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Mediation of a Hero as Cultural/Moral Stereotype and its Role in the Social Integration of a Society

Every society (re)produces its cultural/behavioral schemes and mediates them periodically in order to maintain social integration and social order. This mediation can appear in explicit form (such as in case of spiritual and ideological mobilization before and during wartime) or in their implicit form: by incorporating some elements of social integration into factual media contents (news reporting) or popular fictional texts of collective imagination (films, serials, theater plays, comics etc). The latter platform is usually constituted by certain types of heroes and heroines, reflecting through their protagonists (more or less authentically) some aspects of their socio-cultural matrix. Although many traditional Japanese heroes (primarily members of Yakuza, roaming samurai or rónin) are emblematic of blurring boundaries between good and bad, social and antisocial, or even tending to openly and violently oppose the authority, their mediation is supported by both the media establishment and the audience. Apart from the commercial profit, this actually serves its „social" purpose: it stimulates accumulated frustrations caused 1) by the pressure of subordination through multiple norms of everydayness, and/or 2) by negative aspects of the Zeitgeist.

The proposed paper deals with ways, how has the cultivating agenda of cultural/moral hero been constructed and redefined during the Japanese postwar period. It will also try to answer following questions: What are the basic features and purposes of anti-systemic and contradictory hero-stereotypes in Japanese and non-Japanese mass-mediated texts? How do such texts deal with mediation of the Other and how are they informed and influenced by the Other?