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***The Occident in the Orient or the Orient in the Occident?:  
Reception of Said's Orientalism in Japan<sup>12</sup>***

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**INTRODUCTION**

“Although Edward does not appear in the film, he exists in every aspect of it”<sup>3</sup> commented Mariam Said, a widow of Edward W. Said (Siglo 2006, Yuri 2006a, p. 30). In April and May 2006, a documentary film called *Edward W. Said: Out of Place* was screened in Tokyo. The film was produced by a Japanese film director Sato Makoto<sup>4</sup> who visited places and people in the Middle East with the guide of Said's well known autobiography *Out of Place: A Memoir* (Siglo 2006). Sato starts his journey from Lebanon, where Said is now resting. His camera

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<sup>2</sup> Author would like to extend a gratitude to the Centre for Asia Pacific Social Transformation Studies for funding my fieldwork trip to Japan in April 2006. Most of the articles I have mentioned in this text were collected during the trip.

<sup>3</sup> If not specifically mentioned, texts which are originally in Japanese are translated into English by the author (Yoko Harada).

<sup>4</sup> Generally, Japanese and Korean names are in order the surname first and then the given name.

catches scenery from both Palestine and Israel and people from both sides. Ordinary people living in the area appear as interviewees as well as the family of Said – Mariam, his daughter Najla and son Wadie – people like Noam Chomsky, his colleagues and friends. Sato's focus is on people and their lives in the most controversial area in the Middle East. People living on the border are what Sato showed on the screen and Said himself was one of them. A book with pictures was published to coincide with the release of the film (Nakano & Sato 2006). It contains many interviews, which could not be included in the film because of the restriction on the length of the film and Sato's record of filming (Siglo 2006).

Despite the fact that this film was a relatively minor one compared to Hollywood and other entertainment movies, it was promoted in a well-planned way and its notices and reviews appeared in daily newspapers several times<sup>5</sup>. The first screening of the film in Tokyo was attended by Mariam Said and Japanese Nobel Prize winning novelist Oe Kenzaburo, who was a friend of Said (Siglo 2006, Yuri 2006b, p. 24). A special lecture by Oe was given after the screening. Other than this event, the director Sato took part in several symposiums and talk-shows which coincided with the screening of the film and some other Said related scholars joined the events. A symposium held at one university in Kyoto was attended by Mariam Said (Siglo 2006). The series of events, which were held on the occasion of the releasing of *Edward W. Said: Out of Place*, simply shows that Said was and still is a significant figure to the people, especially to intellectuals, in Japan. What then did Said leave in their minds? What elements of Said touched the heart of people in Japan – an archipelago on the edge of the Orient?

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<sup>5</sup> See for instance, articles by Hamada Motoko, Ikeda Tomotaka, Katsuta Tomomi, Matsumoto Ryoichi, Myochin Miki, Takao Yoshinari and a culture column in *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* (15 May 2006).

This paper will explore how Edward W. Said and specifically his most prominent book *Orientalism* were accepted in Japanese intellectual circles. First, I will look back to 1986 when the Japanese translation of *Orientalism* was published eight years after the original publication of the book. Book reviews on the *Orientalism*, which appeared in the Japanese daily newspapers and magazines, will be the focus of this section to observe how his work was understood and introduced to Japan at the first stage. Then three dimensions which derive from analysing those reviews will be examined respectively: recognising Japan, a country of the Orient, as a subject of ‘orientalism’; reconsidering Japan’s perception of the Orient – the Arab world in particular; realising Japan as an entity to conduct ‘orientalism’. Finally, articles appearing in the Japanese media commemorating Said after his death in September 2003 will be examined to consider what Said had left behind in Japan.

### **INTRODUCTION OF *ORIENTALISM* IN JAPAN**

The Japanese translated version of *Orientalism* appeared in book stores in Japan in October 1986. This does not mean, however, that Japanese scholars had been ignorant of this significant book before that, of course. Since the appearance of the original book in 1978, the argument put forward by Said had gradually influenced the intellectual circle in Japan (Sugita 1986, p. 358). The recognition of the significance of this controversial book prior to the publication of the Japanese translation explains the reason why four major Japanese nationwide daily newspapers picked up the translation in their book review section in November 1986, right after the publication. Nevertheless, it is fair to state that the term ‘orientalism’ in terms of how Said uses the word, and Said himself, came to be widely known in Japan after the publication of the translation. Following book reviews in the newspapers, a number of reviews appeared in

journals and periodicals in the following years and the term ‘orientalism’ came to be used frequently in academic writings and in the media.

