

**FASCINATION WITH THE MODERNIZATION OF JAPAN –
REACTIONS OF THE WEST-EUROPEAN PART
OF THE SILK ROAD THROUGH THE PRISM OF
REVERSIBLE EXOTISME ^a**

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Abstract

The interruption of Japan's foreign relations, which has lasted since the beginning of the 7th century, was interrupted by the signing of the treaty of Kanagawa and the seizure of power by the emperor Mutsuhito, who called his reign the Meiji period, or „Enlightened rule.” It was during this period that the foundations for modernization of today's sophisticated Japan were laid. Japan begins to open up to the world, but it retains its independence, combining tradition and modernism in all segments. The journey and the exchange of ideas that have inspired many literary works, not only by the French writer Pierre Loti, on whose work this paper is partially based, then artistic ideas and artefacts, aim to explore the author of this paper, which focuses on the presentation of elements of Japanese art and culture at the Exhibition Universelle in Paris, 1867.

The analytical-comparative method used in this paper shows the remarkable place of Japan in the cross-section that transported silk from the Mediterranean to East Asia, which has become a symbol of the connection between East and West and metaphors for various myths and legends from previous periods, and today the link between western and eastern cultural development models, whose proximity and distance are constantly changing, leaving a strong mark on all societies.

Key words: Meiji restoration, modernization, Japonisme, influence, exotisme.

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ФАСЦИНАЦИЈА МОДЕРНИЗАЦИЈОМ ЈАПАНА – РЕАКЦИЈЕ ЗАПАДНОЕВРОПСКОГ ДЕЛА ПУТА СВИЛЕ ПРАЋЕН КРОЗ ПРИЗМУ РЕВЕРЗИБИЛНОГ ЕГЗОТИЗМА

Апстракт

Прекид односа Јапана са иностранством, који је трајао од почетка VII века, завршен је потписивањем уговора у Канагави и преузимањем власти од стране цара Мацухита, који је своју владавину назвао периодом Меиђи, односно „Просвећеним владањем“. У овом периоду је постављен темељ модернизације данашњег високоразвијеног Јапана. Јапан почиње да се отвара према свету, али чува своју независност, комбинујући у свим сегментима традиционалност и модернизам. Путовање и размена идеја које су инспирисале бројна књижевна дела, не само француског писца Пјера Лотија, на чијем раду је делимично заснован овај рад, затим уметничких идеја и артефаката – циљ су истраживања аутора овог текста, којим се у први план ставља представљање елемената јапанске уметности и културе на Светској изложби у Паризу 1867. године. Аналитичко-компаративним методом, примењеним у овом раду, приказано је изузетно место Јапана на трансверзали којом је преношена свила од Медитерана до Источне Азије, која постаје симбол повезаности између Истока и Запада и метафора за различите митове и легенде ранијих периода, а данас веза између западних и источњачких културних модела развоја, чија се блискост и удаљеност непрестано смењују, остављајући снажан траг у свим друштвима.

Кључне речи: Меиђи рестаурација, модернизација, жапонизам, утицај, егзотичност.

INTRODUCTION

The Silk Road, as a network of trade routes which connected the East and West was a central economic, political, cultural and religious interactions between these regions from almost 2000 years.

The object of this paper are the influence and interaction between Japanese and Western civilization, in almost every field of culture and art, but also industry, which continues through the New Silk Road today.

Thus, the work will include an analysis of the impact that Japan's participation at the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris had on Western civilization and the analysis of works of Japanese and French literature, most notably the work of French writer Pierre Loti, who approached the then-distant Japanese civilization to the French reader. An analysis of work of artists from all cultural fields from the second half of the XIX century, as well as contemporary artists, will be included, so that, through a broad multidisciplinary approach, taking into account the significant number of factors and components that are an integral part of the historical development of every society, conclusions and new ways of exchanging cultural experiences, avoiding cultural obstacles in this increasingly important geographical route for the dissemination and exchange of experiences in all these areas.

The resulting data can certainly and should be the basis for new research, which is the primary goal of this paper.

ART OF JAPAN – EXPOSITION UNIVERSELLE, 1867 PARIS

Japanese art and culture was first introduced to Western civilization during the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris.

In this period of Japanese history, the emperor was still only *de jure* sovereign of Japan, and *de facto*, this duty was exercised by a shogun of the Tokugawa family who gave fifteen shoguns, who were the equivalent of dictators, but even more today, than in ancient times. The center of military government - Bakufu - was in the city of Edo, or Tokyo today.

