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## Araştırma Makalesi/Research Article

### Shinzo Abe's Psychological Analysis of Discourse on Sino-Japanese Relations: Take Japan Back and Japan's War Guilt Problems

Kübra DAĞ\*

**Abstract:** In this paper, Shinzo Abe's political rhetoric will be taken into attention by utilizing Teun Van Dijk's 'critical discourse analysis' and James Martin's rhetorical structure, considering his perception of the war guilt of Japan during World War 2. Shinzo Abe's official speeches and interviews from his first and second presidential terms will be analyzed. This Analysis will help us to understand these two countries' shared past and the reflection of this past in presidents' discourse. Abe's identity, paternal relations, and connections with his political rhetoric will be presented at the end of the paper.

**Keywords:** *Abe Shinzo, Sino-Japanese Relations, Discourse Analysis, Psychological Analysis*

### Shinzo Abe'nin Çin-Japon İlişkisi Kapsamında Psikolojik Söylem Analizi: Japonya'yı Gerigetirme Politik Yaklaşımı ve Japonya'nın Savaş Suçu Problemi

**Öz:** Bu makalede, Teun Van Dijk'ın 'eleştirel söylem analizi' ve James Martin'in retorik yapısı kullanılarak Shinzo Abe'nin siyasi retoriği, 2. Dünya Savaşı sırasında Japonya'nın savaş suçluluğu algısı göz önünde bulundurularak ele alınacaktır. Bu amaçla, Shinzo Abe'nin birinci ve ikinci başkanlık dönemlerinde yaptığı resmi konuşmalar ve röportajlar analiz edilecektir. Bu analiz, iki ülkenin ortak geçmişini ve bu geçmişin

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günümüz uluslararası siyasetine yansımaları anlamamıza yardımcı olacaktır. Ayrıca, siyasi figürlerin söylemleriyle bu ilişkileri nasıl etkiledikleri de incelenecektir. Çalışmanın sonunda Abe'nin kimlik inşası, baba figürü ile ilişkisi ve bunun siyasi retoriği ile bağlantıları analiz edilecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Shinzo Abe, Çin-Japon İlişkileri, Söylem Analizi, Psikolojik Söylem Analizi*

## **Introduction**

Japan and China have long-lasting relations as neighbours, economic partners, and political rivals. Their relations are crucial to see which phases they had been through and how those phases reshaped their relations over time. In this paper, specifically, Shinzo Abe's two presidency terms will be considered to understand an important political figure's discourse in the scope of the historical upheavals. In this discourse analysis, the war guilt problem of Japan during the Second World War will be the main point.

The discourse frame will be blended with Salazar's international life theory to conduct an "international discourse frame" for that purpose. The reason for conducting an 'international frame' is to observe an individual leader's perception of another country, in this case, Abe and rising China, which shares a common history with his own country.

To apprehend Abe's perception of China, this paper will focus on the 'common history' in his rhetoric. And, eventually, how this discourse affects the masses and shapes the relations. By doing so, the influence of individuals, as actors in policymaking, would be apprehended in the international arena. To analyse Abe's discourse in detail, Abe's official speeches on the anniversary of the war in Japan every year on August 15, his interviews, and his speeches delivered on official visits will be analysed. Abe is a very controlling speaker, there is no slip of tongue case, and as we will see in the 3rd and 4th parts, he uses the same speech patterns at the anniversary ceremonies. Nevertheless, this controlling attitude changed in his 2nd term. In 2014, he delivered his speech on the anniversary day, and through the end of the speech, he used "history of humility". This is an important alteration in his word choice.

Therefore, I will try to answer this shift in his rhetoric and, at the same time, contribute to these CDA analyses, a psychological evaluation will be held by considering Abe's ancestral connections as Choshu's origin. By

doing so, this paper aims to answer whether the social identity theory of IR could be suitable for the shift in Abe's rhetoric or not. Alongside the identity theory, other IR theories will be included: realism and postwar constructivism. In these theories, moral values, changing discourses according to the post-war conditions, and leaders' perception of their 'power' relations in a new sphere of politics will be taken into attention.

### Methodology and Literature Review

Philippe Joseph Salazar claims that, by using Maus's 'International Life' theory, international life expresses the anthropological characteristics of a country on the rhetorical shape of international life. In this sense, different rhetorical styles of different countries are important to examine to determine the influence and contributions of a political figure, as the 'shaper' of the difference, in international relations<sup>1</sup>.

Leader, as a political figure, will be the focus point to see the collective consciousness, political interests, and psychological biases in their discourses by observing the semiotic and semantic parts of the CDA. To do so, the research question for the CDA, according to Salazar<sup>2</sup>, will be: How do nations talk to each other, how do the roles of the leaders change, and how do they transact words in their discourses?

For discourse analysis, I prefer Teun A. Van Dijk's "Critical Discourse Analysis". The CDA is used by various scholars for written or spoken analysis to see the macro, super, and microstructures of the text.

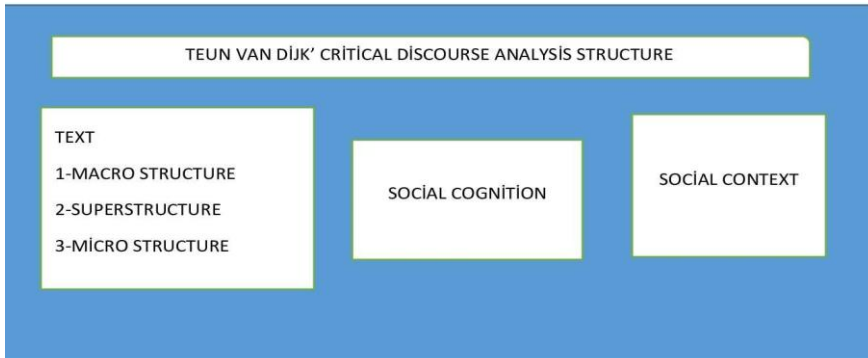


Figure 1. Dijk's CDA Structure<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Salazar, Philippe Joseph, *Rhetoric and International Relations: An Introduction*, University of Cape Town, 2005, P.5-10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, P.5-10.