“Lost in translation” is the image often attached to translated books. It gives the books a rather ‘second-rate’ impression compared to original publications. Needless to say, it is better to go through original text but in case of *Orientalism*, readers of the Japanese translation are not necessarily at a disadvantage. The eight-year time lag between the publication of the original text and the translation, allowed the editor to include some additional text; one was a translation of the article “Orientalism Reconsidered” by Said (1985), others were an essay by Sugita Hideaki, an editorial supervisor of the book and an after word by Imazawa Noriko, a translator.

Amongst these three texts, Sugita’s essay titled “*Orientalizumu to watashitachi*” (literally means “*Orientalism* and us”) gives the reader deep insights into the argument of Said and also a picture of the worldwide influence of this book since its publication in 1978 (Sugita 1986, pp. 358-372). Referring to the significance of this book was to re-conceptualise the term ‘orientalism’ itself and also Said’s critical stance on this matter (Sugita 1986, p. 358). Sugita first explains the meaning of ‘orientalism’ in Said’s sense – “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said 2003, p. 3). Then he turns to some critical points about the argument of Said. Finally, Sugita focuses on *Orientalism* and us – Japanese. The relationship between Japan and the Middle East and Japan and Asia are pointed out. Also he mentions that studies on ‘Japaneseness’ should be reconsidered in the light of ‘orientalism’ (Sugita 1986, pp. 368-369).

Along with Sugita’s review of *Orientalism*, Imazawa’s after word supplies another book review.

She starts her after word by describing Said's background as a Jerusalem-born Palestinian who was displaced as a result of the Jewish people's settlement (Imazawa 1986, p. 373). By doing so, Imazawa made the readers recognise Said not only as an English literature academic but also as an intellectual who was speaking from a Palestinian point of view. Referring to 'orientalism' in relation to Japan, she points out that Japan was in a peculiar position (Imazawa 1986, pp. 375-376). Japan was of course, a subject from the Western point of view, but simultaneously the Japanese treated the Orient as their subject.

Another text inserted into the Japanese version of *Orientalism*, "Orientalism Reconsidered", was published in 1985 for Said to refute the various critiques the original book had received since its publication. Having this text coinciding with the main literature, readers in Japan were able to have a clearer view of the argument in his book. Two reviews by Sugita and Imazawa played an important role in providing background information to the readers since they contained major critiques of *Orientalism*, which Said had counter-argued in the essay.

Thus, *Orientalism* – a book which "dramatically converted the meaning of the term orientalism" (Usuki 2002, p. 240), was introduced to the archipelago with intense and detailed information. Said's standpoint, as well as his personal background, was made clear at the point of introduction.

#### **BOOK REVIEWS ON *ORIENTALISM***

On the occasion of the publication of this Japanese version of *Orientalism*, several book reviews appeared in journals, periodicals and daily newspapers in Japan. A month after the publication,

four major daily newspapers<sup>6</sup> reviewed the book. They first referred to the significance of the literature in a general sense, specifically mentioning Said's interpretation of the term 'orientalism' and then exploring the meaning of it in the context of Japan.

As Nakano Makiko wrote in memory of Said in 2003 right after his passing, "the significant achievement of Said was to bring the keyword 'imperialism' into the area of literary critic" (Nakano 2003, p. 46). Back in 1986, this point was clearly recognised by the four book reviews. *Yomiuri Shimbun* writes "What becomes clear through Said's writing is the dynamic process of the image of the Orient created by romanticism absorbed into the theory of imperialism" (1986, p. 7). Explaining 'orientalism' as one ideology which Europeans have conceived, *Mainichi Shimbun* says "orientalism is one ideological system which Europe has imagined unrelated to the life of people actually living in the Orient and the interest of imperialism and colonialism are embedded completely in the idea" (1986, p. 9). Each book review explains the presence of the structure of imperialism and colonialism, which is the structure of domination of the Orient by the West, in the practice of 'orientalism'.