The shogunate which founded Tokugawa Ieyasu at the beginning of the 17th century, in fear of foreign influences, in particular Spain and Portugal, restricted trade and severed all ties with Catholic Europe. The Tokugawa shoguns intended to develop trade, while clans such as the Shimazu of Satsuma wanted to suppress all attempts to reach foreigners.

The samurai became an army of shogunates, but had no enemies to fight. In the following century, their power declined, compared to the strengthening of the merchant class, which also weakened the emergence of European and American ships in the waters of the Sea of Japan in the first half of the 19th century.

There was also a civil war in which the Tokugawa shogunate was expelled and the emperor returned to its former position in 1868. The founders of modern Japan understood that instead of suppressing the barbarians, cooperation with foreigners was necessary for the survival of the nation. Thus, the old practice of having a privileged samurai class has been broken.

The enthusiasm for the artefacts exhibited in the pavilion of the Champ de Mars, speaking of thousands of objects by various craftsmen and artists, provoked a strong reaction in the artistic, educational and industrial circles of visitors to the exhibition.

Several hundred artefacts in porcelain, bronze and estampes, selected by Britain's first consul general in Japan, Sir Rutherford Alcock, were exhibited in London, 1862, but only five years later at the Exposition Universelle in Paris, the Empire of the sun, which began slowly to open to the world, officially participated in an International exhibition which would represent a real discovery for Western civilization.

The suspended government, represented by the young prince Tokugawa Akitake, sent several thousand artefacts to Paris.



Photo 1. Photo of Japanese delegations at the International exhibition, Paris, 1867, Commission Imperiale du Japon, (1868). Histoire de l'Art du Japon. [History of Japanese Art.] Paris: Maurice de Brunoff

But the militant Satsuma and Chōshū (薩摩長州同盟) alliance, founded by the heads of the feudal domains of Satsuma and Chōshū in 1866 to restore imperial Japan, also has its own delegation.

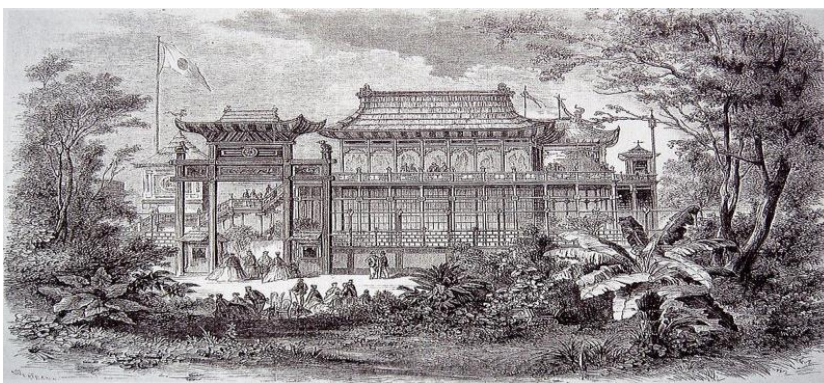


Photo 2. Japanese pavilion at the International exhibition, Paris, 1867, Commission Imperiale du Japon, (1868). Histoire de l'Art du Japon. [History of Japanese Art.] Paris: Maurice de Brunoff

The Japanese pavilion in the *Champ de Mars* was designed by architect Alfred Waterhouse, while the Japanese farm was set up in the *Jardin de Trocadero*.



Photo 3. Photo of the Japanese farm, Champs de Mars, World exhibition, Paris, 1867, Commission Imperiale du Japon, (1868). Histoire de l'Art du Japon. [History of Japanese Art.] Paris: Maurice de Brunoff

The first French General Consul in Japan, Gustave Duchesne de Bellecourt, reports on the event in the *Revue des deux mondes* and expresses his admiration for porcelain and less for weapons, which also occupied a significant place in the exhibition.

The author of the publication *Histoire générale de l'Exposition universelle de 1867*, Pierre Aymar-Bression, uses the characteristic lyrical style while describing the presence of the Japanese artistic and industrial objects: „Les Japonais, ce peuple artiste dont les principales qualités de leur art sont : l'invention, l'imagination et le goût de la perfection. L'exposition japonaise nous fera rêver longtemps! Elle est de nature à réduire sérieusement nos prétentions artistiques“, avant de conclure:¹ “Yes, Japan has a lot of secrets to teach us!” (Aymar-Bression, 1988, p. 48).