<sup>3</sup> Conducted by the author of this article by utilisin Van Dijk's CDA.

Van Dijk divides the critical discourse analysis into three phases: Text, social cognition, and social context<sup>4</sup>. The microstructure part of the "text" involves linguistic themes: semantics (meanings), syntax, stylistic, and rhetorical (technique or art of the text)<sup>5</sup>. In this paper, mainly semantics and rhetorical sub-categories will be used to analyze Abe's attempts at the creation of an argument and the interpretation of the historical events of Japan.

To conduct a framework between international relations and critical discourse analysis, besides Van Dijk's analysis, James Martin's "political rhetoric" structure will be used. The rhetorical argument part of Martin's structure will be directly related to Van Dijk's 'Micro Structure of the CDA', namely the rhetorical sub-part because both of them are linked to argument creation (*inventio*)<sup>6</sup>, in which political figures are involved.

#### JAMES MARTIN'S RHETORIC STRUCTURE

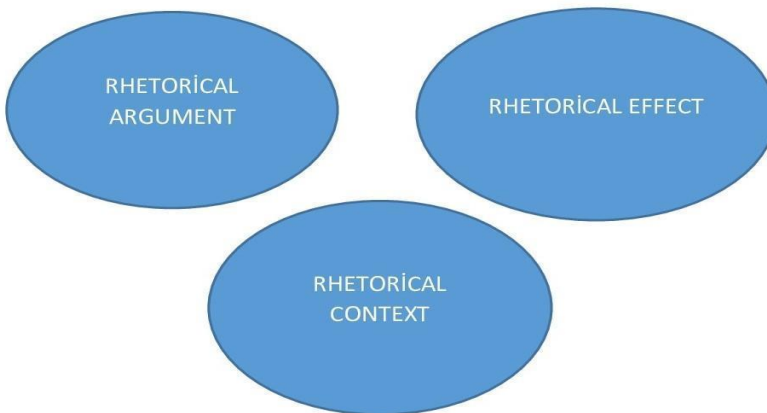


Figure 2. Martin's Rhetoric Structure<sup>7</sup>

James Martin asserts that rhetoric has three main characteristics: rhetorical context, rhetorical argument, and rhetorical effects. , these three characteristics refresh the audiences' perspective on the situation through

<sup>4</sup> Lina Rosliana, Fajar P. Mahardika I, Micro Structure in Shinzo Abe's Policy Speech at the 195th Assembly Meeting (Critical Discourse of Teun A. van Dijk), Universitas Diponegoro, Semarang, Indonesia, IZUMI, Volume 9 No 1, 2020, P. 13-21.

<sup>5</sup> Discourse and Literature, edited by Teun Van Dijk, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1985, P. 59.

<sup>6</sup> Op,Cit, 1985, P.60.

<sup>7</sup> Conducted by the author of this article by using Martin's cited article.

the speakers' efficient discourse<sup>8</sup>. According to Chris Pope, semiotic observations could be related to the IR field by analysing leaders' discourse, specifically the rhetorical part of Van Dijk's<sup>9</sup>.

Current literature on speech analysis varies from theoretical approaches to the relations between power and rhetoric<sup>10</sup><sup>11</sup>, the image/charisma creation of a leader with the help of political rhetoric<sup>12</sup><sup>13</sup>, the organizational discourse examining<sup>14</sup>, morality and rationality in rhetoric<sup>15</sup>, ideology, and psychology in rhetoric<sup>16</sup>, rhetoric, and political deliberation<sup>17</sup>. Some case studies focused on legendary leaders such as Nelson Mandela<sup>18</sup>, Barack Obama,<sup>19</sup> and other prominent African leaders<sup>20</sup>.

In terms of Shinzo Abe's discourse, the current literature has some analysis<sup>21</sup> of Shinzo Abe's resignation speech in 2020. This article used Teun Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, but only the text dimension

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<sup>8</sup> Martin, James, *Situating Speech: A Rhetorical Approach to Political Strategy*, Goldsmiths, University of London, Political Studies, 2015, Vol 63, P.25–42.

<sup>9</sup> Pope, Christie Farnham. "Bringing back 'Japan'?: Prime Minister Abe's political rhetoric in critical perspective." (2017), P.3.

<sup>10</sup> Ronald R. Krebs, Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: The Power of Political Rhetoric* SAGE Publications and ECPR-European Consortium for Political Research, 2007, Vol. 13(1): 35–66.

<sup>11</sup> Bowo, T. A., Wijayanti, N., & Wulansari, D. (2022). A dramatic fall: Critical discourse analysis of Boris Johnson's resignation speech. 1st International Conference on Language Education, Linguistics and Literature 2022. NST Proceedings. pages 122-138. doi: 10.11594/ nstp.2022.2615.

<sup>12</sup> Nadezhda Frolova, Anna Morozova, Alexander Pushkov, *Use of the discourse analysis method to study current political practice (by the example of representation of the political leader image)*, SHS Web of Conferences, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Deanne N. Den Hartog, Robert M. Verburg, *Charisma and Rhetoric: Communicative Techniques of International Business Leaders*, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

<sup>14</sup> Gail T. Fairhurst, Mary Uhl-Bien, *Organizational discourse analysis (ODA): Examining leadership as a relational process*, Elsevier, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Jack L. Goldsmith and Eric A. Posner. *Moral and Legal Rhetoric in International Relations: A Rational Choice Perspective*, *Journal of Legal Studies*, vol. XXXI, by The University of Chicago, 2002.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Billig, *Ideology and Opinions Studies in Rhetorical Psychology*, SAGE Publications, 1991.

<sup>17</sup> Ryan Walter, *Rhetoric or Deliberation? The Case for Rhetorical Political Analysis*, *Political Studies* 2017, Vol. 65(2) 300–315.