It is worth noticing that two of the four newspapers use a verb '*abaku*' which means 'reveal' in their title of the reviews. A review by Miura Masashi in *Asahi Shimbun* is titled "*Seiyo no yokubo abakidasu*" (literally meaning "revealing the West's ambition") (1986, p. 11), whereas Isoda Koichi's review in *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* says "*Seiyo chushin no ishiki wo abaku*" (literally meaning "revealing the Westerncentric consciousness") (1986, p. 12). Miura points out that Said has revealed "something Orient which had been told and studied was merely an illusion created to justify the domination of the Orient by the West" (1986, p. 11). On the

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<sup>6</sup> There are five major daily newspapers distributed nation wide in Japan: *Asahi Shimbun*, *Mainichi Shimbun*, *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, *Sankei Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun*.

other hand, Isoda mentions that Said has revealed “causes which are constraining Europeans as a pattern of thinking when they observe the Orient” (1986, p. 12). Both reviews are clearly indicating that the target of Said’s argument is “the West”. Along with the information that Said was a person born in Palestine (Miura 1986, p. 11), Said’s stance was clearly recognised and depicted.

While describing the basic argument in *Orientalism*, three out of four reviews go into discussions referring to what this literature means to Japan and to people living on the Japanese archipelago. They try to place Japan in the context of the argument of Said, which depicts the situation in the world in a dualistic structure – one party being a ruler and the other a subject. When it comes to the question of “who is the subject of ‘orientalism’”, Japan becomes ambiguous. In some cases, Japan is the Orient, the subject. However, in other cases, it will become the Orientalist.

The review in *Yomiuri Shimbun* has referred to two dimensions. It says that the method used by Said to structurally analyse discourses regarding the Orient by referring to Foucault was effective in re-considering the discourse on Japan (1987, p. 7). This statement derives from a point of view which is recognising Japan as a subject of orientalism. How the Occident describes, understands and represents Japan as a country in the Orient affects the way people in Japan recognise themselves. In order to put the discussion on ‘Japonism’ in a relative position, *Yomiuri*’s review indicates Said’s method may contribute to the task. *Yomiuri*, at the same time, points out an element which Japan has as an orientalist in relation to the Arab world. Although both Japan and the Arab world belong to the same grouping, the Orient, according to the Western categorisation, Japan’s understanding of the Arab world is insufficient as it is in the



West. In many cases, images of the Arab are imported to Japan from the West. Thorough description of images imposed on the Arab world by the West in *Orientalism* allows Japan to recognise how little they know about the history or culture of the Arab world.

On the other hand, Miura and Isoda also point out the aspect of Japan as an orientalist – the ruler. However, their focus is on Japan’s relation with neighbouring Asian countries, not the Arab world. At the outset of his review, Miura refers to this episode in terms that he was surprised by recognising the perspective of the colonialists in Watsuji Tetsuro’s prominent work *Fudo*<sup>7</sup> (literally meaning ‘climate’) especially in description of China (1986, p. 11). He continues saying that what Said described in *Orientalism* was what he had felt in Watsuji’s writing. Isoda, in his review, is more straightforward on this issue, indicating that the problem of ‘orientalism’ was not foreign to Japan, he directly states that Japan’s unjust discrimination against China and Korea in the past could be a representation of ‘orientalism’ (1986, p. 12). Both Isoda and Miura are recognising Japan belonging to the side of those who imposed imperial and colonial power on others.

These three dimensions, which were indicated in these reviews, have then expanded its argument respectively and also inter-relationally. In the next sections, these three dimensions of receiving *Orientalism*, Said and his argument in Japan will be described in detail.

### **JAPAN AS A SUBJECT OF ‘ORIENTALISM’**

Amongst three dimensions, which *Orientalism* could be read and adopted in Japan, seeing Japan as a subject of ‘orientalism’ is the least difficult way to absorb the idea for the Japanese people.

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<sup>7</sup> Watsuji Tetsuro is a prominent Japanese philosopher born in 1889 and died in 1960. *Fudo* is the most significant and well known work by Watsuji published in 1935.

*Orientalism* has touched the sentiment of them. Japan has been exposed to the exercise of 'orientalism' by Europe since the day it had appeared in an Italian merchant and traveller, Marco Polo's record as 'Zipangu', a place located in the east of China which was imagined to be rich with gold. This tendency has been enhanced especially after the opening up of the country to the world in the middle of the nineteenth century. It was a place where the Western powers, joined by the United States of America, exercise their imperial and colonial experiment. It was under the pressure from the Western countries in the international political scene whereas its culture was represented and admired as a unique Oriental culture by the West. The argument of 'orientalism' has made intellectuals in Japan reconsider its position in the world and its culture by realising its subjectivity.