Interestingly, the translator from the Japanese delegation, Tadamas Hayashi, stayed in Paris. He became the first Japanese art dealer and founded a company to import Japanese prints, which he advertised in the already illustrated magazine *Paris*. Tadamas bequeathed his collection of Sword Guardians to the Louvre Museum.

More than 1300 pieces of Japanese artefacts were left in France at the end of the Exposition Universelle. Some of them were sold at an auction organized after the exhibition, and some continued to circulate among the first collectors of japonaiserie.

¹ **In-text citation:**

(Aymar-Bression, 1988), i.e. (Aymar Bression, 1998, p 48)

In 'References':

Aymar-Bression, P. (1988). „Oui, le Japon a bien des secrets à nous apprendre !“

The term Japonisme, started as a “fury“ for the collection of Japanese works of art, by which the French journalist, critic and collector Philippe Burty described a strong interest for specimens of works of art and Japanese decorative objects.

UKIYO-e AND FRENCH PEINTERS

Then also the Japanese artistic direction of Ukiyo-e, literally translated “floating image“, which became popular in Japan during the second half of the 17th century, through wood carvings and Japanese paintings which painted landscapes and presented Kabuki theater actors, sumo wrestlers, various scenes from folk tales and legends, samurai battles, exert a powerful influence on the painters of primitive impressionism. In addition to this direction, Western painting, especially French, was influenced by other Japanese painting art directions, such as Kanô, Maruyama, Nikonga, Rimpa, etc.

I will immediately mention the influence of Katsushika Hokusai on the canvases of Claude Monet and Pierre-Auguste Renoir, who even based their work on Hokusai's ukiyo-e graphics, then on Edgar Degas and Edouard Manet, then on the post-impressionist Paul Gauguin, Van Gogh, on Toulouse Lautrec and artists from other western countries, Gustav Klimt and Franz Marc, whose Jugendstil style drew ideas from Japanese art.



Photo 4. Katsuhika Hokusai, The Great Wawe off Haganawa, Holmes, C.J. (2014). Hokusai. New York: Parkstone Press International.

Claude Monet painted the bridges of the Giverny Garden, from his Water Lilies series, inspired by the Japanese form, and we should not forget to mention one of his earlier works, a Japanese woman with a fan.



Photo 5. Claude Monet, The Japanese Footbridge Wildenstein, D. (2019). Monet or The Triumph of Impressionism. Cologne: Taschen.

Edgar Degas's drawings and pastels express a reflection of Japanese compositional style, and the wide-area design in one color is found with Gauguin and Toulouse Lautrec.

The reason for the earlier partial interest for Japan is present through epistolary novels, which were published either as a whole or as magazine articles during this period. After the Exposition Universelle, a two-volume study of the Art of Japan was published, in 1883, and from 1881 to 1891, the richly illustrated journal *Artistic Japan* was published, which aimed to promote the influence of Japanese design among European artists.

In order to show all segments of the rich Japanese civilization at one of the next World exhibitions, which again took place in Paris (where the Bing, Barte and Guimet collections attracted a lot of attention when it comes to decorative art), the Japanese Imperial Commission publishes an extensive two-volume publication *Japan at the 1878 Exposition Universelle* (*Le Japon, Exposition universelle de 1878*).



Photo 6. Toulouse Lautrec, Divan Japonais, Frey, J. (1995). Toulouse –Lautrec: A Life. London: Orion Publishing.

The first part contains a detailed description of the geography and history of Japan, and the second volume, which is more interesting for this paper, contains five chapters entitled Arts, Education, Industrial Production and Agriculture and Horticulture.

The chapter on education, chronologically conceived, begins from the ancient period, when no written form of expression was developed in Japan. The Japanese emperors Kaika and Sujin (157-50 BC) introduced the Korean script. During the sixteenth year of Emperor Ojin's reign, in the 3rd century, Chinese books (in the fields of medicine and astronomy) were imported and the influence of Chinese literature became dominant. At the beginning of the seventh century, the first students from Japan went to study in China, and in the middle of the same century, Emperor Tenji founded the University of Japan and appointed professors at this first Japanese public educational institution. In the first year of the period Taihō, Emperor Mommu (701-704) established in each province public colleges under the supervision of the aforementioned University of Edo.

During this period, the studies lasted for nine years and students were selected from the ranks of young people aged thirteen to sixteen. Enrollment issues were statutory and covered six areas. The study program included four sections: history and geography, philosophy, law and mathematics, and in two separate areas were studied music and calligraphy and medicine. The seriousness of the preparation of the Japanese Imperial Commission for the Exposition Universelle in 1878 is also evidenced by a precise account of the detailed development of the educational system, which at the time of writing this study is already numbered by ten universities. During this period, France sent professors to Japan to teach at Japanese universities. In sales exhibitions of Japanese artists's works, a portion of the proceeds is spent on expanding French language studies and establishing a Franco-Japanese language alliance.



