

# The Imagined West and Modern Japan <sup>(1)</sup>

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## 1. What is Occidentalism?

Edward Wadie Said once argued in his world-famous book, “the answer to Orientalism is not Occidentalism” <sup>(2)</sup>. Then he continued: “No former ‘Oriental’ will be comforted by the thought that having been an Oriental himself he is likely—too likely—to study new ‘Orientals’—or ‘Occidentals’—of his own making” <sup>(3)</sup>

However, long time before Said published *Orientalism* in 1978, there had already been phenomena that in fact could be called Occidentalism. These phenomena had existed not as a simple counterpart to Orientalism, such as constructing new symmetrical discourses against Western hegemony, but as rather complicated processes. The purpose of this paper is to examine the processes of image (representation)-constructing of the West, which often tends to be a more important subject in non-Western societies than in Western societies under discussion. <sup>(4)</sup>

Recently, the concept of Occidentalism has attracted considerable attention. There are several studies dealing with this concept, such as that of Chen Xiaomei (1992), Christopher GoGwilt (1995), James Carrie (1995), Chen (1995), Wang Ning

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<sup>(1)</sup> The present study is a revised and extended version of the presentation entitled “Reconsidering Occidentalism: Invention of “the West” in the case of modern Japan” made at the *Perspectives on Eurasia 2006 International Symposium* (Tampere, Finland, 05.09.2006) (Takeuchi 2006).

<sup>(2)</sup> Said 1978[1995]: 328

<sup>(3)</sup> Said 1978[1995]: 328

<sup>(4)</sup> It goes without saying that the West as images could be sometimes a serious topic in Western societies as well, disproving that the West as images would become a hotly debated subject in non-Western societies only. Furthermore, the criteria for judging certain societies as Western has become more and more complicated recently. As Ernest Gellner - pointing out this kind of problem - argued, “Moreover, over and above the fact that the industrial/agrarian and Western/Other distinctions cut across each other, and obscure each other’s outline, we have by now an additional one which cuts across both” (Gellner 1993: 3).

(1997), Zaheer Baber (2002), Meltem Ahiska (2003), Alastair Bonnett (2004), Bonnett (2005), Takeshi Arthur Thornton (2004), Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit (2004)<sup>(5)</sup>, as well as Jukka Jouhki (2006). These studies examine how the various images of the West were created and what the political dynamics around those images were like both in Western and in non-Western societies.

For instance, though Bonnett himself was born and lives in England, he stated that “*being Western* has never meant much to me”<sup>(6)</sup>. He argued that it was the non-Western people themselves to whom the representations of the West had more important meaning.<sup>(7)</sup> Furthermore, he said that “it was the non-West that invented the West”<sup>(8)</sup>, emphasizing the necessities and possibilities of researching “how the idea of the West has been put to use for diverse political and social ends in different societies around the world”<sup>(9)</sup>. A Japanese scholar, Nishitani Osamu, who is a specialist of French literature and thought, describes “Europe” not as a name of a certain geographical area but as a desired target that has been longed for beyond time and space.<sup>(10)</sup> He also says that in the eyes of “the Others outside Europe”, “Europe” looks like a strong and prominent entity of civilization whose outline is clear.<sup>(11)</sup>

However, while the concept of Orientalism in the sense of “Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient”<sup>(12)</sup> has an obvious advocator in Said, Occidentalism remains as an obscure concept, which is explained in different ways by various people. For example, according to Wang, Occidentalism is an “indeterminate and problematic ‘quasi-theoretical’ concept”<sup>(13)</sup>. He pointed out that:

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<sup>(5)</sup> In this field of research, Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit (2004) can not be ignored. However, their claims sometimes result in a little oversimplification. They define Occidentalism as “the dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies” (Buruma and Margalit 2004: 5). I think their understanding of Occidentalism simply as a hostile feeling towards the West is inappropriate and problematic. For example, Aoki Tamotsu managed to grasp two aspects of Occidentalism: the West as an idealized model and the West as a bad example (Aoki 1998: 212-22). In this paper, I will use the word *Occidentalism* as a word that includes more complicated and ambivalent meanings than the way Buruma and Margalit defined.