<sup>18</sup> Amitabh Vikram Dwivedi, *Mendelian Rhetoric: An Analysis of Nelson Mandela's Political Speeches*, School of Languages & Literature, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, Katra, Jammu (J&K), India

<sup>19</sup> Makoro Sj, *Political Rhetoric In Public Speaking: A Stylistic Analysis of Selected Political Speeches*, University Limpopo, 2018.

<sup>20</sup> Moses A. ALO, *A Rhetorical Analysis of Selected Political Speeches of Prominent African Leaders*, Department of English, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Syartanti, Nadya Inda, Ketut Artawa, I Wayan Pastika, and Ketut Widya Purnawati. 2023. "Discourse Structure of Shinzo Abe's Resignation Speech: Critical Discourse Analysis". *The International Journal of Social Sciences World (TIJOSW)* 5 (2):22-32.

part (word choices, speech order, semantic cohesion of words) is covered in this article. By using the same theory, CDA, Junky Nakahara<sup>22</sup> deconstructed Abe's "Take Japan Back" nationalism to observe how he used national ideas in his speech.

Moreover, Chris pope<sup>23</sup> is declared that Shinzo Abe's rhetoric is based on neoliberal principles, however, his political actions reflect a 'neoliberalism' and 'political realist' ideology to surround China and enhance its power in international and regional dimensions., this rhetoric according to Yahui Zhang<sup>24</sup> and Xiaoming Zhang<sup>25</sup> negatively perceived by China.

In the existing literature, even though some studies declare that the problem of the Sino-Japanese relations is buried in the historical memory (or as Gao Dexiang describes 'chosen trauma'<sup>26</sup>). However, there is no study specifically focusing on Shinzo Abe's discourse at the psychological level of the CDA.

Therefore, I will commit to constructing a framework by using the Freudian trilogy with Adorno's studies on "Propaganda and Fascism" and "Authoritarian Leadership", and James Martin's "Rhetorical Argument" by blending with Van Dijk's "Microstructure" to observe how Shinzo Abe's discourse shaped the Sino-Japanese relations. For that reason, I chose the year 2012, as a turning point in East Asian politics. I wanted to make the rise of China through Xi Jinping's administration coincide with the 2nd phase of Abe's presidency to observe how Shinzo Abe perceived "the rising China".

## **1. The Historical Background of Sino-Japanese Relations**

### **1.1. 1880-1949: From the Meiji to The Second World War**

Japan and China have been neighbours for centuries, China influenced Japanese cultural and social life until the end of the Qing period. They had not been into a big clash until Japan attacked China in 1894 to take advantage of the fragile position of China after the large-scale Opium

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<sup>22</sup> Junky Nakahara, Deconstructing Abe Shinzo's "Take Back Japan" Nationalism, *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, December 2021.

<sup>23</sup> Pope, Christie Farnham, 2017.

<sup>24</sup> Yahui Zhang, Interpreting "Statement by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan" as Rhetorical Strategy, Wayland Baptist University, April 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Xiaoming Zhang, China's Perceptions of and Responses to Abe's Foreign Policy, *Asian Perspective*, Volume 39, Number 3, July-September 2015, pp. 423-439.

<sup>26</sup> Gao Dexiang, Memory, Reconciliation, and Chosen Traumas: The Political Psychology of the Chinese state, media and Public on Sino-Japanese relations, National University of Singapore, 2008.

Wars. During the Meiji restoration, Japan believed that he would be the transporter of Westernization into other Asian countries and began to make expansion plans for East Asia, especially in Korea. It was normally under the suzerainty of China, even though was an independent country<sup>27</sup>. On the surface, Japan wanted to add Korea to its territory to modernize and westernize it, however, The real reason for this expansionist foreign policy was Japan's requirements for raw materials<sup>28</sup>.

Consequently, China was tremendously defeated by the Japanese army at the Yalu River and in Weihaiwei in 1895. In the subsequent process of the defeat, China had to sign a peace treaty at Shimonoseki on 17 April 1895. The articles of the treaty were a further burden for China: Extra concessions were given to Japan and Japanese merchants<sup>29</sup>.

The Japanese aggression had not ceased in the Sino-Japanese wars. One of the most devastating chains of events happened during World War 2: the Nanjing Massacre. Alongside the loss of Taiwan in 1895 and the occupation of Manchuria in 1931, the Nanking Massacre was the most traumatic event in the Chinese people's minds<sup>30</sup>. This incident caused the death of 300,000 Chinese people who were exposed to all kinds of cruelty: rape, torture, and the mass killing of civil people<sup>31</sup>.

## 1.2. 1949-1989: Textbooks, Normalization, and the Tiananmen

During the post-war period, China and Japan remained as commercial partners by disregarding political affairs until the Gorbachev Period with the USSR-USA rapprochement. They had signed the Treaty of Peace and Friendship and a long-term trade agreement in 1978. China generally had been seen by Japan as a balancing power against the USSR hegemony with the support of the USA-Japan-China triangle relations<sup>32</sup>.

However, after the 1980s, conditions changed with China's withdrawal from the construction of the Baoshan Steelworks near Shanghai in 1982<sup>33</sup> and the textbook issue emerged between the years 1982-86. That was about high-school-level history books in which the Japanese war crimes were censored.

<sup>27</sup> Philip Jowett, *China's Wars: Rousing The Dragon 1894-1949*, Osprey Publishing, 2013, P.20

<sup>28</sup> Kürşat Yıldırım, *Çin Tarihi: Tarih Öncesinden 21. Yüzyıla*, Ötüken, 2021, P.257.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Harrington, *Peking 1900: The Boxer Rebellion*, United Kingdom, 2001, P. 9.

<sup>30</sup> Derek McDougall, *Asia Pacific in World Politics*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2016, P.139.

<sup>31</sup> Editors Fei Fei Liu, Robert Sabella, David Liu, *Nanking 1937: Memory and Healing*, An East Gate Book, 2002, P. 35-45.