Photo 7. Jules Chéret, *Exposition des maîtres japonais à l'École des Beaux-Arts*, poster *Journal of Japonisme*. (2017). Netherlands: Brill, vol 2, p.11

JAPONISME IN OTHER ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL FORMS

Since 1850, the Parisian auctioneer Hôtel Drouot has organized the annual public sale of Japanese art objects. Napoléon III style, when it comes to furniture, will reflect Japanese art through the use of black lacquer with mother-of-pearl inlays, while from 1867, Gabriel Viardot will produce furniture as replicas of the existing Japanese furniture.

In their newspaper in 1851, the Gonkur Brothers talk about a salon adorned with Japanese art objects: screens, candles, estampes and porcelain.

The porcelain factory in Sèvres is increasingly inspired by Japanese designs (the first service under the name “Rousseau“ is manufactured), and Satsuma ware, or Satsuma porcelaine) will become one of the most famous and most exported Japanese products during the Meiji period.



Photo 8. Traditional service Satsuma ware, Eriksen, S. & De Bellaigue, G. (1968). Sèvres Porcelain. USA, AbeBooks.

At all four world exhibitions held in Paris between 1867 and 1900, government representatives were also present, each time becoming more aware of the influence and prestige their empire was receiving in the west. And it is about the millions of visitors who have simply printed on these exhibits to see what has now arrived from Japan.

TRILOGY ABOUT JAPAN – PIERRE LOTI

One example of Japan's fascination with literature is Pierre Loti's trilogy about Japan, which is viewed by contemporary critics as a scene in which exoticism is opposed to colonialism, just as romanticism was opposed to naturalism. Pierre Loti was an officer in the French Navy, which, in addition to aspiring all artists of the time to be *quelque part ailleurs, quelque part plus haut*, gave him the opportunity to physically imprint on what attracted him and to express through his works what I named for my doctoral thesis as a reversible exoticism.

The first part of his trilogy on Japan, entitled *Madame Crysanthème*, was published in 1868 by Loti. This is an autobiographical novel

about Loti's first trip to Japan, about his life with eighteen-year-old Japanese Oikané-San, or Kikou-San, or Mrs. Chrysanthemum, whom he married the day after he arrived in Nagasaki, 1885, and which he would leave later, less than two months of marriage.

The closed civilization, which Europe did not know much about, was therefore strange to Loti. Even, as he stated several times, he did not know if he was in a French colony, in Australia, or in New Zealand.

The intertwined thematic-lexical exoticism is present, as already stated, from the very beginning of the novel, from the description of landing on, or entering Nagasaki, but from page to page changes its focus - from the description of nature to customs, then to inhabitants and in this example, specifically Loti's observations regarding the Japanese language.

During this first visit to Japan, Loti hardly understood the Japanese language at all, so he only described the experience seen and not the inner feelings of women of then-Japan. In this way, he painted a woman who is a doll in a kimono, calm and submissive who does not show her feelings and who reconciles herself to the destiny that, according to Japanese laws at the time, foreigners can buy her and be with her while they are in Japan.

In the last chapter, before parting with Madam Chrysanthemum, Pierre Lottie explicitly states that he bought Madam Chrysanthemum to enjoy himself during his stay in Japan, and there is the inevitable question of a Western civilization man: "What will be the last act of this little Japanese comedie of mine?" (Loti, 1981, p. 78).

In the whole trilogy on Japan, it is imperative that the readers' attention be drawn to the frequent use of the adjective small, of course, not in pejorative terms, but as a form of cultural exotisme.

The way the home was furnished and decorated was also unusual for Lottie. The exotisme of everyday life is shown here by a description of an ikebana made by Chrysanthemum, which Loti admired and acknowledged that the inhabitants of Western civilization would not be able to make it:² "What form apart they still have, these bouquets arranged by Chrysanthemum: Something difficult to define, a japanese slenderness, a prepared grace that we could not give them." (Loti, 1981, p. 71).

In addition to the ikebana, the exotic connotation of the Loti was also given to famous Japanese bouquets made from native species of flowers.