"An ethnic obsession" is the phrase used by Seki Hirono in his book review of *Orientalism* to refer to the "dichotomy between the West and the East" which was depicted by Said in the book in order to draw his argument to the state of Japan in relation to the West (Seki 1987, p. 146). Seki points out that the book could be misread by Japanese readers as a literature specifically on the Middle Eastern issues and unrelated to Japan (1987, p. 146). By introducing the phrase "an ethnic obsession", he bridges the gap between the argument and Japanese readers' consciousness. On the other hand, Sekii Mitsuo is more direct in putting Japan into the context of *Orientalism*. Explaining "unconscious structure" of 'orientalism', Sekii quotes from a record by one British engineer, Richard H. Brunton who was hired by the Japanese government in the late nineteenth century when Japan was going through the process of modernisation and westernisation (Sekii 1987, p. 288). The notion of superiority over Japan was expressed clearly in Brunton's writing. By adding that there was no shortage in Brunton-like statements by foreigners who visited Japan, Sekii makes Japanese readers find

themselves in the discussion in *Orientalism*.

A dialogue between Karatani Kojin and Paul Anderer which appeared in a journal *Waseda Bungaku* in May 1987 brought this point to a deeper level. Their dialogue proceeds by having its basis on issues concerning Japanese literature and its critique. Answering to Karatani's comment saying that he was surprised to hear almost all people who were studying Japanese literature in the United States were mentioning Said's *Orientalism*, Anderer expresses his concern about the phenomenon (1987, p. 10). He himself an American who is majoring in Japanese literature, Anderer indicates that people had to be more cautious in adopting 'orientalism' when talking about Japan. Whether we could expand the argument of Said beyond the Middle East, to South East Asia, China and Japan, is the most stimulating aspect, no one has pursued this task yet, says Anderer (1987, pp. 10-11). This does not necessarily mean that Anderer was against the idea of adopting Said's argument to Japan. What he is suggesting is the necessity of a thorough critique of Japanese studies and its origin by American scholars, as Said did for the Middle East. The importance of once rejecting or criticising the flame work of 'orientalism' and to construct the work is emphasised.

Referring further to American scholars on Japanese studies, Anderer points out the lack of a Japanese point of view in Americans' literary critique on Japanese literature (1987, p. 15). This point was echoed by Karatani who is speaking from the side of Japanese literature as a Japanese literary critic. Karatani introduces an episode from his experience of teaching Japanese literature at the Yale University and says that there was a tendency that American students uncritically adopt the Western philosophy or critique to Japanese literature and ignore the history of literary critique in Japan (1987, p. 16). In relation to this ignorance of the

context of Japan, they also mention to American researchers' belief that the "Japanese can feel but cannot think" (1987, p. 18). This simultaneously relates to their belief that Japanese issues could not be explained or described logically. Karatani insists the possibility of explaining Japanese issues logically, and emphasises the significance of putting the issues in the context of Japanese history.

While depicting characteristics of Japanese studies in the United States, the situation of Japan's side is also mentioned in their dialogue. The most significant remark by Karatani is "Japanese modern literature was written completely in the Westerners' point of view" (1987, p. 11). He affirms that the perspective of 'orientalism' would penetrate into the Orient itself, as Said had argued. Concerning the representation of Japanese being 'illogical' by American scholars, Karatani is not only criticising those Americans but also putting the blame on the Japanese side. He affirms that the Japanese are consenting to the image and not making enough effort to explain in logical rhetoric in order to make the Westerners understand (1987, p. 18).

Coming back to the book review by Sekii, he indicates that the most significant aspect about 'orientalism' is that it is still alive and reproduced even today and penetrating into the East from the West (Sekii 1987, p. 288). What Sekii considers the most problematic aspect of this phenomenon is that the subject of 'orientalism', in this case Japan, was somehow indifferently adopting and absorbing the Western hegemony (1987, p. 289). Although Said is not talking about this aspect of 'orientalism', says Sekii, the domination over the East by the West is supported by this "reverse orientalism" (1987, p. 289). He insists that the reason why the belief that the Japanese language does not have rhetoric and the Japanese are emotional was still in the air, could be explained by this point (1987, p. 289). This indication completely echoes

with Karatani's remark.

Japanese people passively accepted what the Western world are imposing on them and somehow giving up the effort to spontaneously consider and evaluate their own society and culture. What is necessary for intellectuals in Japan, according to Karatani, Anderer and Sekii, is to re-consider Japan by once escaping from the framework of 'orientalism'. The argument of Said in *Orientalism* allows Japanese intellectuals to realise their ignorance of consenting to the Western hegemony. This realisation will lead them to place Japan in a relative position in the world.