<sup>32</sup> Op. Cit, 2016 P. 139-140.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 2016, P.141-142

The usage of words such as 'invasion'(shinryaku/shinyu), 'aggression'(shinryaku), and 'rape' had not allowed being used in the books, instead of them, some naive words are used like 'advance' (shinshutsu) or 'incident' (jiken) to elevate the meaning<sup>34</sup>. Therefore, China accused Japan of not presenting a decent view of history<sup>35</sup>.

In the 1990s, Japanese right-wing intellectuals promulgated this 'revisionist' way of history to restore Japanese dignity by getting rid of the war stigma. Therefore, a Hawkish group within the LDP including Abe Shinzo and Nakagawa Shoichi attempted to reconstruct the idea of Japan as a normal country. In their manifesto, historical narratives- especially the Nanjing Massacre and the Comfort Women- were important components<sup>36</sup>.

The Notion of nationalism in East Asian countries must be stressed to observe the whole Picture and the dynamics between China and Japan. As Gregory Moore states, one of the main problems between these two countries is nationalism. This nationalism is built upon history as collective guidance that the hereditary Confucian ancestors worshipped<sup>37</sup>. And, this problem reflects in their foreign relations, especially during Xi Jinping's and Shinzo Abe's administrations<sup>38</sup>.

## **2. Main Themes: Take Japan Back, Rising China, And Nationalism**

After the 1990s, Japan began to decline, whereas China was on the rise of economic prosperity. This is evident in the statistics of Japanese economic stagnation beginning in the 1990s. On the contrary, China was prestigious and filled the place that Soviet Russia left after the dissolution<sup>39</sup>. This change affected Sino-Japanese relations directly; Japan had to mitigate its textbook controversies as a response to reactions from China and South Korea between 2004 and 2005.

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<sup>34</sup> Caroline Rose, *Sino-Japanese relations: Facing the Past, Looking to the Future ?*, Routledge, 2005, P.56-58.

<sup>35</sup> Caroline Rose, *Interpreting History in Sino-Japanese Relations A case study in political decision-making*, Routledge, 1998, P.1.

<sup>36</sup> Junki Nakahara, *Deconstructing Abe Shinzo's "Take Back Japan" Nationalism*, *The Asia-Pacific Journal | Japan Focus*, Volume 19, Dec 15, 2021, P. 4.

<sup>37</sup> Gregory J. Moore, *History, Nationalism and Face in Sino-Japanese Relations*, *Journal of Chinese Political Science/ Association of Chinese Political Studies* 2010, P. 283-306.

<sup>38</sup> Xiaoming Zhang, *China's Perceptions of and Responses to Abe's Foreign Policy*, *Asian Perspective*, Volume 39, Number 3, Published by Johns Hopkins University Press, July-September 2015, pp. 423-439.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* P. 285-300.



Prime Minister Junichiro Kouzimi's apology in 2005 for the war guilt of Japan, albeit not directly to China or Korea, also, rectify this case<sup>40</sup>. That was not the only apology that the Japanese side proposed. Before him, in 1995 Prime Minister Muruyama apologized for the first time but was not taken seriously by the Chinese side as being a socialist leader who led Japan for a short time. Therefore, the Chinese remain unpersuaded that Japan represents a decent way of looking at the past<sup>41</sup>.

The persuasion of China was a hard task for Abe's administration in Japan because, after the Cold War period, China utilized 'myth-making' of historical 'heroism' constructed by othering Japan's self-face in world politics<sup>42</sup>. Their main theme was 'victorious resistance against Japanese aggression', so Japan is perceived as the villain of the story. This stigma forced Japan to act more freely in East Asia<sup>43</sup>.

The rise of China against the US dominance in the region made the historical debates an important task for Japan to deal with. Because there were outside allegations against Abe's administration, China Daily's Zhao Luoxi stated once that Abe's administration tried to whitewash Japan's history of war<sup>44</sup>.

This kind of reaction became acute after Abe's Yasukuni Shrine visits in December 2013. Abe believed that the Japanese did not have to respond to past war crimes because it was difficult to determine how many people died in the Nanjing massacre. And he declared that by visiting the Yasukuni Shrine he just wanted to display his respect for the spirit of the war dead<sup>45</sup>.

This 'rising China' theme coincides with Abe's 'taking Japan back' theme. This theme 'Take Japan Back' was the main concern of the Liberal Party and Shinzo Abe's discourse. For this theme, war memory is the critical component to revitalizing the national identity of Japan. However, neither Abe nor his party members had overwhelmingly stressed the historical narratives. Rather focused on the strong image of Japan by validating two

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, P. 285-306.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. P. 290.

<sup>42</sup> Shogo Suzuki, The importance of 'Othering' in China's national identity: Sino-Japanese relations as a stage of identity conflicts, *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 20 No. 1 March 2007: 23-47.

<sup>43</sup> Yanan He, Remembering and Forgetting the War: Elite Mythmaking, Mass Reaction, and Sino-Japanese Relations, 1950-20, India University Press, *History and Memory*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Fall/Winter 2007), P. 43-74.

<sup>44</sup> Kong Yeung Ronald Lai, *Shinzo Abe's Version of History and the "Rise of China"*, MA Thesis, University of Victoria. 2018, P. 47-69.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, P. 71-77.

points: The reconstruction of Japan after World War 2 and the economic growth period<sup>46</sup>.

The reason for this revitalization of nation-building is 'restoring confidence in Japan. The Abe administration thought that Japanese nationalism would help the 'Constitutional Revision' of Japan through the elite-driven and top-down nationalism of the two non-government organizations, Nippon Kaigi and Jinja Honcho<sup>47</sup>.

To do so, Abe, even though he never overwhelmingly emphasized the historical narratives related to militarist Japan during WW2 in his rhetoric, took action by visiting the Yasukuni Shrine<sup>48</sup>. The reason for Abe's hesitation to take a more solid stance in Japanese politics is the taboo of war in Japan<sup>49</sup>. The "War Guilt" issue became evident in the revisionist history-making in Japan after the Cold War. The "guilty" and "aggressor" labels are so permanent stains in the hands of the Japanese government such not easy to eliminate it easily.