<sup>(6)</sup> Bonnett 2004: 1

<sup>(7)</sup> Bonnett 2004: 2

<sup>(8)</sup> Bonnett 2004: 2

<sup>(9)</sup> Bonnett 2004: 4

<sup>(10)</sup> Nishitani 2002: 361

<sup>(11)</sup> Nishitani 2002: 362

<sup>(12)</sup> Said 1978[1995]: 3

<sup>(13)</sup> Wang 1997: 62

“Occidentalism only manifests itself, at least in the current stage, as a prevailing social and cultural trend and a state of mind of certain people, or a strategy of discourse opposed to Western cultural hegemonism, or an ideological force challenging the Western power, and so forth. It is far from a full-fledged *episteme* covering such a wide range of learning and representation as Orientalism, nor has it become a discipline.”<sup>(14)</sup>

Occidentalism is neither a simple alternative nor a symmetrical counterpart to Orientalism.<sup>(15)</sup> However, I am of the opinion that studies on Occidentalism have positive possibilities which can throw lights on fields that are made invisible by the concept Orientalism. Thus, the aim of this paper is to reconsider the concept Occidentalism. In doing so first, I will examine what is expressed by this concept, and what the effectiveness of studying Occidentalism is, contrasting it with its assumed counter-concept Orientalism. *Orientalism* by Said threw light on the problematic issue of representations that the West used for controlling the Orient. Since publishing *Orientalism* in 1978, his theory has established a systematic perspective in the academic world. Innumerable studies based on his theory have been published. However, what I intend to do in this paper is to point out fields that tend to be overlooked by studies based on Said’s theory, and to suggest possibilities for introducing another perspective of Occidentalism.

Secondly, I will analyze the characteristics of Occidentalism in modern Japanese society (from the Meiji period to Japan’s high economic growth period, between 1868 and 1970). The reason for doing so lies in that modern Japan is often said to be a society which strived to become a Western country more purely and extremely than real Western societies.<sup>(16)</sup> In such a society, the West as representations had complicated and ambivalent characters which could not be reduced to either admiring or hating.<sup>(17)</sup>

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<sup>(14)</sup> Wang 1997: 66

<sup>(15)</sup> And it also must be noted that there is some danger in adopting such perspectives as Orientalism or Occidentalism because the adoption itself might strengthen the binary opposition and cause a kind of Orientalism.

<sup>(16)</sup> For example, as Carrier said, “although Japan is outside the geographic West, at least the economic data seem to indicate that it is fully modern, perhaps more than the West itself” (Carrier 1995: 18). Bonnett also reckoned that one of the important twentieth-century transitions is “towards the inclusion of non-European heritage societies within the West, most notably Japan” (Bonnett 2004: 5).

<sup>(17)</sup> This ambivalent position of Japanese society also gave rise to ambivalent attitudes towards the Orient. For example, as Kang Sang-jung stated, “modern Japanese society, whose main course is

## 2. What are the possibilities of examining Occidentalism?

The limitations of Said's research have been criticized and revisited from numerous angles.<sup>(18)</sup> For example, Wang said that the limitations of "Orientalism" constructed by Said mainly pertain to geographical, cultural and literary aspects.<sup>(19)</sup> The geographical limitation that Wang pointed out is that the Orient constructed by Said is limited mainly to the Near East and the Middle East. Said did not spend much time researching other Oriental regions and countries, such as Southeast Asia, India, China or Japan. Secondly, Wang especially criticized the absence of the Chinese case in Said's theory in spite of its great heritage to the Oriental culture.<sup>(20)</sup> He claimed that in the post-cold war era, culture has become a more and more important subject. Thirdly, Wang's criticism about the literary aspect is that the texts Said analyzed were mostly from the "English or *english*-speaking world rather than from the non-English-speaking or other Third-World countries"<sup>(21)</sup> .