#### **ARAB AS THE ORIENT**

In the context of observing the world divided into two categories, the West and the Orient, it is, as we have seen in the former section, not a difficult task to place Japan in the latter category. However, when the term "the Orient" is specifically attached to the Middle East, Japan's position will suddenly become very uncertain. Although the argument of Said in *Orientalism* is effective in considering the broader power structure of the entire world, his central interest is specifically on the issue concerning the Middle East and he is mainly drawing examples from the relationship between the West and the Arab world. If we focus on this aspect, Japan will share the stance with the Western countries.

Sugita Hideaki wrote back in 1986 that the Western 'orientalism' which was analysed and criticised by Said was not only the problem of Western countries but also that of Japan (Sugita 1986, p. 367). This notion is unconsciously shared by people in Japan and buried in their minds. This is most apparent when we think about the relationship between Japan and the

Middle East, he says. Sugita refers to how the Arab world is represented in Japanese popular culture and mass media. One example was an advertisement of a department store in 1981. The poster said “*Fushigi, Daisuki*” (literally means “I love wonder”) to promote the image of the department store and a photo of a caravan proceeding in front of pyramids was used. Through this advertisement, an exotic image of the Middle East, which is typical to depict the region, was enhanced (Sugita 1986, p. 367). Sugita also mentions the tendency of linking the Arab image to terrorists (1986, p. 367). According to Sugita, this situation was the result of the import of ‘orientalism’, which is popular among the American public directly, to Japanese society (1986, p. 367). At the same time, the similar phenomenon can be recognised in the area studies of the Middle East in Japan. It is significantly influenced by the Western oriental studies (Sugita 1986, pp. 367-368). Another academic Uhara Takashi is also referring to this point. He says that through the channel of theories, the West’s distorted image of Arab or Islam was cast over Japan as well (Uhara 1988, p. 69).

As a result, information about the Arab world is insufficient in Japan and it is failing to recognise alternative stories from the region. Seki Hirono bluntly points out that the Japanese could not imagine anything other than oil, war, the Koran and the *Arabian Nights* from the Middle East (Seki 1987, p. 146). That is why says Seki, that Japanese readers of *Orientalism* would be surprised by Said’s indication referring British, American and French policy on the Middle East or Israeli policy on Arab was under the influence of the practice of ‘orientalism’ (1987, p. 148). Comments from Itagaki Yuzo in his dialogue with Kang Sang-jung on Said in 1995, further pursue this point. Itagaki, a prominent Japanese scholar in Middle Eastern studies, explains the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union by inserting a perspective, which includes the Islam element in the scope (Itagaki & Kang 1995, p. 345). He

sees the collapse of Socialism in the twentieth century, originated in the Six-Day War in 1967, since the war shook the ground of Socialism in the Arab world (1995, pp. 345-346). According to Itagaki, the direct starting points of the dissolution of the Soviet Union were the Iranian Revolution and the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union. This argument is rarely seen in Japan as well as in the Western countries. The interpretation of historical events varies and deciding which view is correct is a complex matter. Nevertheless, the absence of Itagaki's argument in the discussion of "the end of Socialism" in Japan or in the international arena should be considered as a lack of sufficient materials to thoroughly examine the issue. Since Japan is in a position, different from the Western countries, it has an opportunity and also a responsibility to introduce alternative points of view that differ from the Western ones and include those from the Arab world in the debate within the international society.

Nishikawa Nagao says that he was listening carefully to experts on the Middle Eastern problem and military affairs in the media to mention Said's *Orientalism* during the Gulf War (2003, p. 69). However, few recalled the name of Said or *Orientalism*. Considering the popularity of the term 'orientalism' in Japan, it is rather ironic that the term had not been used on the occasion when it was most appropriate. As Nishikawa rightly indicated, the Gulf War proved what Said had presented in *Orientalism* was right and was still going on (2003, p. 69). Now in 2006, we are observing another war in the Middle East. The practice of 'orientalism' is still alive and in a more coercive way. Japan as a member of the Western allies took part in the Gulf War in a palliative measure: contributing financially (Nishikawa 2003, p. 69). This time in Iraq they deployed their Self Defence Force troops for a 'humanitarian' task to a rather 'safe' area. Regarding this policy of Japan on the Middle East, as Nishikawa insists, it is necessary for Japanese intellectuals to re-consider its relation to the region by consulting the argument of Said

in *Orientalism*.