In the further part, Shinzo Abe's discourse will be analyzed in the scope of 'the history controversy', 'living with guilt', 'rising China', and 'taking Japan back'.

### **3. Shinzo Abe's Discourse Analysis**

For Abe's discourse analysis, firstly all official speeches<sup>50</sup> will be analyzed by categorizing them as domestic and international. The domestic speeches were delivered in Japan such as the anniversary of the War Dead at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony and Nagasaki Peace Ceremony, whereas the international speeches were delivered during the official visits to other countries. This split is vital to help our psychological analysis in the next part.

In addition to this categorizing, I will divide Abe's presidency terms. The reason for doing this is that I believe that in his second term, he became quite mature in politics because Abe was the first president who was born in the postwar years, so he was so young.

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<sup>46</sup> Op. Cit. 2021, P. 4.

<sup>47</sup> These two organizations have high-ranking leaders from LDP and prestigious entrepreneurs. Matthew D. Boyd, "Towards a Beautiful Country": The Nationalist Project to Transform Japan, 2019, P.1.

<sup>48</sup> This action by journalists was interpreted as 'taking back Japan's national pride: Ibid, P. 6-7.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. P. 4-7.

<sup>50</sup> "Speeches and Statements by the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe." 2006-2020. Prime Minister Of Japan And His Cabinet.

### 3.1. International Speeches

I want to begin with Abe's visit to China On October 8, 2006, just after his inauguration. After completing his speeches, journalists asked several questions and among them the first one was important. the question part of the speech is:

*“ (Question) In today's summit meetings, the pending issues between Japan and China-the issues of Yasukuni and the perception of history-I believe have been discussed. Mr. Prime Minister, do you believe that the understanding of China has been facilitated through today's discussion? And with regard to the visit to Yasukuni...*

*(Answer) In the meetings today, Chinese leaders referred to the spirit of using history as a mirror to progress toward the future.... In response, I said we shall look at history squarely and shall continue to conduct itself as a peaceful nation.*

*Japan has come through the 60 years of the postwar period on the basis of the deep remorse over the fact that Japan in the past has caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of the Asian countries....*

*This feeling is shared by the people who have lived these 60 years and is a feeling that I also share. This feeling will not change in the future.”<sup>51</sup>*

In the first presidency, Abe was more sensitive in his word choice (lexical) for the history issue between China and Japan. He shares his sense of suffering and misery. However, in the same speech, he concluded his answer implicitly by stating the “Yasukuni Shrine” case:

*“With regard to the visits to Yasukuni Shrine, I explained my thoughts. Whether I have visited or will visit Yasukuni Shrine is not something I shall make clear since this is a matter that has been turned into a diplomatic and political issue. I shall not elaborate on it. That said, from the viewpoint that both sides shall overcome political difficulties and promote the sound development of the two countries, I shall address this matter appropriately. This explanation which I made, I believe, was understood by the Chinese side. What I mean by “address appropriately” is what I just explained now.”<sup>52</sup>*

In this statement, he openly refrained from talking about the Yasukuni visit, and hinted at his Chinese counterparts by abbreviating the case as “address appropriately”. This hesitation can be called “Ventriloquism” or “Hidden voice” strategy. This is an authorship style, which veils the direct

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<sup>51</sup> Press Conference by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe Following His Visit to China, October 8, 2006.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, October 8, 2016.

control of the author<sup>53</sup> and we see this tendency generally in literary studies like novels, however, Abe also uses this strategy in his official records. What is important in this strategy is that it allows us to consider his manipulative and fugitive manner in his rhetoric: He is so controlling, bright, and persuasive in his arguments.

Abe's interviews with foreign journalists are important in observing the war guilt issue and the theme of rising China regarding his political and social heritage. This interview was held in his second presidency term during which we could obtain most of the information about his definite position on the war crime of Japan, with Temperman, Abe responded to the questions as follows:

*'I have never said that Japan has not committed aggression. Yet at the same, how best, or not, to define aggression is none of my business. That's what historians ought to work on.'*<sup>54</sup>

He uses the definite time adverb "never", the sentiment-based noun "aggression", and the modal should "ought to" for express disposition, testimony, and suggestion, respectively. While he is disposing of his responsibility for the war guilt of Japan, conducts a strategy by transferring this responsibility to another agency, in that case, historians.

Overall, when we interpret the grammar, words, and sentences of the interview, we would assume that Abe attempts to create a balance in his rhetoric by considering his international and domestic liberal policies. Therefore, he did not speak out directly about the war crimes of Japan, however, did not reject either.

In the same interview, Abe continued by making an analogy between his Yasukuni Shrine visit and the Arlington National Cemetery by comparing their meanings for Japanese and American cultures, respectively. He said that whether or not Arlington Cemetery represents a slavery plantation, no American leader refrained from visiting.

*'About the Yasukuni Shrine, let me urge you to think about your place to pay homage to the war dead, Arlington National Cemetery, in the United States. The presidents of my first and current terms as prime United States go there, and as Japan's minister, I have visited. Professor Kevin Doak of Georgetown University points out that visiting the*

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<sup>53</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel'. In *The Dialogic Imagination. Four Essays*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) (1934-35).

<sup>54</sup> Shinzo Abe and Jonathan Tepperman, *Japan Is Back: A Conversation With Shinzo Abe*, Council on Foreign Relations, Vol. 92, No. 4, 2013, P. 5.

*cemetery does not mean endorsing slavery, even though Confederate soldiers are buried there. I am of the view that we can make a similar argument about Yasukuni, which enshrines the souls of those who lost their lives in the service of their country.*<sup>55</sup>

In the first part of the interview, he disposed of the responsibility to historians, and, in the following part of it, he continued to utilize this strategy. He used Professor Doak to slope off from the responsibility. This usage of Professor Doak's argument presents solid scientific proof to strengthen his arguments on the analogy of the shrine. This part is very important to analyze Martin's structure 'social context', Abe in front of a foreigner, is creating an analogical frame to make the listener familiar with the context and this strategy makes the rhetoric effective.