Another criticism about Said, which is introduced by Usuki Akira (2002), points out that Said's discourse analyses mainly pertain to British, American and French Orientalist discourses only, and that the objects of those discourses are only about the Arabs and the Islam.<sup>(22)</sup> Among the many critiques about Said, this kind of criticism is highly relevant, since Said's unilateral methodology may cause the problem that the representation of others in Said's theory always pertains to some negative image imposed on powerless people by powerful people.<sup>(23)</sup> Iyanaga Nobumi, who examined

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described as *Datsu-A Nyu-O* (escaping from Asia and entering the West)" created "distorted Orientalism" (Kang [1996]2004: 47). Kang argued that from Japan's views on Korea and China to see, it is easy to understand that Japan had always cast out its "inner Others" as "the Object" in order to forget its self-portrait as the Orient (Kang [1996]2004: 47).

<sup>(18)</sup> One of those kinds of research is Robert Irwin (2006). He examined the works and lives of Orientalists in detail, not as a monolithic unity but as diverse and various entities. Irwin defended their academic achievements. Maya Jasanoff (2006) argued the difference between Irwin and Said in her book review of Irwin's book. In this book review, she approved Irwin's factual corrections, but did not think Irwin could defeat Said theoretically (Jasanoff 2006).

<sup>(19)</sup> Wang 1997: 61

<sup>(20)</sup> Wang 1997: 61

<sup>(21)</sup> Wang 1997: 61. Here Wang a little oversimplified, because Said used French texts wherever he could - but of course that does not much increase the types of literature analyzed.

<sup>(22)</sup> Usuki 2002: 245. Usuki himself does not think this kind of criticism about Said is much to the point.

<sup>(23)</sup> As to this kind of problem, for example, Pekka Korhonen pointed out that "a modern reader, whose thinking has been influenced by Edward Said's concept of Orientalism" sometimes tends to fall into a trap of finding Western hegemonic power everywhere (Korhonen 2002: 254).

how the illusions of “the Orient” had been constructed, also pointed out the danger of that abusing “Orientalism” as a tool of a political struggle could invite another oppression.<sup>(24)</sup>

Said’s methodology necessarily overlooks the active strategies of people who are viewed as Oriental. Consequently, what tends to be overlooked in research studies based on Said’s theory is the complicated processes, such that the Orient sometimes internalizes Orientalistic thinking, or that Orientalism and Occidentalism can be used as means for liberation in certain situations too.

Therefore, what I intend to do with the concept Occidentalism is not accuse that the non-Western societies also represent the West with distorted images. Occidentalism as well as Orientalism both refer to biased representation. However, Occidentalism does not exist as a symmetrical counterpart to Orientalism. Instead, Occidentalism exists as strategies devised by subordinate people for surviving in the hegemonic power balance. That may naturally involve using distorted images of the West, but it can also pertain to the attempts to acquire an accurate knowledge of the West. The main point is that whereas Orientalism is an often subconscious strategy suitable for administrative purposes, Occidentalism is a conscious political strategy for surviving, and if possible reconstructing, an unfavorable international situation involving the overcoming of cultural boundaries. Occidentalism often appears as a *creative* process. To borrow Chen’s phrase, I think this kind of “strategic use of discourse”<sup>(25)</sup> is worth analyzing.

Seen from this perspective, I refer to some recent remarkable research.

Chen (1992) examined a controversial TV series ‘He Shang’. ‘He Shang’<sup>(26)</sup> is a documentary TV series that was broadcast in China from June 1988 onwards and became a national sensation.<sup>(27)</sup> The significant message of this series was denying the fetishes of “traditional China” from the perspective of an idealized, scientific and

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<sup>(24)</sup> Iyanaga [1996]2005 (vol.2): 170-1. In another book, Iyanaga discussed the problem of the Orientalism concept advocated by Said (Iyanaga 1988: 19-53). According to Iyanaga, the mistake made by Said came from his unconscious presupposition that there can and should be discourses on the “true” Orient somewhere even though Said denied that kind of presupposition in his words (Iyanaga 1988: 30-2).