² **In-text citation:**

(Loti, 1981, p 49),

In 'References':

Loti, P. (1981). „ Quelle forme à part ils ont toujours, ces bouquets arrangés par Chrysanthème : Quelque chose de difficile à définir, une sveltesse japonaise, une grâce apprêtée que nous ne saurions pas leur donner. “

Exotic from the sphere of everyday life, Loti also approached the western reader with a description of the custom that the Japanese must take off their footwear before entering the home and with a description of his wife who was resting in the afternoon by lying on the floor. Siesta was familiar to the European, and specifically French reader - Provence, Languedoc-Roussillon, but it was exotic that Madame Chrysanthème slept on the floor.

He continues the exoticism of the traditional sphere by describing cemeteries on the hills above Nagasaki, which according to the writer were not at all such as to cause a feeling of sadness: ³ “And these mountains all around Nagasaki are full of cemeteries; for centuries and centuries, people have been climbing there dead.” (Loti, 1981, p.75).⁴ And he immediately passes to the descriptions of eating habits, which are also exotic - “incredible thing” (Loti, 1981, p.38), that is, something amazing as Loti himself said. According to Japanese tradition, Chrysanthemum has two plums, which are first dipped in a kind of compote liquid and then dipped in powdered sugar. Of course, tea is obligatory. And other meals are completely different from Western civilization. Lunch consists of a number of smaller meals prepared by the landlady and which are, of course, eaten with chopsticks. There is also an exotic choice of dishes: a kind of sparrow platters, stuffed shrimp, seaweed in a sauce, salty candy, and especially dessert because of the amount served. In fact, it is a type of cooked rice on the water, which Chrysanthemum takes repeatedly. In the descriptions of the dishes, he constantly uses colors to emphasize the specificity of the meals, that is, their variety and thus to attract the readers' attention:⁵ “This continues in the course of the day with two very

³ **In-text citation:**

(Loti, 1981, p 75),

In 'References':

Loti, P. (1981). „ Quelle forme à part ils ont toujours, ces bouquets arrangés par Chrysanthème : Quelque chose de difficile à définir, une sveltesse japonaise, une grâce apprêtée que nous ne saurions pas leur donner. “

⁴ **In-text citation:**

(Loti, 1981, p 38),

In 'References':

Loti, P. (1981). „ la chose incroyable“

⁵ **In-text citation:**

(Loti, 1981, p 77),

In 'References':

Loti, P. (1981). „ Cela se continue dans le courant du jour par deux dînettes très drôlement ordonnées. De chez madame Prune, où ces choses se cuisinent, on les lui monte sur un plateau de laque rouge, dans de microscopiques tasses à couvercle ...

Mais ce qui ne change jamais, ni chez nous ni ailleurs, ni au sud de l'empire ni au nord, c'est le dessert et la façon de le manger : après tant de petits plats pour rire, on apporte une cuve en bois cerclée de cuivre, une cuve énorme, comme pour Gargantua, et contenant jusqu'au bord du riz cuit à l'eau pure ; Chrysanthème en remplit un très

oddly ordered dinettes. From Madama Prune's, where these things are cooked, they are brought up to her on a red lacquer tray, in microscopic cups with lids ... But what never changes, neither at home nor elsewhere, neither in the south of the empire nor in the north, is the dessert and the way to eat it: after so many small dishes for laughs, we bring a wooden vat encircled with copper, an enormous tub, as for Gargantua, and containing up to the edge of the rice cooked in pure water; Chrysanthemum fills a very large bowl (sometimes two, sometimes three), dirties the snowy whiteness with a black sauce, with fish, which is contained in a fine blue cruet ... The we collect the small cups and the small lids, the last ones, last crumbs fallen on these mats so white, nothing should ever tarnish the irreproachable cleanliness." (Loti, 1981, p.77).

The last paragraph of this chapter also discusses another aspect of eating habits. The attention is paid to the type of used pottery and cutlery, their size, shape, material from which it is made, as well as the special attention that the Japanese pay to table and tablecloth to be clean before, during and after the meal.

The fascination with sounds that characterize the different countries in which Loti served, is reflected in the fact that he did not fail to describe in detail every sound that was interesting to him, which was of course different from the sounds we are used to. His descriptions were so faithful and specific that even the reader could hear them, such as moving the paper walls from the following example:⁶ "The sound of those innumerable wooden panels being pulled and closed at the beginning of each night in all Japanese houses is one of the things of this country that will remain in my memory" (Loti, 1981, p. 84).

In this way, he combined exoticism on the phonetic level with exoticism in architecture, not only focusing on the description of the external appearance of buildings, but also their interiors, while emphasizing simplicity.

