

## **Abstract**

This Master's thesis provides an analysis of the contemporary depiction of significant historical moments in U.S.-Japan relations in American cinematography, specifically in the films: *The Last Samurai*, *Pearl Harbor*, *Letters from Iwo Jima*, and *Emperor*. The analysis elaborates on the theoretical stream of *popular culture and world politics* and most particularly on the *popular geopolitics* discipline. A discourse analysis is used as the research method, through which the three main aspects of popular geopolitics in the selected movies are followed – representational logics, affect, and intertextuality. The research goal is to tackle the question, how the historical milestones in U.S.-Japan relations are portrayed in the present and how their portrayal is linked to the current geopolitical context. The research shows that filmmakers usually try to offer a balanced view of both sides, which means there are positive and negative portrayals of both Japanese and American characters. Japanese villains are usually militarists, which is in line with the postwar narrative of the American Occupation administration. The trend of negative portrayal of Americans has been strengthened only recently due to controversies related to the *War on Terror*. The main finding, however, is the fact that although Japan is constructed as the cultural Other of the United States, there is an ongoing narrative of mutual friendship and interpersonal similarities despite cultural differences. This corresponds to the contemporary geopolitical distribution of power because Japan has been a key ally of the United States in the region of East Asia since the end of the Second World War.