### 3.2. Domestic Speeches

In 2006, Abe, without stressing the Nanjing Massacre or Comfort Women issues, delivered a speech in his cabinet and an important part of the speech was as follows:

*"Upon the innocent people, did our country inflict immeasurable damage and suffering... The peace we enjoy today exists only upon such precious sacrifices..."*<sup>56</sup>

He constantly used the "innocent" adjective with the positive word "peace". Subsequent usage of these words creates a positive cohesion overall. Also, the semiotic way of speech conveys the sense of agitation and digression of the main subject. In response, the Chinese side reacted to this speech as 'an impressive play of words'<sup>57</sup> as well.

In 2007, at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony, Abe delivered a speech on the atomic bomb victims in Hiroshima and Nagasaki:

*"In front of the souls of the deceased atomic bomb victims and the citizens of Hiroshima, I have further strengthened my commitment not to repeat the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I renew my pledge to observe the stipulations in the Constitution, sincerely seek international peace, and firmly maintain the Three Non-Nuclear Principles.*

*In front of the souls of the deceased atomic bomb victims and the citizens of Hiroshima, I have further strengthened my commitment not to repeat the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I renew my pledge to observe the*

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, P.5.

<sup>56</sup> "Statement by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe," Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, September 26, 2006, [http://japan.kantei.go.jp/abespeech/2006/09/26danwa\\_e.html](http://japan.kantei.go.jp/abespeech/2006/09/26danwa_e.html).

<sup>57</sup> Op. Cit. 2018. P. 80.

*stipulations in the Constitution, sincerely seek international peace, and firmly maintain the Three Non-Nuclear Principles*<sup>58</sup>.

I extracted this part because there is a word, “tragedy”, which Abe used subsequently. This lexical choice does not represent the “sensitivity” that we found in his speech during the Chinese visit. Surprisingly, this sensitivity occurred in his speech in 2014, his second term of presidency:

*“We will carve out the future of this country for the sake of the generation that is alive at this moment and for the generations of tomorrow, facing history with humility and engraving its lessons deeply into our hearts. We will make contributions to lasting world peace to the greatest possible extent and spare no effort in working to bring about a world in which all people can live enriched lives.”*<sup>59</sup>

We catch an important word in this part, which Abe was not used to, humility. This subordinating adjective is not seen in his previous speeches. Especially within a phrase with the word “history”. This is an essential gap to fill: why did he use such a word?

It cannot be a haphazardly preferred word, because Abe is known for his controlling rhetoric, he delivered his speeches in the same patterns:

*“My sincere condolences to those of whom injured, perished, suffered....wish to extend my sympathies to those who were injured and impoverished ...On behalf of the people of Japan, I express my feelings of profound remorse and sincere mourning for all the victims of the war ,,,,”*

So, I believe that this indicates a sense of hurt, however, this hurt is not the ordinary sentiment that most people call. In the next part, I will elaborate on this issue.

### **3.3. Psychological evaluation of Shinzo Abe's discourse:**

Before getting into the word “humility”, I will present Abe's political inspirations in detail by analyzing his speeches. After giving details, I will turn back to the notion of “humility” with the assistance of Theodor Adorno's writings to understand his psycho-rhetorical twist in 2014. When it is needed, I will pull some Freudian theories to support Adorno's ideas.

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<sup>58</sup> Address by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the Nagasaki Peace Ceremony, August 9, 2007.

<sup>59</sup> Address by Prime Minister Abe at the Sixty-Ninth Memorial Ceremony for the War Dead, Friday, August 15, 2014

Ancestral connections are crucial to reading his heritage's "coercive constructivist" impacts on his political agenda, "Take Japan Back"<sup>60</sup>. According to Tobias Harris<sup>61</sup>, Abe shaped "reformist conservatism" by influencing the Meiji intellectuals.

He appreciated the Meiji intellectuals such as Yoshida Shoin, Takasugi Shinsaku, Iwakura Tomomi, and Nabusuke Kishi for being 'strong-minded' people who bore the consequences of their responsibilities to create an independent and strong Japan<sup>62</sup>. Especially, he was influenced by his maternal grandfather Kishi, a realist for the welfare of Japan:

*"Concerning what one should do as a politician, my grandfather consistently acted according to 'responsibility for consequences.'"*<sup>63</sup>

Abe took Kishi as an ideal type of leader in his career to construct an identity to take 'Japan' back. In other words, Abe's identity formation was shaped by his ancestors' values. In his speech on New Year in 2018, he shared the story of Umeko Tsuda, a Meiji intellectual who pioneered women's education, to exalt the Meiji reforms to awaken the Japanese nation to modernize<sup>64</sup>.

This exaltation is evident in his other policy speech in 2018:

*"150 years ago, Kenjiro Yamakawa, as a member of the Byakkotai, a samurai group that fought against the government forces, witnessed (the exact moment when) the new "Meiji" era started.*

\* \* \*

*However, the Meiji government decided to make use of his talent for the future of the country and gave Yamakawa an opportunity to play a role in society.*

\* \* \*

*"The strength of a country lies in its people"*<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Ronal R. Krebs and Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: The Power of Political Rhetoric*, SAGE Publications and ECPR-European Consortium for Political Research, Vol. 13(1), 2007, P.35-66.

<sup>61</sup> Tobias S. Harris *The Iconoclast: Shinzo Abe and the New Japan*, First published in the United Kingdom in 2020 by C. Hurst & Co. (Publishers) Ltd, P. 42.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 42-82.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, P.49.

<sup>64</sup> *Speeches and Statements by the Prime Minister, New Year's Reflection by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe*, January 1, 2018.

<sup>65</sup> *Speeches and Statements by the Prime Minister, Policy Speech by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the 196th Session of the Diet*, January 22, 2018.