### **JAPAN AS AN ORIENTALIST**

“When will another Said appear in this stronghold of orientalism in the Far East?” writes Kang Sang-jung in the very last line in his review on *Orientalism* (1987, p. 59). Needless to say, the “stronghold of orientalism in the Far East” applies to Japan. As Miura Masahi and Isoda Koichi indicated in their book reviews in Japanese daily newspapers, the argument of Said in *Orientalism* brings an aspect of Japan being an orientalist to mind. This time the object of ‘orientalism’ is in neighbouring Asian countries, specifically Korea and China, not the Middle East. Unlike in the case of Japan in relation to the Middle East, this practice of ‘orientalism’ involves physical coercion to those Asian countries. This aspect of Japan being an imperialist and a colonialist tends to slip out of Japanese people’s consciousness because of its significant image of being subject of the West. In order to escape from a trauma, a pressure from the West, Japan tried to reject its ‘Asianess’ and view neighbouring countries with imperialist and colonialist eyes (Kang & Murai 1993, p. 185).

Kang called this cultural hegemony exercised by Japan over Asia as “Japanese orientalism” following Said (Kang 1988, p. 134). Japan drew a borderline, which cannot be crossed between themselves and Asia, and by dividing ‘us’ from ‘them’ Japan had managed to assure their identity. This cultural hegemony was practiced in accordance with social, economical and political systems (1988, p. 134) in the course of Japan’s expansion into Asia from the end of the nineteenth century up to the end of World War Two, specifically to the Korean Peninsular. However, even after the war, the practice of “Japanese orientalism” has continued and this was apparent in Japan’s attitude towards their “inner others” – Koreans living, or I should say left, in



Japan (Kang 1988, pp. 134, p. 137-138). Fifteen years later, on the occasion of Said's passing, in a dialogue with Ukai Satoshi in memory of Said, Kang once again refers to Japan's aspect as an orientalist. He explains that there is a notion of superiority in Japan in relation to their neighbouring countries and refers to the importance of re-visiting Said's argument for Japan to seriously consider real reconciliation with Asia (Kang & Ukai 2003, pp. 18-20).

Among other scholars who read Japan as an orientalist in Said's context, there were those who focused on individual Japanese intellectuals from the middle of the nineteenth century to the early post-World War Two period. Those intellectuals ranged from policy makers, educators, philosophers, ethicists, and others, and were the people who shaped the Japanese knowledge and thoughts about the world, Japan and Asia. Fukuzawa Yukichi, a thinker and an educator in the late nineteenth century, is one favourite target for those who accuse imperialist and colonialist behaviour of Japan in Asia. By referring to Said's criticism of Marx's view as orientalist, Nishikawa Nagao argues that it was possible to recognise the same element in Fukuzawa's thinking which urges Japan to separate itself from Asia (Komori 2003, pp. 97-112, pp. 247-249). Komori Yoichi also defines Fukuzawa as an orientalist. Fukuzawa's vision to impose otherness on the neighbouring countries and give justification for Japan's colonial expansion was a characteristic of imperial states as pointed out by Said (2003, pp. 39-47). Regarding the colonial policy of Japan, Tanaka Kazuo is referring to Yanaihara Tadao, a Christian and an economist who was one of the policy makers on Japan's colonial policy in the early twentieth century. Although Yanaihara was quite sympathetic to the local population in Japanese colonies and was dismissed from Tokyo University in 1937 because of his "idealistic pacifist view", Tanaka says, by giving a positive view on Japan's implantation of economical development and education in its colonies, Yanaihara had conceded to the overall colonial

policy of Imperial Japan (1991, p. 291-293). The image of orientalist overlaps with Yanaihara.

Karatani Kojin takes Said's orientalism to examine the world of art. Pointing out that "the most typical subversion of colonialism is its aestheticist way of appreciating and respecting the other" (1997, pp. 48-49)<sup>8</sup>, and adding he believes "this is what Said meant by the term *Orientalism*" (1997, pp. 48-49), he features two aesthetic scholars, Okakura Tenshin and Yanagi Soetsu. Okakura was a person who 'discovered' craft in Japan as art under the direction of American, Ernest Fenollosa, and he expanded this practice to the whole of Asia and also advocated the independence of Asians (1997, p.50). Nevertheless, he was ignorant about Korea and he viewed Japan's domination over Korea as a matter of course (1997, p. 52). On the other hand, Yanagi contributed to the 'discovery' of craft in Korea (1997, p. 52). He loved the people of Korea and was against Japan's policy of assimilation (1997, p. 52-54). However, this derived from his aesthetic point of view and was motivated by his compassion for Korea, which was a perspective of those who dominate.

