

SOCIO-CULTURAL MEMORY OF WORLD WAR II IN  
JAPANESE FILMS (1980- 2019) THE 1990' S  
MNEMONIC TURN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR  
NEONATIONALISM

コルドバ, アロジョ・エステバン

<https://hdl.handle.net/2324/4475219>

---

出版情報：九州大学, 2020, 博士（学術）, 課程博士  
バージョン：  
権利関係：やむを得ない事由により本文ファイル非公開（3）

氏 名 : Córdoba Arroyo, Esteban

論 文 名 : **SOCIO-CULTURAL MEMORY OF WORLD WAR II IN JAPANESE FILMS**

**(1980- 2019) THE 1990'S MNEMONIC TURN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR**

*NEONATIONALISM*

(日本の映画に現れた第二次世界大戦の記憶(1980-2019): 1990年代における社会的・文化的な存在としての戦争記憶の変質とネオ・ナショナリズム)

区 分 : 甲

### 論 文 内 容 の 要 旨

Neo-nationalism is becoming a global issue. Cases of racism and xenophobia have increased in parallel with the democratic election of populist and ultranationalist leaders. In East Asia, neo-nationalism is manifest on the different approaches to the sociocultural memory of World War 2 (WW2) and it has become the keystone of serious diplomatic problems since the late 1980s to the present. Besides, in the last decades, several scholars have paid attention to the reproduction of distorted images of the national past in the mass media and, particularly the visual media because its influence in shaping, framing or even replacing images of the past. Some academics have even claimed that the mass media apparatus is as influential as the educative system in rendering images of the past for the target public.

This study presented the discourses around the memory of WW2 that has been articulated in Japanese society and has identified particular content from among them that explicitly or implicitly contained neo-nationalist elements. The study also focused on how WW2 has been represented in Japanese films over the last four decades using the analysis of discourse as a methodological tool. The period of research was chosen because of the pivotal changes in memory since the 1980s to the present, such as the first textbook controversy, the 1990s Mnemonic Turn, and the neo-nationalist backlash.

The first part of this work aims to address how “discourses” regarding the memory of WW2 have been created and reproduced in Japanese society and culture since the end of the war (Part II) to distinguish their origin and consequences and reorganize them in a systematic framework (Part III). It found consistency among the diverse narrations that focused on a) the explanation of the causes of the War, b) that offered a description or representation of the actors involved in the conflict during the conflict and, c) evaluations by the survivors and/or

subsequent generations. Those categories were “Leaders' responsibility,” “Justification,” and “Japanese Imperialism” among the causes of War; “victim,” “heroic,” and “perpetrator consciousness,” vis-à-vis the representation of the people during the War; and “positive,” “negative,” “denial,” and “indifference” regarding the evaluation by survivors and/or subsequent generations. There are many nuances that remain invisible in the preliminary categorization. The study then developed subcategories to differentiate, for instance, the “catastrophe narrative or naïve pacifism” from “activist pacifism,” and “reconciliatory remorse” from “Pentateuchal remorse,” among others.

The second part focused on films. Using a sample of 57 movies related to WW2 released between 1980 and 2019, qualitative and quantitative analysis of Japanese Cinema was conducted to detect the presence of overtly nationalist or nation-based discourses. Results indicated that WW2 is represented mainly as a short-lived natural disaster that began between 1941 and 1942 and inevitably spread to Southeast Asia and the Pacific, escalating in a conflict between Japan and the United States in which the other Asians attended as spectators. Then, after a heroic, patriotic and masculine fight to death in which virtually only the Japanese suffered infinite hardships, the incident ended in 1945, without context or evaluation, as mysteriously as it had begun. There was also a presence of a “heroic consciousness” in the portrayal of Japanese characters that started in the early 1980s, almost vanished during the 1990s and reappeared since the 2000s, becoming a trend rather than an occurrence. Among the implications for neo-nationalism of those findings in cinema are the dichotomic rationale of “us” against “them”, the omission of the otherness and a strong sense of a national uniqueness across generations .

Keywords: Sociocultural memory, neo-nationalism and Cinema, collective memory of World War, history problem in East Asia.