In this speech, again he stressed an important individual, Kanjiro Yamakawa, to underline the importance of self-awareness as he did for Umeko Tsuda before. For Abe, an individual's status, prosperity and gender are not obstacles to their success. Therefore, within the group, he did not underestimate individualism. Another thing that must be noted is that Abe strictly gave place to his predecessors to ornament his speeches by appreciating them.

In the same line with his rhetoric, his political strategies are based on his predecessors' characteristics: being far away from hawkish idealism and following a realistic way to achieve goals. And this identity creation was formed by a good education and self-experience in his political life. When he launched his career in the late 1990s, he was in a more radical line but after 2006, his first presidency, he shifted his position into a more balanced right-wing line by utilizing a more liberal rhetoric<sup>66</sup>. Especially, in his speech for ASEAN and other annual commemorations of the war dead of Japan, there is a rhetorical style that could be called 'pragmatic realism'. He mainly focused on mutual economic partnerships between China and Japan or the USA.<sup>67</sup>

Nevertheless, Abe was not that formidable in his political stand compared to his Choshu ancestors' formidable stance. The reason for that, of course, changing circumstances in international politics, especially the rise of China, the domestic challenges (nuclear disarmament, ageing population, imbalance between urban and rural areas,<sup>68</sup> etc.) he faced, and his insufficient confidence during his 1st presidency term. Confidence, according to the Weber-Freud model, is one of the indicators of "successful" leadership to satisfy the followers, supporters, or disciples<sup>69</sup>.

Right now, I want to turn to the notion of humility with the ventriloquist strategy. As I explained before, ventriloquism, politically speaking<sup>70</sup>, is disguising oneself to be in second place in speeches by disposing of the

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<sup>66</sup> For detail see "Speeches and Statements by the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe." 2006. *Prime Minister Of Japan And His Cabinet*.

<sup>67</sup> Shinzo Abe, Japan, and Asean, Always in Tandem Towards a More Advantageous Win-Win Relationship through My "Three Arrows", Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore Lecture, Published in Singapore in 2013 by ISEAS Publishing.

<sup>68</sup> Statement by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, September 26, 2006

<sup>69</sup> *Political Psychology: Key Readings*, edited by John T.Jost and James Sidanius, Psychology Press, New York and Hove, 2004, P. 163-162.

<sup>70</sup> In the literary studies, this strategy is used to mask the author's dominance via the characters in the stories or plays.



responsibilities to another person. By doing so, the person can get rid of upcoming reactions from outside of the world.

In his speeches, Abe used several agencies, generally well-educated people such as Professor Doak and Meiji reformists, to cover up the war guilt issue of Japan and his repeated visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. His strategy continued until the Sixty-Ninth Memorial Ceremony for the War Dead.

In 2006, after his inauguration, Abe visited China and expressed his sour feelings for Asian people who had suffered from Japanese aggression. After that date, we cannot reach his expression of feelings, except for his classical opening phrases in his anniversary speeches, however, in 2014, he expressed historical humility and this speech was held in Japan not abroad, this is also another eye-catching detail.

This was the first time Abe used the word “humility” on the war death anniversary during his presidency terms. This twist in his rhetoric could be explained in one way: the explosion of the “Superego” (or in Adorno’s terminology “the Superego hurt”).

As I stated in the first part, Japanese officials always wanted to maintain their formidable stance, therefore they have not spoken about the humiliations that Japan had confronted in the past so as not to seem weak. But this is a very basic acceptance in politics, so I will not dig into the reason.

What I want to focus on there is the obsession with being strong or seeming strong. This feature, according to Adorno, belongs to the radical right-wing leadership, whom he associates with the narcissistic pleasure of crises and disasters<sup>71</sup>.

Correlating Abe with these features, in my opinion, is abrupt, however, the change in his rhetoric, especially over-emphasizing “peace”, “disarmament”, and “alliance with neighbours” in his speeches until the 2014 anniversary arrived at a pure conclusion: the rosy glasses are broken.

I hesitate to oversimplify this case, so I will carry it into theoretical ground. According to Freud, the Id represents animal instincts (violence, sex, murder, and these sorts of destructive impulses), the Superego implies

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<sup>71</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Yeni Sağ Radikalizminin Veçheleri ve Geçmişin İşlenmesi Ne Demektir?*, Translated by Şeyda Öztürk and Tarhan Onur from Original German Version ‘Aspekte Des Neuen Rechtsradikalismus und Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit’, Metis Publishing, 2019, P. 36-41.

restrictions (values, obligations, and rules), and the Ego is the balancing power between them<sup>72</sup>.

In the case of the 2014 anniversary, Abe's Ego was suppressed by his Superego, and he eventually expressed his innate feelings: Pain and humiliation. Abe, by inserting the word "humility", destructed his classic lexical preferences (previously he used more positive words like peace, alliance, mutual interests, etc.) and renewed his rhetoric by promoting nationalist sentiments.

In other words, throughout his long presidency periods, Abe has internalized the social expectations (Superego), balanced them to represent in his rhetoric (Ego), and destruct his previous style of rhetoric (Id) in the sack of deteriorating relations with China. Undoubtedly, his rhetoric changed when his politics became, as Chris Pope referred, Neo-nationalist and solid<sup>73</sup> in his second term.

I interpret this rhetorical change as Abe could not bear the peace-keeper stance in politics anymore. As a consequence, by taking support of his Superego (right-wing dominance in his party, nationalism, and unresolved issues like Article 9) and following his idols (Choshu leaders and other important Meiji reformists) Abe explored the real "himself": A strong, dedicated, and determined leader, not a narcissistic leader.

Not a narcissistic leader because the narcissistic cannot stand with unpredictable circumstances in politics<sup>74</sup>. Therefore, a narcissistic personality controls everyone, discriminates the folk against deviants, and creates a collective identity, which could be abused for narcissistic desires. However, Abe does not fit this style of leadership easily. Therefore, I can conclude by stressing that Abe wanted to realize himself as a mature individual in politics<sup>75</sup>. And, this case can be explained with the "social identity theory" rather than Adorno's "Authoritarian Personality".