Coming back to Kang Sang-jung, on the occasion of the publication of his book *Orientalizumu no Kanata e* (literally meaning "beyond orientalism") in 1996, he wrote an article referring to the purpose of the book. In the article he reveals that he had been inspired by the work of Stephan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History* (Kang 1996, p. 135). In this book Tanaka thoroughly examined the work of Shiratori Kurakichi, whom Tanaka calls "the principal architect of *toyoshi*"<sup>9</sup> (Tanaka 1995, p. 11). Shiratori was an academic active in the

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<sup>8</sup> This text of Karatani was published in both Japanese and English. Although I mainly relied on the Japanese text in *Hihyokukan*, for exact quotes in quotation marks are taken from the English version translated by Kohso Sabu in *Boundary 2*. This quotation and the next one appears in p. 153 of the English text.

<sup>9</sup> *Toyoshi* literary means "Oriental history".

early twentieth century and pursued a project to define Asia, that is “to establish Japan as an authority on Asia, and thereby to engage in a dialogue with the West” (Tanaka 1995, p. 28). This book encouraged Kang to pursue the development of Oriental studies in Japan in order to unravel “Japanese orientalism” (Kang 1996, p. 135). Here, it is worth noting that Kang is a second generation Korean in Japan and Tanaka a Japanese American. Both are figures who are somehow “others” from the main stream Japanese society. Japan’s aspect as an orientalist is more clearly recognised by those who were “out of place”.

Although this is a controversial way to observe Japan in the society, this is the most important way to interpret *Orientalism* in the Japan context. Without noticing this profile of Japan, it is almost impossible for Japan to build a peaceful relationship with the neighbouring Asian countries.

### **MEMOIR OF SAID AND BEYOND**

The name of Edward W. Said once again appeared in Japanese daily newspapers when he died on 25 September 2003 after more than a decade of battling against leukaemia. In their obituary columns, *Asahi*, *Yomiuri* and *Mainichi* reported the passing of this prominent intellectual on the following day (Igarashi 2003, p. 39, Kono 2003, p. 31, *Yomiuri* 2003, p. 39). Many articles in memory of Said followed in the later months. Reflecting Said’s multiple faces, the contexts in which he was remembered were diverse. Contributors to a special edition of *Gendai Shiso*<sup>10</sup> on Edward Said published in November 2003 ranged from academics in literature, politics, philosophy, area studies, novelists, TV director and photographer.

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<sup>10</sup> *Gendai Shiso* literally means “contemporary thoughts”. It has a French subtitle that says “revue de la pansee d’aujourd’hui” (review of thinking of today).

Among those articles, there were a few which were concerned how Said was adopted and absorbed into Japanese academia. Yomota Inuhiko, by pointing out the difficulty of Japanese intellectuals who are strangers to war or ethnic cross to bear to acquire Said's idea, insists that the term 'orientalism' is so casually used as the synonym of 'exoticism' (2003, p. 6). He takes up Japanese scholars on history of Western art and says that they were indifferent of the enormous cost Said had paid to forge the idea, 'orientalism' (p.6). They use the term 'orientalism' to easily analyse 'Japonism' and are ignorant of the way they themselves are exercising 'orientalism' through the curriculum at their academic institutions (p.6). Yomota also accuses journalists reporting on the Middle Eastern issue that they only take Said as a specialist on the Palestine issue who can be accessed in English language and therefore 'handy' (p.6).

Usuki Akira is warning the tendency to 'deify' Said (2004, p. 161). He says that Said himself was a person who pursued eternal revolution and if people deify him they would fall into self-contradiction (p. 161). In relation to this comment, Hayao Takanori raises the alarm that we must be cautious in consuming Said (2003, p. 38). He insists that since Said was worshipped to a great extent in Japan and his words were intellectually consumed so well, as a result they are missing the real situation in Palestine (p. 38). It is important to recognise, he says, certain people in Palestine were uncomfortable with Said being recognised as a representative of them in the international arena (p.38). Said, even from the Palestinian point of view, is a person "out of place" and Said himself was well aware of this point. Hayao adds that for the majority of Japanese people the term 'Palestine' evoked a sweet nostalgic image of 'revolution' and even the notion of "out of place" may be consumed as a healing practice (p. 38).