<sup>(25)</sup> Chen 1995: 16

<sup>(26)</sup> ‘河殇River Elegy’

<sup>(27)</sup> Chen 1992: 693

modern Western society. Chen thought it important that in spite of its Occidentalism and “self-degradation”, ‘He Shang’ could touch a large number of Chinese in all walks of life. <sup>(28)</sup> Chen grasped the images of the West in Chinese society within domestic political dynamics. Chen distinguishes two types of Occidentalism in China, which sometimes appropriate the same discourses for thoroughly different political purposes. <sup>(29)</sup> One of them refers to an “official Occidentalism” and the other one to an “anti-official Occidentalism” prevailing mainly among the intelligentsia. The first one is used as “a means for supporting a nationalism that effects the internal suppression of its own people” <sup>(30)</sup> by the Chinese government. The latter is expressed very clearly in the TV series ‘He Shang’. <sup>(31)</sup> Then Chen wrote:

“It is thus one-sided to claim that misconceptions of the Other, such as Orientalism or Occidentalism, are necessarily imperialistic acts. It is the use to which they are put by those who articulate them, and by those who hear and receive them, that determines their social – and literary – effects.” <sup>(32)</sup>

In other words, Chen claimed the possibilities of examining Occidentalism or Orientalism as “practices” <sup>(33)</sup>, the meanings of which are decided not by some essential content but by how they are used.

Bonnett (2005) argues how the West was used in the modernizing processes of non-Western societies. He picked up two philosophers or thinkers. One of them is a Japanese Westernizer and nationalist, Fukuzawa Yukichi (1834-1901). The other one is the Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941). Bonnett attempts “to challenge directly the ubiquitous assumption that the idea of Asian spirituality is, simply or largely, a product of Western orientalism” <sup>(34)</sup>. What Bonnett calls attention to is the inventive power of Fukuzawa and Tagore, that is, how they created the West and Asia for their own purposes. According to Bonnett, Fukuzawa used the West as representations for the independence of his own country, while Tagore created “the

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<sup>(28)</sup> Chen 1992: 702

<sup>(29)</sup> Chen 1992: 688

<sup>(30)</sup> Chen 1992: 688

<sup>(31)</sup> Chen 1992: 691-2

<sup>(32)</sup> Chen 1992: 710

<sup>(33)</sup> Chen 1992: 710

<sup>(34)</sup> Bonnett 2005: 506

ideas of Western soullessness and Asian solidarity and spirituality”<sup>(35)</sup> for articulating Asian modernity. According to Bonnett, the West is “something *used*: employed and deployed to articulate modernity’s many forms”<sup>(36)</sup>

Another scholar Ahiska (2003) discussed Turkish national identity and its modernization process, referring to the problem whether Turkey could gain membership in the EU. Ahiska said that in Turkey the West had been an ambivalent image which has been either a model to be followed or a threat to “indigenous” values since the late nineteenth century.<sup>(37)</sup> Turkey is located on the borderline of East and West not only in a geographical meaning, but also in terms of advanced and developing countries.<sup>(38)</sup> In his opinion, the concept of Occidentalism could be understood better as “describing the set of practices and arrangements justified in and against the imagined idea of ‘the West’ in the non-West”<sup>(39)</sup>.