Simplicity attracted the writer's attention, so that, while describing it, he played with contrasts, as a stylistic figure which, in parallel setting opposites, mutually reinforces the meaning of one and the other term, in this case the adjective or noun to which the adjectives refer.

grand bol (quelquefois deux, quelquefois trois), en salit la blancheur neigeuse avec une sauce noire, au poisson, qui est contenue dans une fine burette bleue ... Ensuite on ramasse les petites tasses et les petits couvercles, les dernières miettes tombées sur ces nattes si blanches dont rien ne doit ternir jamais l'irréprochable netteté. "

⁶ **In-text citation:**

(Loti, 1981, p 84),

In 'References' :

Loti, P. (1981). „ Le bruit de ces innombrables panneaux de bois que l'on tire et que l'on ferme, au commencement de chaque nuit, dans toutes les maisons japonaises, est une des choses de ce pays qui me resteront dans la mémoire. “

The description of the Japanese flag, which is still a symbol of simplicity and diversity today, of course through the use of contrasting adjectives, as noted above, is an example of its minute analysis of cultural elements.

The rich Japanese civilization, as already stated, was at the end of the Edo Bakufu, or Tokugawa shogunate period. The power of the Samurai, the shogunate army is weakened, as there is no internal enemy to fight with. Japan is therefore opening up to the world, and with the advent of European and American ships in the waters of the Sea of Japan, a stronger trading class.

A closed civilization, of which Europe did not know much, must have been new and strange also for Loti. This is probably the reason that idioms have been present from the very beginning, and their frequent contextual use certainly represented Loti's desire to bring Western readers closer to the basics of the Japanese language. And to alleviate his impotence, or even anger at not being able to understand the ideograms of the Japanese language, to provide readers with information on whether the Japanese language truly reflects the beauty of the objects and beings he is surrounded with at every turn.

At Mr. Kangaroo's dinner, where he went to find a girl to marry, he was able to understand the meanings of women's names, which were mostly the names of flowers and fruits: Miss Jasmine - Mademoiselle Jasmine, Miss Carnation - Mademoiselle Cillet, of course Madam Chrysanthemum - Madame Chrysanthème, Miss Peach - Mademoiselle Abricot, Miss Plum - Mademoiselle Prune, Miss Snow - Mademoiselle Neige and Miss Moon - Mademoiselle Lune.

Lottie and Chrysanthemum went out to tea parties almost every night. That was an opportunity for Loti to make the image of Japan as authentic as possible by coloring and listing unusual male and female names. But also by the descriptions of the shops they visited when they have been returned at home, as well as the names of the sales people and what they were selling.

They always came first to the Extremely Clean Lady, Madame Très-Propre in French and O Séi-San in Japanese, who sells paper lanterns and struggles every time removing their favorite gray or red from the ceiling of the store.

Then they stopped by Mrs. Clock - Madame L'Heure, that is, Tôki San, where they bought pink and white candy.

This autobiographical novel, which also inspired Puccini to write *Madame Butterfly* is, according to the painter Philippe Lejeune, a fictional novel of what the author saw and experienced during his first stay in Japan. In the last part of Loti's trilogy on Japan, we learn that Mrs. Chrysanthemum married a lantern maker and lives in a neighboring city.

For the second time, Pierre Loti came to Japan in 1885, which would give him the opportunity to write in his own style *Autumn Story-*

telling from Japan - Japonerie d'automne. Minuscule descriptions imbued with his peculiar sense of humor, witness the scenes that Japanese writers still inspire today, such as the entertainment scene in Yedo.

From Kobe to Kyoto he travels by train, and in the preface addresses Edmond de Goncourt and mentions a train traveling at incredible speed, informing his readers of Japan's extremely rapid modernization. It is equally well represented as a Japanese village and city in the midst of spectacular modernization of Japan, which by then was almost closed to foreigners, and a paradoxical reality in which the land of the rising sun with extremely pronounced traditional refinement embraces the radical transformations of society in the dawn of the new century.

In nine chapters of this novel we find contrasting comparisons - the comparison of street noise and silence in the temple, salons with a large amount of furniture and decorative objects in France, and private residences in Japan.

He also cites a part of Van Gogh's letter in which Van Gogh asks his brother Theo: "Do you think that the real Japanese have nothing on their walls?" (Loti, 1984, p. 123).

So, we can inevitably conclude that the greatest artists in Europe read Loti to get better acquainted with Japan.