Bearing these points in mind, the voice of Suh Kyungsik, another second generation Korean residing in Japan, should be heard. Suh apparently expresses his personal attachment to Said in his essay in memory of Said (2003). Expressing how the absence of Said is significant to him, Suh overlaps Said's circumstance, being a person with multiple identities, with his own situation. Said himself chose his identity to be a Palestinian and Suh chose it to be a Korean, in other words both chose to belong to minority groups in a society with an 'imperialistic' character (Suh 2003, p. 82). Said felt awkward about his name, which had a very Arabian family name and a very English given name, which was also shared by Suh who once had a very Korean family name and a very Japanese given name (2003, p. 81). Suh's voice raised within Japanese society saying "without understanding this awkwardness of a Korean living in Japan regarding their names, it is impossible to understand Said in a real sense" (p. 82) is a serious indication to the Japanese people, especially to those who are 'consuming' Said and 'orientalism'.

As Kang Sang-jung points out in his review on *Orientalism*, in the literature Said's "personal dimension" (Said 2003, p. 25) – being a Palestinian living in the United States still confronting despair – is vividly alive (Kang 1987, p. 57). For Kang, his attachment to Said derived from his "personal dimension". When Kang says it is important for people in Japan to think about "what Said means to the present Japanese society" (Kang & Ukai 2003, p. 16), it indicates the necessity of the Japanese people to see the present circumstances of themselves and their society in terms of Japanese history which does not exclude stories of Kang or Shu's.

This is a challenging message to the Japanese people and occasionally people like Kang are

seen as people with “anti-Japan sentiment”<sup>11</sup> (Nishihara 2005, p. 250), which I place some reservation on. Nevertheless, an episode from Kamakura Hideya, a TV director, obviously includes Kang or Shu’s story. In March 2003 in Cairo, he and his staff were filming Said being interviewed by Palestinian lawyer Raji K. Sourani for a Japanese TV program. Six months later on the day of Said’s death, Kamakura and his staff gathered in Tokyo to remember Said and promised to keep reporting the present problems within East Asia (Kamakura 2003, p. 96). In order not to create new ‘borders’ and ‘imperialism’ in the region, they felt this was their mission, which they inherited from Said (p. 96). Although it is maybe a rather minor event, it is showing a way to receive Edward Said’s legacy, not just to consume but also to absorb and apply to the personal dimension of people living on the Japanese archipelago.

## CONCLUSION

‘Controversial’ is the best adjective to describe Edward W. Said and his work, *Orientalism*<sup>12</sup>. It is true as Nishihara Daisuke asserts “Said’s *Orientalism* has not evoked the same strong antipathy from Japanese conservatives that it did in the West” (2005, p. 242). Nishihara continues “[o]n the contrary, most Japanese intellectuals, whether Marxist or conservative, are sympathetic towards Said’s unsparing criticism toward the West” (p. 242). Nevertheless, still Said and *Orientalism* were and are controversial enough to the Japanese intellectual circle. In the process of receiving and absorbing the argument of ‘orientalism’, the ambiguous state of Japan in the world became more and more apparent.

The significance of Said’s argument in *Orientalism* was that by making the structure of the

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<sup>11</sup> This Nishihara Daisuke’s article “Said, Orientalism, and Japan” in *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* is originally in English.

<sup>12</sup> For instance, Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia write “Edward Said is one of the most widely known, and controversial, intellectuals in the world today” (2002, p. 1).

West's domination over the Orient clearer, he put a spotlight on the side of the Orient – the subject of 'orientalism'. The state of being in the position of a subject in relation to the Western power politically and culturally, specifically after the opening up of the country in 1853, made Japan easily receive and consume the idea of 'orientalism'. Japanese intellectuals not only healed their sentiment being a subject of the West but also came to realise the necessity of putting Japan's society or culture out of the structure of 'orientalism' for relative evaluation.

On the other hand, *Orientalism* simultaneously made Japanese intellectuals realise that Japan's other characteristic – the characteristic being an entity to exercise 'orientalism' on others. When it comes to the Middle East, following ideas imported from the Western countries, Japan had limited knowledge and understanding about the region. Different stories of the Middle East became visible through Said's argument and the necessity of Japan to directly commit to the region became clearer to the intellectuals in Japan.

Furthermore, what was controversial about this character of Japan as an orientalist was that it had made Japan's controversial past in relation to Asia apparent. Through its imperial and colonial policy, Japan exercised its domination – "Japanese orientalism" – over the neighbouring countries. This past is still negatively influencing Japan's relationship with Asian countries and the importance of Japan to re-recognise its past through the argument of Said has not been tainted yet.

Although Edward Said is no longer around, a stone he threw into the world has raised endless debates and is creating more. Especially in a country like Japan which ambiguously floats between the Orient and the Occident, the controversial legacy of Said and *Orientalism* will

continue to live on.



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