What these recent research studies have in common is the perspective that regards representation of the West as a strategy. With this perspective in mind, I think it is important to study the representation of the West in successfully independent countries where the process of Westernization started early, such as Japan or Turkey. First of all, these were overlooked by Said. One of the reasons why Said’s theory sometimes gives us a sense of impasse is that he examined only the images of the Orient in Western discourses. For example, representing the West in modern Japanese society or Turkish society does not necessarily result in imposing one-sided negative images on the Other. Instead, in relatively early modernized non-Western societies, the West is often recognized as an ambivalent and refracted model consisting of a complex mixture feelings, admiration and a sense of inferiority, idealizing mixed with perceptions of threat. Thus, various devices or strategies appeared, such as *Wakon-Yousai* (=Japanese spirit combined with Western learning). And, for example, in modern Japanese society, these various kinds of feelings and patterns of adaptation pushed modernization smoothly, and, on the other hand, gave birth to some reactions, such as Japanese Romantic School, Kyoto School, and

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<sup>(35)</sup> Bonnett 2005: 519

<sup>(36)</sup> Bonnett 2005: 522

<sup>(37)</sup> Ahiska 2003: 353

<sup>(38)</sup> Ahiska 2003: 353

<sup>(39)</sup> Ahiska 2003: 366

Ultrationalism. That is why I pay attention to the images of the “West” in relatively early modernized non-Western societies. Sometimes there could be a paradoxical situation where the Orientals themselves use the Oriental image imposed on them for their own purposes as the famous play “M. Butterfly” written by David Henry Hwang depicted.<sup>(40)</sup> In order to grasp such complex realities, research studies untangling the congestion of the politics of representation, such as how the Orient gazed the West,<sup>(41)</sup> are needed. Such studies could break the monotonousness in Said’s theory. In the following section I will try to point out some of the characteristics of Occidentalism in modern Japanese society.

### 3. The ambivalent images of the West in Japan

In Japan, from the Meiji Restoration to around 1970, the images of the West symbolizing modernity and civilization had been an ambivalent model, which stimulated both yearning and antipathy. Especially it was so for the emerging modern elite because they internalized yearning for the West, while they were also burdened with the consciousness of the fate of their own country. Hirakawa Sukehiro said that “Japanese intellectual elite ...could not help thinking about the relation between foreign civilizations and Japan, especially Western civilization and Japan”<sup>(42)</sup>. Dual meanings of the images of the West sometimes caused serious conflict or anxiety. Numerous studies about this kind of conflict have been made.<sup>(43)</sup> This kind of conflict and anxiety among the intellectuals had also been an important topic of many novels and critical essays.<sup>(44)</sup>

Kondō Kazuhiko (1998) extracted two patterns with which modern Japanese

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<sup>(40)</sup> The play “M. Butterfly” was written by the Chinese-American David Henry Hwang. He said this play was based on the scandalous incident that occurred in the 1980s (Hwang 1988=1989: 135). In this incident, a French diplomat had been in a romantic relationship with a Chinese actress, who later turned out to be a male spy (Hwang 1988=1989: 135). In 1988, the play “M. Butterfly” won a Tony award. In 1993, this play was cinematized by David Cronenberg. This story describes the situation where the Orient purposefully uses stereotypes that we can see in the opera “Madama Butterfly” by Giacomo Puccini.

<sup>(41)</sup> As in the research study of Takeuchi Rio (2005).

<sup>(42)</sup> Hirakawa [1971]1976: 13

<sup>(43)</sup> See, for example, Hirakawa ([1971]1976) and Hirakawa (1976).

<sup>(44)</sup> See, for example, Natsume Sōseki ([1911]1974), Akutagawa Ryūnosuke ([1916]1990), Nitobe Inazō (1928), and Tanizaki Jun’ichirō ([1933-4]1975).

