

**CHARLES UNIVERSITY**  
**Faculty of Social Sciences**  
**Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism**

**MA THESIS REVIEW**

**NOTE: Only the grey fields should be filled out!**

**Review type** (choose one):

Review by thesis supervisor       Review by opponent X

**Thesis author:**

Surname and given name: Takenaka, Yuki

**Thesis title:** Culture of Commemoration: Unraveling Official and Unofficial Memories of Hiroshima in Contemporary Japan

**Reviewer:**

Surname and given name: Ravbar, Barbara

Affiliation: Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

**1. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND THESIS** (mark one box for each row)

		Conforms to approved research proposal	Changes are well explained and appropriate	Changes are explained but are inappropriate	Changes are not explained and are inappropriate	Does not conform to approved research proposal
1.1	Research objective(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	Methodology	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3	Thesis structure	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**COMMENTARY** (description of the relationship between the research proposal and the thesis. If there are problems, please be specific):

Although this study aimed to focus on the collective memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japanese society, the student decided to focus only on Hiroshima. The change of focus was sufficiently explained and justifiable.

**2. EVALUATION OF THE THESIS CONTENT**

Use letters A – B – C – D – E – F (A=best, F= failed)

		Grade
2.1	Quality and appropriateness of the theoretical framework	A
2.2	Ability to critically evaluate and apply the literature	A
2.3	Quality and soundness of the empirical research	A
2.4	Ability to select the appropriate methods and to use them correctly	A
2.5	Quality of the conclusion	B
2.6	Thesis originality and its contribution to academic knowledge production	B

**COMMENTARY** (description of thesis content and the main problems):

The thesis examines the culture of official and unofficial memories of Hiroshima in contemporary Japanese society. Takenaka explains well Japan's public memory, where individual and local memories of the atomic bomb became a part of national remembrance and collective memory for people who weren't direct survivors, which furthermore influenced the national construction of collective (and hereditary) victimhood.

The thesis introduces relevant literature which is well-connected to the thesis's topic. Introduced theoretical concepts are relevant, and the concept of victimhood nationalism, where the belief that Japan was a war

victim, with the erasure of the perpetrator's responsibility and complete disconnection from the war tribunals, is especially interesting.

Discourse analysis as a research method was appropriately chosen and fitted well into the research design. The chosen discourse approach as a study of social reality by Alvesson & Kärreman (2000) could have been explained in more detail. The chosen approach is explained in comparison to other approaches, but apart from defining them in one sentence, the students don't offer further explanation of why this approach was chosen.

Furthermore, the subchapter 1.2.3. titled "The Conflict over Victimhood Memory in Nation-states" is almost completely paraphrased from one author. Although this researcher has extensive literature in this field, it would be useful to find other authors that support the claims, not only one.

### 3. EVALUATION OF THE THESIS FORM

Use letters A – B – C – D – E – F (A=best, F= failed)

		Grade
3.1	Quality of the structure	A
3.2	Quality of the argumentation	A
3.3	Appropriate use of academic terminology	A
3.4	Quality, quantity and appropriateness of the citations (both in the theory part and in the empirical part)	B
3.5	Conformity to quotation standards (*)	B
3.6	Use of an academic writing style, and correct use of language (both grammar and spelling)	A
3.6	Quality of the textual lay-outing and appendices	B

(\*) in case the text contains quotations without references, the grade is F; in case the text contains plagiarised parts, do not recommend the thesis for defence and suggest disciplinary action against the author instead.

COMMENTARY (description of thesis form and the main problems):

The structure of the thesis is good, and the chapters are overall well connected and follow each other logically. The language follows academic standards, and the flow of written text is good.

The visual editing of the text seems somewhat rushed because the text is not equally aligned in all parts of the thesis.

### 4. OVERALL EVALUATION (provide a summarizing list of the thesis's strengths and weaknesses):

The thesis structure is good, and the student logically connects the chapters. It builds on relevant theoretical concepts and a phenomenon that has been studied before but without including the picture of Japan as the perpetrator in the war, which is novel insight and partially disconnects the country from only identifying as a victim.

Comparison between the official statements and the sentiment in movie reviews is well executed, and although the overarching sentiment is similar, it is interesting to see and compare the differences. I believe movie reviews for a movie so connected to Japan's history is a novel and fresh approach to Japan's collective memory.

### 5. QUESTIONS OR TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED DURING THE THESIS DEFENSE:

5.1	You mention that further employing quantitative methods is necessary to support the findings with more generalized data. If you were to make quantitative research, what kind of data would you use?
5.2	When choosing the more subjective views of the bombing held by the general public, how did you decide on film reviews specifically?

5.3	How did you extract your sample - did you use some kind of program for purposive sampling or you were filtering the reviews by hand?
5.4	

**6. ANTIPLAGIARISM CHECK**

X The reviewer is familiar with the thesis' URKUND score.

If the score is above 5%, please evaluate and indicate problems:

6.1	<p>The first antiplagiarism check, done by Theses.cz, indicates only 1% of similarities to other academic texts of the same kind. On the other hand, an antiplagiarism check in Turnitin detected 22% of overall similarity. Upon closer analysis, most of the citations were good and correctly made.</p> <p>The problem occurred in subchapter 3.1. titled "Discourse Analysis" in the Methodology chapter, where Turnitin detected almost all of the subchapters taken from another source. Bigger chunks of text taken from the same source, without proper citations, can also be found on p. 37., and seem to be taken from another thesis published by Charles University. I tried searching for the original work, but unsuccessfully. Therefore, I will give the benefit of the doubt to the student, but would like to discuss this further with the supervisor and other professors on the board.</p>
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**6. SUGGESTED GRADE OF THE THESIS AS A WHOLE** (choose one or two)

- A  excellent
- B  very good (above average but with some weaknesses)
- C  good (average with some important weaknesses)
- D  satisfactory (below average with significant weaknesses)
- E  marginal pass (meeting minimal requirements)
- F  not recommended for defence

**If the mark is an "F", please provide your reasons for not recommending the thesis for defence:**

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Date: 11.9.2024.

Signature: .....

*A finalised review should be printed, signed and submitted in two copies to the secretary of the Department of Media Studies. The electronic version of the review should be converted into a PDF and uploaded to SIS, or sent to the Department of Media Studies secretary who will upload it to SIS on the reviewer's behalf.*

*Do not upload PDFs with a scanned signature, the review uploaded to SIS must be without signature.*