.

but also in terms of their screening method. Adachi did not write as many texts on landscape theory as Matsuda. For this reason, it is believed that for landscape theory, Matsuda assumed theoretical responsibility, whereas Adachi was in charge of the actual production of films. In this chapter, however, the analysis of the films is specifically made based on Adachi's statements, including those made in conversations and roundtable discussions. On the other hand, as for the theory of reportage—proposed mainly by Adachi—I presented its theoretical analysis in connection with his practice, including the production of *Red Army/PFLP*, as well as the screening troop movement. In addition, due to the tendency in the reception of A.K.A. Serial Killer and *The Red Army/PFLP*—that is, the former based on interest in landscape theory and the aesthetics characterized by the film's images, consisting exclusively of shots of landscape, whereas for the latter, political aspects were emphasized—neither film tended to be watched in detail as a film work in and of itself. To remedy that, I introduced a cinematic-based analysis of these films, with reference to their political or theoretical context.

Chapter Four examined films from the works of two film directors, Wakamatsu and Oshima, who were closely associated with Adachi and Matsuda, and who were related to landscape theory, i.e. Wakamatsu's *Go, Go, Second Time Virgin*, and *Sex Jack*, as well as Oshima's *Boy*, and *The Man Who Left His Will on Film*. *Go, Go, Second Time Virgin* is said to be the starting point of landscape theory, whereas *The Man Who Left His Will on Film* is considered to be a representative of the films of landscape theory. Since both films were often referenced through Matsuda's argument, I discussed landscape theory as seen from the side of these filmmakers, with reference to their writings and statements. In addition, as representative of filmmakers in the world who attempted to explore politics in film via landscape during the same period, I made comparisons with Jean-Luc-Godard and his Dziga Vertov group in light of this theoretical background, thereby examining the universal dimension of landscape theory.

Japan currently finds itself in a resurgence of 'grand narratives' of the past, such as the reconstruction of the country through high economic growth, revisiting the Tokyo 1964 Summer Olympics via the 2021 games, and the Osaka Expo '70, scheduled for 2025. This is obviously one of the desperate measures taken to conceal various social problems and contradictions that arise due to the

capitalist economy, single-party dominance and the strength of bureaucracy. Landscape theory could play a new and contemporary role to counter such reactionary trends. It is my hope that the scholarly and historical significance of landscape theory demonstrated in this dissertation will be further developed, theoretically and practically, within a new global context.