intellectuals reacted to the West as representations, namely Modernization School<sup>(45)</sup> and Romantic School<sup>(46)</sup>. The first one, Modernization School means “people who learn the West as a model for their own inferior country, expecting universality of modernity or civilization”<sup>(47)</sup>. For example, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*<sup>(48)</sup> (Fukuzawa 1875) was a typical book. In this book, Fukuzawa showed a course Japan should pursue. He considered civilization as a relative concept, not as a rigid one. Fukuzawa argued that for the time being the Japanese should learn civilization of the West in order to make Japan independent. It must be noted that Fukuzawa was not a naïve Westernized adorer. He made a strategic choice, considering the subordination under Western culture a necessary but nevertheless temporal one. The latter one, Romantic School means “people who put a curse on otherness or hegemonic power of modern=western civilization and want to transcend it by their own tradition or ethnic groups or worldview of organic relations”<sup>(49)</sup>. In particular, the “Discussion about the “Transcendence of Modernity””<sup>(50)</sup>, the Japanese Romantic School<sup>(51)</sup>, and Asianism are categorized in this group. For example, the “Discussion about “Transcendence of Modernity””<sup>(52)</sup> was held in 1942. There were 13 members, consisting of literary critics, a journalist, philosophers, a historian, a musical composer, and a scientist. It was held in an “intellectual shocking situation within one year after the outbreak of the Pacific War”<sup>(53)</sup>. This discussion had a theme of reflecting Japanese modernization course. Some criticisms of importing western civilization too rapidly and too thoughtlessly were presented. “Transcendence of Modernity” became one of the catchphrases in the Greater East Asia War. Especially, this catchphrase caught intellectuals. The phrase

<sup>(45)</sup> *Kindai-ha* (近代派), Kondō 1998: 15-6

<sup>(46)</sup> *Roman-ha* (浪漫派), Kondō 1998: 15-6

<sup>(47)</sup> Kondō 1998: 15-6

<sup>(48)</sup> *Bunmeiron no Gairyaku*, 「文明論之概略」

<sup>(49)</sup> Kondō 1998: 15-6

<sup>(50)</sup> ‘*Kindai no Chōkoku*’ *Zadankai*, 「近代の超克」座談会

<sup>(51)</sup> *Nihon Rouman ha*, 日本浪漫派. Hashikawa Bunzō ([1960]1998) is informative regarding the Japanese Romantic School, as he has based his research on his internal understanding of it.

<sup>(52)</sup> I have to add that although the word “Transcendence of Modernity” became famous as a catchphrase of the Greater East Asia War, not all discussants of this roundtable claimed to belong to the Romantic School. Actually, the opinions of the discussants were somewhat rambling. Also there was an influence from the book *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* written by Oswald Spengler in 1918-22 in the discourse of “Transcendence of Modernity” (Ishida 1995: 124).

<sup>(53)</sup> Kawakami and Takeuchi 1979: 166

idealized and justified the war, so it was used for propagandizing the war.

The rise of two types of intellectuals was not restricted to modern Japan. Kondō (1998) claimed that intellectuals in relatively backward countries, which came into contact with the powerful Western civilization from the nineteenth to the twentieth century often have had such dual pattern of reaction (Modernization School and Romantic School) in common, such as *Slavyanofily*<sup>(54)</sup> and *Zapadniki*<sup>(55)</sup> in Russia.<sup>(56)</sup>

The same was said by Yamamoto Shin (1961). Yamamoto (1961) examined structures and changing patterns of civilizations, referring to Arnold Joseph Toynbee and Alfred Weber. Especially it is interesting that Yamamoto suggested similarity and simultaneousness of the reaction of intellectuals in Russia and Japan:

“Amongst intellectuals, not only the process of losing the consciousness of their own civilization but also the process of recovering the consciousness of their lost civilization is similar between Russia and Japan.”<sup>(57)</sup>

Kondō remarked that in the lineage of Modernization School an academic discipline which could be called Occidentalism had existed in modern Japanese society.<sup>(58)</sup> That is, the discipline where people “invented the Other of the West=modernity=civilization as a model for reorganizing their own country”<sup>(59)</sup> and criticized and enlightened real Japanese society.<sup>(60)</sup> Although Said denied the possibilities of existence of the opposite discipline to Orientalism, Kondō claimed as follows.