Now, more and more often, we also come across words from the Japanese language, such as djin - a type of rickshaw, or a person pulling it, then a mousko, meaning boy, but also now a constant mousmé, as Loti called his Mme Chrysanthème. This was not the most beautiful word in Japanese only for Pierre Loti. Literary critics often cite a letter in which Van Gogh writes to his brother Theo saying that mousmé represents one of the most beautiful words in the Japanese language, a word that has something like moue (expressive) and something that is frimousse (something that express the sweet child face).



Photo 9. La Mousmé, Sitting in a Cane Chair, Van Gogh, National Gallery in Washington, Metzger, R. & Walter, I.F. (2015). Van Gogh. The complete Paintings. Bibliotheca Universalis

Contemporary Japanese painter and photographer, Yoshihiko Wada believes that Loti's frequent use of xenism mousmé was in fact an attempt to reduce the then existing distance between his country, that is, France and Japan.

The latest novel in the trilogy about Japan, *Troisième jeunesse de Madame Prune, Mrs. Plum's Third Youth*, was written during Loti's service in Japan in 1900 and 1901, when he found himself in this distant land for the third time after fifteen years. This time, through Loti's novel, geopolitical events in East Asia at the beginning of the 20th century, such as the Russo-Japanese War, strained relations with China, and the modernization of Japan, also take place.

Hence, many critics suggest three ways of reading this novel - as a love novel, a historical novel, and a travelogue that rounds off Loti's story of Japan.

FRENCH INFLUENCE AND MEIJI PERIOD

The introduction of the notion of reversible exotism will be illustrated in this paper by the influence which, above all, French civilization exerted on Japanese creativity.

One of Japan's most famous composers, Rentaro Taki, who enrolled his piano studies at the Leipzig Conservatory in 1901, did his musical work, of which the most popular are *Moon over the ruined castle*, *Kojo no Tsuki*, 荒城の月, which has been honored by famous contemporary musicians and performers, influenced by Claude Debussy.



Photo 10. Antonio Fontanesi, Shinobazu Pond, Farioli, E. & Poppi, C. (1999). Antonio Fontanesi: E la pittura di paesaggio in Italia 1861-1880. [Antonio Fontanesi: And painting of landscapes in Italy 1861-1880.] Federico Motta Editore.

In 1869, Italian painter and graphic artist Antonio Fontanesi left Turin and came at the Academy in Tokyo, primarily to teach Japanese painters the techniques he used. This is how the famous oil on canvas *Shinobazu Pond* was created, which is located today in the National Museum in Tokyo.

Aoki Shigeru, a Japanese painter, was inspired by the French Impressionists, and his most famous painting, *Umi no sachi* (海の幸), *Fruit de mer*, or *Seafood*, makes him one of the greatest painters of the Meiji period.



Photo 11. Aoki Shigeru, *Seafood*, Fleming, J. & Honour, H. (1902).
A World History of Art. London: Laurence King Publishing

The Meiji period literature is influenced primarily by the Enlightenment, which is essentially the spreading of ideas from West Europe (Fukuzawa Yukichi - *Description of the West*), continuing with the translation of literary works from English (Sir Walter Scott, William Shakespeare), French (Alexandre Dumas father, Jules Verne and somewhat Victor Hugo), German (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller), and Russian (Tolstoy and Puschkin) with the complete absence of original literature.

Translations of the works of Edward Bulwer-Lytton and Benjamin Disraeli influence the emergence of a new literary genre, the so-called political novels (*Toda Kindo - Waves of the Stirring Sea*), to end this century with the genre suppressing literature that was to meet the needs of modern times. The general theory of Japan, written by Futabatai Shimei is considered to be the first literary work of new Japan.

It is necessary to mention writers among whom Naoya Shiga, Takeo Arishima, Kafū Nagai, Ryunosuke Akutagava, Takiji Kobayashi, Natsume Soseki and Toson Shimazaki in whose novel *I Am a Cat*, we come across mixed literary elements of Japanese and Western literature of the time.

Fine expression of French and Japanese artists tell a story specific to their poeticism. The same story as we can find in the novel *Snow Country* by Yasunari Kawabata, in which the girls weave the *tjidjimi* rugs with crumpled linen threads: "Linen thread, thinner than hair, could not be worked anywhere

except in wet snow, which made it a dark and cold season and particularly suitable for rug weaving” (Kawabata, 2009, p.107).

And their storytelling, more than anything else, connected Japan with countries in the Western European part of the Silk Road and laid the foundations of what we now call interculturalism.