According to social identity theory, the nature of an individual's behaviours is open to be affected by external forces that shape one's identity such as social values, family ties, and any sorts of constructive norms. Therefore, we cannot assume that an individual decides their

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<sup>72</sup> Olga Mikhailova, *Suicide in Psychoanalysis*, (Psychoanalytic Social Work, 12:2, 19-45,2006), P. 20-24.

<sup>73</sup> Tina Burrett, *Abe Road: Comparing Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Leadership of his First and Second Governments* Parliamentary Affairs (2017) 70, P. 400-429.

<sup>74</sup> Op, Cit, 2014, P.307

<sup>75</sup> The notion of individualism was stressed by Abe in his education reforms and in his speeches, however, he remained loyal to his Choshu origin, which forms Abe's identity base.

decisions by completely their own free will. However, their interpretation matters in this decision-making<sup>76</sup>. The aforementioned external forces push people to create a structure in social life. For a political figure, this creation occurs in his ideology: how does a leader perceive himself within the society?

In Abe's case, when we apply the social identity theory, we attain that Abe for both his political interests (enhancing economic growth and population, his constitutional aims, and non-nuclear initiatives,) and his psychological needs conducted a new path in his political career. He internalized his ancestral bounds and re-created his political vision to be as dedicated and powerful as his ancestors to empower his political goals.

This internalization is apparent in his 2018 speech:

*“One hundred fifty years ago, a wave of colonial rule was surging into Asia, and the building of a new nation by Meiji-era Japan had its start right alongside that major sense of urgency.*

\* \* \* \*

*Everything depends on the aspirations and eagerness of us, the Japanese people. It all depends on whether or not we believe that we can change the future and can take action, as our ancestors did 150 years ago.<sup>77</sup>”*

In his speech, he used “ancestor”, “Meiji-Japan”, and “colonial” words and created a cohesive structure for his nationalist rhetoric. This lexical style in his rhetoric also created a “collective memory” that feeds “collective identity”. He stressed in this speech that all people of Japan are equal (he mentioned the abolition of the class system of Japan) without discriminating against genders and people with disabilities. This shows us another controversy with Adorno's authoritarian type: segregating a group of people as enemies<sup>78</sup>. Abe has not marginalised any groups as rivals in his war death anniversary speeches.

To conclude, in his second presidency term, Abe's rhetoric became more constructivist by using strong arguments and sentiments by choosing historical words that reminiscence about the past, and, by doing so, became a part of collective memory and identity. The underlying forces

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<sup>76</sup> Op. Cit. 2011, P.16-34

<sup>77</sup> Speeches and Statements by the Prime Minister, Policy Speech by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the 196th Session of the Diet, January 22, 2018.

<sup>78</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, Faşizm ve Propaganda, Translated by Müge Çavdar from Original Script 'On Propaganda- Selections of Essays', Sel Publishing, September 2023. P. 169-174.

for this rhetoric change were his Superego, namely social pressures that pushed Abe to take action, and his Ego balanced all measures to succeed in his political aims.

## **Conclusion**

Abe's discourse within the periods of his first and second presidencies shows us that when he became mature in politics, the characteristics of his rhetoric began to change. At the same time, his rhetoric became intense through 2012 in terms of his political aims such as constitutional restoration, convincing confidence of Japan, and the Article 9 issue.

Abe was so controlling in his rhetoric that he never slipped his tongue (Freudian Slip). The proof of his control is the usage of certain words such as 'deep remorse', 'sacrifice of Asian people', 'respect to the spirit of the deceased', and 'historians own business'; and,

Moreover, he preferred value-based rhetoric with other Asian countries by stressing the peace-seeker view of Japan to highlight the 'otherness' of China. By doing that, Abe tapped the perception of threat from China to provide legitimacy and enhance deterrence against China through a series of security agreements with the USA and other democratic countries<sup>79</sup>. Along the same line, China poses a 'social creativity strategy' to achieve prestigious status in world politics by utilizing the war crime narratives of Germany and Japan to assert that China's rise will be peaceful<sup>80</sup>

To explain his changing rhetoric, I have presented a psychological frame to understand hidden impulses. I found the "Superego hurt" in Abe's identity formation. The Choshu clan was the winning side of the Meiji Restoration, somehow they were the founders of Imperial Japan. However, after the disaster during WW2, their legacy remained as suspicious and dark. Nevertheless, after being sufficiently confident, in his second term, Abe remained loyal to his admirations and followed the steps of them.

To give details about Sino-Japanese relations and Abe's discourse, it is claimed that Abe mitigated his rhetoric to his actions against China and his Yasukuni Shrine visits. One of the appropriate examples was the

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<sup>79</sup>Giulio Pugliese, *The China Challenge, Abe Shinzo's Realism, and the Limits of Japanese Nationalism*, SAIS Review of International Affairs, Volume 35, Number 2, Published by Johns Hopkins University Press, Summer-Fall 2015, pp. 45-55.

<sup>80</sup> Vaughn P. Shannon and Paul A. Kowert, eds. *Psychology and Constructivism in International Relations: An Ideational Alliance*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2011, P. 67-68.

Senkaku Island issue, he did not criticize China for the issue in his inauguration speech, but rather he posed a strategic ambivalence<sup>81</sup>.

As a result, the Sino-Japanese relations with their shared past are very fertile for both sides to use in their political discourses as a legitimacy tool. For the Chinese part, this is evident in the Nanjing Memorial Hall and Xi's speeches at the anniversary celebrations in the hall<sup>82</sup>.

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<sup>81</sup> John hemmings and Maiko kuroki, Shinzo Abe: Foreign Policy 2,0, Harvard Asia Quarterly 15:1, 2013, P.11-12.

<sup>82</sup> Megan Liu, Can the Past Serve the Present? The Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall, Journal of Chinese Humanities 3, 2017, P. 204.

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