“Modern Japanese were able to construct that kind of discipline (Occidentalism). Rather, it was this discipline that had caused national trauma.”<sup>(61)</sup>

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<sup>(54)</sup> *Slavyanofily* are nationalists who believed in and tried to maintain Russian uniqueness in nineteenth century Russia.

<sup>(55)</sup> *Zapadniki* are Westernizers in nineteenth century Russia.

<sup>(56)</sup> Kondō 1998: 16-7

<sup>(57)</sup> Yamamoto 1961: 82

<sup>(58)</sup> Kondō 1998: 79-80

<sup>(59)</sup> Kondō 1998: 79-80

<sup>(60)</sup> On the contrary, Asia as images was also sometimes used as a model or means for reorganizing Japanese society, such as Takeuchi Yoshimi. However, this seems to be the other side of the same logic of Occidentalism. For example, Matsumoto said that “Asia or the East stated by Takeuchi did not mean substance in itself. It was a form of idea”(Matsumoto [1975]2005: 216).

<sup>(61)</sup> Kondō 1998: section of notes p.17. And in this sentence, “(Occidentalism)” is added by Rio Takeuchi.

However, the society where the West as representations aroused complex feelings and had significant meanings came to an end in the high economic growth period (around 1960s), at least on the surface.

As early as 1979<sup>(62)</sup>, Matsumoto Ken'ichi pointed out that the high economic growth period is an important moment for changing Japanese society. Matsumoto argued that 1964 is a more fundamental turning point of structure of Japanese society than 1945, which is the year of the end of the WWII.<sup>(63)</sup> 1964 in Japanese society is a year when Tokyo Olympic Games were held "for the first time in Asia", Japan was allowed to join OECD, and *Tokaido Shinkansen* Line (main railway service) was opened to traffic. In short, 1964 is the first year when Japan was recognized as a member of the advanced countries in civilian sense; in a military sense Japan had been counted among the (Western style) colonial great powers since the end of the Russo-Japanese war in 1905. Matsumoto said that 1964 is "the first year when Japan became a non-Asian country"<sup>(64)</sup>. In other words, in this year, according to Matsumoto, "modern Japanese society," whose main structure had been *Datsu-A Nyu-O* (escaping from Asia and entering the West) since the Meiji era came to an end, accompanied by the decline of persuasiveness or reality of the discourses based on some binary oppositions, such as Asia versus West, rural versus urban, the masses versus the intellectuals.<sup>(65)</sup>

Thus in the Japanese society the historical moment when the West as representations could be interpreted as Occidentalism has already ended because of high economic growth, at least on the surface.<sup>(66)</sup> Even now, obsessive feelings about West sometimes appear in certain points. However, it wears some nostalgic color and has already lost desperateness that the Japanese people once had. It might be possible to say that today's Occidentalism is a kind of "nostalgia for the passionate time of modernization".

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<sup>(62)</sup> The hypothesis that the year 1964 is a fundamental turning point of Japanese society written in Matsumoto (2000) is based on an essay presented by him in a newspaper in 1979 ("*1964nen Igo*" (「1964年以后」, After 1964) *Asahi Shinbun*, 1979.9.4.).

<sup>(63)</sup> Matsumoto 2000: 169

<sup>(64)</sup> Matsumoto 2000: 165

<sup>(65)</sup> Matsumoto 2000: 171-2

<sup>(66)</sup> Ishida Takeshi (1995) classifies post-WWII Japanese society into 3 periods. That is, 1) from the end of WWII to the end of the 1950's: the West as a model which we should approach, 2) from the 1960's to the 1970's: the West as a near-achieving model, and 3) from the 1980's to the present: the West as a having-already achieved and relativized model (Ishida 1995: 90-1).