In September 2012, the exhibition “Hikari-from Japan to Serbia” was held at the Museum of Applied Art in Belgrade. More than 200 showpieces of this exhibition were exemplified by various media, technical and artistic approaches that support and express a multitude of personal and individual expressions, summarizing and revealing the basic currents of contemporary Japanese art. Hikari in Japanese means light, friendship, renewal, the future. On this way, the title of the exhibition itself was an unequivocal message to the Japanese and Serbian people, who are living in the wake of the tsunami and wars. The multiculturalism of this exhibition is confirmed by the presentation and the Japanese way of setting the exhibits. The works of different artists were presented in the same plane, and the works of one author could have been exposed one above the other. The exhibits, as Feng Shui dictates, was not placed in the corners of the rooms, and the tea screen was on the floor, not on the wall, as used in the tea ceremony. It is extremely interesting that a part from the artist's name and the name of his work, his artistic name was also written, such as Young Cherry Blossom, which brings us back to the text of the work and the aforementioned names from the Pierre Loti's Trilogy on Japan.

When it comes to music art, it is necessary to mention the guest appearance of the Japanese music group Japalkan, which is known for nurturing the Balkan folk music, which opened the 2018 Kustendorf International Film and Music Festival. This group plays South Slavic and Serbian songs and combines folk tunes by performing them on traditional way with modern electric instruments.

The teaching of Japanese in Southeastern Europe began 43 years ago at the Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade, whose professors of Japanese language and literature now teach not only in the Silk Road, but also at the universities in America. The textbook of our Japanese language teachers, *Kanji*, has been published in Russian and English in addition to Serbian language.

RESULTS

The results obtained by this analytical and comparative approach and the works mentioned and analyzed from all fields of culture and art, lead to the creation of a new starting point in the analytical and compara-

tive approach and in the study of events in the extremely important and rich new Silk Road.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data presented and their detailed analyzes followed by adequate examples, we can conclude that influence of Japanese culture on the West European part of the Silk road, and vice versa, consists of the elements of the exotic which permeate both the theme and the action, and thus the time of the narration, not only in literature, but also in other artistic works. The culture in generally, and the industrial progress and new techniques in all life's areas, followed the same already mentioned guidelines. Today, when notions of mundialization, multiculturalism, or interculturalism were given prominence, we can suppose that the world discovered the existence and values of other cultures with the strong presence of synergy based on reversible differences offered a whole new dimension and opened up new possibilities for its interpretations, exchange and development.

The opened window to the Orient through proven facts, and we can make it a necessary part of our lives, that is something that still opens many still closed windows today. This fascination with the modernization of Japan with the acceptance and by the same reaction in the countries on the Silk Road with the Rabelais thirst for new knowledge requires to be discovered and studied, of course, with constant reflection and analysis across multiple dimensions adopted as an obligatory percept that to step out means to step out of something that is known and familiar so as to bring the unknown into the familiar with the permanent going out further.

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ФАСЦИНАЦИЈА МОДЕРНИЗАЦИЈОМ ЈАПАНА – РЕАКЦИЈЕ ЗАПАДНОЕВРОПСКОГ ДЕЛА ПУТА СВИЛЕ ПРАЋЕН КРОЗ ПРИЗМУ РЕВЕРЗИБИЛНОГ ЕГЗОТИЗМА

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Резиме

Чувајући у великој мери своју независност, оно што карактерише отварање Јапана према свету које почиње у периоду Меиџи је комбиновање традиционалног и модерног у свим сегментима, а тада је и постављен темељ модернизације данашњег Јапана.

Током векова, елементи источне и западне цивилизације су преносени не само економским каналима, као што је делимично приказано у овом раду, него и кроз бројне књиге, новеле, слике, уметничке предмете, музику, плес, костиме и друго, чиме су државама на путу свиле пружане нове перспективе и готови модели, уз императив очувања личног културног идентитета.

Детаљна анализа трилогије о Јапану француског писца Пјера Лотија, француске и јапанске уметности 19. века, а посебно истицање важности представљања јапанске уметности, културе и економије на Светској изложби у Паризу, 1867. године, имају за циљ да прикажу изузетан значај Јапана, поред осталих држава којима је пренешена свила од истока на запад, и који је постао веза источњачких и западних културних, и делимично индустријских, модела развоја савременог друштва.

Наведени резултати применом аналитичко-компаративног приступа, и наведена и анализирана дела свих области културе и уметности, представљају нову полазну тачку за наставак проучавања активности и дешавања на изузетно важном и богатом новом путу свиле.