#### 4. Conclusions

Studies based on the concepts of Orientalism and Occidentalism have often been accused of distorted representations of the Other. The fictitiousness of binary oppositions such as West versus East has often been pointed out, the argumentative position has been deconstructed, and equal dialogue has been demanded. Those claims are justified and they have given arms for resisting various structures of discrimination and suppression. However, after Said explicated a gigantic system of controlling, it is not very productive just to pile up research that simply accuses various authors and politicians of distorted representations of the Other. Furthermore, representations and perceptions of the Other intrinsically cannot exist without distortion, as we can see in the words of Friedrich Nietzsche: "Truths are illusions, but we have forgotten that they are such" <sup>(67)</sup>. Today when almost 30 years have passed since Said published *Orientalism*, the needed research is not that which simply points out distorted representations of the Other or criticizes binary oppositions. We need studies which investigate how and why such distortions or illusions are constructed and maintained and what the roles of such illusions are. <sup>(68)</sup>

I argue that there is a need for comparative studies <sup>(69)</sup> concerning Occidentalism as a phenomenon. It could give clues to investigating the universality or peculiarity of the modernization process of various societies. For example, as I mentioned in section 3, intellectuals' reactions to the West were similar between Russia and modern Japan. Furthermore, the demonstration of being Western is not restricted in geographically non-Western societies. The testimony of being Western sometimes has been important in geographically Western countries, too. <sup>(70)</sup> Studies which examine various variations of the discourses around the theme of the West are required.

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<sup>(67)</sup> *"die Wahrheiten sind Illusionen, von denen man vergessen hat, dass sie welche sind"*, Nietzsche [1873]1973: 374-5. Said himself also quoted this phrase.

<sup>(68)</sup> Of course, it is necessary for us to consider not only the power relationships which appear in the field of culture or representation but also other serious power relationships, such as economic status, military affairs, and labor situations. See, for example, Terry Eagleton's warning to the research based on post-colonial theories (Eagleton 1996=1996: 84).

<sup>(69)</sup> One of those kinds of pioneering research is Bonnett (2004).

<sup>(70)</sup> Finland was once one of the countries which needed a testimony of being Western. See, for example, Kemiläinen (1998). She examined the anthropological discussion of Finnish identity in detail.

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## The Imagined West and Modern Japan

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The aim of this paper is to reconsider the concept Occidentalism. In doing so first, I will examine what is expressed by this concept, and what the effectiveness of studying Occidentalism is, contrasting it with its assumed counter-concept Orientalism. *Orientalism* by Edward Wadie Said threw light on the problematic issue of representations that the West used for controlling the Orient. Since publishing *Orientalism* in 1978, his theory has established a systematic perspective in the academic world. Innumerable studies based on his theory have been published. However, what I intend to do in this paper is to point out fields that tend to be overlooked by studies based on Said's theory, and to suggest possibilities for introducing another perspective of Occidentalism. Occidentalism as well as Orientalism both refer to biased representation. However, Occidentalism does not exist as a symmetrical counterpart to Orientalism. Instead, Occidentalism exists as strategies devised by subordinate people for surviving in the hegemonic power balance. The main point is that whereas Orientalism is an often subconscious strategy suitable for administrative purposes, Occidentalism is a conscious political strategy for surviving, and if possible reconstructing, an unfavorable international situation involving the overcoming of cultural boundaries. Occidentalism often appears as a *creative* process.

Secondly, I will analyze the characteristics of Occidentalism in modern Japanese society. The reason for doing so lies in that modern Japan is often said to be a society which strived to become a Western country more purely and extremely than real Western societies. In such a society, West as representations had complicated and ambivalent characters which could not be reduced to either admiring or hating. Thus, various devices or strategies appeared, such as *Wakon-Yousai* (=Japanese spirit combined with Western learning). These various kinds of feelings and patterns of adaptation pushed modernization smoothly, and, on the other hand, gave birth to some reactions, such as Japanese Romantic School, Kyoto School, and Ultrationalism. In the latter part of this paper, I try to point out some of the characteristics of Occidentalism in modern Japanese society.